

**IONA Grave Slab No. 150 – Inscription No 22, LOMBARDIC SCRIPT.**

ḤIC · ḤACET · CORPVS · / ENḠVSI · FILII · DOMINI /  
· ENḠVSI · MAC · / DOMNILL · / DE YLE

**It is Angus Og's slab (son of Angus Mor), d.1318.**

It is not for an unknown, unhistorical, unproven, non-existent son of Angus *Master of the Isles*, son of Lord John II, who is postulated as having died somewhere between 1517 to ?-1550-? (not known!) Also, this “father”, Angus *Master (Young Lord)* was never a genuinely recognized “de Yle”, formal head of Clan Donald, regardless of his transient military dominance. And the fact is, not once did he ever title himself as such – “*de Yle*” – “*the peculiar and exclusive designation of the head of the house of Macdonald*”.<sup>1</sup> There is, and can only ever be, one head.

Steer & Bannerman (S&B) claim the slab was made “*shortly before 1500*”; c.1495 for this unproven son of *Angus Master*.

Nobody else had ever transcribed, or published, the inscription entirely correctly until the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) - Steer & Bannerman; 1977. It is not appropriate to standardise or normalise such an inscription under any convention. James MacDonald was very close (Seven voyages between 1793 and 1808. His only mistake being he mistook “MN” as “NU” in DOMNILL. Most of them were not experts in Epigraphy, Orthography or Philology and it appears they were simply (wrongly) using their own contemporary ‘spelling’ (either by mistake, habit or on purpose - in some cases a combination of these). That’s supposing they could or did read the inscription correctly.

If there had of been an accent dot over the “M” in DOMNILL for lenition, and I really doubt it, (as it was in Donald of Harlaw, Lord of The Isles’ own signature on his gaelic (Islay) Charter, 1408) and it was visible to have been observed by Lhuyd, then he would have included it in his sketch. There were instances of suprascript found by S&B – eg, ‘c’ in the same McLeod slab as mentioned below. There is no excuse for later researchers to add in (normalise/standardise) the later “H” between the M and N to replace the diachritical dot (real or latent) when giving a faithful facsimile of the actual inscription. There are too many reasons to speculate why the inscription, from initial reading to publication, was infrequently a perfect transcription. If this inscription was late 15th (eg c.1495) century as S&B postulate, then it is quite possible that a “H” could very well have been included for that period’s orthography. The period of transition from middle Irish to modern Irish was from late 11th century to early 14th century (Annals of Inisfallen – Reproduced in Facsimile; Irish Royal Academy; 1933; intro p.1;... Best & McNeil). So, aspirant “h” is not common in 1318 but more so by 1495-1500, especially, as there is no better witness than an Iona slab of that period doing exactly this very thing, albeit in a clumsy, strange way :- As per “RHAUDIU” (usually Ruaidhri) in McLeod’s slab of c.1515 (inscription 25).

D early spelling	601-700	701-800	801-900	901-1000	1001-1100	1101-1200	D late spelling	1201-1300	1301-1400	1401-1500	1501-1600	Info Updated
Domnall	X		X	X	X	X	Domhnall	*	*	*	*	4 Mar 2003

<http://www.medievalscotland.org/scotnames/gaelicgiven/men.shtml#d>

Medieval Scotland is published by Phd Sharon L. Krossa (contact).

<sup>1</sup> “It was confined to the heads of the race and while cadets of MacDonalld might designate themselves “*de Insulis*” or assume any other title they chose, they never presumed to adopt that of “de Ile”.”

This c.1515 McLeod slab (has black-letter script, confirming it post c1496) but also has the forenames in gaelic which is a significant change to the latin ones of “Engvsii”, slab No 150, and also uses “mac” for son instead of “Fili”. Therefore these factors also contribute to showing that slab No 150 is unlikely to be of the period 1490-1496 - or at least more likely to be of early 14th century. The McLeod slab has a basic design similar to slab No 150 but this could possibly be because they were strong Clan Donald allies, particularly in the cause to restore the Lordship around this period, early 16th and were paying homage to Clan Donald’s history and long 300 year patronage of the Iona School. (Or, it was an off the rock-shelf, “stock item” Iona School design – but poorly executed by “amateurs” as the main Iona School carvers had already gone – the school quickly collapsed after the 1493 Lordship demise –S&B). Another good reason to doubt that slab 150, which is very well executed albeit with less detail, was made 1485-1500.

As can be seen from Angus Mor’s seal (c. 1300) the orthography and the epigraphy (and script) are the same as for slab No. 150 (eventhough the “formula” is different). The double “II’s” after Engus may have been omitted simply because of such limited space on a small seal and the **Latin DOANALDI** is not in the form of a “style” or surname – it’s a patronymic, son of Donald. It has no “domini” or “mac domnill”. If it followed the “formula” of father/son/titles then it would have read “S’ Engvs filii Doanaldi de Yle”. Why did it not? This seal proves there can be differences. At that period there were multiple “formulae” and it was a period of change in regional status, language and how they titled, “styled” and designated themselves.....and how others, sometimes in removed places, did it for them in their various manners and ways (at times clumsily).

## REASONS WHY S&B ARE WRONG:-

### A. THIS INSCRIPTION IS *DE YLE* , NOT *DE YLA*.

The “e” changed to “a” from 1476, ie, from the 1st forfeiture of Lord John II. This change was permanent and total (Reg. Great Seal n.1246, 15/7/1476, actually shows the change “de Yle” to “de Yla”.<sup>1</sup>) Never again was the title “Yle” (in all acts, charters, exchequer rolls, seals, registers, etc). See S&B Inscription no. 29 on Yle -> Yla where they say the change “*corresponds remarkably*”. For more evidence on Yle -> Yla, please see Appendix (B).

“*Categoric dating*”, S&B again say, using Lombardic to black-letter after 1495 – ie, introduced after 2<sup>nd</sup> forfeiture, John, 1493. And the royal charter of 1476 shows no son exists for Angus Master for succession plan and lands to “be held. He’s about 30 year old (born c.1447 – c.16 y.o. at the battle of Inverness 1463 <sup>2</sup>; “*scarcely more than a boy*”). The slab cannot be after 1476 because of “de Yle”, and cannot be after c.1496 because of black-letter script (1476 - c.1496.) That is, its two decades late to be “Yle” if made c.1495. And probably is then “Ysla” in any case (“e” is not a mason’s error; where does conjecture end?) Everybody who later sketched the slab put “Yla” (except Lhuyd), because:- it was faint and that’s how it was spelt when they did it.

