

## **CHAPTER 7.**

### **OTHER NOTABLE CLAN DONALD**

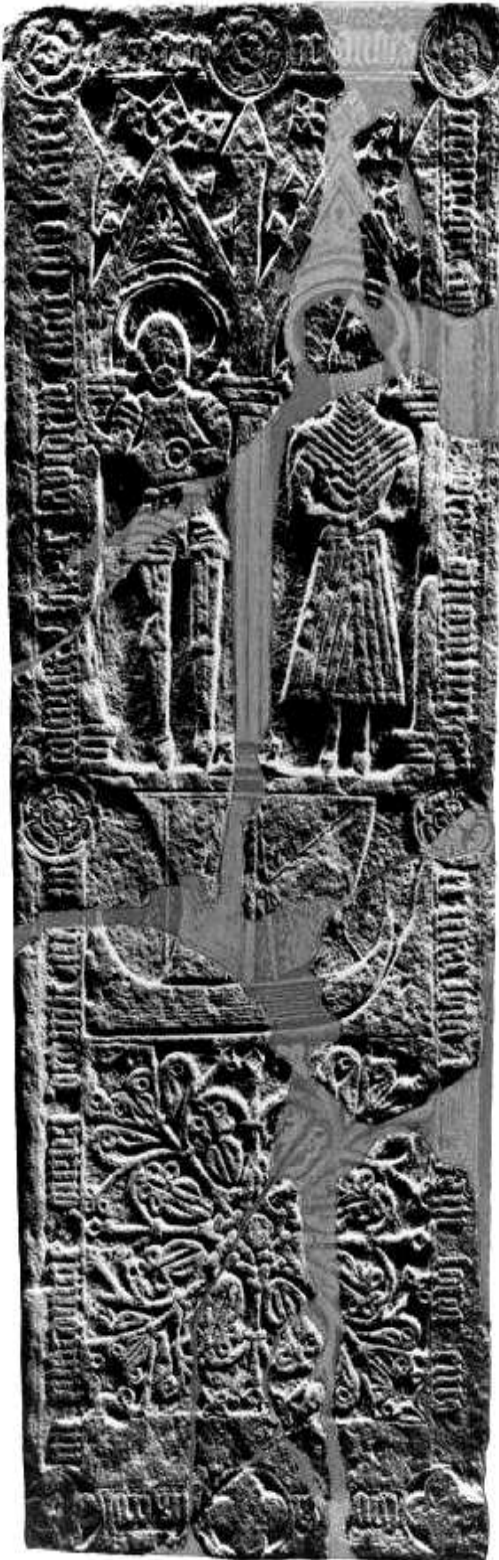
### **INSCRIBED MONUMENTS**

**JOHN MacIAIN'S** sept :- Angus Og's half brother was John (Iain) Sprangach; "*John the Bold*". He was the founder of the **MACIAINS OF ARDNAMURCHAN** (he died c1330).

Their chiefs were great warriors at the battles of Harlaw 1411 and Inverlochy 1431.

Slab No 183. Museum Display No 107.

(But in St Ronan's Chapel, unrestored. Why isn't it in the museum?)



**“HERE LIES JOHN MACIAIN**

(MACDONALD)

**LORD OF ARDNAMURCHAN**

(Killed 1518)

**MARIOTA MACIAIN**

**HIS SISTER, WIFE OF MALCOLM  
MACDUFFIE LORD OF DUNEVIN IN  
COLONSAY, BOUGHT THIS STONE  
FOR HER BROTHER”** (made 1500-09.)

(Black-Letter raised script in border around perimeter)

Stone-Mason : Mael-Sechlainn O’Cuinn, ex Iona – p.63, S&B.

**1494** - Sir John Cathanach (g/son of Donald Balloch, Clan Ian Mor) hangs King James IV's governor of Dunaverty castle, Kintyre, seized from John by the crown after the Lordship's fall 1493. This was done supposedly in site of the King sailing away.

