

**BOOK'S ANALYSIS, FINDINGS:- CONCLUSIONS AND/OR PREDICTIONS ABOUT IONA ABBEY, ST ORAN'S CHAPEL, CEMETERY AND ASSOCIATED ISSUES WITH CLAN DONALD AND THE LORDS OF THE ISLES.**

**IONA ABBEY & CLAN DONALD.**

❖ REGINALD, THE FOUNDER : BUT HIS DREAM HAD TO BE REALIZED BY HIS SON DONALD (I) AND HIS DESCENDANTS : **MACDONALDS**, "*CLOINNE DOMHNAILL*". HE RETIRED TO PAISELY ABBEY BEFORE 1200 AND DIED, 1207 JUST AFTER IT HAD BARELY (RE)STARTED, 1205 (AFTER BEING RAZED = DEMOLISHED). DONALD ASSUMED THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF FOUNDER. DONALD ARBITRATED THE SERIOUS DISPUTE AND GAVE *ASSENT* TO A NEW ABBOTT APPOINTMENT. IT WAS THEN PLUNDERED A FEW YEARS LATER.

❖ THERE WAS A PERPETUAL "*CONDITIONALITY OF ENDOWMENT*". CLAN DONALD LORDS OF THE ISLES WERE "HANDS ON MANAGERS" OF THEIR INVESTMENT RIGHT FROM THE START AND THROUGHOUT THE THREE CENTURIES OF THEIR CONTROL OF THEIR "*ECCESTASTICAL TENANT-IN-CHIEF*" REQUIRING "*FUNCTIONAL RECIPOCITY*" – SOUL SALVATION. IONA ABBEY AND NUNNERY STRUCTURES ARE THE LEGACY OF DONALD (I) AND ANGUS MOR MAC DONALD. IT WAS THEIR LANDS, RENTS, GOLD, STONE, TIMBER. THEIR BUILDERS AND LABOURERS (*THE DHOMHNULLACH*), ETC. THEIR GALLEYS FOR TRANSPORT OF THE MATERIALS FROM MULL AND MAINLAND. THEIR MANAGEMENT, CONTRACTING, OVERSEEING, SUPERINTENDING. AND IT WAS THEIR MASTER MASONS, ARCHITECTS, THE O'BROLCHANS. **THEY "ERECTED" THE ABBEY.**<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The enabling endowments, the core economic strength and life-blood of the Abbey, came from **successive Clan Donald Lords of the Isles** and for 300 years were regularly confirmed, honoured, protected, increased and expanded. Endowments had "*carta confirmationis*" and additional ones made by them during the 14th and 15th centuries as late as 1440, 1485. Donald of Harlaw (1386-1421) : "*gave lands to the monastery of Iona, and every immunity which the monastery of Iona had from his ancestors before him*" – MacVurich. It might be expressed that Iona Abbey had been acting as a '*holy owned*) *land trust*' for Clan Donald.

PUT ANOTHER WAY :- IT WAS **NOT** 12 BENEDICTINE MONKS WHO FINANCED **OR** BUILT THE ABBEY.

❖ THE MACKINNONS ON MULL BECAME HEREDITARY *MARSHALS* OF CLAN DONALD'S MILITARY FORCES AND STANDARD BEARER. NEARBY IONA WAS "ENTRUSTED TO THEIR STEWARDSHIP" AND PROTECTION. THESE LOCALLY POWERFUL MACKINNONS WERE GIVEN TOO MUCH AUTONOMY AND NO CHECKS AS THE DISTANT LORD JOHN (I), 1336-1386, HAD ALSO BEEN PRE-OCCUPIED WITH HIS NEW FOUNDATIONS AT :- ORANSAY PRIORY, THE 'HOLY ISLAND' MONASTERY (EILEAN MOLAISE), AND KILDALTON AND KILNAVE CHURCHES. MACKINNONS WERE UNFETTERED AND VERY "DISTRACTED" BY NEW FOUND FREEDOMS FROM CELIBACY THAT HAD WIDELY BROKEN DOWN OVER TWO CENTURIES AND SPLURGED ABBEY RESOURCES ON CONCUBINES, ETC.