<sup>1</sup> REGISTER OF The Great Seal of Scotland, 1424-1513; No 1277, p. 259. Ed J Balfour. 1882. “*Weik clerico et scriba dicti Joh. De Ile:- Apud Ila, 20 Aug 1476*”<sup>51</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> *Clan Donald*; VOL 1 p.237

## B. ANGUS MASTER, HAD NO SON BUT DONALD DUV.

There was no male heir of Angus Master included in the 1476 grant as in line for succession/land, and there surely would have been (“*failing issue*” by “*natural*” son Angus Master, to go to his “*natural*” brother John <sup>1</sup>). Angus Master married Isabella Campbell “soon after”, ie, c.1477 for further crown reconciliation. Isabella’s father, Colin Campbell, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Argyll imprisoned their only son Donald Dubh in c.1482 after the Battle of Bloody Bay (he was said to be “three year old”). There was no Campbell record of any other son and there surely would have been. This proves he was a very poor progenitor – although he was away a lot fighting! Angus Master was killed in 1490 in Ross. (G Hill, *Macdonnells of Antrim*, pps 20 (n.39), 42 (n.63), has Donald Dhu born just after his father was killed.) All children were well recorded in that period (even recorded a “base son” to Donald Dhu <sup>2</sup>). There is no mention of S&B’s postulated **eldest son (the ‘heir’!) in seven uprisings** needing a new clan Donald leader. There is no other son mentioned in any of this very well, much documented period of history. No other expert historians on this subject give Angus Master another son. S&B found someone barely possible - just a name, *Angus de Insulis*. But he was not right one and he was not connected in any specific, factual way by S&B, or Lamont, to anyone for validation. It was actually *Angus Ileach*, k.1565 –head of Sanda Macs of Dunaveg MacDonalds. S&B’s postulation was alive 1517 - to when, c.1550+?? (they don’t know or try to find out).

But this gives a huge problem – the slab has Lombardic script. S&B are then forced to tag on, like an afterthought:- he “*presumably*” made the slab years before, around 1496. But why? ‘He’, would have been just a teenager (if born c. 1478), c.18 y.o., not a 50+ “aged” person preparing to “*go the way of the flesh*”. So that’s not plausible whatsoever. And whatsmore, the slab is actually pre-1476 (is de Yle), so any “son” is, at best, a baby (and if true, custom was usually a small slab at Finlaggan). The only “*inconceivable*” aspect (S&B *term*), is that Angus Master ever *conceived* a son “Angus”!

## C. ANGUS MASTER, AS THE POSTULATED FATHER ON THE SLAB, WAS NEVER A GENUINE, ACTUAL “DE YLA”.

If another nebulous son (not a lord) besides Donald Dhu existed, he would never be buried in St Orans chapel for lords in any case. Even the recognised last lord Donald Dhu wasn’t, d.1545 (and he could have been brought from Drogheda – many were). Not a lord = no burial in St Orans chapel. *Angus Master* was not buried on Iona. Angus Og son of Angus Mor would have definitely been buried in St Oran’s chapel - no question – and this slab was definitely “original” to St Oran’s chapel. In addition, the last lord buried in St Oran’s was Donald II of Harlaw, 1421, well over a century before, with the intervening three not buried there. Glengarry (d.1460), Clanranald (d.1481) were the last branch Chiefs buried in the outside cemetery of St Orans; ie, burying Clan Donald chiefs in Reilig Odhrain stopped from 1481. John MacIain, was only buried there in 1518 because he was a staunch ally of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Argyll – married his daughter.

## D. IF ITS A 1495-1500 SLAB, IT WOULD BE DIFFERENT in some of these details (featured prominently at the time) :-

(1. Inscription around perimeter. (2. not be the plainest galley of all (and its not wear):- would have a rudder, oar-ports, or stem-stern post head prongs or carvings/ weather-viens, strake-planking. (3. dated; year given. (4. black-letter script. (5. different spelling, more gaelic. (6. proper surname. (7. formula - order of ‘titles’. [eg, for the year given:- no.7, 1495; no. 23, c1498; no. 57, c1495. “*....since, of the fifteen dated inscriptions mentioned above, four in lombardic capitals, are on monuments carved within the period 1489-1500*”.] All others are later; p.5 intro (S&B). All dated slabs are post 1489.

BUT IT HAS ZERO OF THESE 7 FACTORS (7 x XXXXXXXX). THESE ARE IMPOSSIBLE ODDS.

BUT THE CONVERSE FOR 1318?

IT HAS NONE OF THESE = 7✓, 100%.

<sup>1</sup> *Acts of The lords of The Isles*; Munro & Munro; 1986; Appendix A24, p.214.

<sup>2</sup> *Acts of the Lords of the Isles 1336-1493* ; Munro & Munro; 1986. p.314.

## E. THE FIRST WRONG WAS DR. STEER

Dr Steer said its “rare” lettering was not of right period (“*rare form only found on two other stones of year 1489 and c.1500.*”) But obviously it is earlier: see both Reginald’s and Angus Mor’s much older pre-1300 seals which have exactly the same ‘lettering’ (see “great seal”). But:- then Dr. Lamont followed Steer’s false lead <sup>1</sup>. The wording is “*curious*” Lamont thought (why wasn’t it “*domini angus filii angus*”? ...OR.. “*angus filii angus mac domnill domini de Yle*”?... OR.... *angus de Yle filii domini angus mac domnill domini de Yle*?... just what?) and looked for someone else “*consistent with the (Steer’s) presumptive dating*” ie, c1500. So he postulates a “*likely*” son – another “*if*” - of Angus Master’s. Then Bannerman is influenced by this and decides (creates?) his extra “formula” to support this and makes a convoluted search for someone else. He says that its “*inconceivable*” that Angus Og would be described “in the terms used” – ie, without “de Yla” after his name. But he can only find one other inconclusive possibility over a 200 years span, ie, led by Steer’s and Lamont’s speculation. That is, an Angus Master’s “son”. S&B make specific reference to, quote, “*see Lamont*” in their choice of the “*likely candidate*”. They knew nothing about this candidate’s parents, B/D/M, life, genealogy, etc, and had serious doubts and many caveats. They admit ;- “*there is no certain reference to a son of Angus (Master) called angus.....*” (ie, no reference at all!) (PS: I have great respect and admiration for the RCAHMS; and I am a serious fan of Dr John McDonald Bannerman).

## F. THE “FORMULA”

The “formula”, if valid anyway (one case does not = formula) and if 100% fail proof, is complicated by the introduction of patronymically based, new “style/designation”, gaelic “*mac domnill*” (not as “son of”; eg, 1408 charter “*Mcdonnill*”- by itself) in conjunction and competing with two others of separate “*de Yle*” as

a designation and “*Domini*” when used as a title – also together as “*domini de Yle*”. (2 of the 3 not in Angus Mor’s seal – only the main “*de Yle*”). Its understandable and to be expected to cause difficulty – a new and different series. Where to put them?