**1499** – In retribution, James IV granted John MacIain a charter for part of Islay in a conspiracy to ferment clan Donald discord (already being a dispute over Sunart near Ardnamurchan). MacIain, being led by the complicit 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Argyll <sup>1</sup>, Master of the Royal Household (his father in law, who also had imprisoned Donald Dubh), “*treacherously captured*” his MacDonnell kinsmen at Finlaggan :- Sir John Cathanach the Chief of Clan Ian Mor (Dunyuvaig & Glens) and his two or three sons. All of them were later hanged in Boroughmuir, Edinburgh. MacIain's sons, Somerled and Donald, then hounded the two other sons of MacDonnell, Alexander and **Angus Ileach**, throughout the Glens of Antrim, “*cutting down the woods*” “*to exterminate them root and branch*”. After costing MacIain “*much wealth of gold & silver,*” and the death of his son Somerled, a truce and a contract was made with Alexander. It was sealed by him marrying MacIain's daughter Catherine. Their children include:-

- 2<sup>nd</sup> eldest son - James (Dunyuvaig) married *Lady Agnes Campbell*;
- Middle son - “Colla”; his son is the famous *Coll Coitach* father of hero *Alasdair MacColla* of the Colonsay Macdonnells;
- Youngest son - famous *Sorley Boy Macdonnell*, ancestor of the Earls of Antrim. Married Mary O’Neill, daughter of the Earl of Tyrone, Ireland.

<sup>1</sup> “*To carry out his revenge, he summonsed Argyle (f/n (46) Archibald Roe, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Argyle) – for an Argyle was always found as an executioner when any chieftain of the Macdonnells (MacDonalds) was to be done to death*”. By G. Hill (non-subscribing Presbyterian Minister, Queen's Uni, Belfast); *The Macdonnells of Antrim*; 1873. p.34. **John Mor, Clan Ian Mor, brother of Donald (II) of Harlaw, was murdered by James Campbell in 1425 on the orders of his kinsman King James I.**

**c.1518** - However, the MacDonnell son above, Alexander, with Donald Galda of Lochalsh and others, eventually took some revenge for his family's hanging and killed his wife's father, John MacIain and three of his remaining sons in the continuing struggle for clan leadership after the fall of the Lordship. The other son, Somerled MacIain, who was killed in 1499 by Alexander in Antrim, had a son named Alan – see the graveslab inscription for Alan's son *Tamhas* - Inscription 52, Kildalton, Islay.

In another twist of fate, the MacIains returned to occupy land in all three Parishes of Islay and Alexander MacIain, nephew of this Somerled, was even accepted at the last Clan Donald Council of the Isles, on Eigg, in July 1545; almost all of the old vassals of the Lordship united under Donald Dubh, last "*Lord of ye Ilis and Erll of Roiss*" – died 1545, Ireland. (Only son of Angus Og *Master Isles*, son of Lord John (II)).

In 1625 the MacIains made an abortive rebellion against the aggrandisement of the Campbell family.<sup>1</sup>

John MacIain's sister Mariota's own graveslab is at the Oransay Priory. "*Here lies Mariota, daughter of Alexander, son of Johannes MacIain*" (died c. 1530). Her husband, MacDuffie was patron of the Oransay School of carving where the above slab No. 183 was made for John MacIain.

## MAC IAIN GHIORR – THIEVED TWO SLABS FROM IONA.

"This man *Mac Iain Ghiorr* (Mac Ian Year) whose name is proverbial in the West Highlands for that of a master thief was one of the MacIains of Ardnamurchan, a persecuted race". This is from the "*The Gaelic Other World*" – **the wonderful Rev. John Gregorson Campbell's "Superstitions of the Highlands and Islands...etc"**.<sup>2</sup> "Many tales are told of his skill in thieving, and the accomplishment is said to have been bestowed upon him by a glaistig."

This Archibald's skill is very relevant to Clan Donald graveslabs - that are missing!

