

# CONFESSIONALIZATION AND CLAN COHESION: IRELAND'S CONTRIBUTION TO SCOTTISH CATHOLIC RENEWAL IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

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The story of the relationship between Ulster and Scotland during the seventeenth century has long been dominated by the flow of people and ideas from Scotland to the north of Ireland. This, however, belies the prominent role that Ireland had in the social and cultural history of the Western Isles and Highlands of Scotland during that century. This paper argues that of even greater importance to the resurgence of Catholicism in the Scottish *Gaidhealtachd* than a Rome driven Counter-Reformation were the financial support and personnel provided by Ulster Catholics. In the face of aggressive Stuart policies, Catholicism was rejuvenated and became an ideological justification for asserting traditional rights in the face of government sanctioned, Protestant blessed, incursions in the Western Isles. Moreover, in the face of historiography that has argued for the continual disintegration of ClanDonald throughout the seventeenth century, this article explores the ways the clans and their neighbours inspired, funded and facilitated the revival of Catholicism in the *Gaidhealtachd*.

Post-Tridentine Catholicism has traditionally been understood to have made a minimal impact on the Gaelic speaking west of Scotland during the seventeenth century. Having been chronically understaffed, the Catholic Church in the Western Isles was in a dire state by the Reformation. Subsequently, it entered into a period between 1560 and 1620 labelled by Allan Macinnes and John L. Campbell as 'moribund'.<sup>1</sup> While Catholic Scots colleges began to appear on the continent from as early as 1580, they preferred Lowland, English speaking students to Gaelic speaking ones, which resulted in a dearth of Gaelic speaking Scots priests in the generations after the Reformation and through most of the following century. Macinnes thus argues for negligible Scottish efforts to proselytise Scottish Gaeldom and an overall minimal legacy for missionary endeavours.<sup>2</sup> Yet Scottish based attempts were not the only ones made. Beginning in 1619 a mission staffed by Irish Franciscans began to operate in the *Gaidhealtachd*, the Gaelic speaking regions of Scotland. This too met challenges. According to many historians, a severe lack of enthusiasm from the Irish colleges requested to provide Gaelic speaking missionaries blighted the mission, and has led to a

prevailing interpretation that the mission was: directed from Propaganda Fide, staffed by Irish Franciscans from hesitant continental Irish colleges, and took place outside the direct jurisdiction of the missionaries' superiors under the nominal oversight of the nuncio in Brussels. However, such emphasis on continental interests and disinterests has served to cloud the mission's *modus operandi* and minimized its lasting significance to the overall heritage of the *Gaidhealtachd*.<sup>3</sup>

Traditional Catholic accounts of the period do not vary from this account to any great extent, other than emphasizing the noble individual efforts of the missionaries to work in incredibly difficult conditions while being constantly underfunded and facing cultural practices, particularly relating to marriage, that necessitated specially assigned powers Rome was hesitant to dispense.<sup>4</sup> Additionally these accounts have shown particular interest in interpreting claims within the missionaries' own reports that during the first decade of the mission (between 1619 and 1628) they 'converted' over 10,000 people in the Western Isles. These attempts have so far proved somewhat unsatisfactory, particularly because the large numbers of conversions were vigorously defended by the priests despite the fact that they heightened concerns in Rome. Propaganda Fide, encouraged by Lowland Scots clergy residing on the continent, scrutinized the reports as being unbelievable and threatened to terminate the mission.<sup>5</sup> Upon demands for clarification and precise lists, Cornelius Ward, a leading figure on the mission, produced a more precise tally of 12,269.<sup>6</sup> Rather than modifying reports to appease criticism, the missionaries responded by doing their best to provide evidence for the harvest that they themselves perceived as remarkable. Yet rather than seeking out what was distinctive about the mission to the *Gaidhealtachd*, the historiography has tended to interpret it through the monolithic prism of the institutional models proposed by Propaganda which mirrored the ideal patterns of work carried out in other regions of the world. What is crucial for understanding the resurgence of Catholicism in Gaelic speaking Scotland is that it was not primarily driven by Rome, nor did it reflect models of Counter-Reformation from elsewhere in Europe.

Two recent works by Fiona Macdonald and Lisa Curry have made significant strides in highlighting the important sociological role of Catholicism in the Scottish *Gaidhealtachd*. However, just like the historiography they have inherited, they persist in viewing continental Catholic hierarchies as the power brokers in missionary endeavours. As a result, two traditional interpretations persist: the missions had a minimal impact and they were totally dependent on continental support.<sup>7</sup> Yet, while Macdonald argues the Franciscans, 'following the Jesuit guidelines taken up by most Catholic missionaries ... paid considerable attention to the social hierarchy in the hope of influencing the general population', a process she refers to as 'cultivating the Scottish *Fine* or clan elite', the evidence supports a much more proactive lay participation.<sup>8</sup> For this

reason, despite the great steps taken forward by Curry and Macdonald, the primary question remains: what really prompted the return of a resident Catholic clerical presence in Gaelic speaking Scotland after a sixty year absence and why? The answer is that at the behest of some clan elites in Scotland, and with their financial provision, a process of confessionalization took place among clans. From as early as the late 1560s appeals arrived in Rome for missionaries to be sent to Scotland. After repeated requests in 1611, the Scots Franciscan John Ogilvie carried out an initial reconnaissance mission in 1612.<sup>9</sup> What is important to note here is that the initial impetus for missions seem to have originated from Scotland rather than from the continent.

The missions to the Western Isles can be broadly defined in three separate phases. The first took place between 1619 and 1647, crewed by a number of Irish Franciscans reckoned by Propaganda not to exceed four in number; the second staffed by regulars, primarily Vincentians, operated between 1651 and 1679; and, the third represented a renewed Franciscan endeavour between 1665 and 1687. In all three phases the work was not speculative, as previous historians have tended to suggest, nor did they materialize out of the blue. From the outset, these missions were facilitated, and it appears engineered, by elements within ClanDonald. A letter dated a full nine months before the first Franciscan missionaries arrived in the Western Isles was sent from Cardinal Borghese in Rome to the nuncio in Brussels, who at this time was responsible for the affairs of Scotland, asking him to persuade the Irish Franciscans at Louvain to provide some missionaries for Scotland ‘under the guidance of a Scottish laird named MacDonald’.<sup>10</sup> The identification of a particular individual in Scotland before the practical plausibility of such a mission had even been ascertained may indicate that the Scot had submitted a supplication for a mission and offered to provide the promised guidance. Certainly a few years later, between February 1621 and July 1623, additional requests came from Scotland for Irish Franciscans, perhaps from the same source.<sup>11</sup>

The original request for a mission came from ‘Baron di Marandal, scozesse’. Cathuldus Giblin attributes this person with being a MacDonald, but with no specification as to the precise identity of this person. There are a number of viable candidates, but the most likely are Sir James MacDonald of Knockrinsay, Coll Ciotach, Sir Randall MacDonnell, earl of Antrim, and possibly Iain Muideartach, twelfth chief of Clanranald. After the rebellion on Islay Sir James fled to Ireland and hid with a known resetter of priests, before going into exile in Spain in 1615.<sup>12</sup> Thus he was on the continent fraternizing with other Scots Catholics and appealing to them for support in regaining Islay, including the exiled seventh earl of Argyll who had converted to Catholicism, at the time the request for Irish missionaries arrived in Rome.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, he wrote to the archbishop of Tuam, Florence Conry, in 1616: ‘Your

Lordship knows, and can explain better than I could, who I am and what I am capable of doing to help the catholic cause in Scotland'.<sup>14</sup> The case for sustained support from Sir James MacDonald is questionable, however. He was summonsed to return from exile with his co-conspirator, MacDonald of Keppoch, in 1619 and remained in London until his death in 1626 without an heir 'to revenge his wrongs and those of his clan on the Campbells'.<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that despite kin links to the Campbells (Sir James married the sister of Sir John Campbell of Cawdor) and a willingness to fraternize with the exiled earl of Argyll, Sir James persisted in seeing Campbell aggression as the primary threat to his heritable rights. In 1615 he declared to the Secretary of State that 'if his Majestie be not willing that I sall be his heignes tennent in Ila, for Goddis cause let his Majestie hauld it in his awin hand; for that is certane, I will die befor I sie a Campbell posses it'.<sup>16</sup> Although his networks and willingness to assist the Catholic cause are clearly attested, as an exile his hands on guidance could only be very limited.<sup>17</sup>

Both Coll Ciotach and Randall MacDonnell are far more likely candidates. Each of them was accepted as a devout Catholic by authorities on the continent at the time the mission began. It has also been suggested that Coll Ciotach's piratical sailings in 1616, after his involvement in the Islay rebellion, were not merely for pecuniary gain and may have been part of an expedition to find a suitable base to establish a Catholic mission. That there may be some truth in this is suggested by both John Campbell and Fiona Macdonald who note that the earliest mission report for 1624 and 1625 (those from the years 1619 to 1623 are not extant) records visits to the same islands Coll Ciotach had visited in 1616: Texa, Islay, Colonsay, Mull, Canna, North Uist and Iona.<sup>18</sup> Randall MacDonnell also played a prominent role in the mission, which will be discussed below. While the Italian source clearly identifies 'Marandal' as a Scot, it is highly likely that MacDonnell would have described himself as so, in light of his claims to the lands of Clan Iain Mhòr, in any request to Rome for missionaries. While questions remain over the identity of the 'Baron di Marandal', there is no shortage of candidates among the elite of ClanDonald. More important than perhaps identifying a single individual is noting that these individuals were often closely linked. During Coll Ciotach's 1616 foray through the Hebrides he feasted at the home of the daughter of Angus of Dunyveg (Sir James MacDonald's sister) and visited the foster brother of Antrim.<sup>19</sup> These extended kin networks played an important part in fostering Catholicism in the *Gaidhealtachd*.

