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**Gaelic Christianity? The Church in the Western Highlands and Islands of
Scotland before and after the Reformation**

Martin MacGregor

This paper applies the two research questions posed by this strand of the Insular Christianity project to western Gaelic Scotland: the dioceses of Argyll and the Isles from the thirteenth to the early seventeenth centuries, with the emphasis on the decades on either side of the official inauguration of the Scottish Reformation in 1560. Did this Gaelic speech community avow a Christianity rendered distinctive in any shape or form by its language? Did it possess or provide a usable Christian past? The two questions can be read as one, positing the issue of difference with reference to separate timeframes. Consequential subsidiary questions rapidly identify themselves. If distinctiveness there was, did it have a basis in substance or perception? Did it reside in the consciousness of its own community, or of those outside it? This last prompts the sounding of a cautionary alarm bell, lest these questions be fruits either of an archipelagic cultural mindset within which the Celts play their accustomed role of aberrant foils to Anglophone orthodoxy; or of occasional hints within Celtic scholarship that Christianity was little more than a veneer tacked on to Celtic society, and irrelevant to its deepest and truest instincts.¹ Yet, to speak plainly, why should language alone have been sufficient to render Gaelic Scotland different from any other part of either a pre-Reformation western Christendom which embraced a multitude of tongues, or a post-Reformation Europe which elevated the vernacular into a tenet of faith?

The historiography of Gaelic Scotland in general in this era remains poorly developed compared to either Lowland Scotland or Gaelic Ireland, and religion takes its place alongside

other fundamental themes such as economic life, lordship, militarism and gender studies where our knowledge base is alarmingly fragmentary. The region which has fared best to date is the one considered here, a natural consequence of scholarly interest in the greatest secular success stories of late medieval and early modern Gaelic Scotland, the lordships created by the MacDonalds of the Isles and the Campbells of Argyll. These developed initially on a largely complementary and non-confrontational basis which steadily gave way during the sixteenth century to rivalry and enmity, as MacDonald unity and power imploded, and Campbell ambitions expanded in all directions, westwards included. In terms of its ecclesiastical history, this same region has seen notable recent doctoral work on the pre-Reformation era,² while the centrality of the Campbells to the story of the Scottish and indeed ‘British’ Reformation has been highlighted in recent studies by Donald Meek and Jane Dawson.³ Along with James Kirk, Jane Dawson has also contributed to a revisionist literature on the Reformation in Gaelic Scotland, challenging the older mantra of very limited impact down to the death of James VI & I with a far more positive picture.⁴

Argyll and the Isles was the part of Gaelic Scotland most demonstrably in contact with Gaelic Ireland at various levels – military, social, economic, cultural – in the period in question. This is the zone where we find the presence both of practitioners of high Gaelic culture whose origins lay in Ireland, and of the greatest concentration of production of manuscripts in the literary dialect.⁵ One school of thought, associated primarily with Irish scholars, has elevated the relationship into a polity: a late medieval Greater Gaeldom or Gaelic world extending across the North Channel, and offering a genuine alternative to development of kingdoms or states along conventional Irish or Scottish lines.⁶ Recent Scottish scholarship takes a very different view.⁷ What of the ecclesiastical dimension to this debate? If there was a ‘Gaelic Christianity’, did it

manifest itself in terms of continuities or connections of Christian faith and practice across the ‘Gaelic world’? The Reformation is of course as central to an exploration of this question as it is to the two posed at the outset, but even more important to what follows, and a striking continuity across the era of Reformation in western Gaelic Scotland, is the legacy of Iona: the struggle for possession both of the spiritual authority first wielded by Colum Cille or Columba, and the material wealth of the monastery he founded.⁸

The natural starting point is the early medieval Kingdom of the Isles, a product of the Scandinavian impact upon Scotland and mainland Britain’s western litoral. At its greatest extent, this kingdom consisted of the Isles from Man in the south to Lewis in the north, and the province of Argyll which occupied the greater part of the adjacent mainland. The Isles and Argyll had distinct identities and were capable of being ruled separately. A measure of greater integration, political and otherwise, was achieved by the great Gaelic dynast Somerled or Somhairle (d. 1164) and his descendants, the most enduring and influential of whom were Clann Dòmhnail or the MacDonalds, and Clann Dubhghaill, the MacDougalls. Even then, the centre of gravity of MacDonald lordship was insular, in Islay and what contemporaries regarded as the ‘isle’ of Kintyre; while the MacDougalls, followed later by the Campbells, came to dominate Argyll. Ultimate political sovereignty over this kingdom was also divided between islands and mainland, and exercised by the kings of Norway and Scotland respectively, until the Treaty of Perth in 1266, and the formal transfer of the Isles from Norwegian to Scottish possession.

Thirty years later in 1296, the outbreak of war between Scotland and England inaugurated an enmity which endured across the later middle ages until the era of Reformation. Weakening or fluctuating English lordship over Ireland, and embryonic Scottish dominion over the Isles, ensured that the ‘Irish Sea World’ became a strategically crucial geo-political theatre

where these two sovereignties met and clashed, as each party looked to the west to gain advantage over the other. Equally, the putative existence of an alternative sovereignty in the shape of ‘Greater Gaeldom’ gains notional legitimacy from what one historian has likened to the knocking out of the Scandinavian wedge, and the opportunity for renewed and deepened Gaelic communion across the North Channel.⁹ In the wake of regal union in 1603, the events of 1609 – Plantation in Ulster, and the Statutes of Iona as applied to most of the Isles and adjacent mainland territories – can then be readily interpreted as a joint British project directed at the heart of ‘Greater Gaeldom’, and seeking to supplant it with a streamlined and uninterrupted Stewart imperium.¹⁰ From the viewpoint of western Gaelic Scotland, a far more straightforward proposition would be that in the later medieval and early modern era, authority here continued to be wielded most successfully at the level of regional lordship, the greatest exponents of which were the MacDonalds. Their fall, following crown forfeiture in 1475 and 1493, and the death of the last legitimate and serious MacDonald claimant to the headship of the Lordship of the Isles in 1545, triggered competition, most notably between Campbells and MacKenzies, to replace Clann Dòmhnail as regional rulers; but they no less than imperial Stewart monarchy proved incapable of recreating or emulating MacDonald hegemony.¹¹

Unsurprisingly, there are substantial parallels between this political narrative and its ecclesiastical counterpart. The diocese of Argyll may have been largely carved out of the overlarge and unwieldy diocese of Dunkeld, probably in 1188/9. Although the western ambitions of the kings of Scots stood to gain from this addition to the ranks of the *ecclesia Scoticana*, and the opportunity it afforded for the appointment of sympathetically minded bishops, a more likely catalyst for change seems to have been the successful establishment of regional lordship over Argyll by the kindred of Somerled, with his son Dubhghall, progenitor of the MacDougalls,

arguably the moving spirit in the formation of the new diocese.¹² The diocese of Sodor or the Isles was a Norse creation, with its see at Peel in the Isle of Man, and its metropolitan in Trondheim. In 1266 the patronage of the bishopric of the Isles was transferred to the Scottish crown. Although metropolitan status technically remained with Trondheim until 1472 and the elevation of St Andrews to an archbishopric, Norse influence over the diocese of the Isles effectively lapsed after 1331, with the pope acting as metropolitan, and bishops-elect going to Rome or Avignon for confirmation. During the Great Schism, moreover, the stance of the bishops towards the papacy was consistent with that of their patrons rather than their nominal metropolitan. For the Isles, therefore, 1472 was merely long overdue confirmation that the Scottish church was the ecclesiastical polity to which they properly belonged.¹³