He was of the "Macdonald's of Mingarry" in Ardnamurchan and he had a brother Ronald. The book assigns him a *floruit* of 1624-94.

Commentary p.315 : " ... his new property was Grigadale near Ardnamurchan Point and that **he was believed to have brought two sculptured slabs from Iona to mark his parent's grave at Kilchoan**".

There is a cemetery there and it would be very worth exploring to attempt recovery – and undo the "wonderful gift of theft" bestowed on Archibald by that Glaistig. ("Green lady"- fairy)



Kilchoan cemetery, Ardnamurchan.

He obviously did not take the slab of John MacIain, d. 1518. Which ones may he have stowed in his famous boat?

***"One side black and one side grey  
Like Mac Ian Year's boat."***

From the proverb:- those who saw it passing would not recognise it on its return!

<sup>1</sup> Clan, King, and Covenant: History of the Highland Clans from the Civil War ... ; John Leonard Roberts; 2000.

<sup>2</sup> *The Gaelic Otherworld: Superstitions Of The Highlands And Islands Of Scotland And Witchcraft & Second Sight In The Highlands & Islands*. Ed. R Black; 2005. pps 97, 357.



## Ranald of Clanranald.

Ian Macdonnell, High Chief's Tour 2011.



Slab 154/83. Attributed (by author) to the eponymous **Ranald of Clanranald, d. 1386.**

**NOTE:** Slab's very close similarity to 157/87 which I tentatively attribute to his father John I, d.1386. Both have a large foliated cross at the top, a small inscription panel near the centre and animals with plant scrolls at the bottom; only swap the galley for a sword. (see Ranald's inscribed cross shaft next page.)

### Ranald of Clanranald's slab (?)

**The inscription was "almost worn smooth," but as "I think it reads" by the experienced and very well qualified, respected Professor R MacAlister in 1913:-**

**"HIC IACET RANALDUS MACDOMNUILL" –**

It is on ARGYLL VOL 4 Inventory, <sup>1</sup> slab No. 154 where it is said that the inscription "two-line in Lombardic capitals (ie, before 1500) now illegible". MacAlister's measurements for his slab No. 112 exactly match slab 154/83 in VOL 4. *MacDomnuill* was not a common clan surname then, but it is the Chief's "*de Isles*" family or kin [sur]name to which especially he would have been entitled at that time.

**R. A. S. MACALISTER, Dr. Litt; M.A.,**  
**PROFESSOR CELTIC ARCHAEOLOGY,**  
**UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN. – VISITED**  
**IONA 1913:** his '*An inventory of the ancient monuments remaining in the island of Iona*', Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, No 48: pps 421-30; 1914. **He was responsible for editing the catalogue of all known ogham inscriptions from Great Britain and Ireland.**

Many of his translations of Irish myths and legends are still widely used today. (Also his : *Clonmacnoise Memorial Slabs*; 1900. *Corpus Inscriptionum Insularum Celticarum*, 2 vols; 1949. And more)

He was elected to the Royal Irish Academy in 1910, and was president of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland from 1924 to 1928. [For some reason the RCAHMS appear to have totally ignored what is clearly an expert opinion.]

This Iona School 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century dated graveslab could very well be for Ranald, son of Lord John (I), who died late 14<sup>th</sup> century (c.1385), the eponym and founder of Clanranald and known to be buried in Reilig Odhráin – and it was later moved to the "Cathedral" for protection where MacAlister read it. It is certain to be a Clan Donald monument. Many of his line were buried in turn in the same tomb in Reilig Odhrain (as per the custom described).

**"Ranald, the eldest son of John of Isla, who resigned in favour of his brother Donald, received a princely heritage by charter from his father, and that he realised the responsibilities attached to the possession of such wide territories is confirmed by the testimony of MacVurich, who speaks of him as 'a man of augmenting churches and monasteries. He bestowed an Unciata of land in Uist on the monastery of Iona forever in honour of God and of Columba'." (CLAN DONALD, p.473)**

<sup>1</sup> ARGYLL : *An Inventory of the Monuments VOL 4 IONA*"; Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS); 1982.

