

Moray, Ulster, and the MacWilliams'

Over the last 300 years historians have been united in agreement that the MacWilliam kindred were of royal descent from William fitz Duncan, son of King Donnchad mac Máel Coluim (Duncan II, 1094). Although various members of this kindred pressed their claim for inauguration as kings of Scotia over a number of decades between c.1180 and 1230, in historiography they have largely become relegated to the position of an annoyance in the inevitable 'progress' of the kingdom of Scotia, probably because they were not descended from St Margaret, but from King Máel Coluim mac Donnchada's (Malcolm III, 1058-93) first wife, Queen Ingebjorg of Orkney.

Historians have also been united in linking the MacWilliams to Moray. The only recorded marriage of William fitz Duncan was to Alice de Rumilly, a Cumbrian heiress, with whom he had one son (also called William) and three daughters. Yet, it has been clear for some time that the MacWilliam kindred were not descended from Alice. In 1876 W.F. Skene suggested that William fitz Duncan had made a previous marriage to a Scottish woman.² G.W.S. Barrow then took this suggestion one stage further and argued that William fitz Duncan's first wife was a cousin or sister of Oengus of Moray (d.1130) and that their son, Donald bán MacWilliam, thus inherited a better claim to the kingship through his mother as a descendant of King Lulach mac Gilla Comgáin (Lulach, 1058) than that which he received from his father. This suggestion answered two thorny problems. Firstly, it explained why William fitz Duncan was named *comes de Murray* in a thirteenth-century Cumbrian genealogy.³ Presumably, he held the title by right of his wife. Secondly, it explained why Donald bán MacWilliam possessed a claim to the earldom of Moray in the 1180s and why Moray was closely connected to the various MacWilliam risings.⁴ This Barrovian thesis regarding the close links between the MacWilliams and Moray has held sway in historiography for some numbers of years now and during the last decade its most prolific proponent, in both a number of articles and in a recent monograph, has been R. Andrew McDonald.⁵

Yet another popular theory is that the MacWilliams launched their various invasions of Scotia from Ireland. In 1993, for example, Keith Stringer remarked: "[...] it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the MacWilliams traditionally used Gaelic Ulster as a haven and a place where large bodies of troops could readily be recruited [...]."⁶ While the latter point seems incontrovertible, there is still some doubt as to the actual role of Moravians in the MacWilliam invasions of north Britain and whether the MacWilliams were permanently based in Ulster as guests and allies of Cenél Eóghain between c.1179 and c.1230.

Historiography and the MacWilliams

Over the last 800 years or so many writers have been careful to stress the illegitimacy of the MacWilliam claim to the throne. These aspersions regarding the ancestry of William fitz Duncan actually first appear in an English source, *Gesta Regum Anglorum* by William of Malmesbury, written c.1126, where King Donnchad mac Máel Coluim was described as *nothus*.⁷ This description fed into a number of other works although it should be noted that later kings of Scotia never described William

¹ My thanks to Sonja Cameron and Richard Oram for reading this paper prior to publication and for making many helpful suggestions.

² W.F. Skene, *Celtic Scotland: A History of Ancient Alban* 3 vols., (Edinburgh, 1876-80), i, 477.

³ J. Wilson (editor), *The Register of the Priory of St Bees* (Durham, 1915), 532.

⁴ G.W.S. Barrow (editor) with W.W. Scott, *Regesta Regum Scottorum ii: The Acts of William I* (Edinburgh, 1971), 12-13, [hereafter: *RRS*, ii].

⁵ For example, R. Andrew McDonald, 'Monk, Bishop, Imposter, Pretender: The Place of Wimund in Twelfth-Century Scotland', in *TGSI*, 58, 1993-94, 247-70.; R. Andrew McDonald, 'Treachery in the Remotest Territories of Scotland: Northern Resistance to the Canmore Dynasty, 1130-1230', in *Canadian Journal of History*, 33, 1999, 161-92, [hereafter: McDonald, 'Treachery']; R. Andrew McDonald, *Outlaws of Medieval Scotland: Challenges to the Canmore Kings, 1058-1266*, (East Linton, 2003).

⁶ Keith J. Stringer, 'Periphery and Core in Thirteenth-Century Scotland: Alan son of Roland, Lord of Galloway and Constable of Scotland', in Alexander Grant and Keith J. Stringer (editors), *Medieval Scotland* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 82-113, at 87.