Scotocentrism also left the Isle of Man as an increasingly anachronistic and unsatisfactory location for the bishop's see, even setting aside its problematic status as an Anglo-Scottish political football across the later middle ages.¹⁴ Snizort in the Isle of Skye may have come to prominence as a northern makeweight to Man, but the fact that the bishop was petitioning the papacy in 1433 to have his see transferred from Snizort 'to some honest place within the diocese' may suggest that it was no less ideal.¹⁵ The bishop's problem was that the logistical epicentre of his diocese was already home to a separate foundation, the Benedictine abbey of Iona. The abbey moreover, was endowed with lands and churches throughout the diocese, while ambiguity attached to the issue of whether the abbot, already possessed of the authority vested in the successor of Colum Cille, should acknowledge the bishop of the Isles as his ordinary, with either the pope or the bishop of Dunkeld also fulfilling this role at points across the later middle ages.¹⁶ It has been suggested that divided or disputed political sovereignty over the western Scottish seaboard – first between Norway and Scotland, and later between the

crowned heads of Scotland and England – redounded to the benefit of the autonomy of regional dynasts, latterly the MacDonald lord of the Isles; and the same may have applied to the abbot of Iona in terms of ecclesiastical freedom.¹⁷ Lay patronage of the abbey came to rest with the MacDonald lords, and either they or others of the descendants of Somerled were founders and patrons of the four other monastic houses within late medieval Argyll and the Isles, all of which seem to have been spiritually and culturally active institutions. The temptation exists to draw contrasts between a dynamic regular church, with the abbot of Iona and the MacDonald lord of the Isles as its presiding personalities, and a moribund and poverty-stricken diocesan structure, with an ineffectual bishop and the king of Scots at its apex.¹⁸

That the contrast was as much political as it was religious seems to be explicitly confirmed in 1498, when Gilleasbuig (Archibald) Campbell, second earl of Argyll, and a key figure in James IV's administration, petitioned Rome to make Iona the cathedral of the Isles, thereby amalgamating abbey and bishopric.¹⁹ The petition was almost certainly consequent upon the death of Eoin MacKinnon, abbot of Iona.²⁰ Although the papal response, in 1499, only went so far as to grant the abbey *in commendam* to the bishop, and stipulated that 'the accustomed number of monks be in no way diminished',²¹ the elimination of the abbot nevertheless sits neatly alongside 1493, the forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles, and the toppling of the last lord, as a decisive blow against regional autonomy. Connections can readily be made with 1507 and James IV's successful petition to have Saddell Abbey in Kintyre – a Cistercian house also under MacDonald lay patronage – annexed to the bishopric of Argyll. The bishop was granted the abbey lands as the free barony of Saddell, along with the right to build castles for its defence. Saddell Castle was completed by 1512 as an apparent symbol of royal authority and regime

change in the west, although the king's attempt that same year to move the cathedral of Argyll from Lismore to Saddell proved unsuccessful.²²

The location of his see, in fact, had become a problem for the bishop of the Argyll no less than the bishop of the Isles during the fifteenth century, but it is with this point that we can begin to build an alternative and arguably deeper reading of the evidence, for in Argyll the bishop was far less obviously encumbered by an ecclesiastical 'other'. It is true that the medieval cathedral on the isle of Lismore was not far removed from the Valliscaulian priory of Ardchattan, founded in 1230 or 1231 by the MacDougall branch of the kindred of Somerled. The MacDougalls were the dominant clan in Argyll until the fourteenth century, and remained highly important at the grass roots thereafter. They maintained a very close relationship with Ardchattan throughout its lifetime and beyond: as lay patrons; providers of clergy, including priors; occupants and ultimately owners of lands belonging to its temporality, and users of the priory for the burial of their chiefs and others of prominence within the kindred.²³ Nevertheless, it would be wrong-headed to present the relationship between prior and bishop as one of natural tension and rivalry, when monastery and see were conceivably both MacDougall foundations, with the building of the first cathedral of Lismore and the priory of Ardchattan as key elements in an ambitious programme of ecclesiastical renewal sponsored by the kindred in the mid-thirteenth century.²⁴ Furthermore, it was Lismore which vaunted the more impressive ecclesiastical pedigree, reaching back to the era of the Columban church itself. As Moluag's successor, the bishop ought to have been the beneficiary of his saintly cult and relics which remained vital in the later middle ages. Indeed, it has been recently suggested that in this era the MacDhuinnshlèibhe or Livingstone lineage, which acted as hereditary custodians of the *bachall mòr* or pastoral staff of St Moluag, may have employed it in the collection of the tithes and dues belonging to the

bishop.²⁵ The decanting of the bishop's residence and centre of operations southwards from Lismore to Dunoon and Dumbarton during the episcopate of George Lauder (1427-73/5), was no more motivated by a need to escape from the shadow of Ardchattan, than it was proof that 'he and his clerks had been unable securely to establish themselves within the local ecclesiastical structure'.²⁶ Rather, it was a logical ecclesiastical response to the shift in the political and economic centre of gravity of Argyll towards the Firth of Clyde, as Campbell lordship superseded that of the MacDougalls; and part of the campaign waged by Lauder throughout his episcopate to assert the status and rights of the bishop in the face of entrenched regional secular power.²⁷

This last, in fact, was the most important form of earthly authority governing the history of the church in Argyll and the Isles across the later middle ages and the Reformation, even as it dominated the exercise of sovereignty and jurisdiction in the political realm. It is represented in the available evidence to a far more significant and consistent degree than those other lines of interpretation given space thus far, namely the bishops of these dioceses as agents or ciphers for Stewart sovereignty; and the related idea of a secular church orientated towards crown and centre existing in opposition to 'nativist' monastic institutions. No less than the crown, the church – whether regular or secular, Catholic or Protestant – had to negotiate with, and ultimately accept the primacy of, lay lordship as embodied in the territorial kindred or clan, at the regional but perhaps even more especially at the local level. To what extent this can be adduced as an aspect of Celtic Christianity is beyond the scope of either this paper or the expertise of its author to answer, but the theme is ubiquitous, and demands exploration in some depth.