S&B give great credibility and wide latitude to all their postulations and endless possibilities but none at all to the “formula” possibly not being a critical, unconditional factor (a “law”). They say it is “*inconceivable*” to be Angus Og – ie, its inflexible, Black & White. Yet everything they use to try to identify their choice of dead son is very subjective with generous interpretations and exhaustive exploration with extensive justification being attempted. One example:- after agreeing he “*never was recognised as a lord of the isles*”, they say the “*dominus*” (lord) “*probably*” applies to the period when he was “*master*” but “*its positioning is unusual*”, out of order, for the period in the inscription wording (period they chose. Strange that – so is the Lombardic script) ...but it was probably a courtesy title for an earl, well, at least “*a son of one who had been*” and ought to be compared to “*comes*” a title given to him 50 years after he was dead (1542 charter) - and a title of a man whose “*potential status warranted it*” ...potential? – he was dead! <sup>2</sup> (*monumental sculpture* ; S&B; p.111). They were very inconsistent in the application of reasonable latitude.

However, they are wrong - and they found no other option. The only *Engusii filli Engusii*, who in historic fact had the right and privilege of being buried in St Oran’s chapel is Angus Og, son of Angus Mor, son of Donald (I) and all the period detail of the slab and the inscription matches Angus Og’s time of death. A longer standing ‘formula’, applicable to tombstones, is the ancient genealogy one which has repeats of “son of” with the one designation applicable to all only after the last person - is attached to this last person but intended to apply to all. (c.1210 charter - *dovenaldus filius reginaldi filii somerled dominus de incheagal*). Annals F/M 1387.8 - *eoin mac aenghusa meic domhnaill tighearna insi gall do écc.*)

<sup>1</sup> *Ancient and Medieval Sculptured Stones of Islay*; Lamont; pps. 30, 31.

<sup>2</sup> “*Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands*”; Steer & Bannerman; RCAHMS; 1977. pps. 110, 111. (“S&B”).

To have had “*angusii filii angusii mac domnill domini de yle*” is a combination then of multiple titles/designations/styles running together (see inscription 24, “MacIan” and 25 “McLeod”, and 34, 35; they are different – post 1496 combined, genuine clan surnames).<sup>1</sup> Angus Og 1318 was not formally “*rex or domini insularum*” but neither just a “*domini de yle*” alone (had many territories – unlike other many lesser lords of just one area<sup>2</sup>). As well, he was “Angus de Yle” – the head of the clan and also generally “Angus de Insulis” (of isles). It is a bit confusing. Let alone the frustrating, fraught etymology of ‘*yle yle; yla insula*’ {ie, both = isle of Islay}, which caused some errors and misrepresentations of “*de yle*” status for lesser “of the isles” – incl. Angus Master (1478: “*de Yla*”); ie, “*they never arrogated to themselves the designation; the peculiar and exclusive designation of the head of the house of macdonald*”). Also:- 1295 paisley charter of Alexander Og’s :-*alexander de hyle filius et here domini engusii filii dovenaldi domini de hyle* (encompassing three different placements and associations of “*domini*” and “*de yle*”).

There were multiple *styles/ “formulas”* prior to 1318. That is, no set formula. This eventuated later. Therefore in 1318 (when Angus Mor was the very first “*mac Donald*”) they were requiring disentanglement and clarification (and some understanding?) of titles/designations/style, but still, as per the first formulaic convention, the title selected to be moved must still be applied to the last person - but its still meant for all - ie, by placing “*domini*” (lord) in front of the last person (as the only title can be.) It is hardly serious to suggest, under these circumstances, that it makes any real difference to put in another “*domini*” or “*de Yle*” for the dead son. (and its incised in stone, with its panel space already much exceeded – not just a couple of more words on vellum) - or to put “*de Yle*” only after the dead son, etc, etc.

## G. THIS IS NOT AN “EXACT SCIENCE”.

Under these circumstances, it is “ill conceived” to dictate an immutable ‘formula’. **To put “*de Yle*” after the son’s name may add to make his lordship incontrovertible, but not to have it there does not make it “inconceivable”.**

Proof of that :- see inscription no.56 which contradicts S&B’s position – *lachlan* is a maclean lord (ardgour no. 3) irrespective of S&B’s “formula”. (“*here lies lachlanus, son of donaldus maclean, lord of ardgour*”).

1318 – 1908 – Whilst longevity of a statement is not a measure of its accuracy, its worthwhile noting that for many centuries (16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>) not one person of many had ever raised and/or noted the slightest doubt that this inscription meant anything other than the person buried was Angus Og, son of Angus Mor - some simply followed previous views of course (as has exactly happened here!) However, they include those well (and better?) qualified to fully appreciate and understand Clan Donald ‘convention’ in their use of their titles, designations, styling and any “formula” of setting out their genealogies, family relationships in legal documents, Charters, etc. This is especially so when it comes to the variance over the quite distinct and different periods of the early “*Rex Insularum*” to simply “*de Yle*” and then back to (the ‘2<sup>nd</sup> creation’ of) “*Domini Insularum*”.

This recent preset, absolutist negative attitude against slab 150 being for “Angus Og, son of Angus Mor” evolved because Dr Steer’s original mistake morphed a tentative 1907 “*if*” into a 1968 “*curious*” and “*presumptive likely*” and then escalated, mutating into a 1977 “*inconceivable*”.

<sup>1</sup> **1318 Irish annals** “*Mac Domhnaill tigearna Airir Gaoidel*”. This cannot be compared because Irish Annals were many centuries later compilations/recensions. And, another example of difference is that Irish proper surnames were used centuries before Scotland – with Macdonnell examples. ( Inscription No. 88; p.154, S&B;)

<sup>2</sup> eg, Ardnamurchan. Eg, “*Iohannes Maceain dominus de Ardnamurchan*” (c1518). In effect their designation and title in one.





Dr W Lamont says the inscription is “*curious*”.<sup>1</sup> This follows immediately after his inclusion that Dr Steer said it was “*not likely therefore that this is the gravestone of Angus Oig*” son of Angus Mor because the lettering is a rare type

only found on two other stones of year 1489 and c.1500 (Lamont, p.30). However, Dr Steer was wrong (see Angus Mor’s c.1300 seal for proof of this) and it should be considered that his doubts have therefore influenced Lamont, because he then goes on to say “*it would be consistent with the presumptive dating of the inscription (by Steer) if the stone were really a late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> one commemorating a son, legitimate or illegitimate, of Angus Oig, Master of The Isles, son of John the 4<sup>th</sup> Lord.* And then Lamont says, because of this :- “*if the stone does in fact commemorate a son of this Angus (Master) making it late 15<sup>th</sup> .....*”. Lamont’s interest with this slab was only in the context of dating the “foliage style” of the slab design relative to his Islay stones and includes no facts to legitimise any such son’s existence, ie, no confirmationary records or relationships, any other element of the slab’s carvings to date its production stylistically or epi/ortho/palaeo/philo-graphically, or on either the history of the Iona School, burials in St Oran’s Chapel or Clan Donald history to see if any fit can be made. In the Preface to LMMSWH (S&B) Dr Lamont is thanked “for generously communicating the results of his researches on the Islay carvings before they were published” (and more). In light of this comment and in following the history trail of how opinions on slab 150 developed, it should therefore be considered that Lamont’s findings above on slab No 150, firstly corrupted by Steer’s mistake, were also of some

later influence on Dr Bannerman’s deliberations and opinions. It’s instructive to actually illustrate how the rhetoric regards this inscription’s meaning develops :-

**1908.** Trenholme says “The inscription reads as if the person buried was not himself Lord of Isla”.

**1968.** Lamont says “The wording of the inscription is itself curious”; “if the stone” (twice, in two different contexts – one doubting the slab age and in addition one doubting the person) etc, etc (see above).