❖ THE MACDONALDS RECOVERED THE COLLAPSED MONASTERY FROM MACKINNON CORRUPTION AND NEPOTISM : late 14<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> century. FIRST BY DONALD II PUTTING DOWN A MACKINNON INSPIRED, ABBEY RELATED REBELLION; CLAN DONALD ABBOT, JOHN MACALLISTER'S REMOVAL OF ABBOTT FINGUINE MACKINNON AND SECURING ABBEY REVENUE; LORD ALEXANDER MACDONALD'S STRONG AND REAL THREAT TO "CLOSE THE ABBEY DOWN" , ETC.

❖ EMPHASISED AND CLARIFIED EXACTLY WHO ABBOT JOHN MACALLISTER REALLY IS (DESCENDANT OF ALAXANDAIR OG - NOT AN ALASTER **MOR** "MACALLISTER").

❖ RECOGNISED THE GREAT SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS LENGTH OF 30 YEAR PARTNERSHIP WTH DONALD OF HARLAW AND WHAT THIS MEANT FOR THE ABBEY'S DEVELOPMENT.

❖ NOT ONLY DID THEY GIFT THE RELIC AND RELIQUARY CALLED THE HAND OF COLUMBA BUT THEY HAD TO OBTAIN THE RELIC AT GREAT EXPENSE AND TROUBLE, MOST LIKELY FROM DERRY, IRELAND. RECOGNISED THAT ONLY *CLAN DONALD OF ERIN & ALBAN* COULD HAVE ACHIEVED THIS.

❖ MY IDENTIFICATION OF THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS THAT WERE MAINLY ORCHESTRATED BY CLAN DONALD OVER 50 YEARS TO RAISE **THEIR ECCLESIASTICAL CAPITAL TO CATHEDRAL STATUS.**

❖ IF SUCCESSIVE CLAN DONALD CHIEFS HAD NOT EXERCISED THEIR POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER *CONDITIONALITY OF ENDOWMENT* (1207-1493) THEN IONA ABBEY WOULD HAVE "COLLAPSED" AND BEEN UNSUSTAINABLE WELL OVER A CENTURY BEFORE ITS FINAL DISSOLUTION. INSTEAD, IT PROSPERED AND THE ABBEY CHURCH WAS ENLARGED AND ENHANCED BY CLAN DONALD'S LONG TERM STRATEGIC INTERVENTION, AT BOTH A TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL LEVEL, FINANCED BY THEIR INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING .

❖ THEY REBUILT ¾'s OF THE CHURCH INTO A CATHEDRAL. IT WAS LARGELY MONEY FROM JOHN II'S TREASURY. <sup>1</sup> **IT WAS NOT PILGRIM INCOME** (PLAYED A MINOR ROLE THEN).

❖ RECOGNISED AS A FIRST THAT TWO 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ABBOTS OF SADDELL WERE ALSO MACALLISTERS, DESCENDED FROM ALAXANDAIR OG (LAST ONE WAS THERE TO ITS CLOSURE).

❖ FIRST COINED THE PHRASE "*MACALLISTER ECCLESIASTICAL NOBLEMEN*".

## **BURIALS - ST ORANS CHAPEL.**

❖ **THE POSITION AND DRAWINGS OF THE TOMAIRE NAN RIGH. SOME EARLY CHRISTIAN GRAVE MARKERS ARE SECONDARY BURIALS OF EARLY KINGS FROM TOMAIRE NAN RIGH.**

❖ **SOMERLED mac Gillibrìde: k.1164 - KING OF THE ISLES. BURIED IN HIS OWN SUPERIOR CHAPEL, TEMPEULL ODHRAIN, "THE MOST HALLOWED SPOT ON IONA".**