A beneficent context was doubtless provided by the growing secularisation of the church between the early fifteenth century and the Reformation, as evinced by the increase in

commendatorships and the ‘scramble for benefices’.²⁸ Parameters were also set by other sources of authority. Ecclesiastics or laymen who sought to exercise power over the church had to take account of papal jurisdiction, particularly once the introduction of the system of papal provisions from the 1380s onwards established the papacy as a higher court of appeal.²⁹ Crown influence was also a factor across the period, but intermittently, within limits, and usually as a consequence of the particular political agenda of a particular monarch. The election of *Martinus* or Gille-Màrtainn as bishop of Argyll *circa* 1342, at the expense of David II’s preferred candidate, serves as an apt illustration.³⁰ Gille-Màrtainn had the backing of Edward III, and the dispute reflected the continuing struggle for the Scottish throne between Bruce and Balliol parties in the aftermath of David II’s return from exile in 1341. More importantly, Gille-Màrtainn may have enjoyed MacDougall support, and belonged to that kindred. The MacDougalls had been exiled and forfeited after 1308 for their adherence to the Balliol cause, but it would take more than this to loosen their grip on Argyll. As we shall see, James I’s return from exile in England in 1424 triggered a parallel course of events centred upon the figure of George Lauder, bishop of Argyll, while James II also sought to use Lauder to bolster royal authority on the Firth of Clyde, with economic motives probably to the fore.³¹

More impressive and sustained was the programme of ecclesiastical reform pursued by James IV as a means of furthering his integrationist political agenda in the west. This involved the strategic enhancement of the resource base of the bishops of Argyll and of the Isles, respectively David Hamilton and Eoin Campbell, with at least the former of whom the king had a demonstrably close working relationship.³² A century later, in the wake of regal union and his successful restoration of a reformed diocesan episcopacy, it has been suggested that James VI and I may have sought to utilise two non-native bishops of Argyll and the Isles, Andrew Boyd

and Andrew Knox, in similar fashion, ‘as trusted servants whose primary allegiance lay with king and kirk’.³³ In Knox’s case this involved a truly spectacular augmentation of episcopal resources, including not only the return of church lands lost to private hands since the Reformation, but also the permanent annexation to the see of both Iona and Ardchattan. It also entailed simultaneous advancement to the bishopric of Raphoe in Ulster, following in the footsteps of another Scot, the much more explicitly colonialist – and less successful – George Montgomery.³⁴ One of Knox’s successors as bishop of the Isles, John Leslie, took the same career path.

However, a case has recently been made for seeing Knox as no mere front for royal authority, but as a skilled and hard-headed politician who understood that diocesan renewal in the Isles could only succeed at the expense of Campbell power in the region, and who sought to persuade his king to act accordingly. By 1635 the game was lost, and the bishop of the Isles was a Campbell and Campbell client, guaranteeing this kindred preferred access to diocesan resources.³⁵ In Argyll, Andrew Boyd may have been no less dependent upon Campbell support, whatever his initial intentions.³⁶ Other and earlier pieces of evidence conform to a reading of the Campbells as regional dynasts first and foremost, who can never be assumed to have been acting merely in the interests of the crown. It was the earl of Argyll rather than James IV who took the initiative in petitioning the papacy ‘for the erection of the abbacy of Colmkill in the bischoppis sete of the Illis’ in 1498, and this at an early stage in a phase, lasting until around 1530, when Campbell political ambitions to supplant the MacDonalds as lords of the Isles resonated in the ecclesiastical sphere, with Campbells as bishops or bishops elect of the Isles, and a likely succession of Campbell priors of Iona.³⁷ A papal supplication of 1461 sought to take from Bishop Lauder the parish church of Dunoon, by then the location of the episcopal headquarters

of Argyll. Although the petition ran in the name of James III, the moving spirit was probably the first earl of Argyll, who had already taken advantage of the sudden death of James II in 1460 and the ensuing royal minority to assert himself vis-à-vis the bishop on the Firth of Clyde.³⁸

In a papal petition of his own in 1462, Lauder gave the reason for his move to Dunoon as ‘strife raging between temporal lords and other magnates of his diocese, and the tumults of wars and dangers arising therefrom’. The allusion may be to the tensions arising from the clashing regional ambitions of the Campbells and Dòmhnall Ballach, contemporary war-leader and leading light of Clann Dòmhnail. These came to a head during the minority of James III, in tandem with crises at the head of both the MacDougall lineage and that of the Stewart lords of Lorn in north Argyll.³⁹ In a petition of 1411, a predecessor of Lauder’s had complained against the ‘nobles and powerful men’ who had unlawfully appropriated ‘the rents and profits pertaining to the episcopal table of Argyll’.⁴⁰ With these petitions we can compare a crown precept of 1506 to ten of the leading men of the Isles, ‘chargeand thaim that thai have na intrometting nor disponying with ony kirkis, fermez, malis nor proffittis pertenand to Johne, bischop of Ylis and commenditare of Ycolmekill’.⁴¹ The stark reality was that in Argyll and the Isles, the bishops’ authority and wealth was fundamentally restricted not so much by their counterparts in monastic institutions, as by secular lords who provided only limited endowments, who appropriated church lands, rents and revenues including tithes, and who dominated ecclesiastical patronage. In the face of this constant pressure, the crown provided only intermittent support and relief. The scale of the lay stranglehold over Argyll is particularly breathtaking, extending to all six canonries and prebends, the four cathedral dignitaries (treasurer, chancellor, dean, precentor) and 24 of the 43 parish churches within the diocese (there were 48 in total) for which evidence exists.⁴²

The principle can be extended in two ways. Firstly, and in further demonstration of the danger of creating a false dichotomy between a ‘nativist’ regular and ‘non-nativist’ secular church, ‘the personnel of any given ecclesiastical institution would tend to be drawn from the ranks of the secular kindred which enjoyed political ascendancy within that area at that time’.⁴³ This applied with equal force to both regular and secular church, and across the ecclesiastical hierarchy. High office at the monastery and nunnery of Iona was dominated successively by MacKinnons, Campbells and MacLeans; among the late medieval bishops of Argyll and of the Isles were high-ranking MacDougalls, MacDonalds and Campbells. It was inevitable that such a scenario should give rise to patterns of hereditary succession, and the formation of castes or lineages which looked to the church as their vocation. Secondly, particular churches came to be indelibly associated with the predominant local kindred, ‘whether as founders, patrons or users of the burial ground’.⁴⁴ Examples are legion: the MacDougalls at Ardchattan; the MacDuffies at Oronsay; the MacLeods of Dunvegan at Rodel; the MacNeills of Gigha at Keills (Knapdale); the MacMillans of Knapdale at Kilmory; *Clan Murachie* at Knapdale and Kilberry; the MacEacherns of Kilellan in Kintyre and Kilkerran; the MacGregors at Clachan an Dìseirt (Dalmally).⁴⁵

Perhaps the best demonstration of all of how much kindred mattered is provided by Iona. Here, the most powerful local clans between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries were the MacKinnons, succeeded by the MacLeans. The entrenched position each enjoyed at Iona presented a formidable challenge to those lords who enjoyed regional dominance within the same era, the MacDonalds and Campbells respectively. For all their might, which included the lay patronage of the monastery, the MacDonald lords of the Isles struggled to free Iona’s buildings, offices and lands from the grip of the MacKinnon lineage descended from the

notorious Finguine, abbot from c. 1357 to c. 1408. The MacDonald lord was even brought to the point of threatening to remove elsewhere, ‘the relics and bones of his progenitors who are buried therein, and the precious things which have been given thereto’; and ultimately joined forces with the king of Scots to petition the papacy for redress. The fifteenth century nonetheless ended as it began, with a MacKinnon abbot of Iona, albeit of different ancestry from his predecessor; while the contemporary prior was also a MacKinnon.⁴⁶ Following an interlude of Campbell ascendancy down to c. 1530, the MacLeans then came to the fore as the natural heirs to the MacKinnons. Overcoming initial opposition from Campbells and crown, MacLeans largely monopolised the office of bishop of the Isles until c. 1565.⁴⁷ Thereafter they continued ‘to look upon the possessions and revenues of the bishopric of the Isles and of the abbey of Iona as their personal property’,⁴⁸ even succeeding in having their possession of church lands belonging to Iona confirmed to their chief by the crown in 1587.⁴⁹ By the later sixteenth century the MacLeans may have been firmly established as Campbell clients, yet this did not preclude fierce competition between the kindreds over the right to the resources of Iona. ‘Successive MacLean chiefs used the rents of the abbey to provide security for loans’,⁵⁰ while Eoin Campbell, who belonged to the Campbells of Cawdor and who succeeded Eoin or John Carswell as bishop of the Isles in 1572, was so hampered by the MacLeans and their adherents in his attempts to uplift his revenues and travel freely in his diocese, that he was even compelled to ‘leave the country’ for a time.⁵¹