⁷ R.A.B. Mynors and Rodney M. Thomson (editors), *Gesta Regum Anglorum* 2 vols., (Oxford, 1998 and 1999), i, 725.

fitz Duncan's father in such terms in their own charters.⁸ The reason behind this sudden description of King Donnchad mac Máel Coluim as *nothus* after c.1125 in an English source may have everything to do with the fact that he was not a son of King Máel Coluim mac Donnchada and Queen Margaret, but a scion of King Máel Coluim mac Donnchada's first marriage to Ingebjorg of Orkney. Given the continued English interest in and military support for the sons of Máel Coluim and Margaret, this labelling of King Donnchad as a *nothus* in an English source is perhaps hardly surprising and should probably be regarded as English-driven propaganda to ensure and advance the claims of just one segment of the royal kindred of Scotia, the one descended from Queen Margaret. It is also probably no coincidence that the claim regarding the ancestry of William fitz Duncan appeared around the time of the inauguration of David I in 1124, when David's right to be inaugurated may have been challenged both by William fitz Duncan and Máel Coluim, son of King Alexander I.⁹

Two later Scottish sources, *Gesta Annalia I* and *Scotichronicon*, followed William of Malmesbury. They justified their denigration of the MacWilliam claims by asserting that the progenitor of the MacWilliam kindred, Donnchad mac Máel Coluim, was a 'bastard son', and that it was therefore absurd that any of his descendants should have considered themselves as suitable candidates for the kingship of Scotia.¹⁰ The effects of this propaganda continued to be felt in the nineteenth century and the easiest method of disparaging the claims of the MacWilliam kindred was to label them as 'impostors' and 'bastards' at every opportunity. Since King Donnchad mac Máel Coluim was frequently called 'the bastard king of Scotland',¹¹ this meant that his descendants became doubly damned: they were the bastard sons and bastard grandsons of a bastard king.

As if allegations of bastardy were not bad enough, John Mair, writing in the sixteenth century, introduced a new dimension to MacWilliam historiography when he presented them as 'wild Scots' or Highlanders. In his opinion, men like this were rebels and should be executed for their actions.¹² Perhaps characteristically, Hector Boece also added some new elements into the story when he discussed MacWilliams: he stated that these men lived as pirates in the Hebrides.¹³ In addition, Boece made absolutely no reference to the MacWilliams being members of the royal kindred who wanted to have their claims recognised. This must have had the effect, whether intentional or not, of greatly lowering the status of this segment of the royal kingroup. Because MacWilliams had no special status in his history of Scotland, their efforts in opposing successive kings of Scotia became just one small part of a greater picture of recurring Highland unrest in Scotland.¹⁴ It is possible that this is why John Leslie, for example, completely ignored the various members of the MacWilliam kindred in favour of other examples of Highland unrest. To him, the MacWilliam 'revolts' were obviously of no particular interest or significance.

In contrast to Leslie, George Buchanan included two MacWilliam 'revolts' in his work even though one of these was not directly associated with MacWilliams by the author.¹⁵ In addition, Buchanan rightly recognised that the MacWilliams had a claim to the throne and this would imply that he had checked

⁸ For example: Cosmo Innes, *Registrum Episcopatus Moraviensis* (Edinburgh, 1837), no.36.

⁹ For a re-evaluation of the career of Máel Coluim, son of King Alexander I, see: Alasdair Ross, 'The Identity of the Prisoner of Roxburgh: Malcolm son of Alexander or Malcolm MacEth?' in S. Arbutnot, K. Hollo, and A. Ross (editors), *Festschrift: Essays in honour of Professor Colm Ó Baoill*, (forthcoming, 2004).

¹⁰ For example: *Chron. Fordun (GA 1)*, 268. The text of *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* has recently been re-examined by Dauvit Broun [cf: Dauvit Broun, 'A New Look at *Gesta Annalia* Attributed to John of Fordun', in Barbara E. Crawford (editor), *Church, Chronicle and Learning in Medieval and Early Renaissance Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1999), pp. 9-30, hereafter: Broun, 'Gesta Annalia']. In this article Broun convincingly demonstrates that the text of the work known as *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* also preserves two earlier texts that Broun called *Gesta Annalia I* (completed before April 1285 but probably based on an earlier Dunfermline work) and *Gesta Annalia II* (completed by 1363). Accordingly, only the first five books, together with the unfinished sixth book, of *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* are likely to have been Fordun's work, completed sometime between 1371 and the mid-1380s. Accordingly, I have chosen to use *Chron. Fordun (GA 1)* when referring to the first *Gesta Annalia* section of *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*.

