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REFORMATION ENTRY INTO GAELIC SCOTLAND, 1567–1630

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ABSTRACT

This study traces mainly the transference of Protestant Reformation ideas to Gaelic-speaking Scotland as a ripple effect of the European Reformation. A topic often eclipsed in general historiography, the chapter re-introduces it on a platform displaying salient features of the changing Scottish religious landscape. The focus is on, first: promoters from the nobility and the Church in the 1560s, like Archibald Campbell (5th earl of Argyll) and John Carswell, both close to the Stewart monarchy interested in all-Scotland integration, and second: pioneering Gaelic translations of liturgical and catechetical texts embodying genres, ideas, and practices of diverse origins in central Europe then circulating in Lowland Scotland. Some attention also will be given to Gaelic writings of post-Tridentine Catholic reiteration and mobilization presumably availed of in the controversial, 17th-century, Ulster-based mission to parts of Gaelic Scotland. Such instructional aids, designed to resist, or inoculate against, Protestant Reformation advance, emanated from Irish Catholic exiles in the Spanish Netherlands.

KEY WORDS: Argyll; Clan Campbell; John Carswell; Reformed Church; Gaelic translations; Irish Franciscan mission.

The Meeting of the Waters

INTRODUCTION

Scotland's alternative culture

Study of the Reformation in Gaelic Scotland received a fillip by text-critical editions in 1962 and 1970 of the Scottish Gaelic Texts Society. These two volumes comprised what was four texts of significance for the new face of theology in the *Gàidhealtachd*.[1] At the time, Gaelic was more widely spoken.[2] About a third of the population spoke it either as monoglots or bilingual speakers; it also lingered in parts of the lower lands. However, Gaelic in "bi-polar

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[1] SGTS 7 and 11; details below at nn. 14, 17, 19 and 20 below.

[2] Ó Baoill, "History of Gaelic." For Gaelic, Scots English and Latin at the time, see Bannerman, "Literacy."

Scotland"[3] had (as in Ireland) an image problem in the neighbouring anglophone world. Two well-known quotations from 1521 and 1616 illustrated an institutional bias evident since the 14th century but with ultimate roots in classical antiquity's axiomatic ascription of wildness, barbarism and northernness to incomprehensible aliens. The first is from John Mair (1467–1550):

> The Irish tongue is in use among the former [Wild Scots], and the English tongue among the latter [civil Scots]. One half of the Scots speak Irish, and all these as well as the Islanders we reckon to belong to the Wild Scots.[4]

In 1616, King James VI & I's declared hostility to Gaelic speech and mores (as in his anglicization project in the 1609 Statutes of Iona) was re-affirmed. He considered the language as not only barbarous, but also a hindrance to the true (Reformed) religion:

> [T]he Kingis Majestie having a speciall care … that the trew religioun be advancit … that the youth be … trayned up in civilitie, godliness, knawledge, and learning, that the vulgar Inglishe toung be universallie plantit, and the Irische language … one of the … principall causes of … barbaritie and incivilitie amongis the inhabitantis of the Ilis and Heylandis … abolishit.[5]

Some prominent Lowlanders close to James actually "had the Gaelic" in their backgrounds, like George Buchanan and Alexander Montgomerie. Yet they also spurned the language, the former less contemptuously of those spoke it than the latter, whose poetry denigrated Highlanders. The stigmatization was such that Gaels, often perceived as forest denizens or lawless mountainy people – "the wild barbarian at the gate"[6] – were later often classed with

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[3] MacGregor, "Gaelic Barbarity," 12.

[4] Major, *History*, 48; on the theme in other writers like John Fordun, Hector Boece, George Buchanan, Alexander Montgomerie, and Bishop John Leslie, see MacGregor, "Gaelic Barbarity." See also Mickel, "'Our Hielandmen'," 192–194.

[5] *RPC* 1st series 10, 671–672; see Ó Baoill, "History of Gaelic," 13–14.

[6] Mickel, "'Our Hielandmen'," 186.

groups like Border reivers and unreconstructed Catholics as retrogrades or "bogeymen."[7] Incongruously perhaps, the Lowland low view of the Highlands and Islands was not quite shared by Stewart monarchs since James IV. Their ideology envisaged the adoption of the Gaelic sphere into a more inclusive concept of Scottish nationhood,[8] even if the language was never to receive official benediction.

This chapter recalls that some others thought differently, mostly some educated Gaels and the odd Lowland Humanist: if Gaelic Scotland needed more acclimatization to God and king, then religious writings in the vernacular would help.[9] This echoed Erasmus's "Paraclesis" [exhortation] in his Greek New Testament (1516). Abandoning Catholic inhibition, he had urged Bible translations for all including the Scots and Irish.[10] There was astute comment from a Scottish Humanist and non-Gael, the writer and Erasmian Catholic, David Lyndsay (*c*.1486–1555): his *The Monarchie* remarks that if St Jerome, Latin Vulgate translator, had been an Argyll man, he would have written in Irish (Gaelic):

> Had Sanct Jerome bene borne in tyll Argyll
> In to the Yrische toung his bukis had done compyle.[11]

Gaelic Scotland corresponded culturally to the Irish *Gaeltacht*. Between them and internally there was (as in all other contemporary vernacular languages) cumbersome diversity of dialects, orthography, and script. Like elsewhere, no there was no popular lingua franca within each country or across both, although mobile classes must have had a convenience parlance. Available also was a mutual, ad hoc literary language assisting

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[7] MacGregor, "Highlands and Islands," 296.

[8] Dawson, "The Gaidhealtachd"; Mickel, "'Our Hielandmen'," 192, 195–203.

[9] See Ó Baoill, "History of Gaelic," 14.

[10] "Utinam haec in omnes omnium linguas essent transfusa ut … a Scothis & Hybernis … legi cognoscique possint." *Novum Testamentum omne*, 8.

[11] *Works* 2, lines 627–628.

communication with a dispersed audience.[12] "Gaelic" and "Irish" are both correct for the language of Greater Gaeldom. In the 1560s, the Scottish Church's General Assembly acknowledged the need to have ministers competent in "the Irish tongue" in areas other than Argyll.[13] When a century later the Synod of Argyll referred to the "Irish Catechism," it meant the Westminster Shorter Catechism in the "Irish language."[14] The literary, supra-dialectal medium of learned Gaels at the time is now named variously as "Common Gaelic," "Classical Common Gaelic" or maybe "Literary Irish." The availability to literary intelligentsia of this quasi-High Gaelic mattered for wider dissemination. Gaelic culture was markedly oral and scribal: speech and manuscript. With some trepidation about the reaction of the Gaelic bardic academy to its language quality, the venture into print first occurred in 1567 with a Reformed Church text.

Reformation Gaelic texts in Scotland

The few published texts aspired to the High Gaelic genre. But just as there was no pretension to bardic virtuosity, there was no recourse to marketplace or domestic colloquialisms either, as Martin Luther had sometimes done for religious German. The Gaelic texts were neither belles-lettres for the learned nor unsophisticated fare for the analphabetic majority; rather, they were materials for worship and religious education for use by communicators and teachers (churchmen). The landmark texts were first: *Foirm* (1567),[15] being the Gaelic version of the Reformed Kirk's liturgy and rites – the "Booke of Geneva."[16] This was the

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[12] Ó Dochartaigh, "Gaelic Language," 253.

[13] *BUK* 1, 40, 47.

[14] *Minutes of the Synod* 2, 105; see also vol. 1, 127, 173, 185.

[15] Two different editions: the standard one is Thomson's SGTS text-critical *Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh*, 1–94 (1970). An older edn was a diplomatic reprint (1873) with Introduction, entitled: *The Book of Common Order … Gaelic* (=BCO Gaelic). See Introduction to 1970 edn of *Foirm*, xi. McLauchlan's 1873 edn has English translations of everything, while Thomson's later edn has only (new) English translations of preambles.

[16] *BUK* 1, 30.