**Ranald, founder of Clanranald & Glengarry branches.**

Died 1386. Son of Lord of the Isles, John I and Amy MacRuairi. His cross shaft from **Texa Island**, off Port Ellen, Islay. Now in **Museum of Scotland**. (Oransay School?-ie, sails always unfurled.



Inscription 49: **“HEC EST CRUX REGNALDI IOHANNES DE YSLE”**. **“This is the cross of Reginaldus, son of Iohannes, of Islay”**.

(See his possible graveslab previous page.)

**Donald (II) of Harlaw’s wife : Dame Mary of the Ile, Lady of the Ylis and of Rosse.**



Her cross shaft with damaged head from **Eilean Mor, Knapdale**; c.1430. Now in **Museum of Scotland** (Iona School carving.).

Inscription 80 : **“MARIOTA DE ROS INSULARUM DOMINA ET IOHANNES PRESPITER AC HEREMITA ISTE INSULE ME FIERA FECERUNT.”**- **“Mariota de Ros, Lady of the Isles, and Iohannes, priest and hermit of this island, caused me to be made.”**

**Sir John MacAlister**. (**“Iohannis macalistaire”**). His grave slab from **Texa Island**, off Port Ellen, Islay. (c.1500+). Now in **Museum of Scotland**.



Inscription 50 : **“...IOHANNES IOHANNIS MACALISTAIRE RECTOR DE.....MAURICIUS MACAEDA VICARIUS EIDEM.....”**

Rendered by RCAHMS (p.129; S&B) with aid of history as : **“Here lies Sir John, son of John MacAlister, parson of Gigha. Muireach MacKay, vicar of same, caused me to be made”**.

Because of the repeat Christian name and hereditary nature of ecclesiastical positions, this is probably a grandson of **John MacAlister, Abbot of Iona**, d. 1421. (MacDonalds were pushed out of Iona by the local Macleans and

MacKinnons after the Lordship collapsed 1493). Therefore, if correct, this confirms him as a **MacAlasdair** descendant of Alexander Og from whom many (or most?) MacAllisters were descended in any case in Islay and Kintyre from c.1318 (not from his uncle Alexander Mor).

**R C Graham, Carved Stones of Islay; 1885; pl xxix, 102.**

“A broken slab from the island of Texa, having on it the figure of an ecclesiastic in a niche. In his hands there is a chalice, and the chasuble is very richly ornamented. There is an inscription round the edge, with rosettes at the corners.”

**Mariota MacIain**. (MacDonald, Ardnamurchan)



Died c. 1530. Her graveslab at the **Oransay Priory**.

Inscription 34 :

**“HIC IACET....MARIOTA ALEXANDRI IOHANNES MACEAIN”**

**“Here lies .....Mariota, daughter of Alexander, son of Johannes MacIain.”**

The principal figure depicted on the grave-slab is that of a laywoman. Mariota is the sister to John MacIain, Lord of Ardnamurchan.

Dugall MacIain became Prior of Oransay in 1426.

Mariota was married to Malcolm MacDuffie of Colonsay, the promoter and patron of the Oransay school of carving.



Tamhas son of Alan son of Somerled MacIain –

KILDALTON, ISLAY. (inside church)



The grandfather, Somerled, son of John MacIain (see slab 183 above) was killed by Alexander Macdonnell in Antrim 1499.

(Black-letter) Inscription No 52 :-

*“hic iacet.....alani sorleti maceain”*

“Here lies ....., son of Alanus, son of Somerledus MacIain”.

FINLAGGAN, ISLAY (inside Chapel)

It is not Sir Donald Gallda; Died c. 1519.



(Black-letter) Inscription No 41 :-

*“hic iacet donaldus filius patricii celestini.”*

“Here lies Donaldus, son of Patricius, son of Celestinus”. *Carved Stones of Islay*; Robert C. Graham – 1885.

“Celestine of Lochalsh was brother to John, fourth Lord of the Isles.”