**1997.** S&B.....says its “inconceivable”.. that the inscription refers to Angus Og son of Angus Mor. Their last extremely strong description of “emphatically and absolutely no chance”, is a big change from the nonchalance and dispassion of the previous two who only show some minor surprise of a slightly different approach to what most have regarded as, or have become used to, the “formula” “norm” – (but for what period must be asked.)

It should also be noted that S&B make specific reference to, quote, “*See Lamont*” in their choice of the “*likely candidate*” for the slab No. 150 person as the “*son, legitimate or illegitimate, of Angus Oig, Master of The Isles*” (Note 21, p 110). They have made the considerable leap from many “*ifs*” and its “*curious*”, to something “*inconceivable*” triggered to a large degree, not solely, by Lamont’s questioning firstly and then by his finding of a new “*likely candidate*”, all of which however was unfortunately based on an incorrect attribution of the slab’s epigraphy by Dr. Steer. Nothing more is suggested here other than a natural, understandable series of events, one thing leading to another – “steered” in the wrong direction! Dr Steer’s opinion in this particular aspect (epigraphy) was later discarded; it makes no subsequent appearance.

<sup>1</sup> LAMONT, Dr. W D; *Ancient & Medieval Sculptured Stones of Islay*; 1968; pps 30-31.

## H. THE ACTUAL INSCRIPTION

I. No 22, Slab No. 150/87. “*Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands*” (LMMSWH); Steer & Bannerman; RCAHMS; 1977. “S&B”.

HIC · IACET · CORPVS · / ENGVSII · FILII · DOMINI · /  
ENGVSII · MAC · / DOMNILL · / DE YLE ·

(based on acknowledged most accurate record:- Lhuyd, Edward – Iona 1699-1700. Recorded slab no. 150 – “Yle”.)

If the inscription No. 22 followed the **1495-1500** trend of the period, for key nobles and ecclesiastics (to be buried on Iona), it would be leading edge style, mostly along these lines :- Black-Letter script <sup>1</sup> and around the slab perimeter, with a part year (century only 15--; see inscription No. 23); etc. (RED SHOWS CHANGES)

HIC \* IACET \*(^) AENGUS \*(#) AENGHUSA \* MACDOMHNAILL \* DOMINI \* DE YSLA \* ANNO DOMINI \* MILLESIMO QUIN GENTESIMO - - (and 55?)

(^) : no “corpus”; (#) : filii, “son of” between christain names became “silent”. Aenghus/a instead of Engusii. Isla instead of Yle. Surname now “Macdomhnaill”, not mac Domnill (with lenited “H” and genitive “AI”):- Eventually the standard practice was to use the diacritic lenition dot (over “m”) when writing in Gaelic script and the following ‘h’ when writing in Roman letters. (eg, In McLeod’s poorly copied and made Iona slab\* (No. 151) just after 1500 –ie, ‘*Rhuariu*’). <sup>2</sup> \* The skilled *Iona School* of carvers had left Iona after the Lordship failed 1493 and become independent on Oransay, Ardchattan, etc. [And, on the other hand, for Scots spelling c.1495 it would be “Donyll”.]

**IF THE SLAB WAS C.1496, IT WOULD HAVE AT LEAST SOME, OR MANY OF THESE SEVEN CHANGES, BUT IT HAS ZERO (7XXXXXXXX). IMPOSSIBLE ODDS! BUT THE CONVERSE FOR BEING A 1318 SLAB:- IT CORRECTLY HAS NONE; 7✓ = 100%.**

If in fact it was made in advance for a son of Angus, **Master of the Isles** (it would be something like) :-

HIC \* IACET \* AENGUS \* AENGHUSA \* MACDOMHNAILL \* MAGISTRUM DE INSULARUM \* ANNO DOMINI \* MILLESIMO QUIN GENTESIMO - - (AND 55?)

<sup>1</sup> The high relief effigy of Abbot John MacKinnon (with Inscription No. 23) with only the century in his obit date (15 - - no decade) must have been commissioned before 1495 when he was alive (as agreed RCAHMS), because the inscription is in Lombardic and the master masons (incl. O’Brochan, O’Cuinn) had left Iona soon after the Lordship fell in 1493. He was last known alive in 1492. A high quality effigy such as this would take considerable time and would have been commenced about 10 years before expected death

<sup>2</sup> This undated c.1515 McLeod slab, which has black-letter script, confirming it post c1500, also has the forenames in gaelic which is a significant change to the latin ones of “Engvsii”, slab No 150, and also uses “mac” for son instead of “Filli”. Therefore these factors also contribute to showing that slab No 150 is unlikely to be of the period 1490-1510 - or at least more likely to be of early 14<sup>th</sup> century.

## SUMMARY

### IS SLAB NO. 150 FOR A POSTULATED SON OF ANGUS MASTER, SON OF JOHN II? **NO.**

- A. NOTHING SUPPORTS THE SLAB AS VERY LATE 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (ALMOST 16<sup>TH</sup>);
- B. NOTHING SUPPORTS ANGUS MASTER HAVING A SON ANGUS;
- C. NOTHING SUPPORTS ANGUS MASTER BEING A GENUINE “DE YLE” (THE SLAB’S FATHER);
- D. NOTHING SUPPORTS THIS PRESUMPTIVE SON’S RIGHT OR TIMING OF BURIAL IN ST ORAN’S CHAPEL;
- E. NOTHING SUPPORTS LOMBARDIC SCRIPT MATCHING A **REALISTIC** SLAB MAKING TIME FOR THE PRESUMPTIVE SON (FROM 1518 -?1550+?)
- F. NOTHING OF THE PERIOD DETAIL MATCHES THE PRESUMPTIVE SON’S DEATH, POST 1518 TO.....?1550+?;
- G. THE INSCRIPTION, AT BEST HYPOTHESIS, IS APPROX. 2% CORRECT FOR PRESUMPTIVE SON :- “*HIC IACET*” (JUST “HERE LIES.....!”)

### IS SLAB NO. 150 FOR ANGUS OG, SON OF ANGUS MOR, SON OF DONALD (I)? **YES.**

*‘It is substantially more likely than not, that it is in fact true’ (Law test).*

- 1. EVERYTHING SUPPORTS THE SLAB AS EARLY 14<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY = MATCH FOR DEATH OF ANGUS OG;
- 2. EVERYTHING SUPPORTS ANGUS MOR HAVING A SON ANGUS (OG);
- 3. EVERYTHING SUPPORTS ANGUS MOR BEING A GENUINE “DE YLE” (THE SLAB’S FATHER);
- 4. EVERYTHING SUPPORTS ANGUS OG’S RIGHT AND TIMING OF BURIAL IN ST ORAN’S CHAPEL;
- 5. EVERYTHING SUPPORTS LOMBARDIC SCRIPT MATCHING THE SLAB MAKING TIME FOR ANGUS OG;
- 6. EVERYTHING OF THE PERIOD DETAIL OF THE SLAB’S MAKING MATCHES ANGUS OG’S TIME OF DEATH.
- 7. THE INSCRIPTION, AT BEST HYPOTHESIS, IS APPROX. 98% CORRECT FOR ANGUS OG d.1318.