Genevan English service-book (1556) which formed the core of the 1565 Scottish *Forme of Prayers*, later published as the *Psalm Book*, renamed in modern times as the "Book of Common Order"[17] or misnamed as "John Knox's Liturgy." The translator was the prominent and visionary churchman from Argyll, John Carswell (*c.*1522–1572), sponsored by his patron and Reformation activist, Archibald Campbell, 5th earl of Argyll (1532x38–1573) and chief of Gaelic chiefs. Second (within the same book): A pre-Communion catechism for youth.[18] However, this was not the Genevan Longer Catechism appended to the *Forme of Prayers*, rather Carswell's amplification of the Genevan Shorter or Little Catechism appended also to the same. Both Genevan catechisms derived from Calvin's French originals.[19] Third: an edition of the Synod-of-Argyll sponsored Gaelic translation (*c.*1630) of Calvin's Latin Longer Catechism.[20] And fourth: an edition of the synod's Gaelic version (1653/59) of the Westminster Shorter Catechism (1648).[21] As shown below, the linguistic ancestry of these Gaelic texts was diverse: English, French, Latin – but with German as the ultimate formative context in three cases.

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[17] See Cowan, *Bibliography*, 53 ff. A 16th-century expression, but not used as title until many generations later.

[18] Carswell, "Modh Ceasnuighe" [manner of examining], in *Foirm*, 95–108; *BCO Gaelic*, 205–235.

[19] Calvin, *Le catéchisme.* Modern English: Calvin, "Calvin's Catechism, 1542"; Calvin, "Little Catechism" (French, *La manière d'interroguer les enfans*, 1553).

[20] *Adtimchiol an chreidimh* [on the faith], 1–112; Calvinus, *Catechismus* (1545); modern English: Calvin, "Catechism of the Church of Geneva."

[21] "Forceadul Aithgearr" [shorter catechism], in *Adtimchiol*, 231–250. Being outside this volume's period, it will not be discussed here – but see website for translation procedure: https://sgeulnagaidhlig.ac.uk/17thc-argyll-the-synod/?lang=en

The jewel in the crown, the *Foirm*, was the famed media-landmark in book history: the pioneer publication in Gaelic – Irish or Scottish.[22] The epochal moment gave Gaelic a foot on the "information super-highway of contemporary Europe."[23] The two 17th-century Gaelic catechisms appeared in one volume in 1962 as trimmed diplomatic reprints, but with introduction, notes and glossaries. All translations were of texts which helped shape Scottish Protestant self-understanding, so that the modern editions retrieved Reformed theological basics in their historic Gaelic expression.

Other studies and cultural issues

There are informative essays on Carswell and *Foirm*.[24] An old view was that early Reformation impact on Gaelic Scotland was nominal, of little significance beyond "policy" and legislative enactment,[25] reminiscent of the illusory Irish Reformation. But a revisionist suggestion resulted in James Kirk charting the progress of the Reformed Church in the region.[26] Findings showed that while there was no precipitous advance, there was no stasis either, so that one cannot relegate the 1567 Gaelic religious texts to programmatic and aspirational ephemera. For the west Highlands' geo-political and religious position and the role of the Argyll Campbells, Jane Dawson's studies are indispensable.[27] And on Gaelic

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[22] Maclean, *Typographia Scoto-Gadelica*, 65–66; Cowan, *Bibliography*, 10. See also inter al. de Bhaldraithe, "Leabhar Charswell"; Ó Cuív, *Aibidil*, 1; Bannerman, "Literacy," 221, 228; Williams, *I bPrionta*, 20–21; Mac Craith, "The Gaelic Reaction," 44; Meek, "Reformation and Gaelic Culture," 38–39; Mac Craith, "Literature in Irish," 191; Caball, "Gaelic and Protestant," 196; MacGregor, "The Campbells," 127, 141.

[23] Meek, "Gaelic Literature," n.p.

[24] Meek and Kirk, "John Carswell"; Kirk, "John Carswell"; Meek, "Reformation and Gaelic Culture"; Caball, "Gaelic and Protestant," 196–203; MacGregor, "The Campbells," 141–156. See also n. 21 and cf. McLauchlan in *BCO Gaelic*, xiii–xxxvii.

[25] Kirk cites the pessimistic view in "The Kirk and the Highlands," 387.

[26] Ibid., 307, and n. 5 citing Donaldson, *The Scottish Reformation* (London, 1960), 88–89; Kirk, "The Jacobean Church."

[27] See Bibliography under Dawson.

culture and religion at the porous late-medieval and early-modern interface, Martin

MacGregor reveals various continuities and discontinuities, among other studies.[28]

One writer was sceptical about the received understanding of wider Gaelic culture

seamlessly transcending marine and political frontiers; he considers that Irish Gaelic coteries

did not grant parity of esteem to Scottish Gaelic.[29] That might be relevant for Carswell's pan-

Gaelic consciousness. Although he spoke in *Foirm* of "we, the Gaels of Scotland and

Ireland," "our Gaelic language" and "our ancestors" and "our history",[30] he played down his

language competence, while remarking that linguistic mastery was rare anywhere in wider

Gaeldom. He tempered, however, his etiquette of deference to Gaelic literati by repudiating

the canon of Irish origin-myths and other legends (also circulating in Scotland) as "vain,

lying worldly tales" of pseudo-history. And "worldly men pay" to hear such fantasies while

neglecting the biblical "genuine words of God" which offer higher truth freely.[31] Such

counter-cultural Christian dismissal of national epics as pagan superstition was not new.

Furthermore, one need not exaggerate reputed "Irish" and "Scottish Gaelic"

divergence. Language bifurcation and irreversible separate development were not axiomatic

at the time and need not be seen as an inevitable early-modern outcome determining future

historiographical divisions.[32] In 1630, Calvin's Latin Longer Catechism was anonymously

translated "into Irish"; its modern editor comments on the "essential Irishness of the

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[28] See Bibliography under MacGregor. See also MacDonald, "Church in Gaelic Scotland."

[29] McLeod, *Divided Gaels*.

[30] *Foirm*, 10–11, 179 / *BCO Gaelic* 18.

[31] *Foirm*, 11, 179–180 / *BCO Gaelic*, 19. There Carswell dismissed the legends of Fionn mac Cumhaill (Finn McCool) in the Fenian Cycle (*fianna*), the mythical foundational stories of the Iberian Milesians (ur-Gaels), and the aboriginal pre-Gaelic pantheon of the semi-divine Tuatha Dé Danann (race of the goddess Danu). See also *Foirm*, 125.

[32] Ellis, "The Collapse."

language."[33] Its Scottish translator assumed that literary "Irish" is also "ours." However, while the later (1653) "Irish Catechism" was the Westminster Shorter Catechism, its second edition (1659) was adapted more to Scottish Gaelic.[34] But such an issue for translations of religious texts occurred elsewhere in Europe.[35]

Eventual Catholic reaffirmation in Gaelic

Flexible Common Gaelic was to help religious persuasions to evangelize or to re-Catholicize gaelophone populations. The chapter will not recall the narratives of Catholic survival and revivals in far-flung *Gàidhealtachd* districts. It will, however, hypothesise (or state the obvious): In the early-17th century, post-Tridentine Catholic reaffirmation found expression in some Gaelic religious publications by exilic Irish Franciscans based in Flanders. This can only have conditioned the message of Irish Catholic missioners trained in Louvain, mostly Franciscan, in parts of Gaelic Scotland. Crucially, such catechetical writings furnished appropriate Gaelic vocabulary for Catholic witness and apologetics, as well as reformed practical piety.

<div align="center">CHAMPIONS OF EARLY GAELIC PROTESTANTISM</div>

The Argyll factor

As indicated, two complementary figures formed the vanguard of the Reformation breakthrough in Scottish Gaeldom via Argyll. One was a layman: Archibald Campbell [Gilleasbaig Ó Duibhne[36] or Caimbeul], 5th earl of Argyll, a major figure in Scottish political life; the other was a former priest: John Carswell [Séon Carsuel]. The sine qua non of the *Foirm*'s transference of Reformation observance and beliefs into the Gaelic idiom was Campbell as Carswell's patron and protector. Sharing his father's convictions, the 5th earl's

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[33] *Adtimchiol*, xv.

[34] Ibid., xxxiii.

[35] Burke, *Languages and Communities*, 104–107.

[36] Rendered by Carswell as "Ghiolla Easbuig Ua nDuibhne," *Foirm*, 3.

activity as a driver of Protestant reform out of religious motivation is reminiscent of a Lutheran Reformation prince charged with direct religious responsibility. That the Campbell-Carswell nexus in Argyll was effective followed from a "propitious alignment of factors," personal, political, national, cultural, and religious.[37] Paradoxically helpful was that they had a positive relationship with the Highland-friendly Catholic Queen Mary. And the cooperation of minister and chief was not just fortuitous. The Gaelic world out of which both came was unitary and coherent, despite its balkanized politics. Analogous to parallels elsewhere in Europe, they reflected the promotion of a religious reform strategy and a modernizing project at various levels.