The careers of arguably the four outstanding churchmen to hold office in Argyll and the Isles between 1400 and the early seventeenth century were united by their efforts to achieve a better working relationship with local secular authority. Dominicus or Maol-Dòmhnach mac Ghille-Coinnich, abbot of Iona from 1421 to c. 1465, succeeded in reversing the decline in the

monastery's physical and spiritual well-being brought about by abbot Finguine and his progeny. To do so, he enlisted the support of Stewart kings and MacDonald lords of the Isles in persuading the papacy to ban members of the secular nobility from entry to the community 'by reason of succession than from devotion', and 'without the unanimous consent of the abbot and convent'. As Bannerman concludes, 'that such a ban should ever have been entertained, let alone enforced, in a highly aristocratic society is remarkable'.⁵² A close contemporary was George Lauder, bishop of Argyll from 1427 until 1473/5, who took to an altogether different level the efforts of some of his predecessors to assert episcopal rights in the face of a lay stranglehold over patronage and resources.⁵³ Lauder was a non-Gael and crown appointee, with no existing personal ties in the west. His initial advancement of his own candidates – sometimes of non-Gaelic origin like himself – to parochial benefices in Argyll, against the interests of Campbells and then of MacDonalds, can readily be interpreted as the ecclesiastical corollary of James I's strategy to curb the regional power of these kindreds. The king's assassination in 1437 brought a predictable local backlash against the bishop and his men.

Yet the remainder of his long episcopate proved Lauder to be no mere crown dependant. He displayed courage and tenacity in his attempts to uphold and augment what was due to the bishop in terms of jurisdiction, patronage and wealth, sometimes through the reactivation of claims long since set aside or fallen into desuetude. There were inevitable clashes with burgeoning Campbell lordship, notably over the risk of diversion of diocesan resources towards Kilmun, the collegiate church founded by Donnchadh Campbell lord of Loch Awe in 1442. In a series of papal supplications across several decades the Campbells played the Gaelic card against the bishop's men, charging them with unsuitability to serve the cure on the grounds of lack of the vernacular language. These supplications have been linked in turn to both the attack on Lauder

by some of his own cathedral clergy on Lismore in 1452, and to his relocation to Dunoon, to paint a portrait of a bishop who was out of his depth and unable to cope in an alien environment.⁵⁴ More recently, Iain MacDonald has argued convincingly that underlying the veneer of ethnicity and language was an ongoing power struggle between Lauder and secular magnates, in the course of which the bishop achieved viable accommodations with both the MacDonald lords of the Isles – who possessed significant lay patronage in Argyll – and the Campbells. In Lauder’s time at least his ability to exercise effective episcopal governance throughout his diocese – both in the parishes and at his cathedral – was not compromised by the removal to Dunoon, although the loss of the association with Lismore and Moluag may have held damaging longer term consequences for the bishops of Argyll.⁵⁵

Eoin Carswell moved from the ambit of the MacDonalds to that of the Campbells, and from the treasurership of the pre-Reformation diocese of Argyll to becoming its post-Reformation superintendent, as well as Protestant bishop of the Isles from 1567 (*de facto* from 1565) until his death in 1572. Indeed, for a time he possessed both bishoprics and their related commendatorships of Saddell and Iona.⁵⁶ His ecclesiastical jurisdiction therefore encompassed both Argyll and the Isles, but his horizons did not end there. In 1567 he published *Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh*, his version of John Knox’s translation of the Protestant liturgy *The Book of Common Order*, and the first book to issue from the printing press in Gaelic in either Scotland or Ireland. In his two introductory epistles, Carswell revealed that his vision was nothing less than the reformation of all Gaelic Scotland and Gaelic Ireland. Fulfilment of the vision would entail much more than the translation of the Word. Protestantism would need to adapt so as to ensure its compatibility with the most powerful institutions operative within Gaelic society. In turn, these institutions – secular chiefship or lordship, and the native learned classes – would need to

reform themselves if they were to act as the instruments of Reformation, and retain their social primacy within a Protestant world.

Henceforth the Gaelic lord would need to be guided by scripture rather than by hereditary practice, and look to the Old Testament rather than his own lineal ancestors for appropriate role models. Military prowess should be channelled into iconoclasm, and against enemies of the true religion; protection and welfare should be offered to those who professed the faith and suffered for it. Commitment to the godly life in thought and deed would alone confer legitimacy and immortality upon the godly prince. The learned classes should continue to support the lord in his earthly mission, but patronage should now be founded upon a shared belief in the truth freely available in the bible, not upon commerce and lies; and their gifts should be directed towards the promulgation of the word of God rather than the vanities of worldly literature:

And to whomever God has given the gift of being learned in the correct writing and diction and speaking of Gaelic, so much the greater is his obligation to spend this gift that he has received from God in cherishing and exalting the truth which is in God's gospel, rather than to spend it in cherishing falsehood or injustice or error against that gospel.⁵⁷

The archetypes of the godly master and his godly servitor were already present in the person of Gilleasbuig (Archibald) Campbell fifth earl of Argyll, a key agent in implementing the Scottish Reformation, and Eoin Carswell himself. James Kirk has pointed out the several and significant ways in which Carswell adjusted or departed from accepted Protestant doctrine in order to minimise the active role of the congregation and church elders vis à vis the secular lord – the 'civil magistrate' – and minister.⁵⁸ Most dramatically, where Knox's base text stated, 'I acknowlage to belonge to this church a politicall Magistrate', Carswell wrote:

The church ought to have a lord or secular noble over it, called in Latin, *magistratus civilis*, and that magistrate ought to deal fairly with all men, in such matters as giving honour and protection

to the good and in punishing the bad; and the church ought to render obedience and honour to those nobles in anything that does not conflict with the will or command of God.⁵⁹

In the light of the central argument of this paper, Carswell's stance makes perfect sense. If Gaelic Scotland ever spawned a Celtic Christianity on either side of the Reformation, it was the Gaelic Protestantism of *Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh*. But in its pan-Gaelic aspect at least, the vision of Eoin Carswell failed to translate from the page.⁶⁰

Andrew Knox, bishop of the Isles from 1605 until 1618, was no less a visionary than Carswell, if one accepts the view that the Statutes of Iona of 1609 represented a coherent and considered programme of social, economic and spiritual reform devised by Knox in co-operation with the Hebridean elite, rather than a colonial edict which he foisted upon them.⁶¹ His non-Gaelic background seems to have been no impediment to his ability to minister effectively and sympathetically to Gaelic-speaking peoples, both in the Isles and Donegal. Like Carswell, Knox saw local secular authority as the indispensable guarantor of Reformation, and the Statutes were designed to consolidate chiefly status in a time of transition. Simultaneously, and again with echoes of Carswell, they sought to shift the basis of the elite's legitimacy away from 'the traditional chiefly functions to its status as government agents and overseers of a new legal and economic order'.⁶² At root, Knox wanted to ensure that wealth and resources were both maximised and more evenly and rationally distributed, to the benefit of all parties including crown and kirk. In his determination to secure the bishop's rightful share, and to make the elite address its responsibilities to him by building churches and paying ministerial stipends, Knox bears comparison with George Lauder. As with Lauder, and in sharpest contrast to Carswell, Knox's greatest challenge was posed by Campbell power, and despite remarkable short-term successes in his mission to create a Campbell-free future for the Isles in order to improve their secular and ecclesiastical governance, the task ultimately proved to be beyond him.