“Donald cannot be identified as a Macdonald, unless he was a grandson of Celestinus of Lochalsh, son of Alexander, Lord of the Isles. But, Celestinus is not recorded as having a son named Patrick, nor was this a MacDonald forename in any case.” (LMMSWH\* - S&B).

**Celestinus is the Latin equivalent of Gaelic Gill-easbuig.** The chaplain of Finlaggan in 1508 had this surname – Sir Malcolm MacGill-easbuig. (*Makgillespy*; 1527)

Lands in Finlaggan itself were held in 1541 by **Donald McIlllapy** (MacGill-easbuig). The stone may be his.

(\* *“Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands”*; Steer & Bannerman; RCAHMS; 1977. “S&B”)



**SLAB NO. 536. Iona school.** [9<sup>th</sup> Report and Inventory of Monuments and Constructions in the Outer Hebrides, Skye and the Small Isles (HMSO, 1928)]

**AONGHAS NA GAOITHE -“ANGUS OF THE STORMS”** [buried under it.]

*“HIC IACET ANGUSIUS IOHANNIS”* - “here lies Angusius, son of Iohannes. Lombardic Inscription No 4.; Kilmuir, Skye. **Iona school** [LMMSWH].

The following passages are excerpts from the booklet, *“The Martins of Skye, a Short Family History”*, author unknown and printed by Alex. MacLaren & Sons, Glasgow.

**“The historical progenitor of the Skye Martins was then a soldier and sailor of some capacity and position in the early years of Queen Elizabeth (b.1553-d.1603), known as Aonghas na Gaoithe, or Angus of the Storms [sailed in any weather]. He is said to have had as a wife Biurnag (Bernice) who was a Danish Princess and alternatively, (or as a second spouse), the sister of his MacDonald chief (Donald Gorm Mor MacDhomhnuill). He also had a taste for writing poetry and sonnets, which led him into misfortune. The chief had married a MacLean (Mary MacLean), and this lady persistently solicited Angus to honour her with an ode. Disliking her intensely, he at last complied, with some most abusive lines in Gaelic, long preserved. Such an insult**

**rendered his residence in Skye unhealthy, and though the chief, in view of his relationship and undoubted status and capacity, bore Angus no hostility whatever, he arranged that he should leave Skye while his own wife lived.”**

.....Continued.

{ thanks to Edd MacDonald, Montana and Skye [Dir., Clan Donald Foundation] for his enquiry which spurred me on with Aonghas. }

“Aonghas, therefore sailed for Antrim to assist Sorely Boy (or Somhairle Buide) in the conquest of that province, taking with him a thousand Skyemen. In Ireland, he acted as Lieutenant to this kinsman, who became Earl, and his son Marquis of Antrim. Angus had seven sons, and some of these may well have continued to serve the Antrim branch of the MacDonald clan. They certainly obtained many grants of land in Ireland. (my note: perhaps this is why it is mistakenly thought that the surname Martin came originally from Ireland).

**At last the MacLean lady died, and Angus returned to Skye, stopping at Iona to annex a stone with a sculptured knight on it which still adorns the Martin burying place in Kilmuir, Trotternish.** His first act on landing was another ode to the MacLean lady, which he had graved on the stones marking the places where her coffin had rested. It is so abusive as to be unrepeatable, but has been preserved in the Gaelic to this day. Curiously, no one, not even the chief, in any way resented this effusion. Writing of the MacLean lady he says, "We" (that is the MacDonald clan) "never obtained any benefit from this marriage".

Angus named his son ‘Gille Mhartain’ or ‘servant of St. Martin’. His grandson, therefore, became known as ‘Mac Ghille Mhartain’ or ‘son of the servant of St. Martin’. Eventually, such a long title came to be shortened to ‘Martin’.