In addition, a pan-Gaelic, soteriological "vision"[38] was articulated by Carswell in an Address in *Foirm* "specially to the men of Scotland and Ireland." They should profit from unmediated access to, and embrace, the biblical Word of God with heart and mind eschewing human fabrications (Luther's *Menschenlehre*).[39] Carswell's predisposition was cross-national, humanist (original sources and broader literacy), evangelical and apostolic – "out of love of God and his Church."[40]

Archibald the 5th earl was the eldest son of Archibald Campbell, 4th earl (1498–1558). The role of both in the "Lords of the Congregation" effecting the Reformation was frontline, so that the Campbell clan came to embody the new persuasion.[41] Moreover, they were not just Highland chiefs, since they also lived in the Lowlands. This gave them a unique all-

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[37] Meek, "Reformation and Gaelic Culture," 33, 47.

[38] Ibid., 38–39, 60.

[39] *Foirm*, 7, line 204 / 177; *BCO Gaelic*, 12.

[40] *Foirm*, 9, lines 247–250; 12, 358–359 / 178, 180; BCO *Gaelic*, 14, 21.

[41] For both see Dawson, "Campbell Dawson, "Clan, Kin, and Kirk"; Dawson, "Protestant Earl and Godly Gael."

Scotland dimension due to their double identity as both Highland and Lowland magnates.[42]

Their pedigree was special: their descent linked them not only to the Celtic British King

Arthur, but also the conquering Milesian ur-Gaels of Ireland (notably the warrior Fianna

branch, the *Ó Duibhne*[43] branch).[44] Retained by Campbell chiefs, the Ó Duibhne name

bestowed a kudos rooted in numinous Gaelic antiquity. Norman-French extraction added a

third dimension, echoed in the Campbell name.

The family prestige was special. Ex officio, the Argyll earls ranked third in the

kingdom and were hereditary major-domos of the royal household. On the abolition of the

Isles lordship in 1493 the Argyll earl became royal "Lieutenant-general of the lordship,"

helping fill the vacuum.[45] And as hereditary Justice Generals since 1514, the Argylls

exercised the highest legal office. The 5th earl became Chancellor of Scotland in 1573, but

then died unexpectedly. Unmatched armed forces, influence and quasi-impunity made the

family the most respected of Scottish nobles, always near the political apex. Still, the 4th earl

cited identity-otherness when, in a reply to a courteously threatening letter (1558) from

Archbishop Hamilton about harbouring a Protestant chaplain, he wryly referred to "we

Highland rude people."[46]

Archibald Senior may have come from an old, prudentially private, Protestant

tradition among some Scots originating in the 1520s – and in the Campbell case, possibly

earlier: their Ayrshire branch was involved with dissenting Lollardy. This legacy may well

have enhanced their credentials in the drift to religious revolution after 1556. In that reply to

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[42] See Dawson, "The Fifth Earl"; Reid, "Earls of Argyll."

[43] Cited in *Foirm*, 3, line 24; 13, line 402 / 181, mid-page; *BCO Gaelic*, 1.

[44] Argyll bards like the MacEwens promoted the dual descent; see Gillies, "Invention of Tradition," 144–149.

[45] MacGregor, "Highlands and Islands," 296.

[46] "Memorandum," in Knox, *History* 2, 247.

the sabre-rattling archbishop in 1558, the 4th earl also remarked: "There are diverse houses in Scotland apart from us that profess the same God secretly,"[47] suggesting that any persecution might involve a pogrom. On coming out, the 4th earl embodied the pro-Reformation avant-garde among the nobility linked soon to a Protestant English alliance.

INSERT FIGURE 21.1 WITH CAPTION HERE

In 1556 John Knox had conducted worship in the Campbell's Lowland castle, also impressing the teenage Lord Lorne, future 5th earl. Knox's host, the 4th earl, was the first in 1557 to subscribe the oath of the Lords of the Congregation, as did Lorne.[48] 1558 was when Campbell appointed a Protestant chaplain. The earl died that year, his will expressing the Knoxian aspiration to the "Reformation of religion" and that the 5th earl-in-waiting will "study to set forward the public and true preaching of the Evangel of Jesus Christ and to suppress all superstition and idolatry."[49] This wish was later to be set in motion in Argyll.

The fifth earl of Argyll

|He belonged to such a milieu when catapulted in his twenties on to the national and international stages in the transformative years of 1558–1561. He already had military experience in 1555 as part of a taskforce to Tyrconnell in north-west Ulster in connection with regional power struggles. For Campbell was related by marriage to the MacDonalds or MacDonnells, a force in the land on both sides of the North Channel and pretender to the Isles lordship. This adventure helped make the 5th earl an interlocutor of choice, also as a Gaelic speaker, in both Scoto-Irish and Anglo-Irish affairs in respect of still unconquered Ulster for some time.[50] Campbell features in the Treaty of Berwick (1560) creating an Anglo-

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[47] Ibid., 253.

[48] Knox, *History* 1, 136–137

[49] Ibid., 138; cf. "Confessio Scotica, 1560," chap. 24.

[50] See Dawson, *Politics of Religion*, 5–10, 96–100.

Scottish alliance with religious implications. The English statesman, William Cecil, sensed something of the Campbell charisma when he wrote to Queen Elizabeth that the earl of Argyll was "a goodly gentleman of person, universally honoured here of all Scotland."[51] The treaty's 8th article cast him as a prospective trouble-shooter and collaborator of the foreseen English advance into still unconquered "north parts of Ireland"[52] (where he had land interests) especially if he had to deal with the Edinburgh-educated chief, James MacDonnell or MacDonald (*c*.1501–1565) of Dunyvaig (Islay) and the Glens (of Antrim). James's manoeuvres had made him problematic for the north Irish policies of English and Scottish rulers. The situation was sensitive: The Catholic James had led 700 soldiers to assist the Lords of the Congregation against the Catholic regent, Mary of Guise.[53] Later, Campbell might even have been linked to the religious unrest reported in the Catholic redoubt of Gaelic Ulster in the 1560s: Rome was asked to consider installing an Inquisition office there.[54]

The question of when the 5th earl "converted" to the Reformation may not be the right one. He might have experienced it at home while outwardly still Catholic, like the "Nicodemite," crypto-Protestant aristocracy in France visited by his father in the 1530s. His tutor, John Carswell, later commended his pupil's "godly life from the age of childhood."[55] The Knox visit to the family in 1556 and his previous exhortations at Calder House (Haddingtonshire) for members of the underground "Privy Kirk" seem to have energized both father and son.[56]

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[51] *CSP Scot.* 1, 734, 821.

[52] Articles in Knox, *History* 1, 305–306.

[53] Maclean-Bristol, "MacDonald, James."

[54] Hazlett, *The Reformation*, 98–99, 191; Bellesheim, *Geschichte* 2, 696.

[55] *Foirm*, 173, 178; *BCO Gaelic*, 2–3, 14.

[56] Dawson, *John Knox*, 113–114.

As 5th earl, the young Campbell's religious zeal became more public. In 1559 he helped enforce Protestant worship in the Old Church's centre: St Andrews. He was at the 1560 Reformation Parliament as a Lord of the Articles and became a Privy Councillor in 1561. Yet his future career has caused him to appear as enigmatic and paradoxical. In the Reformation cause he was the leading ally of its lay leader, his university-educated brother-in-law, Lord James Stewart. Both had respectfully visited the dying regent, and both defended the authority of the new queen to whom both were related by either blood or marriage. But they took different sides in the Scottish civil war (1567–1571), the loyalist Campbell unsuccessfully leading the "Queen's party." And while in 1566 he boycotted the state Catholic baptism of James VI but not the great jamboree afterwards, Argyll had defended the queen's agreed right to hear Mass in Edinburgh. Also, even if conceivable within Reformed Churches and ready to subject himself to church discipline, the circumstances of his history-making divorce case 1567–1573 raised eyebrows among devout believers.[57] Still, he promoted the Reformation in Argyll and the Isles, also taking particular care that church appointees were properly educated.[58]

All this mystified John Knox and the General Assembly which Campbell often attended by right as a Christian magistrate. Some rigorists found Reformation leadership associated with marital problems, post-separation affairs with other women, children out of wedlock, Highland-chief lifestyle and loyalty to a female Catholic ruler etc. as unworthy.[59] Later writers lamented similarly over Campbell's loyalty to Mary and his amorous adventures – so that Lord James Stewart (Earl of Moray) overshadows him in Protestant hagiography.[60]

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[57] *BUK* 1, 114; Dawson. "'The Noble and the Bastard'."