Before the era of Reformation and regal union, Scottish literati were beholden to a version of Scottish secular origins which emphasised separateness from England, and freedom from English pretensions to sovereignty over Scotland and Greater Britain. They did so by giving centrality to the Dalridian and thus Gaelic identity of the Scots, as evidenced by origin legend and monarchy: the ancient and unbroken succession of the native dynastic line. Necessarily, however, the history of the church in Scotland ran somewhat differently. There was the same need to demonstrate antiquity and autonomy, in terms of conversion certainly no later and ideally earlier than England, and subsequent successful resistance to the claims of York and Canterbury. Equally, ecclesiastical freedom meant that Scotland was ‘from the outset catholic and free’,⁶³ acknowledging none but papal authority – at least until the fifteenth century and the formulation of the doctrine of imperial monarchy, which held that the king of Scots exercised absolute jurisdiction within the bounds of his own realm. The official narrative sought to demonstrate that Scottish Christianity had always enjoyed a special relationship with Rome, highlighting Andrew as the brother of Peter, and the establishment of orthodox episcopal Roman Christianity through the mission of Bishop Palladius, emissary of Pope Celestine I, in 430 AD, long before St Augustine set foot in England.⁶⁴

Loyalty to Rome meant strict doctrinal adherence to Roman Christianity. Hence the downplaying in pre-Reformation Scottish historiography of anything that smacked of Celtic Christianity as having flourished in Scotland, lest this give leverage to those who would seek to undermine Scottish sovereignty via accusations of religious particularism and peculiarity. If the writers of classical antiquity associated pagan characteristics with the ancient Scots, these were quietly suppressed. The stereotype developed of their contemporary representatives, late medieval Gaelic Scots, portrayed their primitivism and moral failings in purely secular terms, not

extending to charges of heathenism or heresy.⁶⁵ Problematic subject matter such as the Synod of Whitby and the Céli Dé or Culdees was largely sidelined, and while Columba might be accorded distinctiveness as an Irishman and monk, his profile was nonetheless limited. Indeed, it could be argued that in pre-Reformation and non-Gaelic contexts, the ideological significance of Iona and the west Highlands lay, not in any putative status they possessed as the cradle of Scottish Christianity, but as the cradle of the secular nation, especially Iona's role as the burial place of the kings of Scots of old. Such is the emphasis in the reference by Hector Boece to Bishop William Elphinstone's researches in the west while working on his great patriotic liturgical project, the *Aberdeen Breviary*, published in 1510: 'the history of the antiquities of the Scottish nation, especially in the Hebrides, where also are preserved the sepulchres of our ancient kings and the ancient monuments of our race, he examined with great care and labour'.⁶⁶ A similar chord is struck by James V, writing to the pope in 1529: 'The Isles formed the greatest part of the Scottish kingdom at the first: they received the faith with alacrity, and have maintained it consistently'.⁶⁷

Twenty years later Dòmhnall Monro toured the Isles as the newly appointed archdeacon of the diocese. Yet his account of Iona in his famous *Description* is overwhelmingly concerned with its role as a mausoleum for lay nobility and royalty: 'the sepulture of the best men of all the Iles, and als of our Kingis ... because it wes the maist honourable and ancient place that wes in Scotland on those dayis, as we reid'.⁶⁸ Within the sanctuary of Reilig Odhráin, Monro describes three tombs, those of the kings of Ireland and of Norway flanking *Tumulus Regum Scotiae*, 'that is to say, the Tomb or the Grave of the Scottis Kings. Within this Tomb, according to our Scottis and Irish Chronicles, their lyis 48 crownit Scottis Kings, throw the quhilk this Ile has been richly dotit be the Scottis Kings, as we have hard'.⁶⁹ Monro's figure is consistent with the numbers of

kings of Scots enumerated in the chronicles from the dynasty's supposed arrival from Ireland in the sixth century down to 1093, when Dunfermline began to be used for royal interment.

However, Steve Boardman has recently suggested that Monro may be bearing witness to nothing more than 'an interesting piece of retrospective monumental commemoration ... [i]f Monro did actually see the three 'royal' tombs with their attached inscriptions, then the community at Iona had, at an unknown point prior to 1549, and in the obvious absence of extant individual graves for any of the kings supposedly buried there, erected these communal memorials'.⁷⁰

1549 also saw the publication of a work which emphatically celebrated Iona not as 'vetus Scotorum Regum sepulchrum', but for its sanctity and the legacy of Columba.⁷¹ This was the book of Latin verse published at Rome by Ruairi MacLean, bishop of the Isles, who reworked the first two books of the *Life* of Columba by Adomnán into a celebration of the saint 'in no fewer than sixteen different metrical forms, most of them following the model of the classical poet Horace'.⁷² As Richard Sharpe has pointed out, in scale and scholarly ambition MacLean's initiative can hardly be compared with the great Columban project recently sponsored in Ireland by Maghnas Ó Domhnaill, lord of Tír Chonaill. Rather, it was personal and political in intent, demonstrating the spiritual importance of his see, and his own fitness for office in the face of opposition which seems to have been strong enough to force him into exile.

In his introductory poem to the reader, MacLean alluded to Protestantism, now an active force in Scotland:

We compose these verses such as they are for Columba as our patronal duty; you sing better if you are able, but beware, do not let the terrible poisons of fashionable Minerva shift you from your ancient piety.⁷³

Perhaps the earliest Gaelic Scot with Protestant sympathies of whose views we have record was John Elder, a churchman and native of Caithness. On the basis of certain aspects of his letter to Henry VIII, written sometime after the death of James V in late 1542, Elder has sometimes been cast as an eccentric.⁷⁴ Yet his known authored corpus bears out his own comments on the quality of his education, received, like that of Ruairi MacLean, both in the Isles and at university; and it is conceivable that the intelligence he provided opened the door for the intensive negotiations which took place between the English crown and the Islesmen in the mid-1540s. Certainly, Henry thought enough of him to award him a pension, while Elder accompanied the English army which invaded Scotland in September 1545.⁷⁵ Along with his letter to Henry he sent a 'plotte' or map of Scotland, now sadly lost, and accompanying key or guidebook, as a means of assisting English military conquest. The letter itself argued for Anglo-Scottish dynastic union with a Protestant foundation. Elder thus followed in the pioneering footsteps of John Mair or Major, whose *Historia Maioris Britannie tam Angliae quam Scotiae*, published in 1521, had broken with the late medieval Scottish historiographical orthodoxy in calling for just such a union, although on different grounds which did not include religion.⁷⁶