**HIS CHAPEL, IS IN MEANING AND EFFECT THE FOURTH TOMAIRE NAN RIGH, THE *TUMULUS REGUM INSULARUM*. HE WAS *RI INNSE-GALL* (KING OF THE ISLES) <sup>2</sup> AND WOULD DEMAND NOTHING LESS THAN TO BE BURIED NEXT TO THE 40 (AT LEAST) OTHER GAELIC/CELTIC/NORSE KINGS (OR 'SUB-KINGS') OF IRELAND, SCOTLAND AND 'NORWAY' IN REILIG ODHRAIN, THE "***MOST ANCIENT GRAVEYARD IN ALL SCOTLAND***". (HE IS **NOT** BURIED IN SADDELL.... **UNEQUIVOCALLY! MAYBE HIS HEART IS – AND HIS SON'S REGINALD.**)**

❖ THE LOCATION OF SOMERLED'S AND REGINALD'S BURIALS EITHER SIDE OF ST ORAN'S ALTER FROM OTHER RECORDS OF PRACTISE ("*depositio ad sanctos; solidarity of kindred*") AND CUSTOM OF KINGS AND FOUNDERS OF ABBEYS IN IRELAND. USED AND ASSIMILATED MORE RELEVANT IRISH RECORDS THAN BEFORE.

❖ THE SECONDARY BURIAL PRACTISE OF ROTATION IN THE "TOMB OF THEIR ANCESTOR" ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF ST ORANS CHAPEL FROM THE "PRACTISE OF THE COUNTRY" IN CLONES, TYRONE (FROM DONALD (1) TO DONALD OF HARLAW). LATE 15<sup>th</sup> c. WALL NICHE BUILT OVER IT – TO *CROWN* THE SITE.

❖ HEART BURIAL : RELATIONSHIP OF IONA, PAISLEY AND SADDELL AND THE LORDS OF ISLES' HEARTS, ETC. (JOHN I'S TO ORANSAY?)

❖ **GRAVESLABS ATTRIBUTED FOR :** (and see location plan in the Attribution, Location section)

1. REGINALD THE FOUNDER; No. 161 With his pilgrim staff most likely still in his grave, north of the alter.
2. ANGUS OG K.1318; No. 150. Major submission.

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<sup>1</sup> "...it was the founder of a house **and his heirs** who provided the impetus to build **or rebuild**, who might contribute ideas, and **who furnished resources to finance the project**". *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain, 1000-1300*. Burton, J. 1994; p.152.

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<sup>2</sup> Historian Hugh MacDonald of Sleat, 17<sup>th</sup> c. has Somerled responding to Malcolm the Maiden : "He replied, that he had as good a right to the lands upon the continent as he had to the Isles. As to the Isles, he had undoubted right to them....". (At least, a 17<sup>th</sup> c. Clan Donald, or their historian's opinion, which in any case is hard to argue with.)

❖ **TENTATIVELY:-** 1. DONALD (I).  
No. 126. (opposite wall niche along N. wall)

2. CLANRANALD; No. 154. (Clanranald 1<sup>st</sup>).

3. DONALD OF HARLAW; No.152. Last buried in chapel. His location in front of the wall niche/arch, south wall.

## CLAN DONALD HISTORY.

❖ THAT MACALLISTER AND ALEXANDER CLANS IN FACT DESCEND FROM ALAXANDIAR OG; ALL OF THEM.

NONE DESCEND FROM THE NEBULOUS, NON ENTITY, ALASTER MOR. THE ALASTER MOR (BURKE'S PEERAGE) PEDIGREE HAS A FATAL "BLACK HOLE" AT NUMBER 'IV' WHO IS CONCLUSIVELY PROVEN AS RAGHNAILL (RANALD) SON OF ALAXANDAIR OG. PROVEN THE MISUSE OF GENERATIONS IN ALEXANDER OG'S TREE. PROVED *RAGHNALL MAC ALAXANDIAR* WENT TO IRELAND 1366 AS THE HEIR OF CLAN ALAXANDAIR OG (MACDONNELL GALLOGLAICH); NOT CLAN ALISTER MOR.

