



University  
of Glasgow

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## WHERE AND HOW WAS GAELIC WRITTEN IN LATE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN SCOTLAND? ORTHOGRAPHIC PRACTICES AND CULTURAL IDENTITIES

This article owes its origins less to the paper by Kathleen Hughes (1980) suggested by this title, than to the interpretation put forward by Professor Derick Thomson (1968: 68; 1994: 100) that the Scots-based orthography used by the scribe of the Book of the Dean of Lismore (c.1514–42) to write his Gaelic was anomalous or an aberration – a view challenged by Professor Donald Meek in his articles ‘Gàidhlig is Gaylick anns na Meadhon Aoisean’ and ‘The Scoto-Gaelic scribes of late medieval Perth-shire’ (Meek 1989a; 1989b). The orthography and script used in the Book of the Dean has been described as ‘Middle Scots’ and ‘secretary’ hand, in sharp contrast to traditional Classical Gaelic spelling and *corra-litir* (Meek 1989b: 390). Scholarly debate surrounding the nature and extent of traditional Gaelic scribal activity and literacy in Scotland in the late medieval and early modern period (roughly 1400–1700) has flourished in the interim. It is hoped that this article will provide further impetus to the discussion of the nature of the literacy and literary culture of Gaelic Scots by drawing on the work of these scholars, adding to the debate concerning the nature, extent and status of the literacy and literary activity of Gaelic Scots in Scotland during the period c.1400–1700, by considering the patterns of where people were writing Gaelic in Scotland, with an eye to the usage of Scots orthography to write such Gaelic.

### I

Classical ‘Common’ Gaelic, also known as Early Modern Irish or Classical Irish (the names favoured in Ireland), are the terms used to describe written Gaelic between c.1200 and c.1650 in Ireland, and also in Scotland. This Classical Gaelic has been described as a sort of ‘Gaelic esperanto’ which differed, perhaps markedly, from the vernacular Gaelic of Scotland and from that spoken in many parts of Ireland, especially towards the end of the ‘Classical Gaelic’ period.<sup>1</sup>

Classical Gaelic, it was thought, masked or may even have put a brake on the development of distinct Irish and Scottish vernaculars, c.1200–c.1650. Furthermore, it has traditionally been thought that the presence of this Classical ‘Common’ Gaelic implied that there was little real difference between this archaic literary dialect and the vernacular Gaelic of Ireland and Scotland – although this view is currently undergoing scholarly revision.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it has generally been held that Classical Gaelic among the literate bridged the gaps between the diverging brands of Gaelic, facilitating easy communication (c.1200–c.1650) within the wider Gaelic world from Cape Clear in southern Ireland to Cape Wrath in the far north of Scotland (McLeod & Bateman 2007: xvii–xxx). This Classical Gaelic was the *lingua franca* of the Gaelic literati, who were first described at length in their Scottish manifestation by Professor Derick Thomson (1968). Classical Gaelic literacy, while thin on the ground in comparison to Ireland, is well attested in Scotland in late medieval and early modern Scotland (Black 1989). It has been widely held that this Classical Gaelic world held sway in Gaelic Scotland up until the Scottish Privy Council initiative in the Statutes of Iona, which dictated in 1609 that ‘English’ should be adopted henceforth by clan chiefs in the education of their heirs. This, the implementation of the statutes of Iona, has often been seen as the blow which fractured the unity of the Scottish Gaidhealtachd with the wider Gaidhealtachd, in tandem with the British conquest of Ireland and the plantation of Ulster.<sup>3</sup> Hence it has been thought that the vernacular Gaelics of Ireland and Scotland increasingly emerged from beneath the rigid constraints of Classical Gaelic from then on. Much of this needs little rehearsal here and is undoubtedly an oversimplification of current and past interpretations of the situation. It offers, nevertheless, a useful point of departure. Wilson McLeod (following on from John Bannerman and Professor Meek) has recently observed that this ‘Classical’ Gaelic literary activity was almost completely absent from areas of Gaelic Scotland outwith Argyll and the western Isles (zone ‘A’ on the map, figure 2). However, while studies have, understandably, concentrated on Classical Gaelic in zone ‘A’, due to the availability of materials, such a focus leaves well over half of Gaelic Scotland in the dark, a zone regarded by scholars as ‘peripheral’<sup>4</sup> (zone ‘B’, figure 2). So what was

going on in these areas and why was this? This paper will attempt to map out the patterns of such activity (or inactivity) and tentatively explore some of the cultural patterns implicit in these, with an eye more to the rather more neglected 'Scots' dimension of the Scottish Gaidhealtachd, in terms of Scots orthography being used for the writing of Gaelic, a dimension which has received relatively little attention from modern scholars, other than from Ronald Black, and especially Professor Meek in his work on the Book of the Dean of Lismore.

## II

Before focusing on the evidence for this representation of Gaelic language and literacy in Gaelic Scotland, it is worth re-iterating the status of Gaelic within the wider Scottish context. Scotland, it is generally accepted, is a country created by Gaelic-speaking kings (843–1018).<sup>5</sup> However, the only substantial surviving Gaelic (Middle Gaelic) texts from Scotland of the period prior to c.1150 are the Gaelic notes in the Book of Deer, the latest Gaelic entries of which date from the mid twelfth century (Jackson 1972: 89; *cf.* Broun 1998: 184). In the wider Gaelic world – in Ireland in particular – the later twelfth century was a time of epochal political and social upheaval, not least church reform and the arrival of the Normans. In terms of Gaelic orthography one of the reactions to this upheaval in Ireland was seemingly the reform of linguistic conventions current in Middle Gaelic (or Middle Irish, the form of written Gaelic dated to c.900–c.1200) and the emergence of Classical Gaelic as the literary language from approximately 1200 onwards (c.1200–c.1650).<sup>6</sup> In eastern and central Scotland there is little evidence of the adoption of these new Gaelic linguistic and orthographic conventions – at least in the areas directly controlled by and influenced by the crown of late medieval and early modern Scotland, which itself was undergoing a parallel 'Norman' or 'Davidian' revolution in the twelfth century.<sup>7</sup> The nature of Normanisation in Scotland and Ireland was markedly different: by invitation and assimilation in Scotland rather than invasion and expropriation.<sup>8</sup> This difference may have extended to language and orthography. Although in Gaelic Ireland there was a move away from Middle Gaelic to the new Classical Gaelic forms sometime around

1200, this may not have happened in eastern and southern Scotland, where by the thirteenth century it seems that 'the language of record and correspondence was Latin and of speech Scots or Gaelic'.<sup>9</sup> Gaelic had been expanding in Scotland prior to c.1124, a process which was 'put into reverse' in the southern and eastern fringes of the kingdom of Scots, a development often credited to the mac Mael Colaim or Margaret-son monarchs c.1094–1153 (Bannerman 1988: 2; Lynch 1992: 76–87). Inglis (known as 'Scots' from the late fifteenth century) on the other hand had long been present in southern and eastern Scotland, but started to attain greater importance, probably under the mac Mael Colaim or 'Canmore' dynasty (Murison 1974; Ó Maolalaigh & Robinson 2007: 159).

In the south and east of Scotland, monastic centres such as Deer, St Serfs and St Andrews produced Middle Gaelic manuscripts prior to 1200, although the manuscript associated with Deer is the sole survivor.<sup>10</sup> However, in Scotland the effects of the twelfth-century 'Norman' cultural revolution may well have been, as posited above, very different from that in Ireland. Although there is a lack of evidence either way, it may well be that in southern and eastern Scotland Middle Gaelic orthography did not make the transition to Classical Gaelic. While a lack of manuscript evidence hinders a detailed understanding of scribal practices, this is matched by our lack of detailed knowledge of the vernacular in the Scottish Lowlands. There was, however, in this period (1100–1400) a language shift in the vernacular away from Gaelic to Inglis in the lowland centres of commerce, accompanied by the retreat of Gaelic to the Highlands and Islands, a slow process, little understood, but which seems to have been well advanced by the early fifteenth century if not earlier.<sup>11</sup> The written record witnessed the replacement of (largely putative) written Middle Gaelic in southern and eastern Scotland with Latin as a language of record, replaced gradually by Inglis (known as Scots from the end of the fifteenth century onwards) rather than Classical Gaelic, as the languages of business of the late medieval kingdom of Scotland (Broun 1995: 18–19, 25–6; Boardman 2003: 116–7). However, while it might seem obvious, it is worth stressing that the area which was to become the Lordship of the Isles (c.1336–1493) was not a part of the kingdom of Scotland

(*pre-1266*) when Classical Gaelic seems to have been readily adopted (in zone 'A'). Although the early evidence is not strong, this suggests that the Gaelic (or Gaelic-Norse ?) establishment in the Western Isles embraced this new linguistic norm – Classical Gaelic for their written Gaelic, both before and well after their assimilation into the Scottish kingdom.<sup>12</sup> Could it be that Classical Gaelic, widely practised in the Western Isles of Scotland was never from its inception, *c.*1200 (with the exception of some later Campbell-led usage), really established in mainland Scotland outwith Argyll? (figure 1)

While such a view may appear controversial or wrong-headed to many, it might be supported by recent research which suggests that the 'Classical' revision of Gaelic language (*c.*1200) was Irish (in a modern geographical sense) and had little or no Scottish lexical or grammatical input (Ó Maolalaigh 1996: 14).<sup>13</sup> Recent scholarship has even suggested that there might have been significant divergence between spoken and possibly written Gaelic in Scotland and Ireland in the middle Gaelic period (*pre-1200*), when it does seem to have been used in mainland Scotland, and that written Gaelic in Scotland such as that of the Book of Deer, may have been adapted to local usage (Broun 1998: 193; Ó Maolalaigh 2008: 217, 286; Ó Buachalla 2002: 4–5, 11, n.14; *cf.* Jackson 1972: 125–6, 149–51). Classical Gaelic, in other words, may have been devised in Ireland, a late medieval precursor of modern Irish (even though it was markedly different from the vernacular in many districts of Ireland), and that while this was practised in some parts of Gaelic Scotland (Argyll and the Western Isles) adjacent to Ireland, it may have differed quite markedly, in some respects, from the vernacular Gaelic of Scotland (1200–1650). The traditional understanding of the Gaelic world imagined one Gaidhealtachd, stretching between Cork and Sutherland, as a single culture province. This may remain valid at many levels, not least that of a linguistic continuum – but from a Scottish perspective, taking account of political, social and cultural differences, together with extensive areas where Classical Gaelic was not, apparently, written (zone 'B'), another interpretation might prove more beneficial (Ó Baoill 2000; Ó Maolalaigh 2008: 210).

One great problem for a historian of Gaelic Scotland is that there is often little evidence in the historical record of spoken 'Gaelic'.