[58] *Campbell Letters*, no. 154.

[59] Knox, *History* 1, 139; Reid, "Earls of Argyll," 11; Dawson, "Protestant Earl," 358–362; see also *BUK* 1, 258–263.

[60] Brown, "Godly Magistrate," 556, 561.

However, Knox's somewhat Manichaean attitude[61] to a Catholic monarch diverged from that of mainstream Reformers like Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575) and Calvin. The Genevan's *Institutes* (Book IV.20) held that constitutional resistance to tyranny and religious coercion might be legitimate but without any hint that enforced regime change, due solely to religion or confession, is permissible.[62] In one sense, then, like others Campbell was truer to Calvin than the Knox who had argued for the deposition of the two Marys in Scotland as idolaters.

John Carswell

Carswell was a St Andrews graduate (1544). Theologians like John Mair and John Winram taught there at the time. A priest from about 1546, he can hardly have been unaware of the Protestant mission and martyrdom of George Wishart (1544–46). In 1560 Carswell became a Reformed minister. That he was more than a mere conformist or opportunist follows from both his prior role as Argyll family chaplain and his commitment to Reformation programmes.[63] He affirmed his Church vocation in a letter of 1564 noting that he was not failing "to do my sobir diligens in furderance of the Kirk."[64]

Carswell was of both high status and stature. He seems to have been a giant, reportedly 7 feet tall (2.13m),[65] and was apparently likened to a "heron" or "crane" (*corra*).[66] His cultural attainments were impressive too, being trilingual, having Gaelic, Scots English, and Latin, so that triple "code-switching" in Scottish "locales of encounter" came naturally.[67]

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[61] See Knox, *Works* 4, 232 (religion is either God's or the Devil's).

[62] Hazlett, "Church and Church/State," 252. Cf. Knox, *History* 1, xl–xli; Dawson, *John Knox,* 86–87, 139–140, 157, 216.

[63] Biographical outlines in *BCO Gaelic*, xiii-xxvii; *Foirm*, lxvii–lxxxix; Kirk, "John Carswell"; Stiùbhart, "John Carswell"; Breathnach and Ní Mhurchú, "Carsuel, Seon."

[64] *Foirm*, lxxxi

[65] Ibid., lxxxv.

[66] *BCO Gaelic*, xxvi.

[67] Cf. Burke, *Languages and Communities*, 6–7, 117.

Latin was the passage to Renaissance humanism and to Reformation theology debated at St

Andrews since the 1520s. As a student, Carswell must also have heard the news of

Parliament's exhortation in 1543 to translate the Scriptures (meaning probably Scots

English).[68]

Since his family seems to have been historically within the Clan Campbell orbit, his

close association with the 5th earl gave him direct access to the high echelons of Scottish

society and government. At first sight, his lifestyle reflected his role as Campbell's alter ego.

For he seems to have been the only European Reformer who had special rights of residence in

not just one, but three (Campbell-owned) castles! – Kilmartin, Carnasserie and Craignish.

Carswell had acquired various benefices and livings since 1550. After 1559/60 the

trajectory of his career accelerated upwards. He was appointed as chancellor of the Chapel

Royal in Stirling and then Reformed Church superintendent of Argyll. In 1563 he secured the

lease of the bishopric of Argyll. In 1565, on the 5th earl's recommendation, the Catholic

Queen Mary nominated Carswell as bishop of the Isles and commendator-abbot of Iona,

thereby becoming a Scottish lord spiritual. This made him a member of Parliament which,

like the General Assembly, he attended occasionally. On becoming bishop in 1567 (when he

published *Foirm*), he then became a Lord of the Articles.

Yet Carswell was anything but a mini-Renaissance bishop embodying vague

continuity with the Old Church. His accumulation of livings need not be evidence of cupidity.

The Church, not just in Argyll and the Isles, was short of resources. The new Kirk had a

serious funding problem with ministerial stipends in default of revenues of its own despite

promised Crown subventions. As superintendent, for example, Carswell needed funds for

hefty travelling expenses including horses, ferry costs, accommodation, and food as well as to

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[68] *APS* 2, 415, c. 12.

support his wife and children (a married minister was more costly than a priest). Further, as a learned Church minister and Gaelic scholar, he needed a personal library: books were expensive. He had no independent means; as a student he had registered as a "pauper." In his Scots letter of 1564 to someone who had reproached him for both his intimated absence from the summer General Assembly and alleged zealous collection of teinds, he made two interesting remarks. The first was one can only conduct visitations to far-away Argyll and the Isles in summer. The second was on the dilemma of the parlous financial situation: asking locals for the stipends makes one unpopular and undermines preaching, whereas simply waiving stipends will hardly enhance the ministry if exercised by "beggaris."[69]

Carswell's *Foirm* is of renown – "an astonishing achievement."[70] But despite (or because of) his intimate association with the controversial, advanced-Protestant Campbells, Carswell has had no conspicuous position in the pantheon of Scottish Church reformers. Financial issues apart, the image from the sources is ambiguous. As in the Campbells, his attitude to Mary displeased Knoxian radicals. Indeed, his book seems to be the only Scottish Reformation text acknowledging "the most powerful Queen MARIE, queen of Scotland";[71] the General Assembly reproved him for accepting a bishopric without consultation, interpreted by later partisans as "un-presbyterian." Further, holding offices in both church and state (thereby belonging to two different kingdoms and mixing secular with spiritual) also counted as an un-Reformed lapse. For such sceptics, Carswell's work "translating the Reformation itself into Gaelic"[72] did not dispel alleged shortcomings. That apart, in the Letter and Postscript he anticipated no welcome from the pillars of Gaelic society either, foreseeing

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[69] In *Foirm*, lxxxi–lxxxii.

[70] Meek, "Reformation and Gaelic Culture," 55.

[71] *Foirm*, 113, line 3978; *BCO Gaelic*, 246.

[72] Meek, "Reformation and Gaelic Culture," 41.

resistance from the bardic sceptics, from "ignorant and boorish men" (some chieftains?) and Old Church clergy – all symbiotically interwoven.[73] Crucial to that conjunction of interests was consciousness of an indefectible Catholic faith and immunity from heresy among Gaels.[74] Nor did the General Assembly acknowledge Carswell's achievement. And others may have had reservations about anything published in the barbarous "unchristian language" of an "unhallowed people"[75] – such was the automatic cultural antagonism. Carswell's honouring in his own country and church was, and remained, equivocal.

<div align="center">

FORME OF PRAYERS / FOIRM NA N-URRNUIDHEADH

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The publisher of Carswell's *Foirm* was Robert Lekpreuik in Edinburgh, and in roman rather than the Irish font or black letter. Typographically, the enterprise was challenging, since the printer had not "a single word of Gaelic [*én-fhocal Gaoidhelce*] but printed haphazardly or by guess."[76] However, this does not detract from the product. While with rhetorical modesty Carswell claimed no excellence in literary High Gaelic, he was familiar with it. He had visited Ulster in 1545 as part of a diplomatic mission dealing with disputes over claims to the Isles lordship. Since nothing is known of him for the next five years, there is a surmise that he remained in Ireland and received some bardic training. When working on his translation he may have had to consult knowledgeable people about various renderings and the challenge of creating a Gaelic theological lexis –there were no Gaelic grammar books nor dictionaries and no Gaelic Bible at the time. But Carswell did not seem to have access to an eminent bard in the way that William O'Donnell in Ireland had to a top poet among the prestigious Munster

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[73] *Foirm*, 112–113 / 180–182; *BCO Gaelic*, 22, 2[4]4–245; on such a conjunction of interests, cf. Meigs, *Reformations in Ireland*, 16–27.

[74] The notion of essentialist Catholicism among Scottish Gaels, reiterated in 1578 by Bishop John Leslie in his *De origine … Scotorum*; see MacGregor, "Gaelic Barbarity," 34–36.

[75] A Lowlander utterance in 1615, in *Letters and State Papers*, 273.