One final possibility for the mysterious 'Marandal' is Ian Muideartach, although reports indicate he was not 'converted' until 1624. This, however, would not necessarily rule him out. Conversion was a loose term that could equally mean reconcile. Moreover, a 1626 report to Propaganda describes him as the 'ruler of the whole clan of Ranald in which by common consent they profess obedience to the Holy See,

asking apostolic benediction and favour for the spread of the faith in the whole of Scotland'.<sup>20</sup> Hence he came to play a prominent role within the first few years of the mission and his identification as the leading figure in 'the clan of Ranald' could easily account for being called 'Baron di Marandal' in an Italian source.

Just as political factors contributed to the maintenance of Catholicism in the Scottish Lowlands during the seventeenth century, so too they played a prominent part in the reintroduction of a missionary presence in the Isles. Pressures on the traditional power structures of the Western Isles increased from the ascension of James VI to the English throne, particularly through the implementation of the Statutes of Iona in 1609 and their agenda relating to feuds, education and religion. By 1616 more precise mechanisms for enforcing royal authority were in place. The rise of client clans such as the MacKenzies and Campbells allowed the possibility for royal authority to be imposed in the Isles without the kind of expense required for the expeditions funded in 1596, 1599, 1605, 1607 and 1608.<sup>21</sup> In the new model client clans carried the cost of campaigning before being recompensed by the expansion of influence and territory at their victim's expense. One of the primary targets of this royal policy was ClanDonald, who since the reduction of the Lordship of the Isles in 1493 had suffered internally from severe infighting and fragmentation while also facing persistent external pressure from central royal authority and Campbell encroachments. In 1607 the traditional MacDonald territories of Kintyre were given to the seventh earl of Argyll by royal charter and through similar policies Islay later fell into Campbell hands as well. In that same year, the Privy Council instructed the earl of Argyll to take 'action of blude' against ClanDonald, 'being the strongest pillar of all the broken hieland men, quha never in any aige wer civill ... bot evir wer assisteris of the northern Irische people ... in all their rebellionis'. The order sought the clan's 'ruitteing out and utter suppressing' on the grounds that 'sa long as the said Clan Donald remaynes unremovit furth of the saidis landis, his Majestie nor na otheris sal half any proffeit, and the uncivilitie and barbarities all continew nocht only thair [Ireland] bot in the Iles'.<sup>22</sup> However, contrary to traditional interpretations of the dire straights of Clan Iain Mhòr (ClanDonald South) resulting from internal divisions in the wake of Sorley Boy MacDonnell's death in 1590 and increased pressure from the crown after 1603, ClanDonald began to demonstrate a strong policy of developing and consolidating clan links by the 1610s.<sup>23</sup>

After losing Kintyre in 1607 and facing a similar plight with Islay, Angus MacDonald of Dunyveg appeared in St Giles' Cathedral in 1612 to receive redemption of the island in the face of Campbell attempts to buy it. Present with Angus was Sir Randall MacDonnell, later first earl of Antrim.<sup>24</sup> In stark contrast to the rift ascribed to the Antrim and Dunyveg branches of ClanDonald South, this occasion tends to suggest a united

front to Campbell encroachments. Randall's presence and his financial success stemming from his ability to stay in favour with the crown through the Nine Years War and his subsequent grants for planting in Ulster have led Martin MacGregor to posit that he provided the money for Dunyveg's redemption of Islay.<sup>25</sup> This unilateral ClanDonald manoeuvre temporarily staved off further losses to the Campbells. Randall MacDonnell received a short-term lease for Islay the following year, but the implementation of his business strategies forged in Ulster planting on Islay led to complaints of excessive feus. It also seems probable that there were tensions among the rank-and-file of the MacDonalds of Islay at the usurpation of the MacDonnells of Antrim, rivals for the chieftaincy of Clan Iain Mhòr, as their superiors, but this does not mean that Angus and Randall had not acted together in a concerted effort to protect ClanDonald claims. Help from Antrim provided support for Angus at a time when the MacDonalds of Dunyveg suffered from serious internal turmoil relating to the succession of the chieftaincy, including an attempted patricide by immolation at the hands of Sir James MacDonald of Knockrinsay. Likewise, the expansion of his influence helped solidify the position of Randall who faced pressure from elements within the Antrim MacDonnells who were unhappy with his planting policies that brought in large numbers of Protestant Scots and English into Ulster.<sup>26</sup> Clearly the ambitions among clan elites were not always shared among the rank-and-file of the clan. Poems produced in relation to the activities of the chiefs of the Antrim MacDonnells and Glengarry MacDonalds bemoan their interests beyond the clans' traditional bounds.<sup>27</sup>

After the death of Angus in 1613 elements within ClanDonald feuded over the Dunyveg rights to Islay and the chieftaincy of Clan Iain Mhòr, including Coll Ciotach who attempted to gain control of church lands on the island in a negotiated settlement after the rebellion and as noted above was associated with the Catholic mission in the some of the earliest reports.<sup>28</sup> However, as a result of excessive feus and general unrest, the crown granted the heritable title of Islay to Sir John Campbell of Cawdor in 1614, a clear indication of royal commitments to forcibly remove ClanDonald South not only from Kintyre, but Islay and Jura as well. As a result of this dispossession the *fine* of the MacBraynes, MacKays and MacEucherns had, by the 1618, obliged themselves to become 'dewtiful kinsmen and obedient tennentis' of the Campbells.<sup>29</sup> This change of allegiance threatened not only the power the MacDonalds of Dunyveg, but of all the clans of ClanDonald South. The reaction 'to the territorial ambitions of ClanCampbell', states Macinnes, proved to be the 'most important polarising factor within Gaeldom prior to the outbreak of the Scottish civil war'.<sup>30</sup>

In the face of concerted efforts to dispossess ClanDonald the fractured branches made collaborative efforts to regain their former glory. Antrim's attempt to secure the MacDonalds of Dunyveg's rights to Islay

was not his only intervention. Jane Ohlmeyer has produced an excellent assessment of the unyielding ambitions and various methods employed by the Antrim MacDonnells to maintain what she has defined as their 'MacDonnell Archipelago'.<sup>31</sup> It was a matter that took on an even greater urgency after the death of Sir James MacDonald of Knockrinsay, the son of Angus and the last claimant to the chieftaincy of the MacDonalds of Dunyveg and the Glens in 1626. In 1627 the earl of Antrim made another attempt to reacquire Islay and in 1634 bid to buy large swathes of Kintyre and Jura from James Campbell, Lord Kintyre, who was crippled by debt, only to have the deal quashed (retrospectively) through the intervention of the crown on the basis of Lord Lorne's pleas.<sup>32</sup> Lorne feared possession by 'anie of the Clandonald' posed a major risk to the tranquillity of the region and that priests would be imported to 'make the whole people turn papistes'.<sup>33</sup> Although a failure, this event seems to have left an indelible mark on the memory of the MacDonnells of Antrim. A history written c.1700 ignores the fact that the deal was rescinded, recording the first earl 'also bought with ready money the lands of Kintyre and if he lived but four or five years more he would be Lord of Iyla, Kintire and many more lands in Ireland and Scotland'.<sup>34</sup> Despite such efforts to restore traditional territorial boundaries, crown policies and mounting debts within ClanDonald led to significant swathes of their territory falling into Campbell hands and as a result their influence throughout the Isles waned. By 1638 the mainland and island estates of the Clanranald chief from Moidart to South Uist and Benbecula 'had been incorporated entirely within the feudal superiority of the House of Argyll'.<sup>35</sup>

ClanDonald came to identify crown and Campbell aggressions as being carried out under a banner of Protestantism. For instance, when Campbell forces under Sir John Campbell of Cawdor put down the rebellion in Islay in 1615 they specifically destroyed images used in Catholic forms of worship, while Cawdor explicitly identified the island's inhabitants as Catholic.<sup>36</sup> This claim represents a justification for Campbell actions against a 'Catholic' population, despite the fact there had been no clerical presence on the island for decades. Thus it should not be viewed as coincidental that the first concerted Catholic mission to the *Gaidhealtachd* in several generations began in the wake of this political turmoil, that it was precipitated by the intervention of a 'MacDonald', or that the primary motivator moving to finance the preservation of ClanDonald territory, MacDonnell of Antrim, was also the primary financial benefactor of Bonamargy Priory which served as the base for the mission.<sup>37</sup> The priory became the official base of the Franciscan mission in 1624, but their presence there and the priory's use as an operational base certainly predated that year. The MacDonnells' use of the priory as the centre of family religion and as a sepulchre stretches back to at least the 1580s, as Sorley Boy MacDonnell was interred there in 1589, and perhaps as far back as the fifteenth century. Randall MacDonnell, first earl

of Antrim, was buried at Bonamargy in 1636 in new family vaults he had built in 1621.<sup>38</sup> The priory itself, according to some sources, began to be used by the Franciscans early in the sixteenth century.<sup>39</sup> Thus, it appears that the close relationship between the MacDonnells and the Franciscans centred on Bonamargy and long pre-dated the mission. That it was officially deeded to the Franciscan mission by Rome in 1624, after a number of requests for the property, may have resulted from Antrim's run-in with authorities and his being summoned to Dublin in 1621 for harbouring priests. Upon admitting his error and promising not to do so again in the future, he was let off. The grant from Rome protected the friars' possession of Bonamargy at a time when Franciscans at Carrickfergus were trying to gain control of the priory and also freed Antrim from any direct involvement, and therefore culpability, in their presence there.