Several of the Scottish monarchs in the period – Robert I, Robert II, James IV and probably James V – had an extensive knowledge of the Gaelic parts of the kingdom. These monarchs may well have been able to understand if not speak Gaelic and they were patrons of the Gaelic artists such as *clàrsairean* and *bàird*. Despite this the thought that a king of Scots could speak the mother tongue of half his kingdom, even as a second language, still might seem surprising to many modern Scots.<sup>14</sup> Whether kings of Scots could speak Gaelic or not, however, it is clear that their main languages of business were Scots, with Latin and perhaps Norman French in earlier centuries. While Gaelic might not have been to the forefront of the consciousness of many of the monarchs of our period, it is worth bearing in mind that competent nobles whose estates were populated by Gaels made a point of being able to speak the language of the tenantry of their estates, even if they habitually spoke Scots themselves, and perhaps we should expect no great difference from this approach in monarchs prior to 1603 (or at least prior to 1540), even although the evidence is not strong either way.<sup>15</sup>

Angelo Forte has recently persuasively argued that Gaelic, while hidden from historical view, may have been a more persistent survivor than is usually thought in areas on the border zone of the early modern Gaidhealtachd such as Stirlingshire and Aberdeenshire (Forte 2007: 23–30). There is similarly little hard ‘evidence’ that many of the clan chiefs from this period were Gaelic speakers – given that the surviving records of their business are overwhelmingly in Latin and especially in Scots – although no one seriously doubts that they were Gaels, a point highlighted by Jane Dawson’s study of Campbell correspondence with their neighbours in the sixteenth century, a pattern of language usage that appears to have extended to many other Highland kindreds.<sup>16</sup> A paradigm such as this, Gaelic speakers but Scots writers, could perhaps be applied to people operating in a Gaelic milieu with very little in the way of a Gaelic historical footprint.<sup>17</sup> Steve Boardman showed that Robert II, the first Stewart monarch (father-in-law to Eoin, 1st Lord of the Isles), owed much of his clout to his powerbase in the Gaelic Highlands, and was very much of and at home in Gaelic Scotland. It would thus have been very surprising if he had not been at the centre of patronage of

the Gaelic arts, albeit none of this surviving.<sup>18</sup> It is instructive, however, that the one major cultural commission of this king to survive, Barbour's *Brus*, is in Scots rather than Gaelic. The decline in the status of the language in the business and power centres of the south and east, when added to language shift within the wider Lowland population from Gaelic to Scots, had profound consequences for the patterns of language usage in the newly (c.1400–1700) truncated Gaelic Scotland, where the language had recently retreated to the Highlands, Islands, Galloway and Carrick. The language of business in the kingdom of Scots was Inglis/Scots, and this included a slowly contracting Gaelic Scotland. When Gaelic Scots conducted legal or commercial business this was, with a few notable exceptions, undertaken in the language of the south and east of the kingdom (Boardman 2003: 95–9, 116–7; Black 2000: 336–7). One could argue that 'the Scottish cringe' started early: it started in the upper echelons of state, commerce and the church and its first victim was Gaelic. This has resulted in a Gaidhealtachd largely 'lost' to history. Little other than limited personal and placename evidence is evident of the Gaelic speech of much of the highlands from the late medieval / early modern period.<sup>19</sup> One other faint trace of what seems to have been a prolonged period of Gaelic-Scots bilingualism, with Scots being privileged in the legal and business sphere, was a number of loanwords for various terms which originated in Gaelic and were fossilised in Scots (and vice versa).<sup>20</sup>

### III

One of the more immediate starting points for some of the points of discussion raised in this paper was a map (figure 1) compiled by Ronald Black in his article 'The Gaelic Manuscripts of Scotland', showing areas associated with scribal activity in Gaelic Scotland. This map cannot be a precise measure of patterns of literacy, due to the portable nature of manuscripts and difficulties with provenance. Nevertheless it does build up a fairly convincing picture of areas associated with Classical Gaelic scribal activity. When this map of scribal activity in the Gaidhealtachd (in Classical Gaelic) is superimposed on a map of Gaelic Scotland (figure 2) it is apparent that the use of Classical Gaelic and associated classical Gaelic script



(*corra-litir*) and orthography was, almost without exception, restricted to the southern and western parts of the Scottish Gaidhealtachd.<sup>21</sup> The overwhelming preponderance of manuscripts was either produced in or associated with the southern and western fringes of the Gaidhealtachd, associated with territories controlled by kindreds such as the Macdonalds, Macleans, Campbells, Macleods of Harris, all of whom had a variety of enduring social, cultural and political connections with Gaelic Ireland. This is a phenomenon which has been explored recently in print especially vis-à-vis the influence (or not) of Ireland and Irish perceptions of Scottish Gaelic identities as demonstrated in extant (Classical) Gaelic poetry.<sup>22</sup>

However, despite the undoubted importance of links with Ireland, of the three major collections of Gaelic poetry from the period c.1500–1700 in Scotland, the Book of the Dean of Lismore (c.1542), the Fernaig Manuscript (c.1689) and the Books of Clanranald (being written up to c.1715), only the Clanranald material was written mostly in Classical Gaelic and using traditional orthographic conventions, albeit with some English content. Even though the earliest of these *duanairean*, the Book of the Dean, copied many poems from Irish and Lordship sources (from oral or manuscript sources or both) in a variety of brands of Gaelic, the manuscript itself was written in Scots orthography (Gillies 2002: 132–3; Gilles 2007: 220–24; MacGregor 2007a: 210–17; MacBain & Kennedy 1894: 1–3, 141–7). The other single largest source of written Gaelic from the period, the Fernaig Manuscript, was written a century and a half later in vernacular Gaelic (with traces of Classical Gaelic language) and was also in Scots orthography. Matters were not always clearcut, however. Although this paper contends that Classical Gaelic was largely absent from mainland Scotland outwith Campbell country, many of those Gaelic Scots – poets such as Giolla Crìost Tàilleir who has a poem in the Book of the Dean of Lismore – showed, seemingly, a clear awareness of the rules of Classical Gaelic even though their poetry is preserved in Scots orthography.<sup>23</sup>

Although written Classical Gaelic is hard to locate in mainland Scotland (Argyll excepted), matters were different in the Isles. Edward Lhuyd (c.1699) recorded that John Beaton in Pennycross, Mull (zone ‘A’), was in possession of a considerable library of

Classical Gaelic manuscripts (Bannerman 1998: 38–9, 140). While Beaton had an unusually large collection of manuscripts, he was not alone. The (seemingly) unique books of Clanranald were written in *corra-litir* and Classical Gaelic, and were not written on the Scottish mainland but in an area where there was a continuity of Classical Gaelic under the patronage of the Macdonalds of Clanranald.<sup>24</sup> While these were produced in Classical Gaelic, even they included material in Scots/English. Interestingly another contemporaneous Macdonald compendium of clan history, probably produced for the Macdonalds of Sleat around the same time, while well aware of the Classical Gaelic tradition, was written in English.<sup>25</sup> While there might well have been ‘widespread literacy’ in Classical Gaelic among the aristocracy of the Highlands, as argued convincingly by Bannerman and Black, this may have been confined to a narrow zone in the West Highlands.<sup>26</sup> There is little evidence for this in much of Gaelic Scotland (figure 2, zone ‘B’). As the sixteenth century progressed the language that was most widespread in all of Scotland, including Gaelic Scotland, as a language of literacy, was Scots (together with Latin), a process that accelerated as the century drew to a close, even perhaps among those Gaelic Scots who were literate in Classical Gaelic. This point can be underlined by drawing on the results of some of John Bannerman’s extensive researches on the Beatons, one of the best known of the hereditary learned (medical) families in the Classical Gaelic tradition. There are some twenty-five surviving Classical Gaelic manuscripts known either to have been written by or to have been in the possession of various Beatons (Bannerman 1998: 142–3). Bannerman identified manuscripts bearing inscriptions by fifty-seven Beaton scribes, one in 1408 and the rest ranging from c.1540 to c.1716. As one would expect, many (although perhaps not all) of these Beatons were Gaelic-literate. However, it is surprising how many of these scribes were Scots (and Latin) literate. Only fifteen out of the fifty-seven Beaton scribes identified by Bannerman have no Scots/Latin ‘secretary hand’ writings attributed to them (Bannerman 1998: 138–43). These are very imprecise measures of literacy rates, but this does show how prevalent Scots was (in zone ‘A’) even amongst the Beatons, one of the most important groups of practitioners of Classical Gaelic in

Scotland, some 73% of whom, identified by Bannerman, were Scots/Latin-literate and wrote using 'secretary hand' forms.

Before considering later and 'lesser' kindreds in Gaelic Scotland, it is worth examining the Gaelic inheritance of the Macdonald Lords of the Isles, regarded as the most important sponsors of Gaelic cultural achievement in medieval Scotland.<sup>27</sup> The concentration of historical attention on the Lordship as representing the Gaidhealtachd at large has, perhaps, resulted in the comparative neglect of the northern, eastern and south-western Gaidhealtachd (MacGregor 1998: 1; Boardman 2006: 4–5). That the Macdonald Lords of the Isles adopted (or continued) their Gaelic (Irish-influenced?) patterns of cultural patronage is incontrovertible, part of the legacy that Niall MacMhuirich was able to draw on in compiling the Book of Clanranald, with perhaps a number of people in the Uist area literate and 'versed in the Irish language,' almost certainly Classical Gaelic orthography, as late as 1695.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless the earlier Macdonalds were also, despite their territorial and cultural toe-hold in Ireland, very much part of the Scottish kingdom, something confirmed by the linguistic orientation of their surviving contemporary administrative paperwork. Of 129 legal documents in the Acts of the Lords of the Isles, only one was in Gaelic. Four were in Scots, the rest were in the formulaic Latin employed throughout the kingdom and no different from the legal and administrative documentation found elsewhere in Scotland.<sup>29</sup> The use of Latin in earlier centuries (1100–1500) arguably masked the increasing part played by Scots as a language of business throughout the period, even in the Lordship of the Isles. Donald Meek (1989b: 393) noted that some of the funerary inscriptions within the province of the Lordship of the Isles were in Scots, indicative of established and widespread use.

Outwith the Lordship area the evidence for this is stronger and the evidence for Classical Gaelic usage slimmer. The Mackenzies were one of the more powerful 'Gaelic' kindreds in Scotland, whose rise to power saw them achieve in the north, by 1609, a position similar to that enjoyed by the Campbells in the south. In common with the Campbells, but to an even greater extent, their scribal activity and historical-documentary footprint is almost entirely Scots/English, with some employment of Latin for legal purposes.

They have, seemingly, no surviving Classical Gaelic manuscripts.<sup>30</sup> Their territory lay outwith the period of Gaelic scribal activity outlined by Black – and within an area described by scholars as a peripheral one within the Gaelic world (fig. 2, zone ‘B’).<sup>31</sup> From a Classical Gaelic ‘one-Gaidhealtachd’ culture zone perspective embracing Ireland, this is how it might appear. If one adopts a Scottish perspective, however, things look very different, with kindreds such as Mackenzies, Campbells, Grants, Frasers, Mackays, Munros and Rosses forming a core, and perennially disaffected kindreds on the western seaboard very much on the periphery, not only of Scotland but of Gaelic Scotland (fig. 3). What then of the scribal activity which was employed by kindreds such as the Mackenzies outwith Black’s zone? While one can regard this area (fig. 2, zone ‘B’) as peripheral, a strict application of such criteria could also rule out the two largest collections of Gaelic verse from Scotland: the Book of the Dean and the Fernaig Manuscript, both from the ‘peripheral’ area and both written in Scots orthography.