[76] *Foirm,* 112 / 182; *BCO Gaelic*, 244.

writers like Maolin Og MacBrady when preparing the Irish New Testament (1602). Yet

plausible consultants for Carswell were the hereditary bards and chroniclers of the

Campbells: the MacEwens.[77]

Dedication and Letter

Foirm included an intriguing Dedication to the 5th earl,[78] plus the self-deprecating Letter to

the Reader about the translator's lack of polished Gaelic. Carswell's hope is that stylistic

limitations will not undermine the book's credibility among the literati in Ireland. From the

perspective of the Gaelic tradition of the poetic "panegyric code," an innovation by Carswell

was the use of prose rather than verse for the Dedication, although the Letter to the Reader

has some verse. The dedicatory encomium also reflects Renaissance humanist conventions

seen as obsequious by modern tastes. Needing or acknowledging patronage, seeking

endorsement, ascribing honour, reinforcing authority or offering advice in the genre of the

Mirror for Princes, Humanist and Reformation authors often employed it.[79] If they availed of

verse, it was usually epigrammatic quatrains as an adornment.

In a Reformation context, accordingly, dedications were often more than songs of

praise. They could proclaim religious status accompanied with exhortation. Carswell's

dedication was a religious policy statement and declared Campbell's prerogative as a

Christian magistrate entrusted with the *cura religionis*, axiomatic in Reformation theology.

Echoing chapter 24 of the Scots Confession, the Dedication cited Campbell's spiritual

"honourable ancestors," namely the reforming judges and kings of Israel, and outlined a

succinct theological analysis of the earl's divinely instituted spiritual office and

responsibility. This was to safeguard the true faith and pure worship mandated in the first

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[77] See Appendix II in *Foirm*, 183–186.

[78] Ibid., 3–13 / 173–181; *BCO Gaelic*, 1–24; for summation of this and Carswell-Campbell relationship, see Dawson, "Protestant Earl and Godly Gael," 351–355.

[79] See King and Rankin, "Print, Patronage"; Enenkel, *Einchreibung des Autors*, 55–198.

table of God's law. In the Reformed tradition, this involved urgent elimination by magistrates unilaterally of "idolatry and superstition" – for which Argyll is praised here.

But some have considered that Carswell inflated Campbell's religious responsibility, infringing Reformed norms. He was projected as God's appointed lord over the Church in Argyll with a plenitude of power by virtue of being one of the Christian nobility of the Scottish nation.[80] The perceived extent of such supremacy ascribed to the magistrate in the Church creating a single-sphere fusion of church and state –"Constantinian", but later designated as "Erastian" – was anathema to what some saw as the properly "Reformed," "presbyterian" and so correctly Calvinist principle of relative church autonomy. Some have held that such power infringed the balanced distinctiveness of the binary if overlapping spheres as envisaged in Genevan and Melvillian paradigms (after Carswell's time).

However, "Reformed" was a wider spectrum. It also embraced churches where the civil authority was supreme in religion. In the 1566 Second Helvetic Confession (also endorsed by the Church of Scotland), Heinrich Bullinger characterized in chapter 30 the ruler or sovereign as "the minister of God" with authority in doctrine, Church discipline etc. This was the norm in the Swiss-German Churches, the Church of England, and in Erastus's Reformed Electoral-Palatine Heidelberg.[81] It also reflected ecclesio-political reality in the early years of the Scottish Kirk. Accordingly, there was no binding, uniform Reformed position on the issue, no immutable constitution *de iure divino*. Both concepts claimed legitimacy,[82] so that one must exonerate Carswell from deviation in ascribing unwarranted power to Argyll's office.

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[80] *Foirm,* 173–177; *BCO Gaelic*, 3–10.

[81] Hazlett, *The Reformation,* 37–39.

[82] Hazlett, "Church and Church/State," 249–252; Hazlett, "Confessions," 192–193.

The Dedication also paid tribute to Argyll's role in helping lead the country away from papal tyranny, idolatry, and the old false faith of "human" teachings and practices to retrieved "divine" ones. This accompanied a thumbnail text of controversial theology contrasting "true" and "false" faith. While echoes of Luther, Zwingli and Calvin are obvious in the Dedication, Carswell's immediate source was 1560 Scots Confession, particularly articles 14 (good works), 15 (the divine law) and 24 (the civil magistrate). The Dedication communicated other key features of the Reformation conservative revolution. First: the liberating principle of *ad fontes* – a revisionist Humanist appeal to biblical antiquity and recovery of divine revelation uncontaminated by fallible human interpretation – *scriptura sola*; second: restoring religious and Church rights to the civil authority as the Christian, divinely appointed magistrate, exemplified in patristic Constantinian Christianity (but now seen by some as incompatible with church autonomy). Overall, these ideas may have had resonance in hierarchical Gaelic culture with its *taoiseach* consciousness, accompanying sense of sacred origins and divine proximity, and the captaincy concept of clan chiefs.

Main text

Thomson's edition has described and commented on *Foirm*'s configuration and linguistic features.[83] Offered here will be further contextual and theological observations. Carswell's translation included additional elements of his own, so that it is not completely faithful to the original. His inventive title reflects a personal dimension, thereby deviating from the 1565 *Forme of Prayers* title. An English translation is:[84]

> Forms of Prayer and administration of the sacraments and Catechism of the Christian faith, here below. According as they are practised in the churches of Scotland which have loved and accepted the faithful gospel of God on having put away the false faith, turned from the Latin and English into Gaelic by Mr John Carswell minister of the Church of God in the bounds of

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[83] *Foirm*, lxv–xc.

[84] *BCO Gaelic*, [xxxi].

Argyll, whose other name is Bishop of the Isles. **INSERT FIGURE 21.2 WITH CAPTION HERE**

Several features stand out. First: unlike the title of the 1564 *Forme*, Carswell inserts the "Catechism of the Christian Faith." This intimates his chief original and disguised contribution. The 1565 *Forme* had incorporated both the Longer and Shorter Genevan Catechisms. Instead, Carswell omits the Long Catechism and then creates a catechetical text of his own based on the Shorter Catechism. There will be explanations below. Second: two ecclesiological turns of phrase are striking, "churches of Scotland" and "church of God in Argyle." This suggest again that Carswell recalled the 1560 Scots Confession. Its article 18 stated that the true visible Church consists of

> particular Kirks such as were in Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus and other places ... which [Paul] called Kirks of God. Such Kirks, we the inhabitants of the kingdom of Scotland confessing Jesus Christ do claim to have in our cities, towns and reformed districts.[85]

Third: official Church texts are usually collective, anonymous presentations. But *Foirm* is the private initiative of a named individual. Hence the prominence on the title page to the translator and part-author – a minister of the new Church, but one given traditional designations: "M. John Carswell" is not Mister, rather Master (of Arts), traditional title for priests who were university graduates; and then "Bishop of the Isles" with its connotations of continuity. The title and the Epistle to the Reader allude to the Anglo-Genevan Latin version of the *Forme of Prayers* (*Ratio et forma publice orandi Deum*, 1556). This helped to give Carswell's translation further tinges of respectability, learning, universality and authority.

Regarding *Foirm*'s contents: apart from various preliminaries, additions like a metrical expanded version of the Lord's Prayer, minor changes, two substantive omissions, a catechetical adaptation, some poems and so on, Carswell followed the contours of the

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[85] "Confessio Scotica," 275 (quote modernized).

original. This included the Apostles' Creed[86] and the Genevan English confession of faith.[87] The latter was much shorter than the 1560 Scots Confession of which there was no Gaelic version, and which was also not included in the *Forme of Prayers*. The major change in *Foirm* is the replacement of the Longer Genevan Catechism by Carswell's expanded version of the Shorter Catechism. Usually cited as a major omission is the metrical Psalms as found in the 1565 *Forme of Prayers*. But "In" is not correct, rather, "along with," since the Psalms were technically not so much part of the published service book, as what accompanied it: two books in one volume. *The Book of Psalms* there had a separate imprint. Carswell was wise to avoid it if his work were not to become eternally "forthcoming." The challenging English metre combining fixed syllable and stress counts in each line trying to bridge classical and popular modes would be difficult to transpose into a Gaelic medium. There was no Gaelic Clement Marot to call upon. Anyway, there was no good knowledge of Hebrew in Scotland at the time. Not till 1659 did a Hebrew-based Gaelic selection of Fifty Psalms of David (*An ceud chaogad do Shalmaibh Dhaibhid*) in ballad metre appear, published in Glasgow, sponsored by the Argyll Synod.