In later years, thousands of Scots from the Western Isles reportedly crossed over to Bonamargy in order to receive the sacraments of the Eucharist and, more importantly, confirmation, which only a bishop could facilitate. The Bishop of Down and Connor is reputed to have confirmed 700 Scots on a single occasion in 1639. Thus the priory on the Irish coast came to replace Iona as the centre of Scottish Gaelic Catholicism, particularly for the progeny of the Lords of the Isles. In 1626 the missionaries requested the priory be granted a privileged altar, which would allow for private masses that included a plenary indulgence for the soul of the individual for whom the mass was offered.<sup>40</sup> Rather than providing a blessing to Catholics in Ireland, the necessity of the altar was deemed to be that the friary sat as the doorway to Scotland. From as early as 1629 there were eight or nine priests at Bonamargy to deal with the crowds that frequented the place, seemingly supported by Antrim.<sup>41</sup> Father Hegarty reported in 1637 'that the people from the Hebrides flock daily to Bonamargy for spiritual aid, so that the friars resident there are always kept busy'.<sup>42</sup> Thus the mission actively sought to draw Scottish Catholics to a new pilgrimage site already deeply rooted in the political landscape of the Antrim MacDonnells.

Throughout the first Franciscan mission there is ample evidence to demonstrate the hands on influence of the first earl of Antrim and his son, as well as their keen sense of political manoeuvring. From the late 1620s mission reports ask for permission to spend extended periods of time at Bonamargy and, if so, whether during these periods the Franciscans may act as penitentiaries at St Patrick's Purgatory, despite Propaganda's repeated insistence that the pilgrimage site lay outside the scope of the mission.<sup>43</sup> This is of importance since the first earl was a patron of both Bonamargy and St Patrick's Purgatory.<sup>44</sup> The patronage of sites represented much more than personal devotion, serving also as a public duty and a means for strengthening traditional support.<sup>45</sup> Although the missionaries were explicitly told that serving St Patrick's Purgatory was not part of their remit, when the missionaries gathered testimonies



relating the success of their labours, the testimony of the Irish priest Terrence Kelly stated he had seen Ward at the site, presumably inferring that he was ministering there.<sup>46</sup>

While Antrim encouraged the mission, he recognized its sensitive nature and political implications. In 1627 his natural son, Francis, a student on the continent, was nominated to join the mission to Scotland. The following year, being keen to have a superior over the mission designated, the missionaries nominated Francis as their favoured candidate. The earl, however, seems to have blocked the appointment fearing it would put the family estates at risk at a time when other Ulster families had recently been deprived for treating with 'foreign powers'.<sup>47</sup> Even more interesting than the earl's politicking is the suggestion by those working on the mission to appoint Francis over them. He had not yet even arrived on the mission and had only finished his studies a few years previously. This is certainly indicative of the family's prominent role in the mission. In his request to the nuncio in Brussels for MacDonnell's appointment, Cornelius Ward, one of the missionaries, argues for his suitability on the basis that his father, the earl, owns Bonamargy, is of a great deal of help to the mission and regularly visits the missionaries.<sup>48</sup> MacDonnell was not appointed, but it was suggested in 1634 that he be made bishop of Clogher or Derry on which condition the earl promised to contribute 2,000 scudi to cover the cost of his position.<sup>49</sup> A similar intervention occurred in 1671. When Propaganda ordered Archbishop Oliver Plunkett to visit the renewed Franciscan mission in Scotland, which had begun in 1665, the marquis of Antrim, along with others, dissuaded him from doing so due to the political anxieties of the Scottish government over a feared French invasion.<sup>50</sup> Later the marquis demonstrated continuing personal support for another Francis MacDonnell, again a close relative,<sup>51</sup> in a bid to become 'Father of the Province' after fourteen years of service on the mission. The marquis went as far as offering to personally finance the cost of maintaining his bishopric.<sup>52</sup> Thus, in two successive generations the leading members of the MacDonnells of Antrim actively sought to have a kinsman appointed to a high-ranking ecclesiastical position that would affect not only Ulster, but the Western Isles of Scotland as well.

During the more than seventy years the three missions spanned, missionaries worked primarily in traditional ClanDonald territories or those of clans associated with them: South Uist, Barra, Benbecula, Colonsay, Eigg, Canna, Rum, Skye, Mull, Harris, Moidart, Arisaig, Glengarry and Kintyre. In fact, when the mission came into question in the late 1620s and the missionaries were compelled to make lists of converts and attain letters supporting their claims, one Captain Donald MacDonald wrote from Colonsay to testify Ward's ministry had brought many back to the faith. Moreover, MacDonald had personally accompanied Ward to Kintyre, Colonsay, and the territories of Clanranald and

Glengarry where the priest had administered the sacraments.<sup>53</sup> Another letter from Islay described the mission's successes in similar terms, ascribing work in Kintyre, Arran, Jura, Colonsay, Mull, Barra and South Uist as well as within the territories of the lairds of MacLeod, Lochaber and Glengarry.<sup>54</sup> Work often focused around particular regions. From January 1625 until August 1626 Father O'Neill worked exclusively in 'the territory of MacLeod of Harris' and the adjacent areas.<sup>55</sup> By 1637 Patrick Brady had served the mission for eighteen years in the 'northern parts of Scotland', where he lived, according to Ward, in the house of a leading Catholic and it was believed he had readily available access to hosts for the Eucharist.<sup>56</sup> Brady's mission is the most perplexing of the missionaries as none of his reports survive. All that Ward affirms is Brady was generally stationary in a location he had been serving for nine years that, 'bordering the Highlands' approximately '150 miles' from Eigg, took a solid twelve day journey through mountainous terrain.<sup>57</sup> Between September 1636 and April 1637 Ward himself remained in the vicinity of Lochaber, Moidart, Sleat and Glenelg.<sup>58</sup>

Besides working within the territories of prominent clan members, the movements of the missionaries seem to have been directed by them. Ward reports being invited to Barra by leading men, just as Clanranald had invited him to Uist and Moidart.<sup>59</sup> The priests also regularly stayed with leading members of the clans when in their proximity.<sup>60</sup> A report citing hardship on Colonsay specifically states that it was because Coll Ciotach was not there that food was unavailable.<sup>61</sup> On a number of occasions the priests were accompanied on their missions by the clan *fine*.<sup>62</sup> The reports of priests experiencing extreme hardship generally relate to travelling between the clans' territories where the missionaries reported there were not towns or other places to find supplies. Another reason to believe that there was direct intervention on the part of the clan chiefs is that the funds from Propaganda were notoriously absent, despite repeated pleas from those serving in the field. According to one report, Patrick Brady worked on the mission for seven years before his superior requested that he be given a stipend with which to support himself.<sup>63</sup> Without stipends the missionaries required alternative sources of support, especially in light of statements that the Franciscans regularly travelled with one or 'at least two attendants' who carried the necessary accoutrements for celebrating mass or who on occasion were sent to get wine, hosts for the Eucharist or other necessary items.<sup>64</sup> This raises the question: who was paying for or providing the services of these attendants? While Giblin argues the missionaries received no money from the population and John Campbell suggests they refused money, the reports are more ambiguous asserting no money was ever asked for but that the leading members of the clans had a tendency to offer it.<sup>65</sup> Claims emphasizing the poverty and difficulty of the mission can hardly be unexpected when the missionaries were attempting to elicit long overdue funds from

Propaganda. Moreover, the *fine* who supported them would have been anxious for continental money to alleviate their burden.