**It is unreality for anyone to proposition that they know the precise order the words in a 1318 west highland inscription would be made, as though it is governed by some absolute law or exact science - and has a reliability and consistency of 100%.**



**END A 100 YEARS OF A 100 “IF’S”!**

*“The inscription reads as IF the person buried was not himself Lord of Islay”*  
(Trenholme, 1907, *Story of Iona*.) And he was also proved wrong on the space being too short for “ENGVSII”.

**To continue to assign this slab to a poorly postulated, nebulous nonentity and deny a national hero of Scotland his burial monument for eternity would be a historic shame.**

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(NB : I have much more evidence, facts discussion, analysis and deduction than the above, but it simply all becomes too long (40 pages).

**YLE → YLA**

Acts of The Lords of The Isles 1336-1493; J Munro & R Munro; 1986. This book, published nine years later than LMMSWH, was checked to see if the statements about *Yle* and *Yla* for Inscription No 49 could be verified. That is, that *Yle* changed permanently to *Yla* at a specific time (as per Lombardic to Blackletter) very close to the year 1477 (p 126 S&B; LMMSWH). From 1478 the spelling was consistently “*Yla*”.

CONFIRMATION BY JAMES III. OF CHARTER BY ALEXANDER  
OF ISLA, EARL OF ROSS, AND LORD OF THE ISLES, TO  
WALTER OGILVY.

Apud Edinburgh 4. Aug. 1476. Reg. Mag. Sig.

1476 REX confirmavit cartam quondam Alexandri de Ile, comitis  
Rossie, domini Insularum ac Justiciarii ex parte boreali aque de

CHARTER BY JAMES III. TO JOHN OF ISLA, LORD OF  
THE ISLES.

Apud Edinburgh, 11 Aug. 1478.

1478 REX concessit JOHANNI DE ILA, DOMINO INSULARUM— Reg. Mag. Sig.  
pro ejus fideli servitio, &c.—pro toto tempore ejus vite—terras

CLAN DONALD VOL 1, APPENDICES, p.557 and p.559.

However I found a record of an ‘outlier’ of this change that needed checking but which proved to be incorrectly rendered:- Acts of The Lords of The Isles 1336-1493; J Munro & R Munro (M&M); 1986; pps 196-197; in example Act No 123, “*Johannem de Yle*” is given in this 1492 charter, but it is wrong. M&M reference Clan Donald VOL 11, p.747 which indeed does have “*de Yle*” transcribed, but when checking the facsimile of the charter it is quite obvious that this is a guess, and not a good one. From p.747 :-

Omnibus hanc cartam visuris vel audituris nos Johannem de  
Yle dominum Insularum ac Alexandrum de Insulis dominum de

See relevant section of facsimile below which is attached to p.747 :- the writing for “*Yla*” is nothing short of very obscure...it looks like “(de) yu” and cannot possibly be deciphered with any accuracy as either an “e” or an “a”. It should have put as an “a” based on the orthography.

**Johannem** (abbr'ed) **de Yla** **Dominum** (abbr'ed) **Ins(f)ularum**

enlarged :-

Its easy to make a mistake with this and no doubt there may be some others :- like Reg Mag Sig; VOL 2; AD 1495; p485, where Yla is incorrectly rendered as ‘Yle’.

**2286. Apud Striveling, 10 Nov.**  
**REX confirmavit cartam Johannis de Yle,**  
**comitis Rossie, et domini Insularum, —[qua,**  
**cum consensu concilii sui concessit fratri**

I also note that for 1478, M&M give the incorrect “Yle” in their Legend for the Style 5 seal of John II (p.320, App. E; SEALS) for their example acts numbers 113 and 114 which do show the correct “Ila” – and this being confirmed as right by S&B as just above.

This relatively sudden and permanent change from Yle to Yla was also confirmed by S&B to the effect: “This date corresponds remarkably with the dates of the first appearances of this spelling in such official series as the *Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, the Register of The Great Seal, and the Exchequer Rolls*”.

“Of the five extant seals of John II, Lord of the Isles, in use in 1449, 1454, 1472, 1476 and 1478 respectively, only the last has ‘a’ in this position”. (Stevenson & Wood; *Seals*, iii, pp.483-4); p126, S&B, LMMSWH). (1485 .....”*John of Ylay Lord of the Yles.*” (M&M, No 118, p187).

A.D. 1476-77.]

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[17 Jac. III.]

**1277. Apud Edinburgh, 31 Jan.**  
**REX—nomine tutorio primogeniti sui Jac.**  
**ducis de Rothzay, &c.,—confirmavit cartam**  
**Johannis de Ila, domini Insularum,—[qua**  
**assedavit et ad feodifirmam dimisit suo nativo**  
**armigero et alumpno JOHANNI DAVID-**  
**SONE, filio quondam Gilberti D., heredibus**  
**ejus et assignatis,—terras de Grenane, in**  
**comitatu de Carrik, vic. Are:—REDDEND.**  
**pro firmis dictarum terrarum 20 lib. :**  
**—TEST. Donaldo Ballache de Dunno-**  
**wane, Rollando Makelane de Dowart,**  
**Hectore M'Clane de Camlochboy, Nigello**  
**M'Ylwryd archidiacono Sodoren., D. Jac.**  
**Weik clerico et scriba dicti Joh. de Ile :—**  
**Apud Ila, 20 Aug., 1476]:—Proviso quod**  
**per hauc confirmationem nullum prejudi-**  
**cium generaretur Elizabeth de Levingstoun**

This is the pivotal year when Ile permanently changed to Ila –1476, the year Lord John II submitted and resigned the Earldom of Ross. All the court documents (rolls, charters, seals) began from that moment to consistently spell Ile as Ila:- starting with, “*Weik clerico et scriba dicti Joh. De Ile:- Apud Ila, 20 Aug 1476*”<sup>1</sup>. (*Clerics and clerks to write of the said John of the Ile - with Ila* ??) This is two decades before S&B claim that the slab which has “de Yle” was made. Therefore this is a totally unsupportable proposition from this single fact (maybe the courts were frustrated by the continued confusion between both Ile as Islay (*of Islay*) and Ile as Island (*of the Isles*) and were determined to fix it permanently).

<sup>1</sup> REGISTER OF The Great Seal of Scotland, 1424-1513; No 1277, p. 259. Ed J Balfour. 1882.

However the change came about, there can be no doubt that ‘stylistic/orthographic’ changes of this nature were categoric. S&B, p44 Iona School. – *“It can be stated categorically that the rebuilding must be earlier than 1500 since Donald O’Brolchan carved his name in Lombardic”*.