Finally, there is the issue of the genetic precursors of *Foirm*. Outlines of the stemma of *Foirm* rightly cite the Anglo-Genevan *Forme of Prayers* and its Latin *Ratio et forma*, the 1562 Scottish reprint of *Forme*, and the Kirk's 1565 expanded, revised and standard edition. Thomson provided a helpful synoptic table.[88] But in a fuller family tree, their archetypal ancestors could helpfully appear. For example, the 1542 Genevan French rite[89] underlying the English 1556 *Forme of Prayers* initially drafted in Frankfurt in 1555. Moreover, one could

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[86] *Foirm,* 35.

[87] See modern critical edn: "Confession of Our Faith."

[88] *Foirm*, lxv–lxvi.

[89] Calvin, *La forme*.

also specify the exemplar for the Genevan order. Calvin had appropriated it when working in Germany as a chaplain to the French community of religious refugees in Strasbourg. This was the 1539 liturgical order of Martin Bucer (1491–1551): *Psalmen und Geystliche Lieder ... Form und Gebet*, adapted by Calvin in French with *La forme des prières* (1542). The core of this "Form and Prayer" is what migrated through various cultural transfers and mutations from Low Alemannic German into French, thence to English and Latin and then Gaelic. Since such a *forma* was also intended to be *formans*, the aim was to help shape a reformed alternative Christianity; its religious service did not involve a grace-dispensing eucharistic sacrifice of the real body of Christ, rather a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for grace acquired by faith only and (if genuine) strengthened the sacrament.

<p style="text-align:center">CARSWELL'S EDITED CATECHISM</p>

Although this is intimated in the title of *Foirm* as "Catechism of the Christian Faith" (like the Longer Genevan Catechism within *Forme of Prayers*[90]), it materialized in *Foirm* as "Modh Ceasnuighe na n-oganach sol chaithis Suipēr an Tighearna agas Foirceadul Aithghearr an Chreidimh Chrīostaidhe" [Manner of examining children before they be admitted to the Lord's Supper, and Shorter Catechism on the Christian Faith].[91] This echoed the title of the Genevan Shorter Catechism[92] as translated in the 1565 *Forme of Prayers* where it was appended to the Longer Catechism, as had been done in the Genevan French and English predecessors. Carswell changed things by omitting the Longer Catechism and creatively adapting the Shorter one. He did acknowledge the Genevan source of his materials[93] but he also tacitly availed of a Scottish one for his own supplementary expansions, viz. the 1560

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[90] Translation of Calvin's *Le catéchisme*. Modern Engl.: Calvin, "Calvin's Catechism, 1542."

[91] *Foirm*, 95–113 / *BCO Gaelic*, 205–235 (also English).

[92] Modern Engl.: Calvin, "The Little Catechism, 1556."

[93] *Foirm*, 11, line 349 / 180.

Confession of Faith. And just as the shape and contents of the liturgical part of *Foirm* were from Geneva and Strasbourg, the structure of its catechism redacted by Carswell was Calvin's, whose immediate model had been his mentor in Strasbourg, Martin Bucer.[94] The Reformation catechetical archetypes had emanated from Luther in Wittenberg (1529). The templates he adopted were twofold and became standard. First: both small and large catechisms, and second: the question-and answer format, with echoes at least of the dialogical Socratic method revived by Renaissance humanism.[95] But the emerging interrogative method of indoctrination derived from a technique used in the world of late-medieval dissent and among "forerunners of the Reformation." Both the Franco-Italian Waldensians and the Bohemian Brethren had catechisms of this kind – the Waldensian *Interrogaciones menors*, and the Bohemian one published in 1521, republished in German and presented to Luther in 1522 as *Kinderfragen*.[96] These were the protypes of Protestant Reformation catechisms. The Bohemians, the Waldensians, Luther, Bucer, Calvin and Carswell all faced the same problem endemic in Western Christianity: how to educate not only children in the faith, but also ignorant adults and poorly educated clergy in confused situations – especially in the transition to a reformed church with its stress on cognitive faculties other than visual. Catechism in the vernacular was part of the answer.

The Genevan Shorter Catechism was truly short, having 16 brief questions and answers. Carswell expanded these to 65. The Strasbourg and Genevan catechisms were intentionally not overtly contentious, but Carswell's introduces controversial elements and tones presupposing debate. They related to polemical criticisms of the old "false" faith and offered theological reasons to abandon it. Issues raised explicitly were: the exclusive

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[94] Notably, *Der kürtzer Catechismus*. For Calvin, see also Freudenberg, "Catechisms."

[95] *Der große Katechismus / Der kleine Catechismus* – see *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 17, 711–715.

[96] Fudge, "Luther and the Hussite Catechism." Texts of both in *Die Katechismen.*

authority of the Word of God in Scripture, divine rather than human norms; Christ as sole

mediator and intercessor excluding the saints, but who with Mary can still be honoured; the

sufficiency of the sole redemptive sacrifice of Christ, so that Mass as satisfaction or sacrifice

is superfluous; God (not the Church) forgives repentant sinners, who strive after

righteousness in consequence; only God's law binds the conscience; the innovations of the

Old Church have concealed the ancient true original; divinely commanded rejection of

inanimate images that deflect from human needs; two sacraments only and as seals rather

than means of salvation; no transubstantiation of the elements or physical presence of Christ

at Communion and so on. An understanding of this gear change is that while Genevan non-

polemical catechisms had existing Reformation communities primarily in mind, Carswell's

version also aimed to convert Catholics. Post-Tridentine hostilities, sharp confessionalization,

and the concern of the "Second Reformation" with "pure worship" and sanctification made

the Argyll man's catechetical approach understandable – but not inevitable. Luther, Calvin

and Bucer had agreed that religious instruction should not be manifestly polemical – Calvin

most notably in the preface to his 1545 Latin Catechism, where he warned against

"disseminating matters of controversy in religion."[97] And the use of the Genevan catechisms

for Protestant evangelization in Catholic France was also non-confrontational.

INSERT FIGURE 21.3 WITH CAPTION HERE

REPERCUSSIONS OF *FOIRM*

On the short-term impact of *Foirm*, one can point to two marks. One is from 1574 when the

6th earl of Argyll, Colin Campbell, was on a progress through the west Highlands exercising

authority and implementing official policies. The earl:

> mindful of the policy of the Church, established ministers and readers at each parish church ...
> including the prayers, administration of the sacraments and form of discipline according to

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[97] Calvinus, "Catechismus," 72, lines 18-19.

the order of Geneva translated from English into the Irish language by Master John Carswell, late bishop of the Isles.[98]

This underlined how much the Kirk depended on the secular authority to implement the Reformation, and that the official liturgical medium in the region for public worship was to be Gaelic and no longer Church Latin.

The other indicator is from Ireland which Carswell had also explicitly targeted. In 1571 a Protestant religious primer and catechism in Irish was published in Dublin. It was the first Irish Gaelic book printed, and the second Gaelic one after *Foirm*. The author was a clergyman in the Reformed Church of Ireland: Cambridge-educated John Kearney (d.*c.*1587).[99] Subsidized by the Old-English Irish family in Dublin, the Usshers, the work's title was "Irish ABC and Catechism" (*Aibidil Gaoidhheilge & Caiticiosma*).[100] Its modern edition shows that Kearney's drew from sources like the English *Book of Common Prayer* and the Scottish *Forme of Prayers*. But there is also unmistakable evidence that he used Carswell's Gaelic *Foirm*. In a section with a title echoing *Foirm*, namely, "Foirm Urrnaighte" [form of prayers] containing 10 prayers, the first 4 are from Carswell's Gaelic edition.[101] This proves that *Foirm* was known in Irish Gaelic circles as part of a shared, Reformed devotional pool in Ireland and Britain sources in the wider European Reformation.

AN EARLY SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY GAELIC CATECHISM IN SCOTLAND

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[98] *CSP Scot.* 5, 34 (extract modernized by me).

[99] On him see Kearney, *Aibidil*, editor's Introduction, 3–6; Cunningham, "Kearney, John"; Williams, "Kearney [Carney], John."

[100] Kearney, *Aibidil*, 50–157.