By 1626 Ward reported to the Archbishop of Armagh that Clanranald and his clan had embraced the faith and looked to propagate Catholicism among the whole of Scotland. Besides Clanranald, he claimed MacLeod of Harris, John Campbell of Cawdor, Archibald Campbell of Barbeck (both of whom invoked the great displeasure of the eighth earl of Argyll for their conversions), Coll Ciotach MacDonald, MacLean of Lochbuie (the second most important laird on Mull after Duart),<sup>66</sup> the family of the MacDonald laird of Islay (*Cintriae Iliae*—here probably referring to Knockrinsay, who died that year, or perhaps Antrim, who had claims over these lands), with all their subjects and with the inhabitants of the islands of the Hebrides (here probably meaning the territories of MacLeod of Harris), Jura, Arran, Uist (*Iriod*), Canna and Barra (*Cintua Barra*), had embraced the faith.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, they requested a bishop be ordained into a restored see and that parish priests be provided in order for the firm preservation of the faith for the future. This action, despite the variety of clans listed above, can still very much be viewed as a concerted ClanDonald effort as the leading figure, Clanranald, was connected by marriage with the MacLeods, the MacNeills and the MacLeans of Duart. In terms of his MacDonald connections at this time, Clanranald spells out in a contemporary letter written to the pope that a number of his relations were professing Catholics and willing to militarily defend the faith, including: his brothers Ragnall Og, Alasdair Og and Domhnall Glas; his son Domhnall Dubh (the future thirteenth chief of Clanranald, 1670–86); his uncles Ranald MacDonald of Benbecula (Mac Ailean ‘ic Iain) and Iain Ruari; as well as Donald Gorm MacDonald of Sleat. Moreover, the missionaries providing clerical services to the individuals were by this time officially based at Bonamargy priory, for which reason it might be assumed the reference to the MacDonald laird of Islay is referring to the first earl of Antrim. Thus it appears a ClanDonald backbone to the mission stretched from Antrim to Islay, through Coll Ciotach on Colonsay and on to the MacDonalds of Clanranald (spanning from Barra across to Arisaig and Moidart) and Sleat and the MacDonnells of Glengarry.

That there is more to the Catholic revival than just piety might be indicated by a number of instances in which a profession of Catholic faith coincided with an assertion of traditional hegemonies in the face of concerted infringements. For example, Ward claimed the conversion of the last chief of the Maclains of Ardnamurchan in 1625, before the clan was eradicated.<sup>68</sup> Thus Ward places the conversion of Maclain, a part of ClanDonald South, at about the same time as the clan’s resistance to Campbell advances and a burgeoning notoriety for piracy.<sup>69</sup> A direct link cannot be made here, but there is a similarity with the tactics of Coll Ciotach. In 1616, after his involvement in the Islay rebellion, Coll Ciotach set out on a bout of piracy in the Hebrides. Rather than

just for pecuniary gain it has been suggested the expedition may have been intended to find a suitable base to establish a Catholic mission.<sup>70</sup> Both Coll Ciotach and Maclain embraced the Catholic faith contemporaneously with exerting their traditional powers through bouts of piracy, a traditional practice but one that on these particular occasions flew directly in the face of royal policies and Campbell ambitions. Clanranald sheltered ClanMacIain when royal/Campbell forces struck at the clan and upon their decimation they were assimilated into Clanranald.<sup>71</sup> From as early as 1609 the struggle between ClanDonald and ClanCampbell appears to have exhibited a religious element. John L. Campbell argues this had a direct affect on the actions of the clans around them and suggests the alleged murder of the Protestant minister in Benbecula in 1609 was linked to the contested influences of the two clans over the MacNeills of Barra.<sup>72</sup> The culprit of the act was Niall Og, a usurper for control of the clan, who before fulfilling his aspirations refused to convert to Catholicism, but seven years after becoming MacNeill of Barra accepted the faith.<sup>73</sup> The indication is that as a rival to a chief supported by ClanDonald maintaining a nominally Protestant faith allowed for the possibility of Campbell support, while conforming after his position was secured restored him to the internal ClanDonald status quo. Similarly, in relation to the first foray of the Franciscans, John Campbell notes the only chief who was openly hostile to the missionaries in the Hebrides was Hector MacLean of Duart, son of Sir Lachlan MacLean who died a Protestant in 1598, and, of equal importance, was a bitter enemy of the MacDonalds.<sup>74</sup> Here too a rivalry between two closely linked clans sharing the island of Mull may account for religious preferences. Confessional identities tended to mirror kin allegiances or antipathies.

The pattern of mission and the supporting role of prominent clan members sheds important light on the missionaries' reports of conversions and continental claims that they were grossly over exaggerated. Whereas Donald MacLean argues the statistics were inflated in order to ensure the missionaries qualified for their subsidy from *Propaganda*, Odo Blundell, John L. Campbell and others have demonstrated that 'conversion' did not necessarily entail turning from Protestantism to Catholicism. Instead, it could simply mean being reconciled to the church.<sup>75</sup> As far as both the Kirk and the Catholic Church were concerned, much of the Western Isles was a religious vacuum due to decades of clerical neglect. Priests had been absent for nearly sixty years, which meant no Catholic sacraments of baptism, penance, the Eucharist or confirmation. Yet, some pre-Reformation practices persisted. Holy wells and other sacred sites, particularly those associated with St Columba or other Celtic saints, remained part of cultural practices.<sup>76</sup> However, failure to receive the sacraments for three generations could hardly leave the people 'Catholic' in the eyes of Rome. What remained in the cultural memory of the people was a

faith completely untouched by Trent, and the priests recognized this. Yet elements of faith had continued. There are reports from the 1590s of people from Barra making pilgrimages to St. Patrick's Purgatory in Ireland, and the very able historian John L. Campbell has argued this is evidence of Catholic survival down to the arrival of Franciscan missionaries.

As a result, 'conversion' should be viewed as a very loose term. According to Campbell, a convert could be used to 'describe anyone from a baptised Catholic who had had no chance to practice his religion, to a convinced Calvinist won over' who received the sacraments.<sup>77</sup> In either case, this usually meant a quick crash course in Catholic doctrine, teaching the *pater noster*, *ave* and creed, confession and admission to the mass.<sup>78</sup> Such a basic definition makes the number of conversions claimed by the priests much more credible than MacLean or Macinnes have granted, especially when the priests noted that on occasion it was necessary to listen to confessions for twenty-four straight hours before having a mass.<sup>79</sup> The Vincentians found a way of speeding up the education process in the 1650s, if not the hearing of confessions. Father Duggan wrote, 'one needed only teach the *Pater*, *Ave* and *Credo* to one young child in each village and a few days later all in that village knew them, grown-ups as well as little ones'.<sup>80</sup> So conversion might be better understood as reconciliation, which perhaps provides one of the clearest pieces of evidence for what was happening during the first Franciscan mission. Rather than courting clan elites, the mission was provoked, directed and facilitated by the elites of ClanDonald and their *fine*.

The account of the missionaries' success in nearly every location they visited is indicative of a social movement in which the adoption of the Catholic faith by a kin-group represents a systematic process of group cohesion. In other words, the Franciscan mission was one of clan driven confessionalization. Such an interpretation is supported by two Vincentian reports. Father Duggan wrote to St. Vincent de Paul in 1652 that arriving in South Uist he found God 'has so softened the hearts there that Clanranald, Laird of a great part of Uist, has become a convert, together with his wife, son and their whole family. This lead has been followed by all the gentry, the tenants and their families'.<sup>81</sup> A subsequent letter dated 1654 claims that 'in Moidart, Morar, Knoidart and Glengarry all are converted or at least resolved to receive instruction when we have an opportunity of visiting them'.<sup>82</sup> This would also explain why someone like Clanranald would need to be 'converted', since he had not seen a priest in his lifetime, even if he was behind the endeavour, as well as explain why he was so pleased by Ward's reports of success on the island of Eigg in 1626.<sup>83</sup>

Contrary to this position, James A. Stewart argues in his doctoral dissertation on Clanranald that the missions were not in fact carried out

by means of any kin influence, because initial conversions on Canna, a Clanranald territory, were minimal.<sup>84</sup> Yet, Canna and Eigg appear to have been susceptible to external pressures in a way that other Clanranald territories were not, partly due to their exposed location halfway between Uist and Moidart as well as their close proximity to Protestant areas of Skye. In 1625 Neil MacKinnon, minister of Sleat, seized Father Ward on Eigg and in 1630 the Protestant bishop of the Isles, Thomas Knox, seized Patrick Hegarty on South Uist just after he arrived from Canna.<sup>85</sup> On both occasions elements of Clanranald militarily intervened and liberated the Franciscans, the latter incident provoking the ire of both the Privy Council and Charles I.<sup>86</sup> Thereafter, success on Canna and Eigg improved.<sup>87</sup> These circumstances are further enlightening because possession of Canna seems to have been contested. While the island clearly belonged to Clanranald in 1593, the MacLeods of Dunvegan are identified as the possessors in Thomas Knox's report of 1626.<sup>88</sup> This might give greater credence to an argument for confessionalization endorsed by Clanranald both within the clan's bounds as well as in contested areas. Regardless of the political motivations pertaining to Eigg and Canna, the leading role of the laity in preserving Gaelic speaking Catholicism is repeatedly supported in the surviving evidence. Whereas Fiona Macdonald accepts that the re-emergence of Catholicism became a 'weapon against assimilation into the state', it appears ClanDonald and a number of their neighbours actively introduced a Catholic presence for that very purpose.<sup>89</sup>

Therefore, when two Vincentians arrived in 1651 they were missionaries, but they were arriving to an established context. Tradition holds, and records indicate, that they had been invited to fulfil a particular role among a particular group of people. Historians have quibbled over who requested their services, Clanranald or Angus (or Aeneas) MacDonnell, chief of the MacDonnells of Glengarry, but the two Vincentians worked almost exclusively within their spheres of influence.<sup>90</sup> The missionary work of the Gaelic speaking regulars continued during the period 1651 to 1679, usually with the presence of two Vincentians in the Highlands.<sup>91</sup> Even after Rome sanctioned a secular mission to Scotland in 1653 staffed by English speaking priests under the direction of the first Apostolic Prefect, William Bannatyne, Irish involvement continued in the Gaelic-speaking west Highlands.<sup>92</sup> But the relationship between these missionaries and their supporters seems to have been even closer than their Franciscan predecessors, except perhaps for Brady. Although White was arrested in 1655 and spent a period of time in prison, a report from Propaganda in 1664 avowed there to be 'four thousand Catholics in the mountains of Scotland with only one priest, Father Francis White. For ten years he has worked there without receiving any support from Propaganda'.<sup>93</sup> A report just two years later from Father Winster, the prefect of the Scottish mission,

declared the number of Catholics in the Highlands to be 12,000 and confirmed White was working alone. Despite being the lone priest, the work went on.