Therefore slab no. 150 cannot be a product of c1495-1500 because the inscription for Islay is quite emphatically proven as being “Yle” which categorically and permanently ceased being used from 1477. This seems relatively close, a matter of 18 to 23 years, but it is a whole generation (for those days) – and all evidence *“corresponds remarkably with the dates”* (S&B on these facts and this matter). The sudden and permanent cut off from Lombardic to Blackletter script was just as ‘remarkable and categoric’ and accepted as fact. This particular point, at the extreme least, unequivocally places the slab as not able to be ruled out as being early 14<sup>th</sup> century, especially as the seal of Angus Mor (died c.1292) has the same orthography (excluding designation/‘surname’ change), and the same script which epigraphically places them almost together.

The inscription can indeed be still made out in many places and Islay is definitely “YLE”. It is difficult to understand why S&B never discussed this “E” to “A” aspect for Inscription 22 (ie, its Islay orthography) because they had done so in great and detailed length for Inscription No 49 (a page and a half). It had provided a fixed change of date for them, to within only a few years and, as well, it was the decisive factor in dating that particular cross-shaft, Texa. (another ‘Clan Donald’ stone of course – son of “IOHANNIS DE YSLE”; Reginaldus of Clan Ranald). In addition, they placed such emphasis on a “formula” (for titles) in inscription 22 (to heavily constrain their decision making process) that to exclude another important (orthographic) “formula” of the spelling for Islay, compounds the problem in understanding the balance in their approach. If they had raised the timing issue of the “E” versus “A” in Yle for their choice of person buried late 15<sup>th</sup> century then they would be required to have also raised the fact that it was incorrect for the period they chose which leaves the dubious proposition that the stone-carver made a mistake. This is something they had also raised in Inscription No 49 that

once again adds to the difficulty of understanding how this whole issue was overlooked for No 22. (even if they had to go back and revise it, if in fact ‘49’ was actually done after ‘22’). It is hard not to at least ponder that the critical aspect of Islay’s dateable spelling was a key point that strongly went against their particular finding, compromised as it was, and so it was “overlooked”. To now come up with a completely new explanation, after the problem is highlighted, that the carver must have made a mistake and put an “E” instead of an “A” would be rather ingenious and obviously wrong, because not a single piece of other evidence supports the later period; there are so many additional supporting factors which prove their postulated person and a very late 15<sup>th</sup> century slab, completely null and void.

**And importantly, once “mistakes” are raised as a way to solve a difficulty, where does this stop?** Did a novice carver or inscription author make a mistake and put the *Domini* or *de Yle* in the wrong place? Or otherwise placed the order of words incorrectly at a time of renewed and confusing multiple titles, designations and “surnames”, well before the “Iona School formula” had time to become established?



ANGUS OG, MASTER OF THE ISLES – HIS TITLE.

Extracts from RMS II; 1424-1513.<sup>1</sup> Also demonstrates the point above with Ile becoming Ila between these two, ie, from 1476 and 1478.

A.D. 1476.] 253

1246. Apud Edinburgh, 15 Jul.  
 REX—licet alias in Parlamento suo apud Edinburgh tento 27 Nov. 1475, certos processus et judicia forisfacture contra JOHANNEM DE ILE olim comitem Rossie, et dominum Insularum, pro ejus proditoriis criminibus, demeritis, et transgressionibus contra regiam majestatem et regnum perpetratis et commissis, decrevit et promulgavit—nichilominus ob requestam Margarete regine Scotie, et episcoporum, prelatorum, comitum et baronum ac burgorum commissariorum, regni sui statum in Parl. apud Edinburgh, 15 Jul. 1476, et ibidem die Lune 1 Jul. ipsum comitem mundanis honoribus et dignitatibus ac bone fame ipsius persone, ex gratia speciali regis, restituit, et de novo fecit et creavit ipsum Dominum Insularum perpetuis futuris temporibus nuncupandum; —ac etiam concessit in nova infeodatione, eidem Joh.—pro ejus fidelibus servitiis per ipsum ejusque heredes et successores temporibus futuris regi et successoribus suis impendendis,—terras subscriptas, viz ;—terras Insule de Ila, terras aliarum insularum que ipsi Joh. ante dictam forisfacturam hereditarie pertinuerunt; ac etiam terras de Morvarne, Germorvarne; dominium de Lochabir, terras de Durwain, Glencoil, vic. Invernes; terras de Kinedward, vic. Aberdene; terras de Grenane, in comitatu de Carrik, vic. Are;—que terre eidem Joh. ante dictam forisfacturam in proprietate hereditarie pertinuerunt:—Et super dedit et concessit dicto Joh. alias terras, insulas et possessiones infra regnum Scotie ubicunque ipsi ante dictam forisfacturam pertinentes; necnon liberetenentes et eorundem servitia que de dicto Joh. in capite tenebant;—exceptis tamen et reservatis regi terris comitatus Rossie et terris dominiorum de Knapdale et Kintyr, cum tenentibus, &c., unacum castris et fortaliciis dictarum terrarum, ac officiis vicecomitis de Invernes et Narne, et omnibus aliis officiis infra dictum comitatum et dominia predicta, quas et que

RMS No. 1246.

Year 1476 (De ILE)

“JOHANNEM DE ILE.”

253 [16 JAC. III.

rex sibi et successoribus suis reservavit ad memoriam delicti et transgressionis dicti Joh.:—TENEND. dicto Joh. et heredibus ejus masculis de corpore ejus legitime procreatis, quibus deficientibus, Angusio de Ile, filio naturali dicti Joh. et heredibus, &c. (ut supra), quibus def., Joh. de Ile filio etiam naturali dicti Joh. et heredibus,

“Angusio de Ile”

<sup>1</sup> Registrum magni sigilli Regum Scotorum = The register of the great seal of Scotland A.D. 1306-[1688]



RMS No. 1410.

1410. Apud Edinburgh, 16 Dec.  
 REX—quia in tenera etate sua post forisfacturam in Parlamento super Johanne dom. Insularum productam, concessit eidem Joh. terras et dominia subscripta, viz. ;— terras de Ila, terras aliarum insularum que dicto Joh. ante dictam forisfacturam pertinebant, terras de Morwarne, Garmorwarne, dominium de Lochabir, terras de Daroune, Glencole (Glencole), vic. Invernes; terras de Kynedward, vic. Abirdene; terras de Grenane, in comitatu de Carrik, vic. Are; ac omnes terras, insulas, &c. infra reguum ubicunque, unacum libertatibus, &c., quas idem Joh. de rege per donationem habebat;—tunc de novo post ultimam revocationem, concessit dicto JOHANNI DOMINO INSULARUM et heredibus ejus hereditarie dietas terras, &c. :—Exceptis et reservatis regi, &c., terris comitatus de Ross, terris dominiorum de Knapdale et Kintyr cum tenentibus, &c., unacum castris, fortaliis earundem, ac etiam officiis vicecomitatus de Invernes et Narue, et certis aliis officiis regi hereditarie prius reservatis: —TENEND. dicto Joh. et heredibus ejus masculis de corpore ejus legitime procreatis, quibus deficientibus, Angusio de Ila filio naturali dicti Joh., et heredibus, &c. (ut

Year 1478

(De ILA)

”JOHANNI DOMINO INSULARUM”

and ”Angusio de Ila.”