John Bannerman, in his pioneering study of literacy in the Highlands, noted that while there was widespread Scots fluency in members of the Mackenzie kindred by around 1600, literacy was a relatively late arrival to Ross. According to Bannerman, Cailean Cam, or Colin Mackenzie of Kintail (chief 1569–1594), was the first literate Mackenzie chief, and his predecessors were unable to write. However, there is evidence which indicates Scots literacy in this kindred at least two generations earlier, corresponding to patterns observed by Bannerman in Perthshire and Argyll among the Campbells in and around 1500.<sup>32</sup> Cailean Cam’s grandfather, John Mackenzie of Kintail (chief *c.*1500–1560), and the former’s son Kenneth (Coinneach na Cuilc, *c.*1560–1569) were both fluent in Scots, and a holograph letter survives from Coinneach na Cuilc.<sup>33</sup> Literacy was not restricted to male members of the immediate chiefly family, and both Coinneach’s wife Isobel (or Elizabeth), daughter of John Stewart Earl of Atholl, and their daughter, Agnes Mackenzie, were literate, the latter able to sign her wedding contract in an accomplished hand in 1567.<sup>34</sup> While ‘thua bards that cam to see the lard,’ and ‘ane cla[r]ss[a]r callit M<sup>c</sup>Anragan’ were welcomed and paid by Cailean Cam, the chief of the Mackenzies, in 1568–9, and

doubtless spoke in Gaelic, the event was recorded in accounts written in Scots by Alexander Mackenzie of Kilchrist. Such a widespread proficiency in Scots suggests that this ability was a longstanding one in this kindred, although the poor survival rates of documentation prior to the sixteenth century make this hard to demonstrate.<sup>35</sup>

The Macleods of Lewis were, for much of the sixteenth century, the very epitome of incivility in the eyes of central government and their neighbours, had sustained links with Ireland, were consistent supporters of Macdonald claims to the Lordship of the Isles (thus operating in the same political milieu as other kindreds in zone ‘A’), and correspondingly one would imagine that they should have been Gaelic literate rather than Scots literate. They might well have had artefacts in Classical Gaelic, none of which survive, but members of the kindred (and their followers) were quite familiar with Scots legal forms throughout the sixteenth century: they had to be, from necessity (MacCoinnich 2008, forthcoming). Moreover, Murdo Macleod of Lewis was certainly familiar enough with Scots to write a ransom note for a kidnapped Fife colonist in 1600, and a holograph letter from his half brother, Niall Odhar, to the Privy Council survives, 1613, written before the ink was dry on the Statutes of Iona (Bannerman 1983: 218; MacCoinnich 2006: 227). I would contend, although more research could be done in this area, that literacy in Scots was widespread, and that this was becoming the norm throughout the sixteenth century, perhaps a little earlier than suggested by Dr Bannerman, and that the picture we see in Lowland Scotland is the picture we should expect to see replicated in the Highlands amongst *na daoine uaisle* and the clergy, although the evidence is slim.<sup>36</sup> This being so – Scots being the ‘normal’ language of business – it might be the case that literacy in Scots was widespread, well before the advent of the Statutes of Iona, throughout the islands.

Even if this were the case, however, and Scots literacy was a little more prevalent in the West Highlands than has hitherto been realised, the obvious competence in and use of Gaelic script was something that a number of late sixteenth-century West Highland chiefs, such as Ruairidh Mòr MacLeòid of Dunvegan, Lachlann Mòr MacGill’Eain of Duart, Lachlann MacFhionghain of Strath,

Dòmhnall Gorm of Sleat and the chiefs of Clanranald, had sought to cultivate. While it might be hard to prove that their signatures on official documents around the time of the Statutes of Iona bear witness to defiance of the cultural mores asserted by the Scottish Privy Council, it might well be, as Bannerman and MacGregor have argued, that the Statutes of Iona (1609) were aimed at curbing such behaviour, and that the clauses related to education were aimed at eradicating ‘Gaelic’ tendencies in a corner of the new ‘British’ state that harboured ‘Irish’ cultural sensibilities.<sup>37</sup> The Mackenzies were guarantors on the ground, in the north, of the new Jacobean settlement of the Highlands, in much the same way as the Campbells were in the south. The Mackenzies, like the Campbells, were Gaels, and like the Campbells they had strong links with the Privy Council and Crown (MacCoinnich 2002: 146–9). Unlike the West Highland Clans, however, *Na Caimbeulaich* (the Campbells) and *Clann Choinnich* (the Mackenzies) drew strength from mutual co-operation with, rather than antagonism to, Edinburgh. A charter of confirmation issued by Cailean Ruadh, alias Colin Mackenzie, the first Earl of Seaforth, the new power in the region, to his vassal Macdonald of Clanranald for the Clanranald lands of Arisaig, may have been deliberately making this new order explicit when he assented to a charter made in Scots by Clanranald to one of his own kinsmen in 1625, the confirmation by Seaforth stating expressly that Clanranald’s charter was in the ‘English tongue’.<sup>38</sup>

And if, as it seems, Scots (increasingly Anglicised after 1603) and to a decreasing degree Latin fulfilled the functions required in terms of literacy for the kindreds of the Eastern and Northern Highlands, how did these Gaels represent their language, and how did this impinge on their orthographic practices? One clue can be found in the largest extant production of their cultural self-expression, their self-produced histories. Noble houses throughout Scotland produced dynastic histories to the glory of their various houses in the early modern period. Martin MacGregor recently highlighted the importance of this neglected genre to Gaelic Scotland, having identified in excess of fifty genealogical manuscripts related to the Highlands – all, with the exception of the Books of Clanranald, in Scots-flavoured English.<sup>39</sup> Scots, and latterly

English, then, seems to have been the language of letters of choice or habit of almost all the Gaidhealtachd in the early modern (and possibly the late medieval) period, with some remarkable exceptions in Gaelic such as the poetry in the Book of the Dean and the Fernaig Manuscript (Gaelic in Scots orthography) and the Books of Clanranald (Classical Gaelic with some English).<sup>40</sup>

#### IV

Another factor that highlighted, perhaps quickened, the patterns of development of the written forms of Gaelic in Scotland was the Reformation. Gaelic Scotland (the Campbells excepted) is sometimes portrayed as having been either largely Catholic, somehow indifferent to the Reformation, or having had little ecclesiastical provision following 1560.<sup>41</sup> While much research remains to be done in this area, it is clear that the Campbells were not alone in their attachment to the reformed faith. Several of the key families who controlled much of the rest of Gaelic Scotland in the decades following the Reformation, the Grants, Frasers, Mackintoshes, Mackays, Mackenzies, Rosses and Munros, were all demonstrably Protestant.<sup>42</sup> James Kirk has shown that most areas of the Highlands had some sort of reformed church structure in place – even if this was not always adequate and did not always mirror the structures of the south east to the satisfaction of church authorities in the Lowlands.<sup>43</sup> It is something of a conundrum why, given that preaching and especially reading the Gospel in the vernacular was one of the drivers of Reformation ideology, this did not extend to the provision of scriptural materials in Gaelic, although anti-Gaelic prejudice in the south certainly played a part (Meek 1988: 10; 1998: 49). However, when one looks at the clear patterns of presumed Gaelic speech but demonstrable use of written Scots/English by these Gaelic kindreds in the period prior to and immediately after the reformation in legal, political and commercial spheres, for transactions both within and without the Highlands, it may come, perhaps, as less of a surprise that these kindreds used Scots in other spheres. These same linguistic templates may well have been employed in a religious sense: written Scots (English increasingly after 1603) and probably Gaelic speech to deliver the Gospel

(Dawson 1994: 231–9). Given the capacity of many Gaels to use Scots orthography rather than Classical Gaelic, could it have been the case that they accessed the Scriptures more readily through this Scots capability than they would have been able to with Classical Gaelic?

What then of the Campbell religious production in Classical Gaelic from John Carswell onwards? This is all the more puzzling given Jane Dawson's analysis of the surviving letters of the Campbells of Glenorchy, in Scots, many of whose correspondents were Gaels (Dawson 1997: 7). John Bannerman has argued that Gilleasbaig Donn, the fifth Earl of Argyll, wanted the classical Gaelic Geneva prayer book that he sponsored, *Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh*, to be used in Argyll and the Isles (Bannerman 1989: 228). If, however, John Carswell, Campbell's bishop in Argyll who produced *Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh*, had been aiming at a purely Scottish audience, would he have produced his liturgy in Scots orthography rather than a classical language and orthography which may not have been widely understood?<sup>44</sup> Any liturgy produced in a Scots-based orthography would not, however, have been well received by the Gaelic literati in zone 'A'.<sup>45</sup> As it was, this was commissioned in Classical Gaelic, a medium aimed at an Irish (pan-Gaidhealtachd) rather than for a purely Scottish audience (Meek 1998: 40, 47). This would have dovetailed nicely with the Earl's political interests in the island of Ireland, a corollary for his 'British' political posturing and a means of extending his influence on the Irish scene, although he doubtless hoped that the prayer book would be adopted in Scotland too (Dawson 2002: 74, 80–81). It is in any case striking that a generation after the orthography used for Gaelic writing in the Book of the Dean, whose compilers moved in a Campbell cultural nexus, a Campbell-sponsored religious text would adopt a radically different orthographic system (MacGregor 2006a: 50–60). The idea that the Campbells may have been aiming at an Irish market (at least initially) rather than a purely Scottish one is underscored by the proliferation of extant Gaelic textual fragments in Scots orthography (zone 'B', figure 4) written by clergymen, showing perhaps that many clergymen were more comfortable with written Scots than with Classical Gaelic forms, even where this extended to their own efforts to write Gaelic (see figure 4, nos 4, 5,



6, 8, 10, 13). Many of the pieces of Gaelic written in Scots texts collected here (below), c.1400–1711, were committed to paper by clerics, and others involved people with a religious affinity. Those after 1560 noted here (with the probable exception of no. 17) were written by Protestants. This may highlight the importance of literacy (in Scots) to Gaels practising the reformed religion, or more simply the widespread role of Scots as ‘the basic language of written communication in all of late-medieval Scotland’ (MacGregor 2007a: 214–5). In any case Donald Meek may well have been correct to stress the importance of the legacy left by Carswell and his successors in Argyll on the future shape of Scottish Gaelic orthography (Meek 1989b: 394–5; 1998: 62).

## V

Professor Thomson (1968) argued (as noted above) that the Dean of Lismore was a ‘Scotticised Perthshire innovator’ who would have been looked on with ‘disfavour’ for implementing a Scots-based orthography for his Gaelic. Although Professor Meek challenged this interpretation of the Dean’s orthographic practices, more recently Wilson McLeod seems to have re-asserted Professor Thomson’s earlier position, stating that it was ‘impossible to know to what extent – if any – such a concept of “Scotticisation” existed within Scottish Gaeldom’.<sup>46</sup> This, Thomson and McLeod’s view, is a logical one from a ‘Pan-Gaidhealtachd’ perspective, and it is true that there is little remaining of the cultural traditions of a stretch of the Gaidhealtachd, from Caithness to Perthshire (figure 4, zone ‘B’), that was relatively remote from Ireland, as McLeod and others have argued. It is incontrovertible that most of the Gaelic that is left to us from this period is in Classical Gaelic and from zone ‘A’, and that for much of the rest of the Gaidhealtachd only fragments are recoverable. Nevertheless it is worth looking at what is there – the zone that appears as a blank on the map (figure 1). Some commentators have noted that the methods of writing people’s Gaelic names in a Scotticised script may be indicative of the treatment of Gaelic in Scots, as in the Book of the Dean (Bannerman 1983: 220; MacGregor 2006a: 39–43). Certainly the relatively early appearance of Scots forms of Gaelic names in the written record

suggests that this means of handling written Gaelic had a long history.<sup>47</sup> The adoption of ‘charter lordship’ early on (c.1412–), not only by Gaels such as the Campbells on the ‘periphery’ of the Gaidhealtachd, but also by the Macdonald Lords of the Isles at the ‘centre’, required engagement with the linguistic forms of the rest of the kingdom. The importance of such charters and (implicit) parallel legal and administrative documentation would suggest a pool of Scots/Latin expertise within the Gaidhealtachd from an early date, a pattern that was well-established by the sixteenth century (Boardman 2003: 96; MacGregor, 2006a: 38–45). Donald Meek’s observation that a number of scribes contributed to the compilation of the Book of the Dean further underscores the probability that this was widespread, and that these scribes employing Scoto-Gaelic script were ‘working within a relatively stable tradition’ (Meek 1989b: 391, 394). One future approach to defining the scope and extent of this practice might be to build on Professor Meek’s work on this orthography (Meek 1989a: 135–45).