¹¹ George Chalmers, *Caledonia: or a Historical and Topographical Account of North Britain* 8 vols., (new edition Paisley, 1887), ii, 631.

¹² Archibald Constable (translator and editor), *A History of Greater Britain as well England as Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1892), 166.

¹³ R.W. Chambers, E.C. Batho and H.W. Husbands (editors), *The Chronicles of Scotland Compiled by Hector Boece* 2 vols., (Edinburgh, 1936 and 1941), ii, 206-07.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, 282-83.

¹⁵ J. Aikman (translator), *The History of Scotland* 6 vols., (Glasgow and Edinburgh, 1827-29), i, 371 and 376.

Boece's version of events against either *Chronica Gentis Scottorum* or Bower. Nevertheless, Buchanan also continued to describe the MacWilliam kindred as Hebridean pirates who raided Scotland from the sea. One final important adjustment made to MacWilliam 'history' by Buchanan was that his description of their piracy was shifted from the Hebrides and Ross into Moray. Perhaps not too much emphasis should be put on this change of scenery since Buchanan regarded the river Spey as the 'utmost boundary of Ross-shire'.¹⁶ However, it is just possible that Buchanan was heavily influenced by the writings of Boece who had stated that a number of serious rebellions had occurred in Moray, virtually since recorded history had begun.

In fact, it must have made sense to many historians to closely associate Moravians and the MacWilliams since the inhabitants of medieval Moray have an equally bad reputation. Much of this has been derived from the enigmatic entry in the Holyrood Chronicle for 1163: *Et rex Malcolmus Murevienses transtulit*.¹⁷ The author of *Gesta Annalia I*, for example, took this phrase to mean that King Malcolm IV had removed the entire treacherous population of Moray, just as Nebuchadnezzar had once done to the Jews.¹⁸ Later writers adopted this explanation to explain why the medieval Moravians were such bad people.

It should come as no surprise, then, that for many historians the people of Moray had been rebellious subjects since recorded history had begun. But, since they were sure that Moray had never been an independent kingdom, these historians had to find a reason why the Moravians excelled at organising regular rebellions. Ethnographic differences were one possible answer: Highland Celts fighting against Teutonic Lowlanders. This solution was further aided by the imposition of a perceived nineteenth-century highland/lowland divide onto early medieval Moray. For example, according to Charles Rampini, writing in 1897, the Picts of Moray were really Gaels who sided with their Celtic brethren against Norman (and Flemish) incomers. After losing their lands in the Laich of Moray to these settlers, the previous inhabitants had no other choice than to live in the highlands and harass civilised (lowland) people, thus becoming caterans. This explanation allowed him to class the original inhabitants of Moray as: "a warlike and impetuous race [...] who, [...] were wholly responsible for spreading a fear of any Gaelic speaking people in lowland northern Scotland."¹⁹ In fact, medieval Moravians were supposedly so inclined to mayhem and slaughter they even possessed their own origin legend to explain exactly how they first achieved such notoriety in Pannonia during the reign of the Emperor Nero.²⁰

A second possible answer why Moravians frequently liked to rebel was politics. Both David Dalrymple and Andrew Lang preferred to class twelfth- and thirteenth-century kindreds associated with Moray as proto-Jacobites. Lang, in particular, compared various leading representatives of the MacWilliam kindred to Prince Charles Edward Stuart and continually referred to them as 'pretenders' who 'raised their standards' whenever they were 'out'.²¹ While it is perhaps difficult to excuse Dalrymple and Lang's use of emotive Jacobite terminology, there is little doubt that Rampini's commentary was influenced by the ethnographic debate over the different merits of Teutonic and Celtic ancestry, which took place in Scotland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.²²

All of the above probably helps to explain why R. Andrew McDonald, for example, has recently described the MacWilliams and Moravians as being at the forefront of an anti-feudal and anti-Canmore resistance movement in northern Scotland. Essentially, according to McDonald, these people resented the intensive process of internal colonisation and feudalisation that was undertaken by the crown in Moray between 1175 and 1200.²³ Other historians clearly share this view even though it assumes *prima facie* that a process of internal colonisation and feudalisation took place in Moray in the first instance.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, 349.

¹⁷ M.O. Anderson with A.O. Anderson, *A Scottish Chronicle known as The Chronicle of Holyrood*, (Edinburgh, 1938), 142.

¹⁸ *Chron. Fordun (GAI)*,

¹⁹ Charles Rampini, *A History of Moray and Nairn* (Edinburgh, 1897), 5 and at 121-23.