[101] See de Bhaldraithe, "Leabhar Charswell"; Kearney, *Aibidil*, 89–103, and the editor's commentary and notes, 15–16, 168–174, 180–184.

After 1567 it was not until well into the 17th century that other texts in Scotland were published in Gaelic. One was the above-mentioned translation (1630/31)[102] from the Latin version of the Genevan Longer Catechism, being only the second Gaelic book published in Scotland. This catechism was indeed long, with 373 questions. It was the English version derived from Calvin's original French (1542), published with the 1565 *Forme of Prayers* (Book of Common Order). Rather than translate it, Carswell produced his own expanded edition of the Genevan Little Catechism amounting to 500 lines.[103] The Long Catechism's fourfold structure corresponds to that of Calvin's *Institutes*: Creed –Commandments – Lord's Prayer – Sacraments. It is hard to say anything certain about the 1630/31 edition other than confirm its publication (one extant copy) and that it was a translation of Calvin's Latin version. **FIGURE 21.4 WITH CAPTION HERE** Moreover, it was in the literary early-modern Irish quite different from the vernacular of Scottish or Irish Gaels, so that the target was chiefly learned ministers. Editor Thomson noted that "We are quite in the dark about the genesis of [this] Gaelic version,"[104] partly because the original title page is missing. The translator and sponsor are unknown, although there is a sense that Neill MacEwen of the well-known bardic family may have been involved in what was a conservative, elevated Classical Common Gaelic translation.

The impact of the edition is not discernible. It was not symptomatic of a scholastic Calvinism or Reformed orthodoxy in Scotland at the time. Its choice reflects a partiality for the original Calvin rather than "Calvinism"; new editions in English of the Genevan Catechism were on publishers lists at the time. The Catechism embodied the early Reformer,

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[102] *Adtimchiol*, 1–112.

[103] For a sketch of Latin and English catechisms published in 16th-century Scotland after 1560, see Hazlett, "Confessions and Catechisms," 193–195, 201–202.

[104] Introduction to *Adtimchiol*, xxxv–xli (there: xxxiii). On the unknown title page, see ibid., xii, 113.

broadly Protestant and Humanist attuned to Christian tradition, concerned with restoring

original Christianity – and thereby the uncontaminated Calvin. There was (appropriately for

catechumens) no highlighting of either double predestination or prior divine decrees or

original sin, and no explicit anti-Roman polemic.

<div align="center">CATHOLIC RE-ENTRY INTO THE GÀIDHEALTACHD</div>

Much historiography of remnant Catholicism in Gaelic Scotland consists of accounts of

heroic semi-underground priests, hazardous missions, catalogues of crypto-Catholic gentry

(or their wives) or openly Catholic chiefs like the MacDonalds, as well as of resistant districts

or networks loyal to the old faith, symbols of steadfastness. There are also broader studies, as

on the cross-North Channel dimensions of the rebooting of Scottish Gaelic Catholicism by

missioners from Ireland with a Continental background. These accounts go back to Cathal

Giblin.[105] They focus on the interface between the Irish northeast and Scottish northwest

coasts. The picture illustrates a world of religio-political ferment rather than just one of

various creedal conformities grounded in cultural traditionalism, apathy, nominal profession,

or resentful resignation. Catholic districts and enclaves (often deprived of priests) as well as

indigenous, ex-Catholic Protestant communities (often short of ministers) were the focus of

often clandestine Catholic missions and usually protected by a local chief as lay patron. The

missions originated mostly in Ireland or the Continent and were necessarily in the Gaelic

language. However, the precise natures of the prior, syncretic popular Christianity, of

traditional folk Catholicism, or of the alleged veneer of Reformed Christianity in some Gaelic

localities are hard to capture. Yet there are veins of folk religion in the *Carmina Gadelica* – a

"treasure-trove of popular piety,"[106] in which there is some blurring of demarcation lines

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[105] Giblin, "Irish Mission"; Giblin, *Irish Franciscan Mission;* recent contributions from Scotland include Macdonald, *Missions to the Gaels*, chapters 2 and 4; Spurlock, "Confessionalization and Clan Cohesion"; see also Roberts, "Roman Catholicism," 64–71.

[106] MacGregor, "Church and Culture," 6; cf. Roberts, "Roman Catholicism," 67–68

between the profane and the sacred, superstition and the Christian. In Gaelic-speaking Catholic areas (at least in Ireland), the faithful were alerted that itinerant preachers and religious texts in the vernacular could be heretical – a very traditional anxiety everywhere in medieval Europe about the use of the vernacular in religion outside canonically approved mechanisms. The specific content of the reinvigorated missionary and re-evangelizing theology advocated by the new Catholic evangelists is not obvious. Below, however, will be suggestions about the kind of hymn sheets they may have sung from.

From the perspective of Protestant Lowland Scotland, Catholic proselytizing activities in the far west, however deplorable, were on the isolated fringes of the country. From the perspective of Scottish and Irish (or at least Ulster) Gaeldom, however, Catholic revival in Gaelic Scotland was facilitated via the Sea of Moyle triangle of north Antrim, Islay, and the Mull of Kintyre; this pond provided a convenient means of access. The Franciscan friary of Bonamargy (patrons being the MacDonnells, earls of Antrim) on the north Antrim coast, also became an Iona substitute and haven for pious, Scottish Catholic Gaels. Bonamargy priory became part of a network of Catholic resistance, re-conversion and Gaelic-language succour and mission spearheaded by Franciscans in recently conquered Ulster and in the increasingly government-harassed Highlands.[107] **INSERT FIGURE 21.5 WITH CAPTION HERE** There were at least four negative factors. First: Roman hesitancy. Second: opposition from Lowland Scottish Catholic exiles dismissive of Gaels and resentful about "foreign" Irish involvement. Third: xenophobic and anti-Gael scepticism from the Old English Catholic establishment in Ireland. Fourth: no unanimity among the two-sided Irish and Scottish diaspora. Despite all this, strategic plans for the enterprise had developed in Louvain among

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[107] See Macdonald, *Mission to the Gaels*, 55–96; Spurlock, "Confessionalization and Clan Cohesion," 177–178; Roberts, "Roman Catholicism," 64–67; Mac Cuarta, "The Catholic Church in Ulster," 127, 129; Mac Cuarta, "Scots Catholics in Ulster," 145–146; O'Connor, "Irish Franciscan Networks," 281, 284–285; Harris, "Irish Franciscan Mission," 208.

some Ulster Irish exiles and a handful of Scottish Gaels.[108] The mission was eventually

inaugurated in 1619, progressing in fits and starts. From 1626 it used Bonamargy as its

logical base for the Scottish mission. The new papally authorized and Spanish-backed Irish

Catholic college in Louvain, St Anthony's (originating in 1607, erected 1618), provided the

theological and vernacular publishing wherewithal, particularly a press with Irish fonts.

Support for the mission came from various western Scottish, and especially Ulster, clans for

both religious and political reasons in their closely interwoven and rapidly changing world

due to Protestant immigration associated with the Ulster Plantation driven by James VI & I.

The religious zeal availed of Spanish Counter Reformation expertise mediated to Irish

exiles in Salamanca and the Spanish Netherlands. Still, if very low on the agenda of

Propaganda Fide, at least personal papal intervention seems to have been necessary to kick-

start the plan.[109] A spiritual strength of the Scottish mission was that it was an albeit minor

part of the Tridentine grand project to make or remake the entire known world Catholic.[110]

Despite local successes of varying degrees of credibility, the mission suffered from multiple

handicaps, ecclesiastical, cultural, and political as well as some intimidation and other

intrinsic weaknesses.

Catholic catechesis in Gaelic

From 1533 onwards, following both the bilingual publication (1531) and wide dissemination

of the Augsburg Confession and the bestseller catechisms by Luther and later Calvin,

numerous Catholic catechisms also appeared throughout Europe.[111] These included the

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[108] See especially Harris, "Irish Franciscan Mission."

[109] According to the *DIB* on "Hugh MacCaghwell" by Mac Craith. Deviating from standard interpretation, Spurlock emphasizes Roman reluctance, "Confessionalisation and Clan Cohesion," 172.

[110] Ryan, "A Wooden Key," 231.

[111] For a survey see, for example, *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 17, 729–731.

officially sanctioned *Catechismus Romanus* (1566). Most were in Latin, others were composed in, or translated into, the vernacular. Unlike Protestant catechisms, they made less use of the question-answer format and were mostly teaching manuals or aids for use by teacher-priests, ranging from a few to hundreds of pages.