Professor Meek delineated four main categories where Gaelic was written in Scots orthography: (1) forms of Gaelic names in funerary inscriptions; (2) placenames, personal names and the occasional Gaelic word expressed in Scots orthography<sup>48</sup>; (3) Scots verse with occasional Gaelic words, although set in a Scots context; and (4) Gaelic verse written in a Scots-based orthography. All of these provide indications of ‘Scotticisation’ vis-à-vis Gaelic. Further study of some of these categories, category 2 in particular, could harvest a massive amount of information, but that is without the scope of this paper. The final section of this paper hopes to build on Professor Meek’s foundations, and plot the course of some more blatant examples of Gaelic usage, the fourth category defined by him, that of Gaelic verse in Scots orthography – where the structural context of the verse is Gaelic, even for two or more lines, rather than a Scots structural context (as in category 3 above). These items of verse have been numbered by author/scribe, where known (some of these are well known; some lesser-known examples are listed here but further research may well reveal more), and plotted on the map (figure 4) for the purposes of this exercise. The places associated with these texts are in many cases not precise.

1. Murthly Hours – Latin text (produced in Paris, *c.* thirteenth century) with minor subsequent French and Gaelic (*c.*1370 × *c.*1430) additions. Thirty-five fragmentary lines of text in Gaelic in Scots orthography (Black 2000: 336–45).
2. The Book of the Dean of Lismore (*c.*1512–1542). Attributed to Mr James MacGregor and his brother Duncan in Perthshire (MacGregor 2007a; 2006a: 36). This contains ‘over 11,000 lines of Gaelic verse’ in Scots orthography, which have been divided into three broad categories: Scottish verse, Ossianic verse and verse related to the island of Ireland (Mackinnon 1912: 230–32). Some 2400 lines of ‘Scottish Verse’ and a further 2670 of ‘Ossianic’ or ‘heroic verse’ have appeared in editions (Watson 1978 [1937]; Ross 1939).
3. The Chronicle of Fortingall (*c.*1531 × 1571). Scots and Latin text, now lost, includes one poem with twelve lines of Gaelic in Scots orthography (Innes 1855: 146), ‘consisting of admonitions about observing the commandments’ (Gillies 2007: 222). Attributed to Dougal MacGregor, son of Mr James MacGregor (the Dean of Lismore), responsible for no. 2 above (MacGregor 2006a: 36, 75 n.4).
4. James Grant, *c.*1582–1591. Five quatrains of Gaelic written on the flyleaf of a legal book of ‘Practicks’. This Gaelic is in Scots-based script and Scots orthography running to 20 lines with one further poem of four quatrains length ‘in classical Gaelic script and orthography’ as described by Ronald Black (2000: 337).
5. Parson William MacQueen (*c.*1594 × 1611). From Strathnairn. Writer of a history of the Mackenzies in Scots. Original text lost, but a verse fragment, six lines of a Gaelic poem associated with McQueen’s history survives, embedded, in the later Ardentoul MS (BL Add MS 40721, fol. 3. MacCoinnich 2004: i, 29–32; ii, 456).
6. Mr James Fraser (1660) minister of Cnoc Mhuire (Wardlaw) and author of the Wardlaw Manuscript written in Scots-English related to the history of the Frasers of Lovat. Two couplets and a quatrain (eight lines altogether) of Gaelic in Scots orthography (Mackay 1904: 40–41, 175).

7. Allangrange MS (*c.*1680?). A history of the Mackenzies, written in Scots-influenced English (BL Add MS 4072, fol. 58). Contains eight fragments of Gaelic poems in Scots orthography, amounting to forty lines (MacCoinnich 2004: ii, 559–73).
8. Ardentoul, BL Add MS 40721 (*c.*1680?). A history of the Mackenzies, written in Scots-influenced English. Seven items of Gaelic in Scots orthography (including item 5, above) possibly written by Mr John McRa (no. 10 below), amounting to thirty-four lines of verse (MacCoinnich 2004: ii, 456, 559–73).
9. Fragment of a Mackenzie Manuscript (*c.*1650 × 1680?). In Scots-influenced English. Eight lines of Gaelic verse in Scots orthography (MacDonald 1933).
10. History of the McRas, Mr Iain MacRath, *c.*1680. English history of his clan. One item in Gaelic, in Scots orthography, four lines (MacPhail 1914: 216).
11. Donnchadh MacRath (Fernaig Manuscript) *c.*1693. Fifty-nine Gaelic poems in Scots orthography. Approximately 4200 lines of verse (MacPhàrlain 1923; Fraser 1992: 75).
12. Sir Aeneas MacPherson. ‘The Loyall Dissuasive’ (1701). One quatrain attributed to ‘Anis Nanirh’ (Aonghas nan Aoir) and a couplet attributed to ‘Gillichalum of Phoeness’ (Murdoch 1902: 17, 82). Six lines in total of Gaelic written in Scots orthography.
13. Mr Hector Mackenzie’s history of the Mackenzies (dated at his house in Dingwall, 6th September 1710). A history of his clan in English. Eight items in Gaelic in Scotticised-English orthography amounting in total to 25 lines (Mitchell Library MS 591702).<sup>49</sup>
14. Alasdair Campbell, Craignish MS History (*c.*1719). A history of the Campbells of Craignish in English. Two couplets of Gaelic in Scotticised-English orthography, extending to four lines in total (Campbell 1926: 184, 217, 227).
15. Sleat MS (MacPhail 1914: 42–3, 52). A history of the Macdonalds – focusing on the Macdonalds of Sleat in Scots-flavoured English. Traditionally attributed to Hugh MacDonald, although possibly written by Crisdean Beaton (Bannerman 1998: 17–20; MacGregor 2002: 212). Three couplets of Gaelic amounting to six lines in total. This example, while it is like

many of the others an insert of Gaelic verse into an English text, may not be a good fit in this list, as it shows signs of greater awareness of Gaelic orthography.

16. Maclean MS: 'The Beginning of Mac Vurich's Panegyrick on the Macleans.' c.1700, nine lines of Gaelic in Scots verse (Clark 1900: i, 142; Campbell 1961: 90–91).

17. Fassiefearn MS. Gaelic poem found in the Cameron of Fassiefearn papers in Scots orthography. 'Oran reinig le sakart do vrui ousal an deyj a bash', and the identity of the priest who composed it unknown (n.d.). Thought to antedate 1766 but possibly considerably older. Fifty-six lines. A rendering of it appears in Gillies's (1786) collection of Gaelic poetry as 'Do Mhnaoi Uasail ann an Gleanngaraidh' (MacLauchlan 1859: 366–73).

18. Gairloch MS. Manuscript compilation of historical materials in English related to the Mackenzie family dated 1776, but including, probably, earlier materials or copies thereof (Gairloch Muniments). Two lines of verse in Gaelic (Scots orthography) related to a couplet found in other, earlier, Mackenzie histories.

Such a list provides a pattern of demonstrable usage of Scots orthography for the writing of Gaelic (albeit often fragmentary), which may not quite mean, as Ronald Black suggested, that what is regarded as 'conventional' regarding Gaelic script and orthography in Scotland between 1400 and 1700 should be re-assessed (Black 2000: 337). It does, nonetheless, provide (when the items on this list are plotted on a map, figure 4) a strikingly different perspective from the distribution pattern suggested by surviving Classical Gaelic materials. Although the scribe(s) of the Book of the Dean and Donnchadh MacRath (Fernaig) were exceptional in terms of the scale of their Gaelic output in Scots orthography, the seemingly episodic nature of the other couplets and quatrains noted elsewhere here points, perhaps, to a sporadic, idiosyncratic approach to committing Gaelic to paper, something that may not have been particularly widespread (outwith the Classical Gaelic tradition). The concept of a wider, coherent, system for Gaelic in Scots orthography should be treated perhaps, on this evidence, with caution. It is likely

too that people in zone 'B' such as Mr James Fraser (1660), who possessed an 'Irish dictionary' and 'Hibernologia a volum of Irish verse', the well-educated and informed Sir Robert Gordon of Sutherland (1630) and even the Dean of Lismore (c.1512–42) were probably all well aware of traditional Gaelic orthographic practices but were much more comfortable with Scots orthography.<sup>50</sup> The recently discovered manuscript described by Ronald Black, with poems by James Grant (no. 4) utilising both orthographic systems, may serve as a caution against over-rigid categorisation. Whether people were copying poetry from exemplars for the Book of the Dean or not, what is undeniable is that Scots was, by the sixteenth century, the language of business and literacy of almost all of Gaelic Scotland, and that this Scots and Scots orthography was used by people for writing what seems to have been on the whole occasional and anecdotal Gaelic, which as Ronald Black has said may well have been an 'ill developed art of little consequence'.<sup>51</sup> This list, which includes the Book of the Dean (2) and the Fernaig Manuscript (11), places these major works alongside fragmentary items of Scottish Gaelic similarly written in Scots/English orthography. Given the context developed by assembling these fragments, one may be tempted to agree with the opinion expressed by the Rev. Neil Ross on the orthography of the Book of the Dean of Lismore:

It would be strange if the Dean, himself a church dignitary and a Gaelic scholar, were ignorant of standard Gaelic orthography. When he and his brother adopted a 'phonetic' method they were following the custom of the period just as they wrote the script in the current Roman hand and not in Gaelic characters ... why should not the manner which held in writing English be as freely employed in writing Gaelic? (Ross 1939: xiv–xv)<sup>52</sup>

Another point which may be worth pursuing in the future (and outwith the scope of this paper) is why, seemingly, such a method of expressing written Gaelic (in Scots orthography) was abandoned at much the same time as the last Classical Gaelic was being written in Scotland. A parallel study which would shed much light on this would be one that would chart the emergence of modern Scottish

Gaelic vernacular forms in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century. It is probably not surprising that this coincided loosely with the foundation of the SSPCK (the Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge) in 1709. This organisation was notorious (initially) for its views on Gaelic, but their stance on Gaelic subsequently became less hostile. Clergymen associated with the SSPCK in the first half of the eighteenth century may nonetheless have driven the change. Written vernacular Scottish Gaelic as we know it today emerged into print in the mid eighteenth century and there must have been activity in terms of educational development which antedated this printing.<sup>53</sup> While Mr Hector Mackenzie, a clergyman living at Dingwall, was happy to write and probably copy Gaelic written in Scots orthography in 1711 (at much the same time as Niall MacMhuirich worked on the Book of Clanranald), he seems to have been one of the last to do so, as was one of his peers, Alasdair Campbell, the author of the Craignish MS History, *c.*1719 (figure 4, nos 12 & 13).