²⁰ D.E.R. Watt (general editor), *Scotichronicon* 9 vols., (Aberdeen, 1987-98), i, 236-39, [hereafter: Chron. Bower (Watt)]. This origin legend is discussed in more detail in a forthcoming paper of mine called "Pannonians, Pirates, and Pictish princesses."

²¹ David Dalrymple, *Annals of Scotland*, (Edinburgh, 1776), 43; Andrew Lang, *A History of Scotland* 4 vols., (Edinburgh, 1900-07), i, 88-118.

²² Colin Kidd, 'Teutonist Ethnology and Scottish Nationalist Inhibition, 1780-1880', in *SHR*, 74, 1995, 45-68.

²³ McDonald, 'Treachery', 181.

Alan Young, for example, has claimed: "Moray had proved to be a consistently difficult region to control throughout the twelfth century. Despite the planned settlement of Moray in David I's time, Highland rebellions continued to be a danger to the throne [...]. The lordship of Badenoch, perhaps part of the estates forfeited by Gillescop MacWilliam [...] was in the highest part of Moray [...]".²⁴ This is a persuasive and popular group of theories about the MacWilliams and Moray. But how much of it can be supported from the documentary record?

The MacWilliams and Moray

Although it has recently been argued that Bishop Wilmund claimed to be a MacWilliam,²⁵ the various careers of members of this kindred really only begin to be recorded in detail by chroniclers in the 1170s. Between 1179 and 1186 sources indicate that Donald bán MacWilliam may have invaded Scotia on three different occasions. Under the year-date 1179 Bower commented:

Hoc eiam anno Willelmus rex Scocie cum fratre suo David comite de Huntyngdon' et exercitu magno perrexit in Ross' contra Makwilliam, sed vero nomine Donald ban, ibique duo castella firmavit scilicet Dunschath et Edirdovar, quibus firmatis ad australes regni sui partes remeavit. [...]

(Also in this year William king of Scotland, together with his brother David earl of Huntingdon and a great army, advanced into Ross against MacWilliam, whose real name was Donald bán. There he [the king] fortified two castles, Dunskeath and Etherdouer [Redcastle]. Having fortified these, he returned to the southern parts of his realm.)²⁶

In this invasion there is no mention of either Moray nor of any Moravian involvement. Ross is clearly the centre of the events in question. In fact, by implication Moray must have remained loyal to the king otherwise it would clearly have been a strategic error to advance further north into Ross without first having secured the country between the Strathbogie/Lochaber line and the river Beaully. Donald bán may have undertaken a second expedition into Scotia in 1181. That year a well-informed English source, Roger of Howden, remarked that:

Interim dum rex Scotiae moram faceret cum domino suo rege Angliae in Normannia, Duvenaldus filius Willelmi filii Duncani, qui saepius calumniatus fuerat regnum Scotiae, et multoties furtivas invasiones in regnum illud fecerat; per mandatum quorundam potentum virorum de regno Scotiae, cum copiosa multitudo armata applicuit in Scotiam, devastans et comburens totam terram quam attingebat; et homines fugabat, et omnes quos capere potuit interficiebat.

(Meanwhile, while the king of Scotland tarried with his lord the king of England in Normandy, Donald the son of William son of Duncan, who had very often claimed the kingdom of Scotland, and had many a time made insidious incursions into that kingdom, by a mandate of certain powerful men of the kingdom of Scotland landed in Scotland with a numerous armed host, wasting and burning as much of the land as he reached; and he put the folk to flight, and slew all whom he could take.)²⁷

This extract is important because it provides the first indication that Donald bán possessed a fleet, and presumably a base of naval operations outwith Scotia. Once again, though, there is no mention either of Moray or Moravian involvement.

The final recorded expedition into Scotia by Donald bán took place in 1186:

²⁴ Alan Young, *Robert the Bruce's Rivals: The Comyns, 1212-1314*, (East Linton, 1997), 23-27.

²⁵ Alex Woolf, 'The Diocese of the Sudreyar', in Steinar Imsen (editor), *Særtrykk fra Ecclesia Nidrosiensis 1153-1537, Søkelys på Nidaroskirkens og Nidarosprovinsens historie*, (Trondheim, 2003), pp. 171-81.

²⁶ Translation taken from *Chron. Bower* (Watt), iv, 336-37, although this was clearly borrowed from *Gesta Annalia* I. Whenever there is a very close textual relationship between Bower and *Gesta Annalia* I have preferred to use *Chron. Bower*. The reason for this is that the text of *Chron. Fordun* has not yet been edited to modern historical standards.