About 1664 White installed a schoolmaster in Glengarry. His name was Ewan MacAlastair and he had been working for at least the previous three years in Skye, despite being unsanctioned by Propaganda, seemingly funded by Glengarry.<sup>94</sup> Despite having approximately sixty students in the Skye school, an increased anti-Catholic sentiment forced it to relocate.<sup>95</sup> Glengarry provided MacAlastair a room in Invergarry Castle to re-establish the school. Although the number of students was small in 1665, MacAlastair hoped they would increase upon the return of Angus MacDonnell, now Lord of MacDonnell and Aros, from London.<sup>96</sup> A similar level of support was shown for the work of the Dominican George Fanning in Barra who, according to the Franciscan Francis MacDonnell, ran a school on the island for eight years before the second Franciscan mission 'discovered' him working there. According to MacDonnell, Fanning 'would have perished from hunger before now, were it not that he lived with the laird of Barra. He has not received a sixpence from the Sacred Congregation for the past eight years'.<sup>97</sup>

Such relationships meant a high level of dependence upon the laity, approaching something like a level of patronage that Dominicans and Vincentians, unlike Jesuits, would not normally have embraced. Francis White, likewise, resided in Invergarry Castle for large portions of the year. While not receiving explicit permission from Propaganda to abide with Lord MacDonnell on a permanent basis, White did receive permission, due to the inclement weather of the region, to stay at Invergarry Castle from October to May—two-thirds of the year.<sup>98</sup> Thus, according to G. Fitzgibbon, Invergarry Castle 'provided a base for Highland mission equivalent to that for the Lowlands at Gordon Castle'.<sup>99</sup> For Lisa Curry, Glengarry's persistent advocacy of Catholicism, like his canny political manoeuvring, were part of his efforts to be recognized as the head of all ClanDonald.<sup>100</sup>

As a result of the mutuality of the relationship between the clans and the priests close ties were forged. In the absence of promised continental funds the clan *fine* supported the work themselves. This led to a situation, like that in the North-East of Scotland, in which priests were closely linked to patrons. Such was the close-knit relationship between clan and priest that a portrait of Father White hung in Invergarry Castle, in a room referred to as 'Mr. White's Room', until the castle burned down in 1745.<sup>101</sup> The bonds between clan and priest meant that, if necessary, the clans physically intervened when priests were in danger. For instance, when the Franciscan Patrick Hegarty was arrested by the Bishop of the Isles in 1630 some clansmen of Clanranald and Benebecula 'followed the said bishop and his company, presented their arms at them, and

forcibly took the said priest out of their hands', just as they had five years earlier.<sup>102</sup> This tends to suggest, as Curry argues, that the priests were perceived as part of the clans and they were thus redeemed in a manner consistent with this belief.<sup>103</sup> In fact, there is evidence to indicate that this feeling was reciprocated. The animosity between the Campbells and MacDonalds, along with its religious overtones, had its clearest expression during the 1640s. Campbell incursions in Glengarry were justified by the MacDonnells being 'proven enemies of religion'.<sup>104</sup> Conversely, when Irish troops under the command of Alasdair MacColla, the son of Coll Ciotach, opened a campaign in Scotland in 1643 under the encouragement of Antrim, they sought revenge on the Campbells as 'the fiercest persecutors and ... murderers and assassins of the Catholics, in the north of Ireland and the whole of Scotland'.<sup>105</sup> Although they united with Montrose's force, contemporary accounts recognized the army fighting under Montrose to be a coalition force of 'Catholics and Royalists'.<sup>106</sup> The Catholic side's intentions never strayed beyond Argyllshire for any extended period of time.

During the winter of 1644–5 the MacDonald's compelled Montrose to campaign in Argyllshire where, according to a commanding MacDonald's account, 'we left neither house nor hold unburned, nor corn nor cattle, that belonged to the name of Campbell' singling out the lands of the Campbells of Glenorchy, Inverawe, Lawers and Auchenbreck.<sup>107</sup> In total 895 Campbells were killed without a single skirmish or battle-taking place.<sup>108</sup> Patrick Gordon records that Montrose 'would have spared the people', but 'Clan Donald wheresoever they fand any that was able to cary armes, did without mercie dispatch them'.<sup>109</sup> This was a campaign that could have been ascribed as genocide, one that E. J. Cowan calls an 'orgy of blood and plunder', but instead MacColla became known throughout Argyllshire as 'The Destroyer of Houses'.<sup>110</sup> The vehemence of MacDonald hatred of the Campbells was probably best summarised, however, in the wake of MacColla's rout of the Campbells at the Battle of Inverlochy in 1645 by Iain Lom, the bard of Keppoch:

You remember the place called the Tawny Field?  
 It got a fine dose of manure;  
 Not the dung of sheep or goats,  
 but Campbell blood well congealed.  
 To Hell with you if I care for your plight,  
 as I listen to your children's distress,  
 lamenting the band that went to battle,  
 the howling of the women of Argyll.<sup>111</sup>

But there was a religious edge to this event as well. The Jesuit James MacBreck heralded the campaign into Argyll as to 'the greater glory of God that it was by a Catholic army that the persecutor was to be assailed and crushed; that the standard of religion was to be carried into a land whence religion had been wholly expelled'.<sup>112</sup> According to MacBreck,



when Montrose reviewed his army before the battle of Inverlochy he found 'the men on their knees, with priests behind them imploring the divine protection, signing themselves and their weapons with the cross, entreating the celestial aid of the Queen of Heaven, fervently repeating the names of Saint Patrick, the patron of Ireland, and of Saint Brigit'.<sup>113</sup>

Whereas Iain Lom's account is one of triumph over insidious Campbells, MacBreck rejoiced in the same victory as one of providential dispensation against the chief heretics.<sup>114</sup> Several victories, including Inverlochy, fell on Catholic feasts and were interpreted as divinely ordained, while other feast days were marked by fasting and signs of intense devotion by the troops.<sup>115</sup> Continuity between the Franciscan mission and the campaign was maintained by three of the Franciscans serving as army chaplains along with the Jesuit MacBreck; Patrick Brady, Paul O'Neill and Edmund McCann were all old hands on the Franciscan mission.<sup>116</sup> Importantly, the priests seem to have had some influence in the decision making processes of the campaign and on occasion were consulted in relation to Campbell pleas to spare their lands or even over oaths to be subscribed by the army.<sup>117</sup> They also celebrated mass frequently for the soldiers and for civilians.<sup>118</sup> This has led Alasdair Roberts to interpret MacColla's campaign as a Catholic crusade; however this is only part of the picture.<sup>119</sup> David Stevenson recognizes that Catholicism certainly played an important part 'as the Irish and most of the Highlanders who joined them shared religious motivation', but curbs this by adding 'it was not shared by all the clans involved' (in Montrose's campaign). Instead, he suggests Royalism was of much greater importance in clan participation.<sup>120</sup> Royalism certainly played an important part in the campaign, but Allan Macinnes gets closer to the point when he asserts that the actions of leading ClanDonald chiefs in supporting the campaigns of Alasdair MacColla were to 'further the cause of the Gael'.<sup>121</sup> There was both an overwhelming sense of Catholic identity and piety, as well as a clear understanding that, as MacBreck puts it, 'the march of the army was in reality directed upon Argyllshire'.<sup>122</sup>

Throughout his description of events, MacBreck emphasizes the two streams contributing to the campaign by lauding both the greatness of the ClanDonald contribution and the triumph of Catholicism over a heretical enemy. MacBreck particularly praises MacColla in the kind of language used to laud great Gaelic heroes of the past, such as Fionn Mac Cumhaill, writing: 'MacDonald was remarkable for zeal in the faith and strength and courage of mind and body ... it was thought that no man like him had lived for centuries'. The wider ClanDonald influence on the campaign is also persistently reiterated in his clerical reports. Besides noting the influence of MacColla, Clanranald, Antrim and Macranald the Fair, MacBreck praises the contributions of several smaller clans or septs such as the Robertsons, MacNabs and Johnstons deriving 'their descent and honours from the race of the MacDonalds'.<sup>123</sup> MacBreck

then emphasizes the fundamental essence of the campaign by declaring that MacColla's 'very name was a terror to the heretic Campbells'.<sup>124</sup> MacColla's strength and success is repeatedly identified as being rooted in his support for the spiritual work of the priests among his army and is characterized by his immense respect of the priests. He is reported to have fasted three days a week, insisted on Latin prayers before meals and 'even among the greatest tumult and the utmost peril, he always wished to have Mass celebrated'.<sup>125</sup> So to an extent Roberts is correct that from the priest's perspective, and probably to an extent MacColla's as well, this was indeed a religious crusade. But it was also thoroughly cultural and kin based too. 'The entire conduct of the war', summarized MacBreck, 'and the whole hazard of their cause, turned upon this single point ... they considered that they would effect nothing worthy of their efforts unless they crushed the Campbells.... All the Catholics, at the war council, agreed that it was necessary to invade the territory of Argyll'.<sup>126</sup>