There may well be a connection between the continued commitment of the Synod of Argyll to Gaelic publishing throughout the seventeenth century, the distribution of Irish Bibles (1693–8), and the proposed ‘planting of the north’, using Gaelic-speaking clergy from Argyll from 1695, and the fact that ‘traditional’ Gaelic orthography came to be adopted by Scottish Gaelic (Withers 1980: 64–5; 1988: 115–8; Ó Baoill 1994: 9). This was indicative of the influence of the accumulated tradition of Campbell-inspired investment in the development of the language for religious proselytisation. For clergy in zone ‘A’, versed in Argyll traditions of religious classically-driven Gaelic, Scots orthography would probably not have been favoured. Further research may either prove or disprove such speculation on this writer’s part, but it would seem that if the Murthly Hours saw the first Gaelic written in Scots orthography (known to us), the opening of the eighteenth century saw its abandonment due to the emergence of written modern Gaelic and modern Gaelic orthography, drawing on the Classical Gaelic tradition, probably via Argyll.

### Conclusion

Scots (morphing slowly into English post 1603) was in the period 1400–1700 the business language of the kingdom and this seems to have been the case in Gaelic Scotland too. It ill-behoved anyone to be illiterate in or ignorant of the language of parliament, church, court and burgh. Furthermore literacy in Scots/English may well have been more widespread than was thought amongst *na daoine uaisle* (the clan aristocracy) in the Highlands in the decades preceding the Reformation if not in certain cases many generations before this, in tandem with their competence in Latin. Engagement with the organs of governments, all Scotophone, necessitated this. It seems in any case that within a generation of the Reformation, almost all tacksmen, ministers and *daoine uaisle* in Gaelic Scotland were educated in and literate in Scots. This seems, by and large, to have been the case even with the southern and western parts of the Gaidhealtachd where ‘orthodox’ Gaelic scribal practices were strong. It would have been surprising if those nobles in Gaelic Scotland who did use Gaelic script, such as Ruairidh Mòr MacLeòid of Dunvegan, had placed themselves and their kindred at a disadvantage by having no facility in Scots – albeit taking pride in their Classical Gaelic learning. Gaelic in Scotland may already, by the end of the late medieval period, have been restricted to certain contexts, largely to poetry and medical tracts, Scots (and Latin) rather than Gaelic being almost always employed in formal and legal domains within Gaelic Scotland. Where Classical Gaelic was weak or absent (zone ‘B’) this use of Scots extended to the occasional writing of Gaelic employing Scots orthography. The invisibility of Classical Gaelic in zone ‘B’ is testament to this widespread facility in Scots in the wider Gaidhealtachd, as well as to the relatively restricted range of Classical Gaelic within Gaelic Scotland. While the focus of Gaelic studies in medieval Scotland will, of course, remain on zone ‘A’ and on Classical Gaelic, as this is what the preponderance of surviving manuscript evidence relates to, future studies should, nevertheless, aim to fill the ‘gap’ in the rest of the country, zone ‘B’ in what was Gaelic Scotland, inasmuch as this is possible. These patterns of orthographic usage also bear witness, unfortunately, to the deep-



rooted issues related to the decline in status of Gaelic in Scotland which antedate the Statutes of Iona by several centuries.

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#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> McManus 1994: 335–7; Ó Cuív 1973: 116–7. Ronald Black commented that ‘... classical Gaelic was a stately, conservative sort of mount, saddled and bridled by prescriptive grammar’ (Black 1989: 168; MacGregor 2000a: 80).
- <sup>2</sup> For these traditional interpretations see work by O’ Rahilly (1932: 123, 125, 140) and Jackson (1951: 75–7) ‘...The literary dependence of Gaelic speaking Scotland on Ireland, which ceased only in the seventeenth century...’ (Fraser, 1926: 38). For an argument based on this traditional interpretation of a Pan-Gaidhealtachd see Horsburgh (2002: 237, 239). Some Scottish features have also been noted in a classical Gaelic MS of 1467 (Ó Baoill, 1988: 126–37). Ó Maolalaigh has questioned this monolithic ‘pan-Gaidhealtachd’ and ‘Common Gaelic’ models (1995/6: 168; 1996: 12–15, 24 and notes 2–4, pp. 46–7) as has Ó Buachalla (2002: 1–12).
- <sup>3</sup> Ó Baoill 1994: 3–8; Bannerman 1983: 215–18; MacGregor 2000: 82, 94; Horsburgh 2002: 235.
- <sup>4</sup> ‘a peripheral area of the Gaelic world ...’ (Bannerman 1983: 214, 235); ‘... relatively peripheral ...’ (McLeod 2004: 36); ‘cha chuireadh e iognadh orm nan robh cuid de Ghaidheil air iomallan na Gaidhealtachd air fàs gu math Gallda nan dòighean ...’ (my translation follows:) ‘... it wouldn’t surprise me if some Gaels on the periphery of the Gaidhealtachd had become very Lowland in their habits ...’ (Meek 1989a: 139). Kenneth Jackson considered that the ‘abnormal’ spellings and scribal practices in the Book of Deer (ante 1150) took place because the dialect of Buchan was ‘peripheral’ (Jackson 1951: 87, n. 2) and that Deer was on ‘the remotest edge of the Common

- Gaelic civilisation area; its writing masters may have been out of touch and poorly qualified' (Jackson 1972: 126).
- <sup>5</sup> For a useful summary see Bannerman 1988: 1–2.
- <sup>6</sup> Ó Cuív 1973: 116–7; Simms 1987: 4, 13–15; O' Rahilly 1932: 248–9. Simms (1998: 243; 2007: 83–4), however, credits the Ó Dálaigh family in Scotland and Ireland for the new literary standard (MacGregor 2000a: 81–2).
- <sup>7</sup> See however work by Clancy (2000: 94), Broun (1998: 194–8) and Bannerman (1989) for discussion of the largely hidden continuation of Gaelic to some extent in eastern central and Lowland Scotland between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. A number of poems survives by two Classical Gaelic poets with strong links to Ireland, Gille Brìghde Albannach and Muireadhach Albannach Ó Dálaigh some of which places them in an Argyll and Lennox context, c.1200–1250 (Clancy 1998: 247–84). See also Simon Taylor's study of Gaelic linguistic erosion in Fife (Taylor 1994: 104–11).
- <sup>8</sup> Bartlett 1994: 55, 78–83, 97–99, 114, 145–8, 214–7. For further on Scotland see Oram 2004: 8–9; 194–7, 219–23; Barrow 1989: 68. For Ireland see Crooks 2005: 263–307; Ellis 1985: 1–27; Simms 1987: viii; 2007: 83–4. Macinnes commented that by the seventeenth century 'whereas [Scottish] clanship can be deemed to be a product of feudalism, kinship and local association, Gaelic Society in Ireland lacked a corresponding feudal dimension' (Macinnes 1996: 58–9).
- <sup>9</sup> Duncan 2002: 173. For the transition from Middle Irish to Classical Gaelic see work by Ahlquist (1994: 33–44). I owe this reference to Professor Roibeard Ó Maolaláigh.
- <sup>10</sup> A record of gifts to the church of St Serf's was written in the 'ancient language of the Scots' (Barrow 1989: 78; Bannerman 1989: 148). The Augustinian priory of St Andrews was in possession of 'an old volume in Gaelic' related to lands adjacent to Loch Leven around 1150. The transactions at Loch Leven had been recorded in Gaelic until c.1128 and at Deer until c.1150 (Broun 1995: 32; Bannerman 1988: 3; Bannerman 1989: 148). Kenneth Jackson made the point that Gaelic, the language of the Deer inscriptions, would have to be regarded as credible by 'the good men of Buchan' indicative of favourable status and not uncommon usage (Jackson, 1972: 97).
- <sup>11</sup> In the St Andrews area of Fife this may have happened by 1200 (Taylor 1994: 110; Barrow 1989: 67–9).
- <sup>12</sup> For the political history of the Kingdom of the Isles prior to the Scottish takeover of the Hebrides and Man (1266) see work by Power, who considered that 'the cultural dominance of Ireland' was responsible for the collapse of Norse speech soon after 1266 (Power 2005: 58; cf. Jackson 1951: 78). It is difficult to know for sure what the linguistic patterns in the western Isles might have been prior to the twelfth or the thirteenth century, how Scottish political pressure manifested itself culturally and linguistically, and when

Norse speech gave way to Gaelic. According to Steer and Bannerman the descendants of Somhairle mac GilleBride (†1164) both before and especially after 1266 ‘were more wholly committed to a purely Gaelic society and culture than the rest of Scotland’ (Steer & Bannerman 1977: 202). Boardman, however, has recently commented that this perception may rest to a degree on the relatively recent collapse of Gaelic in mainland Scotland (Boardman 2006: 5). Macdonald (1995: 140–42) commented that magnates in the area such as Raonall mac Sorley (fl. 1164–c.1207) were ‘Gaelic’ but also ‘Scoto-Norse’. Surviving poems in Classical Gaelic related to magnates from this area in this period include: a) ‘[B]aile suthach Sith Emhna’, addressed to Ragnhall, King of Man and the Isles, 1187 × 1229 (Clancy 1998: 236–41; Ó Cuív 1957: 283–301); b) ‘Dòmhnall mac Raghnaill Rosg Mall’, addressed to the eponym of Clan Dòmhnail, c.1220 × 1250 (McLeod 2004: 224–5); c) ‘Ceannaigh duain t’ athar, a Aonghas’, addressed to Aonghas Mòr MacDhòmhnail of Islay, c.1250 (McLeod 2004: 225; Clancy 1998: 288–91; Bergin 1970: 169–74, 291–4). Four fragments of verse on ‘Rulers in the Isles’ in Classical Gaelic, possibly relating to the thirteenth or fourteenth century have been preserved in a fourteenth-century grammatical tract (Clancy 1998: 309, 342; Clancy 2000: 88; Bergin 1955: 269, 274–5, 279).

<sup>13</sup> ‘Irish’ rather than ‘Gaelic’ was widely used in the early modern period by Scottish Gaels to describe their own speech ante c.1700 (Horsburgh 2002: 233–4; MacGregor 2007b: 37). The term ‘Gaelic’ or Scottish Gaelic is used here to minimise confusion, and Irish (other than in source quotations) is used in a modern geographical sense.

<sup>14</sup> Alexander Grant noted that Gaelic was so prevalent that James IV even ‘bothered to learn the language’ (Grant 1984: 202; Macdougall 1989: 285; Hume-Brown 1973 [1891]: 39–40). There is no ‘proof’ that James V spoke Gaelic, but there is of course no proof that he did not – and he was very familiar both with Gaels and the Gaidhealtachd (Cameron 1998: 228–48; Dawson 2002: 19; MacCoinnich 2004: 133–9). Boardman (2007: 84–6, 92, 101–09) and Barrow (1988: 321) have convincingly placed Robert II (1371–90) and Robert I (1306–29) respectively in a Gaelic context. Alexander III (1249–86) famously is known to have had his pedigree recited in Gaelic at his inauguration and Gaels held high office under royal patronage, including perhaps that of kings’ poet, and as physicians, suggesting that it is very likely that monarchs such as David I, Malcolm IV, William I, and Alexander II (1124–1249) were all as familiar with Gaelic at the very least if not themselves Gaelic speakers, even if this were not their preferred tongue (Bannerman 1989: 121–3, 136–7; Bannerman 1998: 82; Broun 1998: 184). A quatrain of Gaelic poetry concerning Alexander I (1107–1124) was recently discovered by Thomas Clancy in a fourteenth-century grammatical tract (Clancy 2000: 88–96). Any lingering royal sympathy for or direct engagement with Gaelic would seem to have disappeared by the reign of James VI (1567–1625):

stridently anti-Gaelic yet still stressing his Dalriadic (hence Gaelic) antecedence (Mason 2002: 104–07, 119).