Between 1611 and 1618, three catechetical manuals in Irish Gaelic were printed in the Spanish Netherlands, aimed at partly the Gaelic "Irish abroad" and partly Gaels in Ireland exposed to the Protestant Reformation. One can, however, surmise that Ulster Gaelic-speaking Catholic missioners in Scotland, directed by Donegal bard and musician, Cornelius Ward (d.1641) and Patrick Brady, both St Anthony's Louvain graduates,[112] were familiar with the content of these volumes and their Gaelic theological idiom, disseminated by preaching and teaching. They likely also availed of summaries in Gaelic verse of such texts that had been made abroad – Ward was a poet.

First: in 1611 there was *A Teagasg críosdaidhe* [The Christian catechism] by Giolla Brighde Ó hEódhasa (Bonaventura O'Hussey, *c.*1570–1614), Ulsterman, notable hereditary bard and master-poet, Gaelic grammarian, and Franciscan. This pedagogically realistic work, the first book of Roman Catholic instruction published in Irish Gaelic, was partly verse (for analphabetic catechumens), partly expository prose (for literate teachers). As a compendium and not dialogical, it constituted a source book for the authentic Catholic understanding of core Christian piety and other devotions rather than for dogmas. This material of this catechism, like the others below, also reflects the influential catechisms by Dutch and Italian Jesuits, Peter Canisius and Roberto Bellarmino, both leading popular apologists of Tridentine reform Catholicism

Then from 1616 there appeared a substantial devotional and apologetic handbook, *Desiderius: Sgáthán an chrábhaidh* [mirror of devotion] by a qualified top-rank poet, Flaithrí

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[112] On both see McInally, *Sixth Scottish University*, 182–187.

Ó Maoil Chonaire (Florence Conry or Conroy, d.1629). He was a Salamanca-educated

Franciscan, Gaelic-Irish political patriot in essentialist Catholic terms and initial campaigner

for St Anthony's College. Like John Carswell in Scotland, Conroy had no inferiority complex

about Gaelic culture, especially in his native Connacht and in Ulster. Chiefly a translation of

parts of a Catalan spiritual text rich in allegory (*Spill de la vida religiosa*) his *Sgáthán* availed

of other sources as well. Conroy's plain-language text was for use by educated clergy and

loyal Catholics in harassed circumstances. Moreover, while only in MS form, a basic

question-and-answer catechism translated from Spanish into Irish Gaelic by Conroy in 1593

may also have been available.

Third: the *Scáthán shacramuinte na hAithridhe* [mirror of the sacrament of penance]

(including indulgences) by Aodh Mac Cathmhaoil, *aka* Mac Aingil (Hugh MacCaghwell,

c.1571–1626).[113] This work of 1617, recalled by the author as the centenary of the

Reformation's beginning, reflected Council of Trent reforms intended to correct traditional

aberrations on a topic – easy pardons – the Reformation's catalyst in 1517. Session 14 of the

Council (1551) had now defined the doctrine of penitential satisfaction as clear and manifest

"catholica veritas," and session 25 (1563) had urged "moderation" in indulgences and the

elimination of "superstition and ignorance." MacCaghwell was a cosmopolitan Ulsterman

prudently loyal to James VI & I, language pupil of O'Hussey, scholastic theologian and

rector of St Anthony's in Louvain, and a Franciscan with Spanish, French and Italian

experience. Encouraged by the Pope in person, he along with Conroy helped instigate the

Scottish Gaelic mission in 1618/19. The preface (1617) to his Catholic reformist and not

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[113] For MacCaghwell, Conry, and O'Hussey, see *ODNB* and *DIB* (in latter, O'Hussey is
under *Ó hEódhasa*); Meigs, *Reformations in Ireland*, 81–84, Giblin, "Irish Mission," Giblin,
Irish Franciscan Mission, and Mac Craith, "Political and Religious Thought." There are
modern text-editions of O'Hussey by F. Mac Raighnaill (1976), of Conroy by T.F. O'Rahilly
(1942), and of MacCaghwell by C. Mooney (1952). For other and recent studies see
Walsham, "Wholesome Milk," 115, nn. 78 and 79.

otherwise polemical book contained colourful anti-Reformation sentiments, referring to "Luther MacLucifer" and (more implausibly) the corpulent and "sensuous Calvin," sodomite abuser of boys.[114] In contrast with the more formal style of O'Hussey, MacCaghwell's Gaelic was primarily for a lay audience in ordinary prose peppered with rhetorical flourishes and rich in the edifying piety of late-medieval religious tales and allegories.[115] Availing of Humanist norms of accommodation in presentation, his concern was with lay religious education, instilling core Christian values and correct(ed) Catholic practices in an Irish Gaelic vernacular more serviceable than literary High Irish.

No longer feasible, the mission folded in 1641, its nostalgic legacy being a remnant but enduring, reformed Catholic presence in Scottish Gaeldom. In the last analysis, the mission did little more than "sew a Catholic fringe on to the frayed ends of the Kirk in western Scotland" and as a religio-political "sleeper operation" which never wakened up.[116] However, it helped complete the details on the canvas of Reformation history in Scotland (and Ireland).

<div align="center">SOME CONCLUSIONS</div>

Invoking wider perspectives, three things come into mind. First: historians have not acknowledged that the first Protestant catechism edited and published by a Scot was John Carswell. That recognition has usually gone to Knox's successor, John Craig (1581), although Latin catechisms in 1573 by Patrick Adamson and Robert Pont preceded his effort. This is fair enough, as he was a sole author, whereas Carswell's creation was his expansion of

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[114] Quoted from MacCaghwell in Mac Craith, "Political and Religious Thought," 196, 197; the original source of this aspersion in Catholic propaganda was the polemical *Vie de Calvin* by ex-Genevan minister, Jérôme Bolsec (1577).

[115] Drawn from the edifying anthology: *Magnum speculum exemplorum.* On the praxis-orientation of Conry and MacCaghwell, see Ryan, "A Wooden Key," 221–225.

[116] Harris, "Irish Franciscan Mission," 223.

Calvin's Little Catechism. It did not help the acknowledgement of Carswell's effort that the catechism was never published separately and that it has been mostly inaccessible due to being in Gaelic only.

Second: If *Foirm* and the other Gaelic texts were successful in Scotland, one obvious reason was their approval by the official national Church whose concept of Reformation was not just that of a "trickle down" one. An contrast to Gaelic Ireland, Gaelic Scotland benefitted from having a Gaelic magnate family at the heart of both government and church and which was committed to the Protestant Reformation cause, such as the Campbells. As with religion anywhere else in pre-modern Europe, implementation of controversial change depended critically on cooperation between civil and ecclesiastical authorities but was more likely to succeed if the political leader(s) had strong religious motivation.

Thirdly: this chapter helps illustrate Reformation Scotland's participation in the wider pool of Renaissance and Reformation thinking which blew in from beyond the seas in a process of transmission, transference, reception and dissemination via various staging posts and languages We have seen how the content of *Foirm*, Carswell's augmented catechism and the Genevan Longer Catechism followed (with obvious mutations) a circuitous route to Gaelic Scotland originating to one extent or another in Wittenberg, Strasbourg, Frankfurt, Francophone Geneva, English-refugee Geneva and Edinburgh through modes of German, French, Latin, English and finally Gaelic. But ownership was common. Likewise, in the Roman Catholic missions to Gaelic Scotland, reform and Counter Reformation ideas and materials putatively used were "made in" Louvain, Spain and Trent but delivered in Gaelic via Ulster. In short Christendom or cosmopolitan Christianity, functioning freely across national and regional borders since the 4th century AD, was still a reality, even if the frozen face of its sacrosanct "oneness" and uniformity had now melted.

Accordingly, the incompatible religious waters which formed a confluence in the world of Reformation-era Gaelic Scotland had diverse sources within and outwith the country. In their progress, the tributaries flowed, were redirected and absorbed in contrasting ways, literary and oral. And as in most European contexts north of the Alps not subject to an enforced principle of *eius religio cuius religio* like in the Holy Roman Empire or the confessionally partitioned Swiss Confederation, the de facto outcome in Gaelic Scotland as in all-Scotland was (to the dismay of those claiming possession of truth) no absolute clean sweep for either of the confessional contenders.

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