Rather than the Royalism that Stevenson suggests, what held Montrose's troops together were anti-Campbell sentiments. In light of this, MacBreck constructed a panegyric in his report to Rome in which the Catholic *Gael*, epitomized in the person of MacColla, and corporate commitment of ClanDonald took up arms to destroy the Judas-like Campbells who profited by betraying their neighbours and advancing the cause of the heretic and the *Gall* (Lowland/non-Gael). As such, the report clearly supports Allan Macinnes' argument that their Highland neighbours, especially from the signing of the Covenant in 1638, believed ClanCampbell policies 'were promoting cultural assimilation with the racially inferior Lowlander'.<sup>127</sup>

Yet affinity for the cause of ClanDonald was not limited to MacBreck's interpretation of the events of the 1640s. In the wake of the Popish Plot in 1678 the crown ordered all clans to disarm. The MacDonnells of Glengarry refused and with the assistance of 'other Popish chiefs' marched upon the Campbells in 1679.<sup>128</sup> The campaign was thoroughly anti-Campbell rather than religious in its validation, but the fact that these two elements had blurred into one is evidenced by the enlistment of the missionaries Francis MacDonnell and Robert Munro as soldiers in Glengarry's army, taking the ranks of *Caballieri* and *Capitani* respectively.<sup>129</sup> No matter the close pastoral links between the Franciscans and the people of Glengarry, there was no need for priests to serve in a military role. This represented a step far beyond what their Franciscan counterparts in Hiberno-Spanish service dared to do earlier in the century.<sup>130</sup> The only explanation is that the priests viewed themselves as part of the clan and the campaign against the Campbells as having a religious significance. This represented a role more deeply rooted in the intricacies of clan politics than Propaganda would have approved.

Yet perhaps even more important for understanding the way in which Catholicism came to underpin the cohesion of clan networks in Gaelic

Scotland and Ireland was the letter written from Clanranald to Pope Urban VIII in 1626. In it the twelfth chief of Clanranald promised, upon receiving four ships and arms for 7,000 troops from the pope, the cooperation of all ClanDonald (both in Scotland and Ireland) in a campaign to conquer Scotland and return the nation to the Catholic faith.<sup>131</sup> Much more than a mere declaration of religious identity or, as Allan Macinnes has argued, a plea for employment for redundant Gaelic mercenary forces, the letter represents 'the re-establishment of their own autonomy, which came above any other kind of loyalty'.<sup>132</sup> The letter represents an appeal to a proprietary relationship with Rome that offered religious justification for political autonomy. In fact, it in some ways foreshadows the ideological trajectory that would lead to the formation of the Irish Confederacy in 1642. While Clanranald's crusade never materialized (except for those limited against ClanCampbell), the letter demonstrates the profound turn in fortunes ClanDonald experienced from the deep rifts of the late sixteenth century to the pan-Celtic cooperation of ClanDonald by the mid-seventeenth century. The missionary endeavours bank-rolled, and seemingly masterminded, by elements within ClanDonald transformed the political geography of the Western Isles in the face of concerted Stuart policies for centralization of the political economy.

By the 1650s the northern branches of ClanDonald became the driving force of the mission as is evidenced by their invitation and then appropriation of missionaries. Through the 1650s and 1660s Angus MacDonnell of Glengarry (Lord Glengarry and Aros, from 1660) actively manoeuvred to be recognized as the head of all ClanDonald, a process that included supporting a resident priest and an illicit school. These efforts led to him being recognized by leading Catholic missionaries as one of the two most important contributors to the persistence of the faith. In the late 1660s a letter was sent to Rome requesting Propaganda write to the two greatest proponents and supporters of Catholicism in Scotland and that some holy relics be included to encourage their continued support. The first of these individuals was the Marquis of Huntly, who was widely recognized across the continent for his efforts in supporting Catholicism in North-East Scotland, the second was Glengarry.<sup>133</sup>

Allan Macinnes argues Catholicism had little lasting influence on the cultural landscape of Scottish Gaeldom as a whole, because only six of the fifty principal clans maintained their Catholic identities into the Jacobite period. However, it is crucial to note that these few clans were the ones who had pinned their collective identities and traditional rights to the reintroduction and sustenance of Catholicism nearly a century before. Among these were the Gordons, MacDonalds of Glengarry, MacDonalds of Clanranald, MacDonalds of Keppoch and the MacNeills of Barra, as well as portions of the MacDonalds of Sleat; and the MacDonnells of Antrim, who, ever the opportunists, were keenly aware of the political landscape before declaring their religious affiliation.<sup>134</sup> These clans

remained committed to Catholicism into the turbulent political years of the eighteenth century partly because it provided political currency. Moreover, in relation to ClanDonald, religion was not the sole point of cooperation between the constituent clans. Just as financial cooperation within ClanDonald pre-empted the mission in 1619, it continued to play its part in the 1670s and 80s. During the period of the second Franciscan mission ClanDonald set up an extended credit network that protected the interests of the MacDonnells of Antrim, MacDonnells of Glengarry, MacDonalds of Sleat, MacDonalds of Clanranald and MacDonalds of Benbecula. Fiona Macdonald argues this financial cooperation represents one of ‘five different types of social bonding—marital, fostering, financial, commercial and cultural recreational’—implemented by the *fine* of ClanDonald during the seventeenth century to protect their traditional hegemonies.<sup>135</sup> Due to the hands on role of ClanDonald in the process of Catholic missions and their efforts to sustain the faith in the complete absence of continental funds during the same period, confessionalization needs to be considered as a sixth strand in this wider process of promoting social cohesion.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> A. I. Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart, 1603–1788* (East Linton, 1986), 78; D. MacLean, ‘Catholicism in the Highlands and Isles’, *Innes Review* 3 (1952), 5–13, p. 5. Hereafter *Innes Review* will be cited as *IR*. This assessment has also been sustained in Wilson McLeod, *Divided Gaels: Gaelic Cultural Identities in Scotland and Ireland, c.1200–c.1650* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 196–7.

<sup>2</sup> Macinnes, *Clanship*, pp. 78, 173–4.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Peter F. Anson, *Underground Catholicism in Scotland, 1622–1878* (Montrose, 1970), pp. 17–25, 38–43, 56–60, 69–72; John L. Campbell, ‘The Catholic Church in the Hebrides: 1560–1760’, *The Tablet*, 206, no. 6032 (31 December, 1955), 655–7; D. MacLean, ‘Catholicism in the Highlands and Isles, 1560–1680’, *Innes Review* 3 (1952), 5–13; Cathaldus Giblin, *The Irish Franciscan Mission to Scotland, 1619–1646* (Dublin, 1964), *passim*. Hereafter: Giblin, *Mission*.

<sup>5</sup> Giblin, *Mission*, no. 49 (pp. 150–2)

<sup>6</sup> John L. Campbell, ‘The Catholic Isles of Scotland: The Catholic Church in the Hebrides 1560–1760’, *The Capuchin Annual* (Dublin, 1964), 108–12.

<sup>7</sup> Fiona Macdonald, *Missions to the Gaels* (Edinburgh, 2006), pp. 36–96, 133–79; Lisa Curry, *Catholicism and the Clan MacDonnell of Glengarry* (Lewiston, N. Y., 2008).

<sup>8</sup> Macdonald, *Missions*, 70.

<sup>9</sup> Giblin, *Mission*, xi, nos 1 and 2; *idem.*, ‘The Irish Mission to Scotland in the Seventeenth Century’, *Franciscan College Annual* (Multyfarnham 1952), p. 9. Document 1 in Giblin, *Mission*, indicates a significant number of requests were made directly to the Irish Franciscan College at Louvain. As the college was founded in 1606, this suggests the bulk of requests occurred after that year.

<sup>10</sup> Giblin, *Mission*, no. 4 (p. 14).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 1 (pp. 7–9).

<sup>12</sup> Macdonald, *Missions*, pp. 19–20; *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland* (ed.) D. Masson, first series (Edinburgh, 1877–98), 1616–19, pp. 467–8, 507–8 [Hereafter, *RPCS*]; Robert Pitcairn, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland, 1609–1615*, 3, pt. 1 (Edinburgh, 1832), pp. 26–7; Donald Gregory, *The History of the Western Highlands and Isles of Scotland from A. D. 1493 to A. D. 1625*, 2nd ed. (London and Glasgow, 1881), pp. 386–8.

<sup>13</sup> Macinnes, *Clanship*, pp. 37–8; Macdonald, *Missions*, p. 68; Gregory, *History of the Western Highlands and Isles*, pp. 401–2.