- <sup>15</sup> Fiona Watson (1998: 58, n. 2) was of the opinion that competence in Gaelic has to be assumed for many of the Scottish élite in and around 1300. Sir Robert Gordon (c.1620) recommended to his nephew the young Earl of Sutherland that he should ‘learne to speak the vulgar language of the country ...’ even though the long term aim was to ‘plant schools ...’ on his estates ‘to instruct the youth to speak Inglishe’. Gordon, himself very likely a Gaelic speaker, further stigmatised Gaelic (1620) as the language of the ‘poor on[e]s’ (Fraser 1892: ii, 357, 359; MacCoinnich 2002: 141). David Horsburgh (1997: 160, 166) considered that many of the nobles and clan chiefs of north east Scotland must have been Gaelic speakers, albeit bilingual with widespread use of Scots, in 1622. Gilleasbaig Caoch, marquis of Argyll (d. 1660) took measures to ensure that his heir, Gilleasbaig Fionn, the future 9th earl received a Gaelic education and could speak Gaelic (Black 1990: 5–6). This requires further research but nobles (with estates in the Gaidhealtachd) seem to have made a point of sending their children to learn Gaelic. The Countess of Tullibardine wrote to her mother, the Duchess of Hamilton (22 January 1699) that their eldest son and heir had been sent by his father (John Murray, 1st Duke of Atholl, 1660–1724) to the Highlands to ‘lairne Irishe’ (NAS GD 406/1/7960; this last reference from the online catalogue of the National Archive of Scotland <<http://www.nas.gov.uk/onlineCatalogue/>>).
- <sup>16</sup> Dawson 1997: 7. The same could be said of most Highland ‘clans’ of this period, certainly of the various Mackenzie muniments which do not appear to have preserved any Gaelic legal documents. There is evidence of widespread Scots literacy among leadership of the Grants in 1584, which appears from the fluency of the writer and the expectation that the recipients would read it, to have been a well-established habit (Cathcart 2007: 75–6). For the literacy patterns of the Mackenzies and the MacLeods of Lewis, see elsewhere in this paper. Even the extant papers of the Clanranald family (NAS GD201), known patrons of the Gaelic arts and bards, carry no Gaelic documentation, the documents being in Scots/English or Latin. Arguably this pattern may well be representative of what was there originally despite the known loss of many documents. While many documents were lost many do survive, and there is nothing to suggest that the surviving legal documents are atypical in their patterns of language usage (Dunlop 1964/6: 42–3; Stewart 1999). Some notable exceptions to this generality are a fragmentary Gaelic contract of lease related to the MacDougalls c.1603, edited by Ronald Black and a bundle of seventeenth-century papers in the Dunvegan Muniments discussed by John Bannerman (Black 1984; Bannerman 1980). There is also the Islay charter granted by Dòmhnall, Lord of the Isles in 1408, and a contract of fosterage issued by Ruairidh mòr MacLeòid in 1614 (Munro & Munro 1986:

- 21–7; Parkes 2006: 376, 385–6). Although one is hopeful that similar items will be discovered in the future, such Gaelic documents seem to have been exceptional. See also note 30 below.
- <sup>17</sup> The experience of many modern Gaels (c.1872 – too old to have experienced Gaelic medium education – to post-1981) may parallel this – speakers of Gaelic, but English literate to the prejudice of their Gaelic (Smith 1989: 136–40).
- <sup>18</sup> Boardman 2007: 100–104. Robert II’s sons certainly seem to have been at home in a Gaelic milieu. Both Alasdair mòr mac an Rìgh (known in ‘Inglis’ as the Wolf of Badenoch) and his brother John Stewart Earl of Marr, leader of the ‘lowland’ host against the Macdonalds at Harlaw seem to have been well at home in the Gaidhealtachd and Gaelic (MacPhail 1916: 41–2; McLeod & Bateman 2007: 448–52; Boardman 1996: 88).
- <sup>19</sup> Barrow 1989: 70–79; Horsburgh 1997: 76, 82–3, 100–03, 202–3. The Kennedys and the Carrick area, often overlooked in terms of ‘Gaelic’ Scotland, remained Gaelic speaking until the seventeenth century (MacQueen 1993: 279–81). Gaelic placename evidence for medieval Scotland is currently being investigated in a major *AHRC* project at the Department of Celtic, in the University of Glasgow (2007–2010), ‘The Expansion and Contraction of Gaelic in Medieval Scotland: the onomastic evidence’ led by Professor Thomas Clancy, Dr Simon Taylor and Gilbert Markus. This will be further explored by a concurrent *AHRC* project at the Centre for Scottish & Celtic Studies, University of Glasgow, ‘The Paradox of Medieval Scotland: Social Relationships and Identities before the Wars of Independence’ (2007–2010) led by Professor Dauvit Broun, Professor Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh, with Dr Matthew Hammond and Dr Amanda Beam.
- <sup>20</sup> Barrow 1989. For loanwords from Scots to Gaelic and from Gaelic to Scots see work by O’ Rahilly (1932: 159–60), Bannerman (1988: 3–12), Forte (2007: 28–38), Quick (1988), McClure (1986), Pödör (1995/6: 174–89) and Ó Baoill (1991: 9–17; 1997: 552–3).
- <sup>21</sup> Black 1989. Most of the exceptions to this on this map appearing to the east of Argyll and the Isles probably all originated in the west or fell under the Campbell sphere of influence. These exceptions include the Book of Deer from the Middle Gaelic period, and later activity related to Campbell influence and expansion eastwards into Glenorchy.
- <sup>22</sup> McLeod 2004; Ó Mainnín 1999; Dewar 2006: 39–51; McLeod & Bateman 2007: xxxvi–xxxviii.
- <sup>23</sup> I am grateful to Mr Sìm Innes pointing this out to me. W.J. Watson, editor of *Scottish Verse from the Book of the Dean of Lismore*, was of the opinion that this verse was composed in Classical Gaelic, a pre-supposition that underpinned his methodology (Watson 1978 [1937]: xx–xxi).
- <sup>24</sup> For John Beaton in Pennycross, see Bannerman 1998: 113–6. For an account of the manuscripts that were formerly in possession of his family by the last

- MacMhuirich see Mackenzie's report (Mackenzie 1805: 275–9; Stewart 1999: 302–3). There may well, of course, have been other books, even if they did not contain the same type of materials produced by MacMhuirich. Martin Martin (1695) described books or manuscripts in the possession of MacNeil of Barra, and Macdonald of Benbecula, Fergus Beaton, MacVurich and Hugh Macdonald (Martin 1999: 63, 131, 161). To these could be added, as described c.1699 by Edward Lhuyd, Alan MacLachlane in Knapdale, some 'ancient Irish manuscripts' at Dunvegan castle, Ewen Maclean in Kilchenzie, Kintyre, John Beaton from Mull who sent some of his papers on to Tiree (Campbell & Thomson 1963: 9–11, 33, 37). The Red book of Mingary 'Meggernie' or 'an leavar diari' is said to have been destroyed in a fire at Mingary castle c.1619 (Pitcairn 1833: iii, 481 & note 1). The Red Book of Appin is said to have disappeared around 1800 (Cheape 1993). Although this list is by no means exhaustive and manuscripts were easily portable and may not have been static, all of these territorial associations noted here fall within the area designated as zone 'A' on the maps in the appendices.
- <sup>25</sup> Written in English, the Sleat History written either by a Macdonald or a Beaton, contains three couplets of Gaelic poetry which show more affinity with the Gaelic orthographic tradition than the pieces of Gaelic script embedded in English texts from the mainland (MacPhail 1916: 42–3; Bannerman 1998: 17–19; MacGregor 2002: 201, 212; Gillies 2002: 133).
- <sup>26</sup> Bannerman & Black 1978: 62–3; Bannerman 1983: 235; Black 1984: 142.
- <sup>27</sup> Stübbhart 2005: 110–12, 122; Grant 1984: 205; Steer & Bannerman 1977: 202.
- <sup>28</sup> Mackenzie 1805: 275–7; Martin 1999: 63, 131, 161; Gillies 2002: 121–34. There is also evidence that some Classical Gaelic literacy remained in Kintyre until c.1700 (Ó Baoill 1976: 184). While one can label the Macdonald Gaelic patterns of patronage as 'Irish influenced', this traditional Classical Gaelic scribal practice in south west Gaelic Scotland and the 'border' between zone A and zone B (figures 1–4) could alternatively be perceived as the highwater mark of the Gaelic written continuum. I owe this last observation to a discussion with Professor Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh.
- <sup>29</sup> Munro & Munro 1986: lxxx. For a selection of typical documents see Simpson 1998 [1973].
- <sup>30</sup> I have examined much but by no means all of the extensive Mackenzie of Seaforth papers (NAS GD 46), Mackenzie of Cromartie papers (NAS GD 305), Mackenzie of Coul Papers (NAS GD 1/1149), in the National Archives of Scotland. These have been well catalogued by archivists. The extensive Mackenzie of Suddie papers (BL Add MS 39210 & Ch. 61231–62170) and smaller collections such as the Mackenzie-Fraser of Allangrange papers (St Andrews University Library MS dep 75), Mackenzie of Kilcoy papers (AUL MS 3470), Gairloch Muniments (NRA(S) 0143) all seem to be devoid of any papers bearing Classical Gaelic. This seems to be fairly typical of almost all

the extant records of families whose landed interest embraced Gaelic-speaking areas in this period such as the Grants (The Seafield Papers, GD 248) and the Gordon of Huntly papers (GD 44), both of whom have extensive collections in the National Archives of Scotland. I am grateful to Dr Alasdair Ross, University of Stirling, who has consulted these collections for this last point (Dunlop 1964/6: 42–3. See also note 16 above).

- <sup>31</sup> Bannerman 1983: 214, 235, followed by McLeod 2004: 36, who expanded on the definition of ‘periphery’ and ‘peripheral’. Although this was almost certainly not the authors’ intention, such a paradigm of much of the Scottish Highlands as being ‘peripheral’ to the wider Gaelic world from an Irish or Classical Gaelic perspective may compound the notion of the Scottish Gaidhealtachd as being ‘peripheral’ in the view of scholars working from a Lowland Scottish standpoint (*cf.* Goodare & Lynch 2000: 187, 195, 201).
- <sup>32</sup> John Bannerman (1983: 216–7, 220–1) based this opinion on the non literacy of the Mackenzies on a bond of 1549 where John and Kenneth have ‘their hands led at the pen’ by a notary (see following note).
- <sup>33</sup> The deed of 1549 where their hands were ‘led at the pen’ (see previous note) might conceivably be evidence of either their non-attendance or some political chicanery. In any case John Mackenzie, probably educated in Edinburgh *c.* 1490–1500, was able seemingly to write a ticket in 1537, and his son Coinneach wrote a surviving holograph letter of acquittance to Mr Alexander Mackenzie of Kilchrist for 100 merks dated at Brahan, 16th August 1564 (Paton 1957: 6; BL Add. MS 39210, fol. 4r; MacCoinnich 2004: i, 123–4, 128).
- <sup>34</sup> Contract of Marriage, at Brahan, between Agnes Mackenzie and Lauchlan Mackintosh, 11 May 1567 Signed by Kenoch McKenzie of Kyntaill, Agnes McKenzie, Lauchlane Macintosh and Robert Munro of Foulis (NAS GD 176/83). Agnes’s mother, Elizabeth Stewart, ‘ladie Kintail’ (a daughter of John Stewart, 2nd Earl of Atholl) could presumably write, as an acquittance by Henry Wardlaw for lands she had bought was addressed to her (firstly) rather than to her husband. Dated at Brahan, 13 February 1562/3 (BL Add Ch. 61316).
- <sup>35</sup> I have made a transcript of a surviving annual ‘compt’ in Scots by Alexander Mackenzie of Kilchrist in 1569 (BL Add MS 39210, folios 7–17; MacCoinnich 2004: ii, 380–404), which the computer calculates is of 20,000 words in length. This is indicative of long familiarity with and comfort in written Scots. The clàrsair, Mac an Ra[n]gan, and the bàrd (un-named) appear on fol. 12v.
- <sup>36</sup> See also notes 16 and 30 above (Simpson 1998: 11–13, 25, 27–8; McClure 1995: 48–50). Dauvit Horsbroch in a conference paper presented a case study of the Lennox where similar patterns of linguistic usage appear in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with ‘Gaelic’ kindreds such as the Buchanans and the Colquhouns all evidently familiar with and comfortable in