In all the clan battles, feuds and forays of the time, the Martins bore their share, as tacksmen (managers of estates) of the ‘Beallach’, a farm and property between Uig and the Quirang, at the pass or summit of the watershed, as its name implies. And so far as can be gathered, owing to their unbroken holding of this tenancy and the acquirement of additions, and later of Duntulum itself, and failing any evidence to the contrary, always maintaining a constant fealty to their MacDonald chief.”

**MARTIN**: Scottish: Anglicised form of Gaelic Mac Mhàrtainn [or Mac Mhàrtuinn], formerly Mac Gille Mhàrtainn, a patronymic from a personal name meaning ‘servant of [Saint]’. Martins are numerous on Skye (as are the McDonalds/Dhomhnaill) and Martins were actually a sept of the Donalds there. From the 2002 introduction on Martin Martin's 1695 book by Charles Withers,<sup>1</sup> it says “Martin's father Donald Martin, son of Gille-Mhàrtainn, son of Aonghas na Gaoithe, soldiered with the MacDonalds of Sleat under the Duke of Montrose.” It adds, “He married Mary (Mairi), the daughter of Alasdair, brother of the Domhnall (Donald/Donnell) Gorm Og of Sleat (in Skye). Martin Martin “was, therefore, a cousin to the (Donald) clan chiefs of his day”. This Mary's grandmother was also called Mary (& Margaret) and was a ‘Macdonnell’ from Ireland of The (Antrim) Glens and she was married to Skye MacDonald chief, Archibald Cleirich MacDonald, C1575. (Not the earlier Iain Mhoir, Tanister of Islay/Kintyre/Antrim and heiress Marjory Bissett of The Glens.)

These long ago, but close "connections" between Martins and "Macdonnells" is very interesting, including that on page 5 [f/n 1] it says that Martin Martin was a "Governor" (tutor) to Chief Dòmhnall a' Chogaidh of the Sleat (MacDonald) clan from 1681 to 1686.



**Left** :- Slabs of Clan Chiefs, Iona, “*the best men of the Isles*” (re-arranged, fenced by the Iona Club, 1854-59).

**They include a “Tomb” for the Chiefs of each of the Clan Donald Branches.** “*Each of these chief families of the Isles had its claim to a tomb in the Reilig Odhrain, if not by right of descent from the house of Somerled then by right of marriage into Clan Donald.*”

**Kilmuir graveyard sign on slab No 536.** “**Angus Martin [Aonghas na Gaoithe]**: According to tradition, this slab at the rear of the cemetery depicting a mailed figure, once marked the grave of an early Scottish King [Iona] but was stolen by Angus on one of his forays to be placed over his own grave. He is reputed to have carried it up on his back from the shore.”

Based on the evidence above and the medieval customs and rituals revealed for St Oran’s graveyard and chapel, it appears that this monument, slab No. 536, was deliberately chosen to be removed from Iona after the fall of the MacDonald Lordship and decline of Iona, to continue its ‘sacred’ use as the ancestral slab for this “*chief family of the Isles*“, Martin-MacDonald family on Skye. It does make any sense to go to such extraordinary lengths for just any random graveslab for a very special, personal purpose [even excluding the slab on his back story]. For example, he certainly would make absolutely sure that it was not a MacLean effigy over his bones. The slab is mid 14<sup>th</sup> to late 15<sup>th</sup> century and therefore this could make *Angus of the Winds* only one of many once buried under the “*tomb of his ancestors*” [many burials and/or slabs don’t have inscriptions]. But, he was denied the “*accumulating life-force of their spiritual dust.*” How many later Martins are buried under this relocated slab from Iona if it once again became the monument for their new sepulchre, the “*sacred storehouse and guardian of their bones*”? Where is Gille-Mhàrtainn, son of Aonghas na Gaoithe buried? [Martin Martin is buried in St Martin’s-in-the Field’s.]

**The “wonderful gift of theft” was not bestowed on AONGHAS NA GAOITHE.**

IAN ROSS MACDONNELL 2012. [IRM]

<sup>1</sup> Martin Martin : ‘A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland’; circa 1695; pps. 4,5.