- <sup>14</sup> M. Kearney Walsh, 'Destruction by Peace': *Hugh O'Neill after Kinsale* (Armagh, 1986), p. 376; Micheál Mac Craith, 'The Gaelic reaction to the Reformation', in Steven G. Ellis and Sarah Barber (eds), *Conquest & Union: Fashioning a British State, 1485–1725* (London and New York, 1995), p. 159.
- <sup>15</sup> Gregory, *History of the Western Highlands and Isles*, p. 402.
- <sup>16</sup> F. A. Macdonald, 'MacDonald, Angus, of Dunyvaig and the Glens (c.1548–1613)', *ONDB* (Oxford), 2004; Pitcairn, *Ancient Criminal Trials*, iii, p. 21.
- <sup>17</sup> Thanks are extended here to Dr. Daniel McCannell of the University of Aberdeen for stimulating discussions around the plausibility of James MacDonald's involvement.
- <sup>18</sup> John L. Campbell, *Canna – The Story of a Hebridean Island*, 4th edn (Oxford, 1984), pp. 52–3; Macdonald, *Missions*, p. 71.
- <sup>19</sup> Campbell, *Canna*, p. 52. For additional cooperation between Sir James and Antrim in the wider European political context see: David Worthington, *Scots in Habsburg Service, 1618–1648* (Leiden and Boston, 2004), pp. 83–4.
- <sup>20</sup> John L. Campbell, 'The Letter sent by Iain Muideartach, Twelfth Chief of Clanranald, to Pope Urban VIII, in 1626', *IR* 4.2 (1953), pp. 110–16, p. 110; *Archivium Hibernicum* XII (1914), p. 115.
- <sup>21</sup> A. I. Macinnes, 'Crown, Clans and *Fine*: the "civilizing" of Scottish Gaeldom, 1587–1638', *Northern Scotland* 13 (1993), 31–55, p. 34.
- <sup>22</sup> Raymond C. Paterson, *The Lords of the Isles: A History of Clan Donald* (Edinburgh, 2001), pp. 113–14; *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, 1604–7, p. 465; 1616–19, pp. 467–8, 507–8.
- <sup>23</sup> For the internal troubles of Clan Iain Mhòr see: J. Michael Hill, 'The Rift within Clan Ian Mor: The Antrim and Dunyveg MacDonnells, 1590–1603', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 24.4 (1993), 865–879. For Royal policy against the clan see: Macinnes, *Clanship*, pp. 61–3.
- <sup>24</sup> Cosmo Innes and John Frederick Vaughan Campbell Cawdor (eds), *The book of the thanes of Cawdor* (Aberdeen, 1859), pp. 222–4; J. R. N. MacPhail (ed.), *Highland Papers*, 4 vols (Edinburgh, 1914), iii, pp. 158–9.
- <sup>25</sup> Martin MacGregor, 'Statues of Iona', *IR* 57 (2006), 111–82, p. 167.
- <sup>26</sup> David Stevenson, *Highland Warrior: Alasdair MacColla and the Civil Wars* (Edinburgh, 1980, 2003), p. 39.
- <sup>27</sup> R. Flower, 'An Irish–Gaelic Poem on the Montrose Wars', *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, 1 (1926), pp. 113–18; *Orain Iain Luim: Songs of John MacDonald, Bard of Keppoch* (ed.) A. M. MacKenzie (Edinburgh, 1973), pp. 90–1, 124–7, 158–61; Stevenson, *Highland Warrior*, 298; Macinnes, *Clanship*, pp. 127–8.
- <sup>28</sup> Macdonald, *Missions*, p. 71; Paterson, *Lords of the Isles*, p. 116; Giblin, *Mission*, no. 11 (pp. 24–5).
- <sup>29</sup> Macinnes, *Clanship*, p. 63; Paterson, p. 122.
- <sup>30</sup> Macinnes, *Clanship*, p. 95.
- <sup>31</sup> Jane H. Ohlmeyer, *Civil War and Restoration in the Three Stuart Kingdoms: The career of Randall MacDonnell, marquis of Antrim, 1609–1683* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 20, 288–9.
- <sup>32</sup> Macinnes, *Clanship*, p. 75–6.
- <sup>33</sup> Paterson, *Lords of the Isles*, p. 122.
- <sup>34</sup> Archibald MacDonald, 'A Fragment of an Irish MS: History of the MacDonalds of Antrim', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, 37 (1934–6), pp. 262–85, p. 282.
- <sup>35</sup> Macinnes, 'Crown, Clans and *Fine*', p. 46.
- <sup>36</sup> Gregory, *History of the Western Highlands and*, p. 365; Campbell, 'The Catholic Isles of Scotland', p. 109; MacPhail, *Highland Papers*, iii, p. 186; Giblin, *Mission*, p. vii.
- <sup>37</sup> Jane Ohlmeyer, *Civil War and the Restoration*, pp. 215, 277; Brian MacCuarta, *Catholic Revival in the North of Ireland, 1603–41* (Dublin, 2007), pp. 101–3; A. MacDonald, 'Fragment of an Irish MS', p. 280.
- <sup>38</sup> George Hill, *An Historical Account of the MacDonnells of Antrim* (Belfast, 1873), p. 246.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.
- <sup>40</sup> Giblin, *Mission*, no. 23 (p. 98).
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 32 (pp. 111–12).
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 70 (p. 178).
- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, nos 32 (p. 111), 35 (pp. 117, 118), 42 (pp. 127, 129).
- <sup>44</sup> MacDonald, 'A Fragment of an Irish MS', p. 280; Ohlmeyer, *Civil War and Restoration*, pp. 27, 47, 69, 71, 75, 277; Wentworth to Conway, 13 August, 1638 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford MSS 10A, f. 172).
- <sup>45</sup> Ohlmeyer, *Civil War and Restoration*, p. 27.
- <sup>46</sup> Giblin, *Mission*, no. 59.

- <sup>47</sup> Cathaldus Giblin, 'Francis MacDonnell, O. F. M., Son of the First Early of Antrim (d. 1636)', *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 8 (1975–6), 44–54, pp. 49, 50; Giblin, *Mission*, no. 20 (pp. 50, 52); Macdonald, *Missions*, pp. 84–5.
- <sup>48</sup> Giblin, *Mission*, no. 33 (pp. 114, 116).
- <sup>49</sup> Giblin, 'Francis MacDonnell, O. F. M.', p. 53.
- <sup>50</sup> Cathaldus Giblin, 'St Oliver Plunkett, Francis MacDonnell, O. F. M. and the Mission to the Hebrides', *Collectanea Hibernica* 17 (1974–5), pp. 64–102, p. 72; MacGuaire, 'Ireland and the Catholic Hebrides', *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 5th series, 42 (1933), pp. 345–64, 488–507, p. 493; Cathaldus Giblin, 'The Mission to the Highlands and Isles c. 1670', *Franciscan College Annual* (Multyfarnham, 1954), pp. 7–20, p. 17; Macdonald, *Missions*, p. 154.
- <sup>51</sup> D. O. Blundell, *The Catholic Highlands of Scotland*, 2 Vols (Edinburgh & London, 1909–17), ii, p. 9; Curry, *Catholicism*, p. 99.
- <sup>52</sup> Macdonald, *Missions*, 155; Giblin, 'St Oliver Plunkett, Francis MacDonnell', pp. 64–102.
- <sup>53</sup> Giblin, *Mission*, no. 39 (p. 122).
- <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 40 (p. 124).
- <sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 21 (p. 66).
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, nos 20 (pp. 55–6), 21 (pp. 66–7), 26 (p. 102).
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, nos 20, 21, 26, 30 (pp. 106–7). Giblin interprets this as meaning Sutherland and Caithness (*Mission*, xii). Fiona Macdonald, on the other hand, has speculated that since those regions are actually in the Highlands it is more likely that he resided with Gordon of Cluny in Aberdeenshire (Macdonald, *Missions*, pp. 81, 83). In any case, when he was appointed superior over the mission as the result of his long service the other missionaries complained that he was too far away to be of any regular help (Giblin, *Mission*, nos 42, 60, 66).
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 69 (pp. 172–7).
- <sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 21 (p. 73–4).
- <sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 21 (pp. 72–3, 73–4).
- <sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 20 (pp. 52–3).
- <sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, nos 21 (pp. 66–9), 36 (p. 122).
- <sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 16 (p. 37).
- <sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, nos 15 (pp. 32–6), 20 (pp. 53–4, 55–6), 21 (pp. 66–7), 25 (pp. 96–7).
- <sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 20 (p. 56–7); John L. Campbell, 'Some notes and comments on "the Irish Franciscan Mission in Scotland"' by Rev. Cathaldus Giblin, O. F. M. *IR* 4 (1953), pp. 42–8, p. 43.
- <sup>66</sup> Campbell, 'some notes', p. 47. Hector Mór MacLean of Duart, on the other hand, vigorously advocated Protestantism and opposed the missionaries (Giblin, *Mission*, no. 22 (pp. 81–2); Macdonald, *Missions to the Gaels*, p. 74).
- <sup>67</sup> Brendan Jennings, 'Miscellaneous Docuements-I', *Archivium Hibernicum* 12 (1946), p. 115–16; Campbell, 'The Letter sent by Iain Muideartach', p. 110.
- <sup>68</sup> Macdonald, *Missions*, p. 77.
- <sup>69</sup> Macinnes, *Clanship*, pp. 63–6. The Maclain's of Ardnamurchan had been placed under the feudal superiority of Argyll in 1602 and the territory was managed by Campbell of Barbeck-Lochawe during Alasdair (Alexander's) minority.
- <sup>70</sup> John L. Campbell, *Canna – The Story of a Hebridean Island*, 4th edn (Oxford, 1984), pp. 52–3; Macdonald, *Missions*, p. 71.
- <sup>71</sup> Macinnes, *Clanship*, pp. 63–4.
- <sup>72</sup> John L. Campbell, 'The MacNeills of Barra and the Irish Franciscans' *IR* 5(1954), pp. 33–8, p. 34.
- <sup>73</sup> John L. Campbell, 'South Uist in the Ballentyne Report', *IR* 9 (1958), pp. 214–5.
- <sup>74</sup> Campbell, *Canna*, p. 55.
- <sup>75</sup> MacLean, *Counter Reformation in Scotland*, pp. 154, 159; Blundell, *Highlands of Scotland*, ii, pp. 5–6; Campbell, 'some notes', p. 43; MacGuaire, 'Ireland and the Catholic Hebrides', 493.
- <sup>76</sup> Giblin, *Mission*, nos 19 (pp. 47–50), 20 (pp. 50–53), 21 (pp. 61, 63–4, 68–9, 73–4), 22 (p. 81), 45 (p. 143), 47 (p. 149).
- <sup>77</sup> Campbell, 'some notes', p. 43; Campbell, 'The Catholic Isles of Scotland', p. 111.
- <sup>78</sup> MacGuaire, 'Ireland and the Catholic Hebrides', p. 362.
- <sup>79</sup> Giblin, *Mission*, no. 23 (pp. 95–6). On a number of other occasions the priests record the great challenge of hearing the necessary number of confessions, *op. cit.* nos 18 (pp. 45–7), 20 (p. 51).
- <sup>80</sup> M. Purcell, *The Story of the Vincentians* (Dublin, 1973), p. 49. Hereafter: Purcell, *Vincentians*.
- <sup>81</sup> MacGuaire, 'Ireland and the Catholic Hebrides', pp. 360.
- <sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 361–2.
- <sup>83</sup> Giblin, *Mission*, no. 21 (p. 66).
- <sup>84</sup> J. A. Stewart, 'The Clan Ranald: History of a Highland Kindred' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1982), p. 71.