❖ IMPROVED, CONSOLIDATED ARGUMENTS FOR : ALAXANDIAR OG, K 1299.

### **THE CONCOCTED 1308 'DEPOSITION' OF CHIEF ALAXANDAIR OG.**

STATEMENT : The Clan Chief, Alaxandair Og de Hyle, son of Angus Mor, son of Donald was killed in 1299. The story of his deposition in 1308 was a later political fabrication and is untrue.

❖ REVISITED AND ADDED TO, BETTER EXPLAINED NARRATIVES, BETTER CONTEXT TO ARGUMENTS :- ANGUS OG, K. 1318. DONALD, (I) K. 1247. IT WAS *JOHN (SHANE) MAOL* SON OF RAGHNALL SON OF ALAXANDIAR OG WHO SUBMITTED TO KING RICHARD II, DROGHEDA 1395 (NOT IAN MOR).

❖ MUCH STRENGTHENED DETAIL ON CLAN DONALD'S EARLY DYNASTIC AND STRONG POLITICAL LINKS TO THE NORTHERN UI NEILL AND N/W IRELAND, PARTICULARLY AROUND DERRY, 1250 - 1400. IT WAS RE-INVIGORATED BY THE 1266 TREATY OF PERTH. (NOT THE MUCH

LATER, MORE POPULARLY KNOWN GLENS OF ANTRIM LINK). INTEGRATED MORE CLAN DONALD HISTORY OF IRELAND AND SCOTLAND – MAINLY THROUGH A MORE THOROUGH IN-DEPTH UNDERSTANDING OF THE MACDONNELL GALLOGLAIGH DYNASTIES.

## ARGYLL EARLS, DUKES AND IONA

❖ SHOWN CLEARLY HOW THE ARGYLL EARLS ("LEADER IN COUNCIL AND IN FIELD FOR THE REFORMED RELIGION") NOT ONLY DESTROYED IONA ABBEY BUT POSITIONED THEMSELVES TO SYSTEMATICALLY DRAIN ITS RICHES AND RESOURCES BEFOREHAND. (DISREGARDED MARTIN LUTHER'S "TWO KINGDOMS" FOR SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE AND KNOX'S "FIRST BOOK OF DISCIPLINE" - ABBEY ASSESTS TO NEW CHURCH.) IF THE LORDSHIP OF THE ISLES WAS NOT FORFEITED 1493, THEN THE REFORMATION WOULD HAVE SEEN ALL THE ABBEY'S ASSETS RETURNED EFFECTIVELY TO UNDER CLAN DONALD'S HEADSHIP CONTROL - *ACT OF CONVENTION OF ESTATES*, 1561-74.

❖ THEN DEMONSTRATE THAT THE STATEMENTS THAT *IONA AS YOU SEE IT TODAY IS MAINLY DUE TO THE VISON OF THE 8TH DUKE OF ARGYLL* AND THAT HE *BEGAN RECONSTRUCTING THE ABBEY WITH THE INTENTION THAT IT BE USED FOR ECUMENICAL WORSHIP* ARE BOTH SIMPLY NOT TRUE.

❖ THE 8<sup>TH</sup> DUKE OF ARGYL HAD A "LOVE COLUMBA, HATE POPE" RELATIONSHIP WITH IONA. (This book is not a direct criticism of the 8th Duke. It is a statement on other's hagiographic (Saintly) gloss on him and their narrowness of cause and affect. They make Irish panegyric (praise) poetry seem reserved. )

❖ WE FINISH WITH THIS QUESTION :- IS THE 8TH DUKE'S MONUMENT IN THE ABBEY CHURCH A REFLECTION OF HIS EXAGGERATED ROLE IN ITS 20TH CENTURY RE-BIRTH, OR, A STATEMENT AND CONSTANT REMINDER OF THE DEATH AND DESTRUCTION OF THIS WHOLE MEDIEVAL ABBEY BY HIS DYNASTY OVER THE 16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES?

**Ian R Macdonnell.**