- Scots. On the basis of the forms of recorded names in ‘frontier’ burghs like Dumbarton, the burgh populations may have had many Gaelic speakers. I am grateful to Dr Horsbroch for providing me with a transcript of his unpublished paper (Horsbroch 2004).
- <sup>37</sup> Bannerman 1983: 231–2; MacGregor 2006 b: 145–7. Macinnes (1996: 76–7) has commented that measures in 1616, targeting Gaelic reflected ‘official antipathy towards Gaelic’ rather than active hostility.
- <sup>38</sup> ‘Be it kend till all men be thir present letteris Me Coline Earl of Seafort Lord of Kintail and immediat lauful superior of the landis under designit: to have ratefied approvit and co[n]sentit and be the tennor hereof for we our airis and successoris, ratefies approveis and conferimeis ane feu charter **writtin in the English tongue** maid seillat and subscryvit be John McDonnald of Moydart Capteine of the Clanronnald To Ronnald Mcdonnald off Castle Worffe...’ (NAS GD 201/1/36). It could be that this stipulation commented on the deed being in English as opposed to Latin; however, I have not seen this clause stipulating ‘the English tongue’ in other such charters, and it may well be that Seaforth was making the point that this should not be in Gaelic (cf. Bugaj 2004: 24). These Mackenzie chiefs: Cailean Ruadh (d. 1633) his father Coinneach Òg (d. 1611), his grandfather Cailean Càrn (d. 1594) and Cailean Ruadh’s successor as chief, his half-brother Seòras Donn d. 1651) and their kinsmen all used Scots (with legal Latin) exclusively for all their extant documentation. They seem, nevertheless, to have been at the centre of a circle of Gaelic verse (and were presumably patrons thereof) some of which is preserved (in Scots orthography) in the later Fernaig Manuscript (c.1689) and (in more conventional Gaelic orthography) in the much later (c.1860 × 1897) Dornie Manuscripts (MacPhàrlain 1923: 142–9; Watson 1918: 72–4; Ó Baoill 1994: 78–82; Matheson 1968: 155–6; McGuire 2007: 149).
- <sup>39</sup> MacGregor 2002: 196–239. For the wider Scottish context of this phenomenon, see also work by Allan and Brown (Allan 2002: 147–67; Brown 2004: 222–4).
- <sup>40</sup> MacGregor 2007: 214–5. Bannerman (1983: 214, n. 2) sees little distinction due to ‘the increasing assimilation of Scots to English in the sixteenth century, especially at documentary level ...’. This writer, having studied the Mackenzies (especially writings of persons such as Alexander Mackenzie of Kilchreist, c.1569 and Colin Mackenzie, 1st Earl of Seaforth, d. 1633) would prefer a slight shift in emphasis: perhaps ‘Scots’ prior to 1603 and English with some Scots forms thereafter (BL Add. MS 39210, folios 7–17; BL Add. MS 39187, folio 2r–3r). Seaforth’s writing habits seem to closely parallel the correspondence patterns of his contemporary, James Duke of Hamilton (Peters 1997; Bugaj 2004: 28–32). However, Dr Dauvit Horsbroch has pointed out to me (personal correspondence, 18 May 2008) that the seventeenth century in Scotland at large was a time of gradual transition to English in written forms (albeit with Scots speech) with 1707, in his view,



marking a more defined turning point in the adoption of written English forms in Scotland rather than 1603. (For the widespread persistence of the Scots language in documents of the seventeenth century see Horsbroch 1999: 3–14.)

- <sup>41</sup> Kirk 1986a: 2; Smout 1969: 71–2, 80; McLeod 2004: 196–7; Durkacz 1983: 50–52; Ó Baoill 1997: 568.
- <sup>42</sup> A single document, the last will and testament of John Grant of Freuchie, who died at Ballachastell 2nd June 1585, alone mentions no fewer than three ministers, the chancellor of Moray, two chaplains, and a reader. This is unlikely to be the complete extent of the ecclesiastical structure on the Grant estates (NAS CC8/8/17, folios 156–65). The witnesses to the testament of Hector Munro of Foulis, 12 November 1603, included three of his kinsmen one of whom was the subdean of Ross, and two of whom were ministers at Kiltearn and Cullicudden (NAS CC8/8/41, folios 3–11). For further information see also work by Kirk (1986a: 19–22; 1986b: 22–48), Dawson (1994: 247) and Macinnes (1996: 77–9). Several families including the Macdonalds of Clanranald (and Coll), the MacNeils of Barra (zone ‘A’) and the Gordons (zone ‘B’) remained resolutely Catholic (Macdonald 2006: 37–8, 44; Stevenson 1994: 54).
- <sup>43</sup> Dawson 1994: 231–2, 252; Kirk 1986b: 32–7, 39–42; Kirk 1986a: 8–19.
- <sup>44</sup> In Ireland too, comprehension of Classical Gaelic may have been relatively uncommon by the end of the sixteenth century (O’ Rahilly 1932: 252–5, 258; Jackson 1951: 75). Martin (1999 [1695]: 79), a well-informed Gaelic speaker from the Isle of Skye, coming from an area which was within zone ‘A’ in the appended maps (figures 2–4), commented that the Classical Gaelic bard(s) furnished ‘such a style ... as is understood by very few’. Edward Lhuyd (c.1699) was the only person to record someone in either Scotland or Ireland (John Beaton in Mull, zone ‘A’) reading Classical Gaelic before this orthographic tradition fell into disuse. Lhuyd commented on Mr John Beaton’s reading of Genesis from Kirk’s Bible, a Classical Gaelic text, as follows: ‘... although he is from the Highlands, he was pronouncing as the Gaels of Ireland do ...’ (Campbell & Thomson 1963: 78; Ó Maolalaigh 2008: 265). My thanks to Professor Ó Maolalaigh for this last reference to Beaton. These are late witnesses for the ‘otherness’ of Classical Gaelic in Scotland, but consider also the distribution pattern of fragments of Gaelic in Scots orthography in figure 4.
- <sup>45</sup> Bishop Phillips (1605–1610) wrote the earliest surviving Manx – a prayer book. Phillips adapted Middle English orthography to write Manx Gaelic. He did not seemingly have any access to previous Manx writings, nor, seemingly were there any native Manx ‘literati’ who could gainsay his approaches to the language (Thomson 1971: 178–85).
- <sup>46</sup> McLeod 2004: 37. Gaelic scholars other than Thomson disliked the Scots phonetic spelling of Gaelic. McLeod also referred to a quatrain related to the

death of Dòmhnall Gorm Macdonald of Sleat, c.1539 as a ‘criomag thruailte’ or corrupt fragment (McLeod 2002: 18). O’ Rahilly went much further (1932: 20), calling Gaelic written phonetically in Scots forms ‘a peculiar orthography of a wholly unorthodox and rather repellent type’.

<sup>47</sup> Some early forms of Gaelic names (modern Gaelic forms given here for convenience) appear in Latin/Scots contexts such as: Fearchar (*Fercard*, 1306–), Donnchadh (*Dunecan*, c.1150–), Aonghas (*Anegos*, 1296; *Anegous*, 1305; *Angous*, 1358), Dòmhnall (*Devenold*, 1255; *Donald*, 1328), Caimbeul (*Cambell*, 1294), MacGill’Eain (*M’Gillon*, 1329; *Macklan*, *Maklane* and *M’klane* – all in 1591), MacCoinnich (*M’Kenzeocht*, 1491; *Makkenye*, 1501; *Makkenze*, 1509; *M’Kanze*, 1544), MacPhaidein (*Macpadene*, 1304; *MacPaden*, 1390; *MacFadyeane*, 1457; *McFattin*, 1499), MacDhòmhnail (*M’Donnyle*, 1326; *Makconehill*, 1479; *M’zonil*, 1531; *McConnyl*, 1545; *MakDonald*, 1571), MacLeòid (*M’Leoid*, 1338; *M’Loyd*, 1436; *Makloid*, 1515; *McCloyd*, 1600). For these and many further examples see Black 1993 [1949].

<sup>48</sup> Fraser based a paper on a discussion of such words harvested from the Wardlaw Manuscript (Fraser 1927).

<sup>49</sup> I hope to talk about these Mackenzie related manuscript histories (items 5, 7, 8, 9, 13) in a forthcoming conference at Antigonish, Rannsaichadh na Gàidhlig (July 2008), and discuss these more fully in a subsequent paper.

<sup>50</sup> Mackay 1904: lxxv; MacCoinnich 2002: 141 & n. 38; Gordon 1813.

<sup>51</sup> Black quoted from McLeod & Bateman (2007: xxxi).

<sup>52</sup> Professor Meek also poses a similar question: ‘... am faodadh e a bhith gun robh iad a’ leantainn dòigh litreachaidh a bha cumanta aig an àm ’s a bha cho nàdurra dhaibh ri anail na beatha?’ (Meek 1989a: 132).

<sup>53</sup> Durkacz 1978: 38; Horsburgh 2002: 237–40. John Fraser (1926: 38) considered that ‘the use of the Scottish vernacular for literary purposes began with the peasant poets of the xvii and xviii centuries’, but the clergy should, perhaps, take the credit for this. R.L. Thomson commented that the Catechism produced in 1659 by the Synod of Argyll ‘represents the spoken language of Scotland with some rather half-hearted attempt at keeping up the fiction of a standard literary language’ (Thomson 1962: xxxix). My thanks to Professor Colm Ó Baoill for this last reference. John Lorne Campbell considered the vocabulary compiled by the Rev. Robert Kirk in 1682 as ‘the earliest printed Scottish Gaelic wordlist’ (Campbell 1942: 76, 78). Edward Lhuyd (Lhuyd 1707) collected four poems from Scots, Robert Campbell, Anndra MacLean, ‘Sagart Chill Dalltán’, and Mgr Eoin McGhill’Eoin all in zone ‘A’ who were using elements of modern Scottish Gaelic but who were all leaning heavily on the Classical Gaelic tradition. I owe this last point to Professor Colm Ó Baoill, who has also discussed some of these poets and their poems in a recent article (Ó Baoill 2007: 57–84). The Rev. John Mackay’s Gaelic Sermons (1713 × 1749) are perhaps one of the earliest examples of extended vernacular Gaelic prose, considered variously by D.S.