- <sup>85</sup> In 1626 the Franciscans report that MacKinnon was persuaded to leave the priests and Catholics of Eigg alone in exchange for one-third of the island's teinds. Giblin, *Mission*, no. 21.
- <sup>86</sup> Campbell, *Canna*, p. 60; *De Rebus Albanicis*, p. 127.
- <sup>87</sup> Giblin, *Mission*, no. 43; MacGuaire, 'Ireland and the Catholic Hebrides', 360.
- <sup>88</sup> Macdonald, *Missions*, p. 289 n. 31; Campbell, *Canna*, 63.
- <sup>89</sup> Macdonald, *Missions*, p. 67.
- <sup>90</sup> Those that advocate Glengarry are: Campbell, 'The Catholic Isles of Scotland', p. 111; Curry, *Catholicism*, pp. 6–7. Fiona Macdonald follows on from MacGuaire to suggest Clanranald: Macdonald, *Missions*, p. 142; MacGuaire, 'Ireland and the Catholic Hebrides', pp. 358–9. A shared source among all of these is J. F. S. Gordon, who simply identifies the request as coming from 'the Cheiftain of the MacDonnells': J. F. S. Gordon, *Journal and Appendix to Scotichronicon and Monasticon* (Glasgow, 1867), p. xv.
- <sup>91</sup> For a very useful summary of the mission itineraries see: Fiona A. Macdonald, 'Ireland and Scotland: Historical Perspectives on the Gaelic Dimension 1560–1760' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1994), pp. 961–90.
- <sup>92</sup> Fiona Macdonald, 'Irish Priests in the Highlands: Judicial Evidence from Argyll,' *IR* 46.1 (1995), 17; Purcell, *Vincentians*, pp. 44, 49, 53, 57; MacGuire, 'Ireland and the Catholic Hebrides', p. 361. There were increased links with the missionary work of priests in the North-East, with meetings attended at Huntly Castle (Purcell, *Vincentians*, 52).
- <sup>93</sup> Purcell, *Vincentians*, p. 53. Duggan died in Uist in 1657.
- <sup>94</sup> C. Giblin, 'The "Acta" of Propaganda Archives in the Scottish Mission, 1623–1670' *IR* 54 (1954), 107.
- <sup>95</sup> Macinnes, *Clanship*, p. 128.
- <sup>96</sup> Purcell, *Vincentians*, p. 55.
- <sup>97</sup> O. Blundell, *Highlands of Scotland*, ii, p. 10, 17.
- <sup>98</sup> Purcell, *Vincentians*, p. 57; Curry, *Catholicism*, p. 93.
- <sup>99</sup> G. Fitzgibbon, 'Robert Munro, secular priest in the Highlands. (1645–1704)', *IR* 48 (1997), pp. 165–173, p. 165.
- <sup>100</sup> Curry, *Catholicism*, p. 25.
- <sup>101</sup> Alphons Bellesheim, *History of the Catholic Church of Scotland* (trans) Oswald Hunter Blair, 4 Vols (Edinburgh and London, 1887–90), iv, p. 85n.
- <sup>102</sup> Anson, *Underground Catholicism*, p. 38.
- <sup>103</sup> Curry, *Catholicism*, p. 107.
- <sup>104</sup> Purcell, *Vincentians*, p. 45–6; Curry, *Catholicism*, p. 6.
- <sup>105</sup> Forbes Leith, *Memoirs*, i, p. 306.
- <sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, i, pp. 315, 322, 350.
- <sup>107</sup> Hill, *MacDonnells of Antrim*, p. 90; John A. MacLean, 'The Sources, Particularly the Celtic Sources, for the History of the Highlands in the Seventeenth Century' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1939), pp. 16–17.
- <sup>108</sup> A. MacBain and J. Kennedy (eds), *Reliquiae Celticae*, 2 Vols (Inverness, 1892–4), ii, p. 183.
- <sup>109</sup> Patrick Gordon, *A Short Abridgement of Britain's Distemper; 1639–1649* (ed.) J. Dunn (Aberdeen, 1844), p. 98; MacLean, 'The Sources', p. 17.
- <sup>110</sup> E. J. Cowan, *Montrose: For Covenant and King* (London, 1977), p. 117; Stevenson, *Highland Warrior*, p. 148; MacLean, 'The Sources', pp. 16–17.
- <sup>111</sup> Roderick Watson, *The poetry of Scotland: Gaelic, Scots, and English, 1380–1980* (Edinburgh, 1995), pp. 218–25.
- <sup>112</sup> Forbes Leith, *Memoirs*, i, p. 308.
- <sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, i, p. 321.
- <sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, i, p. 320; Stevenson, *Highland Warrior*, p. 158.
- <sup>115</sup> Stevenson, *Highland Warrior*, p. 199; Forbes Leith, *Memoirs*, i, pp. 320, 343, 348, 355, 357, 358.
- <sup>116</sup> Macdonald, *Missions*, p. 139.
- <sup>117</sup> Forbes Leith, *Memoirs*, i:303–8, 312, 324–5; Stevenson, *Highland Warrior*, pp. 146, 152,
- <sup>118</sup> Forbes Leith, *Memoirs*, i, pp. 299, 303, 310, 311, 319, 340, 341.
- <sup>119</sup> Alasdair Roberts, 'The "Irishes" in Scotland, 1644–7,' *The Glynn* 14 (1986), 41.
- <sup>120</sup> Stevenson, *Highland Warrior*, pp. 122, 267.
- <sup>121</sup> A. I. Macinnes, 'The First Scottish Tories', *Scottish Historical Review* 67 (1988), 56–66, p. 60.
- <sup>122</sup> Forbes Leith, *Memoirs*, i, p. 303.
- <sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, i, pp. 303, 308–9, 317.
- <sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, *Memoirs*, i, p. 292.
- <sup>125</sup> Forbes Leith, *Memoirs*, i, pp. 302, 303, 350.
- <sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, i, p. 306–7.

- <sup>127</sup> Macinnes, *Clanship*, p. 99.
- <sup>128</sup> B. A. Lang, *Highlands of Scotland* (1898), pp. 103–4; Curry, *Catholicism*, p. 35.
- <sup>129</sup> Macdonald, *Missions*, pp. 155, 174; Curry, *Catholicism*, p. 105; Paul Hopkins, *Glencoe and the End of the Highland War* (Edinburgh, 1986), pp. 65–7.
- <sup>130</sup> Benjamin Hazard, *Faith and patronage: the political career of Flaithri Ó Maolchonaire c.1560–1629* (Dublin, 2009).
- <sup>131</sup> Campbell, ‘The letter sent by Iain Muideartach’, pp. 110–16.
- <sup>132</sup> Macdonald, *Missions*, p. 75; Macinnes, *Clanship*, p. 79.
- <sup>133</sup> Giblin, ‘The “Acta” of Propaganda’, p. 68 n106, p. 71 n119.
- <sup>134</sup> Macinnes, *Clanship*, pp. 174, 248–9.
- <sup>135</sup> Macdonald, ‘Ireland and Scotland’, pp. 654–64, 663.