According to Elder's letter, the success of Henrician policy in Ireland meant that he was assured of widespread support among the 'Irish' or Gaelic lords of Scotland: 'they heire and vnderstand, how mercifully, how graciously, and how liberally your noble Grace hath vsed, orderide, and dealide with the lordes of Irland, ther nyghboures ...'.⁷⁷ Elder's political and religious leanings saw him reject the version of independent Scottish origins via Scota daughter of Pharaoh in favour of the competing Brutus myth, used to justify English suzerainty over Scotland and Greater Britain. This left him with the problem of explaining how and when the Gaels came to Scotland, the very constituency of whose loyalty and utility he was seeking to

convince Henry. His response was to Gaelicise Scotland's aboriginal inhabitants, the Picts; and to give a Gaelic gloss to the impact of Albanactus upon Scotland, leading in turn to a novel presentation of Columba:

The Yrische lordes of Scotland [are] commonly callit the Reddshanckes, and by historiographouris, Pictis ... Scotland, a part of your Highnes empyre of England, bifor the incummyng of Albanactus, Brutus secound sonne, was inhabitede, as we reide in auncient Yrische storeis, with gyauntes and wylde people, without ordour, civilitie, or maners, and spake none other language but Yrische, and was then called Eyrin veagg, that is to say little Irland; and the people were callit Eyringhe, that is to say, Irlande men. But after the incummyng of Albanactus, he reducyng theame to ordour and civilitie, they changed the forsaid name, Eyrin veagg, and callid it Albon, and their owne names also, and callid theame Albonyghe; which too Yrische words, Albon, that is to say, Scotland, and Albonyghe, that is to say, Scottische men, be drywyne from Albanactus, our first governour and kynge ... Sanctus Columba, a Pict and a busshep, who in preching of Goddis worde syncerly in Eyrische, in followinge of the holy apostlis in godlie imitacion, doctryne, and pouertie, excellid then our proude Romische Cardinall, and his bussheps now adaies in Scotlande ...⁷⁸

Bishop he may be, yet Columba here exemplifies an older and wiser Christian faith than that currently practised by the Roman Catholic church, upon whose corrupted clergy, from the pope downwards, Elder heaps unbridled scorn.

John Elder is a harbinger of the ideological pull which 'Celtic Christianity' came to exert in post-Reformation Scotland, where the dual orthodoxy of secular opposition to England and doctrinal adherence to Rome no longer dominated. Its value was further enhanced because, while Elder's vision of dynastic union did indeed come to pass, religion did not follow suit. Whether presbyterian or episcopalian, Scottish Protestantism turned to the distinctiveness provided by the

Gaelic religious past to justify itself, and to distance itself both from Rome and from Anglicanism, and Stewart attempts to impose religious conformity upon the three kingdoms. The Synod of Whitby and the Céli Dé or Culdees, once suppressed, now took centre stage, with the latter of particular importance to Presbyterian propagandists as proving that the Scottish church had in its earliest and purest phase operated along non-episcopal, non-hierarchical lines.⁷⁹

Adding to the plurality and complexity of perception in the post Reformation world, for the first time a rhetoric of paganism began to be applied by government and church authorities to Gaelic Scots, notably in the Isles, as a means of justifying assimilationist or neo-colonial action against ‘these vnhalloved people with that vnchristiane language’.⁸⁰ By the same token, Catholic apologists such as Bishop John Leslie held up Gaelic Scots as staunch defenders of the faith: ‘in the catholic religion far less thay defecte, and far fewar than vtheris of the mair politick sorte amang vs’.⁸¹ The Isles came to be regarded as a potential springboard for a Scottish counter-Reformation. Eoin Muideartach, chief of the Clanranald branch of Clann Dòmhnail, was converted to Catholicism in 1624 by the Irish Franciscan missionaries then active in the Isles. In his letter of 1626 to Urban VIII, he requests external military support for those such as himself who would wage holy war in Scotland. In effect, Eoin Muideartach provides a Catholic mirror-image of John Elder’s appeal to Henry VIII, and his arguments combine the tropes of the pre-Reformation era – rejection of English overlordship, and historic Scottish freedom founded on martial prowess –with a strong pan-Gaelicism:

All the Gaelic-speaking Scots and the greater part of the Irish chieftains joined to us by ties of friendship, from whom we once received the faith (in which we still glory) from whose stock we first sprang, will begin war each in his own district to the glory of God ... we who after the example of our forefathers have always been expert in arms when necessity arose, so that freed

from the power of slavery and our enemies we may be faithful to one God in holiness and in justice constantly, for ever.⁸²

The Gaelic Catholicism of Eoin Muideartach, like the Gaelic Protestantism of Eoin Carswell, remained aspirational, and ultimately religion offers little substantive succour to the case for a Greater Gaeldom spanning the North Channel in the eras before and immediately after the Reformation. Bonds of language and culture meant that a devotional art form such as Gaelic religious panegyric verse could travel freely between Scotland and Ireland. Yet on the evidence of Argyll and the Isles, the same most certainly did not apply to the Gaelic clergy of each country, whose service to the church divided along national lines.⁸³ The education of the clergy of Argyll and the Isles clergy might begin locally, but end at university in Scotland or elsewhere, alongside their Scottish or continental peers. Evidence for what they in their turn preached and taught is sparse, but it is hard to point to explicit instances of departure from doctrinal norms other than that of Carswell, or to think of good reasons for assuming that these norms would not apply. The need for competence in Gaelic was an obvious factor in clerical preferment, but when disputes arose, they tended to be driven by ecclesiastical politics rather than ethnicity. A likely lack of Gaelic speech or fluency did not prevent George Lauder and Andrew Knox from functioning well in this environment. The topography of Argyll and the Isles, coupled to large parish size, presented a logistical challenge to which the active role of subsidiary chapels may have provided at least a partial answer.⁸⁴

Across this region and timeframe, the church was engaged in a struggle for resources – not because these did not exist, but because of difficulties in securing and maintaining its due share, even when this should have been guaranteed by law or custom. These difficulties stemmed from the kin dynamic at the heart of its host society, and resultant characteristics such as inter-

clan competitiveness and conflict at the local and regional levels, the viewing of land rights and tenure through the prism of kinship, and the complex of practice linked to the giving of hospitality. This last meant the onus to provide support or sustenance in kind when this was sought or demanded, for example through the billeting of the lord's personal retinue and military retainers. Whether experienced through the exercise of lay patronage, the influence of the kindred upon the identity of clerical personnel, or the appropriation or annexation of ecclesiastical lands, endowments and revenues, the implications for the church were profound and inescapable.

According to Dòmhnall Monro in 1549, the islands of Raasay and Rona belonged to the bishop of the Isles in heritage, but to MacGille-Chaluim, chief of a branch of the MacLeods of Lewis, by force or the sword.⁸⁵ Some fifty years earlier, in the wake of the forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles, a poet had eulogised the MacDonalds as 'a clan that made no war on church', an interesting choice of words.⁸⁶ In common with all parties seeking to exercise authority over Argyll and the Isles, whether popes, monarchs or regional dynasts, the church had to wrestle with the fact that within this society, kindred was king.⁸⁷

¹; John MacInnes, 'The Panegyric Code in Gaelic Poetry and its Historical Background', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, 50 (1976-78), 435-97, at 457. See in general Donald E Meek, *The Quest for Celtic Christianity* (Edinburgh 2000).