The head of Clan Donald has exclusive use of the designation “de Yle” (of Islay). All his immediate family, including his wife and eldest son or tanist, could only correctly use “de Isles” or “de Insulis” (of the Islands) which was used sometimes like an early “surname” as was the designation “MacDomnaill” (M&M; p247) – as also did the MacRuairis (G. Hill – *Macdonnells of Antrim*; p.10. The chief could of course use or may be referred to as “de Isles/Insulis” by itself, but he would normally have the title “Dominus Insularum”, Lord of the Isles. <sup>1</sup>

The above two RMS examples show that “de Ile/a – of Islay” for Angus Og (Master) in these cases was wrong. This is so because there cannot be two heads of the clan and especially so on the same legal document. It was always wrong if used by sons or daughters, except in one situation – the known title *ri ri láim a athar* (“king by the side of his father” – O’Corrain, “Irish Regnal Succession”, p.36), or *ri ar tothacht* (“king in effect” - “by the side of his (ailing) father and already held all the hostages....”. *Annals Connaught 1224.3*; p52; From *Kings to Warlords*; K SIMMS; 1987 ). Angus Og (Master) was never in this exact situation or ever titled as such, the closet being

“the young Lord” (ie, commonly used just for the next to succeed – eg, RMS 1306-1424 (p.553), ROB. I, APP 2, INDEX B, p.26, Perth (23); – “to Alexander, younger lord of the Isles..”) And of course, Master of The Isles, meaning he only took a “considerable and authoritative part in the affairs of his kindred – although his father was still Chief” (p.111; S&B; Inscription 22.; LMMSWH). Angus Og (Master) was never “king in effect” and neither did he ever claim to be – and especially so for 1476-78. He could (or should) not have been recorded on a graveslab as “de Yle” regardless of where the title of “Domini” was placed in the inscription. And it’s clear it was not being made by Angus (Master) for “a son”(unknown) before he was killed in 1490 because otherwise the inscription would have said so. And also why would anyone be making a slab for a very young boy (in say 1487-88) who was alive and well then because in S&B’s postulation he was still so 30 years later (1517) and in the prime of life? It’s only at around 40 that anyone would at the extreme earliest be thinking about pre-ordering a slab; usually done only about 5 to 10 years before death unless something spectacular and almost unique like Rodel/McLeod’s wall niche.

<sup>1-2</sup> Note : A personal name and “de Yle” (same as “de Ergadia/Ergile”) is not a territorial title : it’s shorthand for the head of th “the House of Islay” – the “Royal” family/clan headship. Similar to the patriarchal “The (house of) MacDonald.” This is obvious because Islay was only one territory (island or mainland) of many controlled by any “de Yle” at virtually any period, unlike many other lesser lords of only one area. Thus

we have, for instance, “*Alexandri de Yle Domini Insularum et Rossie*” = *Alexander of Islay*, (designated family head) *Lord of The Isles and Ross* (Territorial title). Lastly, the title, ie “**Domini de Yle**” is a style of title designating the **lordship** of the **principal centre**, or epicentre, of their Kingdom of The Isles (Clan Donald’s).

This is how “de Insulis” was and should be properly used (1395); ie, not use “de Yle”: - VOL 1  
 ..... *Marie de Insulis* daughter of Lord John (I) :-

## HISTORY OF THE MACDONALDS

79

Lochlan (*Lacolannus*) Johannis called “Maguilleon” (Maclean) donsel and Mary de Insulis, daughter of John, Lord of the Isles, from the excommunication which they have incurred by marrying without banns, and to grant them a dispensation to remain in the marriage so contracted, declaring their past and future offspring legitimate.’

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## HIGHLAND PAPERS

Venerabili fratri. . . . Episcopo Sodorensi salutem etc.  
 Oblate nobis nuper pro parte nobilis viri Lacolanni  
 Johannis dicti Maguilleon domicelli et nobilis mulieris  
 Marie de Insulis nate dilecte [*sic*] filii nobilis viri Johannis  
 domini Insularum tue diocesis petitionis series continebat

...and the mother of - *Alexandri De Yle - Domini Insularum et Rossie*, : 1431 referred to as “*domina de Insulis senior*” (ER, iv, 541) – M&M, Appendix D; p302 .

Mistakes were sometimes made by “outsiders” (Scottish/English courts) through ignorance of language/orthography, custom, convention; carelessness – and rarely by ‘insiders’ through mischievous intent, challenging behaviour, etc. A good example of a mistake is provided in M&M, p.lxxxii; (an English doc.) : “John son of Donald Balloch is designated “de Isle” in 1463”. Donald Balloch was never a “de Ile – of Islay” which most would assume they meant – it looks and sounds like “de Ile”. “Isle” at that time could be either Islay or Island so which did they mean? Did the writer intend to mean the plural and just left off the “s” which would have given “de Isles - of the Islands”, which would have been correct for the person. The etymology of Islay and island, particularly in that period’s multi language region, is convoluted and confusion reigned. At one stage there could be :- the “Ile of Ile”, the Island of Islay or “technically” the Island of Island. DONALD MONRO, 1549 (after Ile became Ila for Islay) ; ref. p.308 – 70.55 “*Narrest this forsaid Diuray on the west side of the same Iylis Ila, ane Ile of 20 myle lang.* (If the Lords of The Isles had settled on Jura it would have been much simpler ..“*de Jure*”!)

Many in the courts did not know or were unsure if they were referring to Islay or island when using the variety of words for the title/designation of the head of the Clan and

the variety of words for the title/designation of his family and if they did they still didn’t know which was correct or appropriate...**Islay** = Ile, Ila, Isle, Insula, Isla, Ilay, Iley, .....and **Island** = Ile, Isle, Insula, Insulis (plural). (see p.126; Inscriptions :The Texts, No 49; S&B, LMMSWH). “Y” for “I” was the Scotticised form and was also used from early 13th century.

The designation was more than just “normally reserved” for the Lords of The Isles, it was meant to be exclusive :- “*As matter of fact, the family of John Mor never did possess the whole of the island of Isla, either before or after the forfeiture of the lordship of the Isles, and they never arrogated to themselves the designation de Ile, or of Isla, which was the peculiar and exclusive designation of the head of the house of Macdonald, and ceased with John, the last Lord of the Isles, who died in 1498.*” P.137 VOL 1 Clan Donald; Angus & Angus).