²⁷ William Stubbs (editor), *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi Benedicti Abbatis* 2 vols., (London, 1867), i, 277-78, [hereafter: Stubbs, *Gesta Regis Henrici*]. On Roger of Howden in Scotland see: A.A.M. Duncan, 'Roger of Howden and Scotland, 1187-1201' in Barbara E. Crawford (editor), *Church, Chronicle and Learning in Medieval and Early Renaissance Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1999), pp. 135-59, [hereafter: Duncan, 'Roger of Howden'].

Sed transactis inde septem annis eo solitam continuante nequiciam rex cum exercitu copioso et manu pervalida profectus est in Moraviam adversus eundem inimicum suum Donaldum ban qui se regio ortum | semine ac filium se fore Willelmi filii Duncani bastardi qui fuit filius magni Malcolmi regis viri Sancte Margarete. Is prodicione nonnulorum fretus perfidorum primum quidem totum comitatum Rossensem importunitate tyrannidis sue a rege suo extorserat. Ac deinde totam Moraviam non parvo tempore detinens maximam partem regni cedibus et incendiis occupaverat, totum ambiens et ad totum aspirans. Cumque rex cum eius exercitu ad oppidum de I[n]virnes moram faceret et Donaldum ban ac suos adherentes cotidianis predis inquietasset et rapinis, contigit una dierum ut cum homines suos more solito ad duo milia numero per saltus et pagos ad explorandum et predandum emisisset ecce subito et inopinate quidam commilitones exercitus regis super Macwilliam cum suis copiis in mora que dicitur Makgarby prope Moraviam delitescens offerunt. Quos de exercitu regis ut vidit paucos respectu suorum repente congressum faciens in regios irruit. Cui toto conamine viriliter resistentes et in justicia sue partis confidentes intrepidi propterea persistentes, Macwilliam cum quingentis suorum opitulante Deo ceteris fugatis dignum sibi pro meritis premium conferentes ii kal' augusti feria sexta occiderunt, cuius caput regi ad tocius spectaculum exercitus detulerunt.

(But seven years after that, since Donald bán continued in his customary wickedness, the king advanced into Moray with a large army, a very strong force, against this same adversary Donald bán. Donald bán [boasted] that he was of royal descent, the son of William, the son of Duncan the Bastard, who was the son of the great king Malcolm, the husband of St Margaret. Relying on the treachery of some disloyal subjects, he had first of all by insolent usurpation forcibly removed from the king the whole earldom of Ross. He subsequently held the whole of Moray for a considerable time, and by employing fire and slaughter had seized the greater part of the kingdom, moving about all of it, and aspiring to have it under his control. While the king with his army was staying in the town of Inverness, and had been harrying Donald bán and his supporters with daily raids for booty and plunder, it chanced one day that when he had sent out his men as usual, up to two thousand strong, to reconnoitre and take booty across the moors and countryside, some of those who were serving with the king's army suddenly and unexpectedly came upon MacWilliam as he was resting with his [exhausted] troops on a moor near Moray called 'Makgarby'. When MacWilliam saw that the king's troops were few in comparison with his own, he hurriedly joined battle with them, and charged the royal forces. They bravely resisted all his efforts, and because they trusted in the righteousness of their cause, continued to resist courageously. With God's help they cut down MacWilliam and five hundred of his men, and put the rest to flight, on Friday 31 July, thus repaying him with a just reward for his evil deeds. They sent his head to the king to be displayed to the whole army.)²⁸

In this extract we see that Moray is mentioned for the first time in connection with MacWilliams, though only after the conquest of Ross had already taken place. Once again, there is no mention of Moravian support for Donald bán. In fact, Donald bán is recorded as capturing only one castle in Moray. This was when Gillicolm the royal marischal, a man with strong Perthshire connections, surrendered 'Heryn' (probably Auldearn) to Donald bán and then fought for the MacWilliams against the king.²⁹

Roger of Howden had also heard about the MacWilliam expedition of 1187 and it is from his account that speculation has arisen regarding a marriage between William fitz Duncan and a female relative of Oengus of Moray:

Interim Willelmus rex Scotiae, magno congregato exercitu, profectus est Moraviam, ad debellandum quendam hostem suum qui nominabatur Mach Willam: qui etiam dicebat se regia stirpe genitum, et de jure parentum suorum, ut asserebat, regnum Scotiae calumniabatur, et multa et incommoda faciebat saepe Willelmo regi Scotiae, per consensum et consilium comitum et baronum regni Scotiae.