² Sarah Elizabeth Thomas, 'From Rome to "the ends of the habitable world": the provision of clergy and church buildings in the Hebrides, 1266 to 1472' (P.h.D dissertation, University of Glasgow, 2008); Iain Gerard MacDonald, 'The Secular Church and the Clergy in the diocese of Argyll from circa 1189 to 1560' (P.h.D dissertation, University of Glasgow, 2008); Janet C. MacDonald, 'Iona's local associations in Argyll and the Isles, c. 1203-c. 1575' (P.h.D dissertation, University of Glasgow, 2010). See also Martin MacGregor, 'Church and culture in the late medieval Highlands' in James Kirk (ed.), *The Church in the Highlands* (Edinburgh, 1998), pp. 1-36; A. D. M. Barrell, 'The church in the West Highlands in the late middle ages', *IR*, 54 (2003), 23-46.

³ Donald E. Meek, 'The Reformation and Gaelic culture: perspectives on patronage, language and literature in John Carswell's translation of "The Book of Common Order"' in Kirk, *The Church in the Highlands*, pp. 37-62; Jane E. A. Dawson, ' "The Face of Ane Perfyrt Reformed Kyrk": St Andrews and the Early Scottish Reformation' in James Kirk (ed.), *Humanism and Reform: the Church in Europe, England and Scotland, 1400-1643*, Studies in Church History, Subsidia 8 (Oxford, 1991), pp. 413-35, at 415-16, and n. 10; Jane E. A. Dawson, 'Clan, kin and Kirk: the Campbells and the Scottish Reformation' in N. Scott Amos, Andrew Pettegree and Henk van Nierop (eds), *The Education of a Christian Society: Humanism and the Reformation in Britain and the Netherlands* (Aldershot, 1999), pp. 211-42; Jane Dawson, *The Politics of Religion in the Age of Mary Queen of Scots: The Earl of Argyll and the Struggle for Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge, 2002).

⁴ James Kirk, 'The Kirk and the Highlands at the Reformation', *Northern Scotland*, 7 (1986), 1-22; James Kirk, 'The Jacobean Church in the Highlands, 1567-1625' in The Inverness Field Club (ed.), *The Seventeenth Century in the Highlands* (Inverness, 1986), pp. 24-51, at 24-5; Jane E. A. Dawson, 'Calvinism and the Gaidhealtachd in Scotland' in Andrew Pettegree, Alastair Duke and Gillian Lewis (eds), *Calvinism in Europe, 1540-1620* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 231-53. For sceptical comment on the validity of this revisionism with particular regard to Argyll and the Isles, see Allan. I. Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart, 1603-1788* (East Linton, 1996), p. 77.

⁵ Ronald Black, 'The Gaelic manuscripts of Scotland' in William Gillies (ed.), *Gaelic and Scotland: Alba agus A' Ghàidhlig* (Edinburgh, 1989), pp. 146-74.

⁶ Steven G. Ellis, 'The Collapse of the Gaelic World, 1450-1650', *Irish Historical Studies*, 31 (1999), 449-69; Jane H. Ohlmeyer, *Civil war and Restoration in the Three Stuart Kingdoms: The career of Randal Macdonnell, Marquis of Antrim, 1609-1683* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 7.

⁷ Páa Dewar, 'Kingship Imagery in Classical Gaelic panegyric for Scottish chiefs' in Wilson McLeod, James E. Fraser and Anja Gunderloch (eds), *Cànan & Cultar / Language and Culture: Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 3* (Edinburgh, 2006), pp. 39-55; Martin MacGregor, 'Warfare in Gaelic Scotland in the Later Middle Ages' in Edward. M. Spiers, Jeremy A. Crang and Matthew J. Strickland (eds), *A Military History of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2012), pp. 209-31; Martin MacGregor, 'Civilising Gaelic Scotland: The Scottish Isles and the Stewart Empire' in Micheál Ó Siochrú and Éamonn Ó Ciardha (eds), *The Plantation of Ulster: Ideology and practice* (Manchester, 2012), pp. 33-54.

⁸ On Iona in the later middle ages see K. A. Steer and J. W. M. Bannerman, *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands* (Edinburgh, 1977); Mark Dilworth, 'Iona Abbey and the Reformation', *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, 12 (1971), 77-109; Alan Macquarrie, 'Kings, lords and abbots: power and patronage at the medieval monastery of Iona', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, 54 (1984-86), 455-75.

⁹ T. C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People 1560-1830* (London, 1969), p. 25.

¹⁰ For recent discussions of the Statutes of Iona, see Julian Goodare, 'The Statutes of Iona in Context', *Scottish Historical Review*, 72 (1998), 31-57; Martin MacGregor, 'The Statutes of Iona: text and context', *IR*, 57 (2006), 111-81; Alison Cathcart, 'The Statutes of Iona: The Archipelagic Context', *Journal of British Studies*, 49 (2010), 4-27.

¹¹ MacGregor, 'Civilising Gaelic Scotland'.

¹² MacDonald, 'Secular Church', pp. 13-16.

¹³ Thomas, 'From Rome to "the ends of the habitable world"', pp. 1-5.

¹⁴ Tim Thornton, 'Scotland and the Isle of Man, c. 1400-1625: Noble Power and Royal Presumption in the Northern Irish Sea Province', *Scottish Historical Review*, 77 (1998), 1-30.

¹⁵ Steer and Bannerman, *Monumental Sculpture*, pp. 208 and n. 9. On Snizort, see Sarah Thomas, 'Rival bishops, rival cathedrals: the election of Cormac, archdeacon of Sodor, as bishop in 1331', *IR*, 60 (2009), 145-63.

¹⁶ Barrell, 'The church in the West Highlands', 26-7; MacDonald, 'Secular Church', p. 62.

¹⁷ Steer and Bannerman, *Monumental Sculpture*, pp. 202, 206-7; John Bannerman, 'The Lordship of the Isles' in J. M. Brown (ed.), *Scottish Society in the Fifteenth Century*, (London, 1977), pp. 209-40, at 215-16.

¹⁸ MacGregor, 'Church and culture', p. 20; Barrell, 'The church in the West Highlands', 24-31; MacGregor, 'The Statutes of Iona', 152-3. The present article revises in part my earlier views on the relationship between regular and secular church in Argyll and the Isles.

¹⁹ *Argyll Transcripts* made by 10th Duke of Argyll, held in Scottish History Subject Area, University of Glasgow, 1 April.

²⁰ Steer and Bannerman, *Monumental Sculpture*, pp. 111-12.

²¹ J. R. N. MacPhail (ed.), *Highland Papers* (4 vols, Edinburgh, 1914-34) 4, pp. 185-7.

²² Steer and Bannerman, *Monumental Sculpture*, p. 45; MacDonald, 'Secular Church', p. 70.

²³ Steer and Bannerman, *Monumental Sculpture*, pp. 133-6.

²⁴ MacDonald, 'Secular Church', pp. 22, 38-9.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

²⁶ Barrell, 'The church in the West Highlands', 30.

²⁷ MacDonald, 'Secular Church', pp. 55-8; Iain G. MacDonald, 'The attack on Bishop George Lauder of Argyll in the *Auchinleck Chronicle*', *IR*, 61 (2010), 111-36, at 111-13.