Thomson to be both ‘a genuine specimen of Sutherland Gaelic’ and ‘half illiterate in their spellings’ (Thomson 1961: 176; 1994: 100). From 1741 onwards the appearance of Gaelic in print (MacDomhnuill 1741) and the New Testament of 1767, must have exerted a great ‘stabilising’ influence (Thomson 1994: 99–101). Other influential publications included Alexander MacFarlane’s translation of Richard Baxter’s ‘Call to the Unconverted’ in 1750, and Dugall Buchanan’s ‘Laoidhe Spioradail’, 1767 (Meek 1988: 15; Black 2001: 481–5). In terms of the tradition of writing Gaelic with Scots orthography, this is hard to find as the eighteenth century progresses. Ó Maolalaigh remarked of a Gaelic prose text written in 1776, that it exhibited ‘characteristics of both Scots and Gaelic orthographic systems but is nevertheless nearer the Gaelic end of the Scots-Gaelic spectrum’ (Ó Maolalaigh 2007: 91). The MacDiarmid MS collection of *c.*1770 also appears to have employed regular if unorthodox Scottish Gaelic orthography (Thomson 1992). Nancy McGuire commented that a verse collection collected in Wester Ross by a Captain Alexander Matheson, *c.*1860, a direct descendant five generations down from Donnchadh nam Pios, compiler of the Fernaig MS (1688–93), was similarly written in a quirky orthography that displays many dialect distinctions of Wester Ross Gaelic (McGuire 2007: 146–9). That being so, the examples of Gaelic displayed here from the Dornie MSS (McGuire 2007: 152–76) do appear much closer to regular Scottish Gaelic orthography than the Scots-based orthography of the Fernaig MS (there is no widespread usage of *v*, *j*, *y*, *q*, *z* in the Dornie MSS as found in the Fernaig MS). I am grateful to Dr Nancy McGuire (personal communication, 8 May 2008) for discussing this and providing me with the following examples of the Dornie orthography, which while idiosyncratic is nevertheless based (if a little freely) on conventional Scottish Gaelic orthography (ubair = obair; sgillig = sgillinn; raoin = rinn; riobh = riamh; tromm & troum = trom; ogar = fhogar; miobhse = mise).

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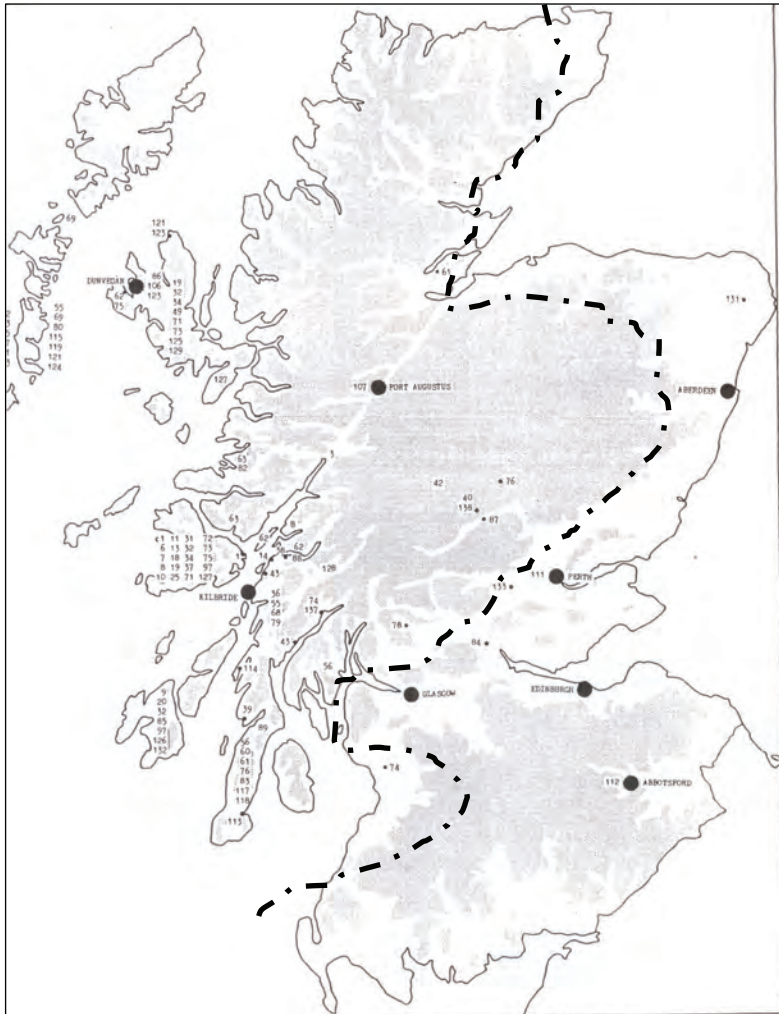
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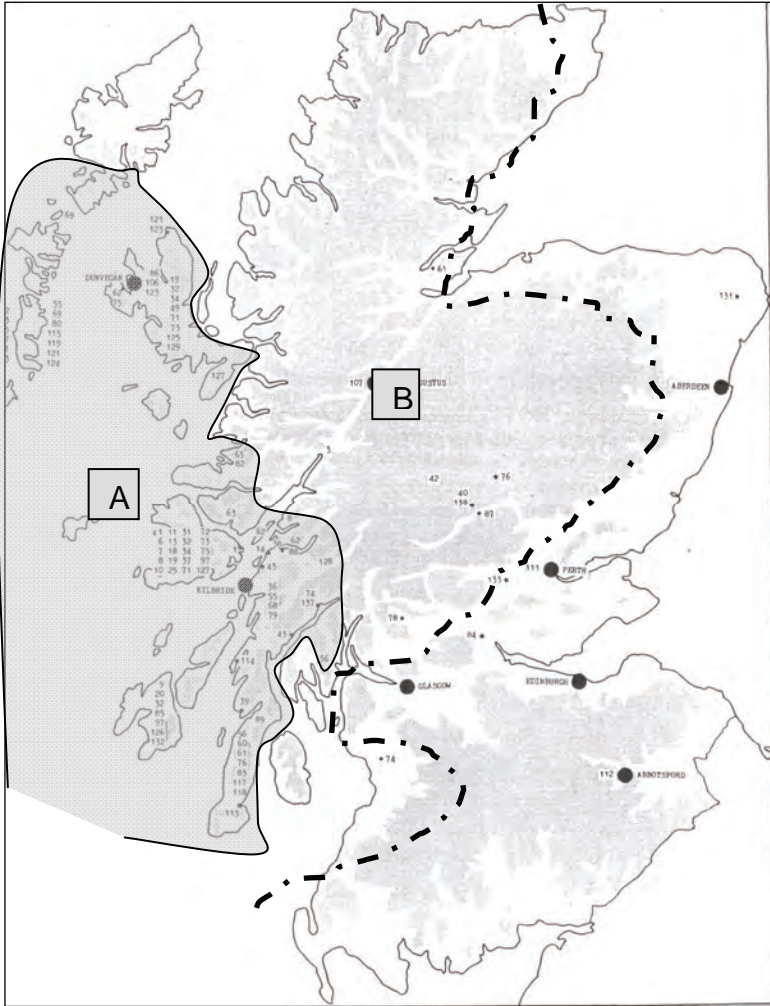
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***Oilthigh Ghlaschu***

**AONGHAS MACCOINNICH**



**FIGURE 1:** Ronald Black's map (1989: 153) showing centres of classical Gaelic activity in Scotland overlaid with a line marking the approximate linguistic extent of Gaelic speech in Scotland, c. sixteenth century (Withers 1980: 63–88; MacCoinnich 2002: 133).

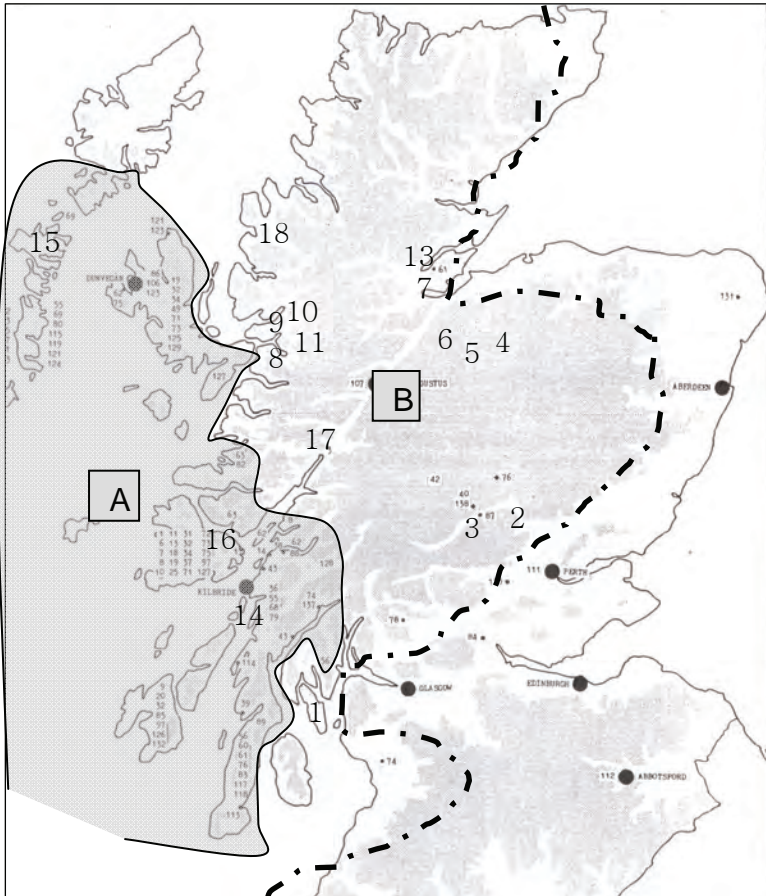


**FIGURE 2:** Ronald's Black's map of Scotland (Black 1989) showing areas associated with classical Gaelic scribal activity in Scotland overlaid with a line marking the approximate linguistic transition zone between Gaelic and Scots in medieval Scotland (c. sixteenth century). The areas which used Classical Gaelic and Corra-litir script shaded (zone A). The areas of the Gaidhealtachd where there is little or no evidence of Classical Gaelic scribal or corra-litir activity are left unshaded (zone B), regarded by scholars as 'peripheral' areas of the Gaidhealtachd.



**FIGURE 3:** Map showing location of territories associated with families discussed in the text.





- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>1 MURTHLY HOURS (c. 1400)</b>                     | <b>10 Mr Iain McRA (c. 1680)</b>                    |
| <b>2 BOOK OF THE DEAN OF LISMORE (1512–1542)</b>     | <b>11 Fernaig MS (c. 1693)</b>                      |
| <b>3 CHRONICLE OF FORTINGALL (1531–1571)</b>         | <b>12 Aenas MacPherson (1701)</b>                   |
| <b>4 JAMES GRANT (c. 1582–1591)</b>                  | <b>13 Mr Hector Mackenzie (1711)</b>                |
| <b>5 PARSON MACQUEEN (c. 1594 x 1611)</b>            | <b>14 Alasdair Campbell, Craignish MS (c. 1719)</b> |
| <b>6 Mr JAMES FRASER (1660)</b>                      | <b>15 Sleat MS (c. 1700)</b>                        |
| <b>7 ALLANGRANGE MS (c. 1680 ?)</b>                  | <b>16 Maclean MS (c. 1700)</b>                      |
| <b>8 ARDENTOUL MS (c. 1680)</b>                      | <b>17 Fassiefern MS (ante 1700 ?)</b>               |
| <b>9 FRAGMENT OF A MACKENZIE MS (c. 1650 x 1680)</b> | <b>18 Gairloch MS (ante 1776 ?)</b>                 |

**FIGURE 4:** Map as in Figs 1 & 2 above, with areas associated with Gaelic verse written in Scots orthography (either by manuscript or by scribe where known) added, numbered, on the map.