“*This title of “de Ile “ was the oldest territorial designation of his family, and always stood first and foremost in the order of their honours and dignities. It was confined to the heads of the race and while cadets of MacDonalld might designate themselves “de Insulis” or assume any other title they chose, they never presumed to adopt that of “de Ile.”* (CLAN DONALD – Donald J Macdonald of Castleton, 1978; p.159)

This is no different to the title of “Rí Innsi Gall”, “(The MacDonald” or “Dominus Insularum” (Lord of the Isles). In any case, there are very few occasions when “de Ile” (of Islay) was wrongly used to describe a member of the Lords immediate family, which was correctly “de Isles” (of the Isles), out of the hundreds of correct ones – and this goes to the fact that it was not meant to be for anyone other than the Lord himself.

One that is interesting is “Alexander de Hyle” (son of Angus Mor) described as such in c.1294; and between then and 1299 as “de Insula” and “de Ile”. However, Angus Mor was old and frail and died sometime in the last decade of the 13th century. (Clan Donald’s “KINGS AND LORDS OF THE ISLES” origins chart shows Angus Mor as dying c.1292 (S&B say c.1295). Alexander did actually become Lord after much evidence of his being heavily involved in the headship of the clan near his father’s death – being the “*ri ar tothacht*” from c.1290. This is quite different to Angus, Master of The Isles, who never became the Lord, was never recognised as such (even though recognised as heir but tellingly called “*the young lord*” as above) **and never called himself “de Ila” in his own documents.** Where someone else called him “de Yle” it was a mistake, as demonstrated above. He always called himself “Master of The Isles” even after the *Battle of Bloody Bay*, c.1484, where he won the fight with his father (his 1485 Charter to Iona Abbey). In this charter he denotes his action is done “*with the consent of his father*” – hardly any indication of someone who considers themselves “de Yle”, head of the clan Donald and Lord of The Isles; and only five years before his life’s end. Its not even a good indication of someone who has been really “reconciled” with his father but one who has been made to be, or at least agreed to be, subordinate or beholden to his father.

He never “*intended to supplant his father as Lord of the Isles during the latter’s lifetime*” (p.111; S&B) and it is certainly not conceivable that either his (only) son Donald Dhu or the non-existent Angus would have formally recognised him as “de Yle”, High Chief of the Clan Donald; and so inscribed (as the father) on the son’s pre-ordered grave-slab, at a highly improbable age of only around nineteen and an equally improbable (up to) 40 years before his unknown, unrecorded, unsubstantiated “death”.

The earliest before death a slab is known to be commissioned is (‘at least’) 17 years...S&B Intro 89. Alexander McLeod, Rodell, Harris, but this is an exceptional wall tomb with a huge elaborate wall panels

and high relief carving. When done in advance, they were usually within 5, sometimes 10 years of death (ie, old age – not teenage!) and they were mostly commissioned by a relative, eg, a wife, sister, and very infrequently by the person themselves (unless a MacKinnon! Or a cross). There is no real evidence of this postulated Angus, son of Master, let alone a wife or children of his, and his postulated ‘father’ was dead in 1490 and similarly his “brother” Donald Dhu was in prison all his life before 1500 (and mostly after) when the slab, if it was for an Angus, son of Master, had to have been made “shortly before 1500” –S&B, p111, ie, c1495-1497. Black-letter was first used from 1497 – S&B, p44 – “last few years began to replace Lombardic” and a prestigious slab, if for the Iona Abbey patron and protector, the “Lord of Islay”, would have used design and inscription characters that were at the leading edge of change – and “fashion”. And in that case, it would also have included at least some of these four new developments at or very close to that time:- 1. date (a year – incorporated from 1489 ; p 38, S&B); 2. the inscription would be around the perimeter; 3. the designs more naturalistic (galley would have had detail – its missing four common elements included by then of oar-ports, stem and stern decoration, planking, rudder); 4. the Christian names would have been in gaelic (Inscription 25 – “*Col(u)m and Rhuariu Meicleoid*).

“de Yle” would certainly not be used on a prestigious monumental graveslab for anyone other than a (genuine) head of Clan Donald and, in that period, the Lord of The Isles. A graveslab that was crafted in an institution patronised for centuries by the MacDonalds, who were the stimulus for the Iona School (p38 LMMSWH), and commissioned for a member of The MacDonald’s “*de Insulis*” family, no matter of what rank, would not have such an obvious, serious error made on it. It is inconceivable.

The graveslab No 150 was in the burial chapel of the Lords of The Isles - the person buried had to be a true Clan Donald head and Lord being customarily placed in the same grave as his illustrious predecessor Lords – this was definitely not a monument placed above a centuries old, revered burial location for S&B’s historically unknown, and in any case if true, an inconsequential bastard by all accounts – and whom, if died at a time as suggested by them would not have been buried anywhere on Iona. (sometime after 1517 up to 1560 and the Reformation– they provide no evidence or idea, even as estimate, of his birth, marriage or death).



ST ORAN'S CHAPEL AND REILIQ ODHRAIN. P.245 – Argyll – An Inventory of the Monuments , VOL 4; 1982. RCAHMS) “In the latter middle ages it served as the burial-place of the MacDonald Lords of the Isles, patrons of the adjacent Abbey and the chaplainry”. “The south side of St Oran’s chapel is recorded as the burial place of John and Donald, 1st and 2nd Lords of The Isles in 1387 and 1421 respectively.”

If he existed at all and was a child he would have been buried on Finlaggan with most wives of Lords. Even the most senior “de Isles”, heads of branches, were not buried in St Oran’s chapel. For example, Ranald, Chief of Clanranald, first son of John II and first wife Ami McRauri, and his sons were buried in Relieg Odhráin cemetery (ie, not Teampull Odhráin): -

*Ranald, the son by the first marriage, had four sons, Allan, Donald Angus Eeabhach, and Dugall, of all of whom it is said that they were interred in the same grave with their father; in Releig Oran; (SKENE)*

By S&B tentatively (and unconvincingly) identifying their Angus buried as a virtually unknown identity in the records and, even if true, nevertheless an historically inconsequential son of Angus Og (Master), they have destroyed their own argument because such a person would never have been interred in the burial chapel reserved for the Lords of the Isles.

There had been no Lord of the Isles buried in the chapel since 1421. Donald of Harlaw was the last (Alexander in Fortrose (Ross), 1449 and John II in Paisley, 1503 – although he would have been buried in the chapel under the new grandiose tomb recess, revered south wall, except for the lordship collapsing.) The postulated Angus, son of Angus (Master), whom S&B say was alive in 1517, may not have died until c.1540- 1560, well over a century later than the last lord’s St. Oran’s chapel burial (Donald Dhu, who would have been his brother, died 1545. He was only 55 y.o. having been in prison for 49 years of his shortened life).

But Angus Og, son of Angus Mor definitely was “buried in the tomb of his ancestors in Iona”. Slab no 150 was definitely in St Oran’s chapel. Every researcher over the centuries records it as such, as does the RCAHMS, Argyll inventory. The exception is Martin Martin, 1695, but as explained, his account has been discounted - not a single other person of all the many researching this slab mentions his finding on his “*hic jacet corpus angufii mack-donuill de ile*”.