²⁸ Barrell, 'The church in the West Highlands', 31-2; MacDonald, 'Secular Church', p. 71.

²⁹ MacDonald, 'Secular Church', p. 71.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-9.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 55, 57.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 52-3, 70-71.

³³ Kirk, 'Jacobean Church in the Highlands', pp. 45-7.

³⁴ MacGregor, 'The Statutes of Iona', 146-7, 152-4.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 163-70; Macinnes, *Clanship*, p. 80.

³⁶ Kirk, 'Jacobean Church in the Highlands', p. 43; cf. *ibid.*, p. 46.

³⁷ Steer and Bannerman, *Monumental Sculpture*, pp. 116, 208, 211-12; Barrell, 'The church in the West Highlands', 25, 27.

³⁸ MacDonald, 'Secular Church', p. 68.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 67-8.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 44, 61.

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- ⁴¹ Steer and Bannerman, *Monumental Sculpture*, p. 117.
- ⁴² MacDonald, 'Secular Church', pp. 43-7. Major secular powers such as the Campbells and the MacDonalds could potentially exploit their financial advantage over the bishops of Argyll or the Isles in their ability to bear the costs of expensive litigation at the papal curia: *ibid.*, p. 72.
- ⁴³ MacGregor, 'Church and culture', p. 19.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.
- ⁴⁶ Steer and Bannerman, *Monumental Sculpture*, pp. 100-102, 106-12, 209.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 115-18.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 117.
- ⁴⁹ Macinnes, *Clanship*, p. 79.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁵¹ Steer and Bannerman, *Monumental Sculpture*, pp. 117-18; Kirk, 'Jacobean Church in the Highlands', p. 38; James Kirk, *Patterns of Reform: continuity and change in the Reformation Kirk* (Edinburgh, 1989), pp. 296-7.
- ⁵² Steer and Bannerman, *Monumental Sculpture*, pp. 106-9.
- ⁵³ MacDonald, 'Secular Church', p. 61.
- ⁵⁴ Barrell, 'The church in the West Highlands', 2, 30; Christine McGladdery, *James II* (Edinburgh, 1990), p. 121.
- ⁵⁵ MacDonald, 'Secular Church', pp. 50-69, 79; MacDonald, 'The attack on Bishop George Lauder'.
- ⁵⁶ Kirk, *Patterns of Reform*, pp. 292-3.
- ⁵⁷ *Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh: John Carswell's Gaelic Translation of the Book of Common Order*, ed. R. L. Thomson (Edinburgh, 1970), pp. 8-9, 178.
- ⁵⁸ Kirk, *Patterns of Reform*, pp. 301-4.
- ⁵⁹ *Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh*, pp. 18-19; English translation in Kirk, *Patterns of Reform*, p. 303.
- ⁶⁰ For discussions of Carswell and his book, see Kirk, *Patterns of Reform*, pp. 280-304; Meek, 'The Reformation and Gaelic culture'; Martin MacGregor, 'The Campbells: Literature, Lordship and Liminality', *Textual Cultures: Texts, Contexts and Interpretation*, 7.1 (2012), 121-57, at 141-52.
- ⁶¹ MacGregor, 'The Statutes of Iona'.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, 156-7.

⁶³ *Scotichronicon* by Walter Bower in *Latin and English*, gen. ed. D. E. R. Watt, (9 vols, Aberdeen/Edinburgh, 1987-98) 4, eds and trans David J. Corner, A. B. Scott, William W. Scott, and D. E. R. Watt, pp. 326-9.

⁶⁴ William Ferguson, *The Identity of the Scottish Nation: An Historic Quest* (Edinburgh 1998); Roger A. Mason, 'Civil Society and the Celts: Hector Boece, George Buchanan and the Ancient Scottish Past' in Edward J. Cowan and Richard J. Finlay (eds), *Scottish History: The Power of the Past* (Edinburgh, 2002), pp. 95-119; Colin Kidd, *British identities before Nationalism: Ethnicity and Nationhood in the Atlantic World, c 1600-c 1800* (Cambridge, 1999), chapter 6.

⁶⁵ Martin MacGregor, 'Gaelic Barbarity and Scottish Identity in the Later Middle Ages' in Dauvit Broun and Martin MacGregor (eds), *Mìorun Mòr nan Gall, The Great Ill-will of the Lowlander? Lowland Perceptions of the Highlands, Medieval and Modern* (Glasgow, 2009), pp. 6-44, at 36.

⁶⁶ *Hectoris Boetii Murthlacensium et Aberdonensium Episcoporum Vitae*, ed. James Moir (Aberdeen, 1894), p. 99.

⁶⁷ *Letters of James V*, ed. Robert Kerr Hannay and Denys Hay (Edinburgh, 1954), p. 162.

⁶⁸ *Monro's Western Isles of Scotland and Genealogies of the Clans 1549*, ed. R. W. Munro (Edinburgh, 1961), p. 63.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 62-3.

⁷⁰ Steve Boardman, 'The Lordship of the Isles' in Seán Duffy and Susan Foran (eds), *The English Isles: Cultural Transmission and Political Conflict in Britain and Ireland, 1100-1500* (Dublin, forthcoming 2013). My thanks to Dr Boardman for access to this paper prior to publication. For the view that Monro's account is coloured by 'self-conscious antiquarian reporting', see Edward J. Cowan, 'The Discovery of the Gàidhealtachd in Sixteenth Century Scotland', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, 60 (1997-8), 259-84, at 269-70.

⁷¹ Richard Sharpe, 'Roderick MacLean's *Life of St. Columba in Latin Verse (1549)*', *IR*, 42 (1991), 111-132, at 119.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 112.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁷⁴ The Iona Club (ed.), *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis*, (Edinburgh, 1847), pp. 23-32; Cowan, 'Discovery of the Gàidhealtachd', 268-9.

⁷⁵ Marcus Merriman, 'Elder, John (fl. 1533-1565)' in *Oxford DNB*

⁷⁶ Roger A. Mason, *Kingship and the Commonwealth: Political Thought in Renaissance and Reformation Scotland* (East Linton, 1998), pp. 243-8, 252.

⁷⁷ *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis*, p. 25.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-7.

⁷⁹ Kidd, *British identities before Nationalism*, pp. 128-30; Mason, 'Civil Society and the Celts', pp. 117-18.

⁸⁰ MacPhail (ed.), *Highland Papers*, 3, p. 302.

⁸¹ MacGregor, 'Gaelic Barbarity', p. 34.

⁸² J. L. Campbell, 'The Letter sent by Iain Muideartach, Twelfth Chief of Clanranald, to Pope Urban VIII, in 1626', *IR*, 4 (1953), 110-16, at 116.

⁸³ MacDonald, 'Secular Church', pp. 93-5; Thomas, 'From Rome to "the ends of the habitable world"', p. 56.

⁸⁴ Thomas, 'From Rome to "the ends of the habitable world" '.

⁸⁵ *Monro's Western Isles*, p. 70.

⁸⁶ W. J. Watson, *Scottish Verse from the Dean of Lismore* (Edinburgh, 1937), pp. 90-1. A near-contemporary mock-elegy castigates its subject on precisely these grounds; *ibid.*, pp. 134-9.

⁸⁷ My thanks to the scholars upon whose original labours this survey depends; to Dr Iain MacDonald for commenting on a draft text, and to the editors for their assistance and generosity.