(Meanwhile William, king of Scotland, collected a great army, and set out for Moray, to subdue a certain enemy of his, who was named MacWilliam; who also said that he was born of the royal stock, and by right of his parents, so he affirmed, claimed the kingdom of

²⁸ *Chron. Bower* (Watt), iv, 336-37.

²⁹ *RRS*, ii, no.258.

Scotland, and often did many and harmful things to William, king of Scotland, through consent and council of the earls and barons of the kingdom of Scotland.)³⁰

In this passage Roger of Howden stated that Donald bán claimed the kingdom of Scotia in right of his *parentes*. This statement, which is almost certainly accurate given the time that the author spent in Scotia towards the end of the twelfth century, has been taken to mean that the mother Donald bán was important in her own right. As we have already seen Barrow suggested that this woman was either a cousin or sister of Oengus of Moray.³¹ Oram further developed this theory in 1999 and noted that as a descendant of King Lulach mac Gilla Comgáin, Donald bán would have inherited membership of the royal kindred of Clann Custantín meic Cináeda. Furthermore, Oram argued that the marriage of William fitz Duncan to a Moravian woman may have been deliberately encouraged by King David I as a means of 'tying-off' the claims of two collateral branches of the royal kindred, although such a calculation was predicated on the gamble that any children of such a union would be uninterested in pursuing their own claims.³²

To a large extent this theory depends on the belief that Donald bán actually received support from Moray between 1179 and 1186. As we can see, there is not a shred of evidence to suggest that this was the case. Accordingly, William fitz Duncan's first marriage could have been to any female member of the royal kindred. More importantly perhaps, the theory that the mother of Donald bán was closely related to Oengus of Moray depends on translating the Latin word *parentes* as 'parents', rather than 'ancestors' or 'kindred'. The use of either of these latter two meanings suggests that there need be no parental link between Donald bán and an important Moravian woman. In fact, this word may simply refer to his paternal descent from King Donnchad mac Máel Coluim and the fact that he belonged to the royal kindred.³³

The death of Donald bán must have been a heavy blow to the aspirations of the wider MacWilliam kindred as they clearly did not manage to gather enough resources to invade Scotia again until 1211:

Anno domini m cc xi rex Scocie Willelmus misit exercitum infinite multitudinis cum omnibus optimatibus regni sui in Ros contra Gothredum Macwilliam, et ipse rex secutus est ut potuit inter Nativitatem Sancti Johannis et autumpnum. Quo dum perveniret duo castella edificavit, et totam terram Rossensem fere destruxit, et fautores dicti Gothredi quotquot invenire potuit cepit vel occidit. Ipse autem Gothredus semper regis exercitum declinavit, sed interim quocienscumque potuit diebus ac noctibus exercitui regis clam insidiabatur et predas de terra domini regis abigebat. Tandem dominus | rex electorum quatuor milia hominum de exercitu misit ut ipsum Gothredum quererent ubi eum latere putabant. Quibus in campidoctores prefecit quatuor militares comites videlicet Adolie et de Buchan, Malcolmum Morigrond et Thomam de Londi hostiarium suum. Qui pervenientes in quandam insulam in qua ipse Gothredus victualia congregaverat, et thesauros suos inde asportaverat, cum Gothredicis congressi sunt, ubi utrimque ceciderunt interfecti multi, plures tamen ex parte rebellium, quorum qui remanserunt ad proximum nemo et loca tuciora pro tempore declinarunt. Dominus autem rex circa festum Sancti Michaelis rediens inde cum manu valida Malcolmum comitem de Fife Moravie custodem dereliquit. Sed incontinenti post regis recessum dictus Gothredus obsessit unum de castris paulo ante per regem in Ros extractis, et ingeniis paratis, cum iam capturus esset illud, timentes qui intus erant sponte illud tradiderunt ut vitam suam tantum salvarent. Hoc eis Gothredus concessit, et apposito igne castrum combussit. Quod cum audisset rex ira incanduit, sed propter hiemis asperitatem expeditionem distulit. Sed in sequenti estate dominus Alexander filius domini regis de precepto patris paulo ante Nativitatem Sancti Johannis profectus est de Laudonia versus Ros cum grandi exercitu, quem ipse rex post modicum subsequi cum alio terre sue exercitu disponebat. Interea Gothredus Macwilliam prodicione suorum captus et vinculatus ad Willelmum Comyn comitem Buchanie justiciarium domini regis adductus est usque Moraviam. Erat enim tunc temporis ipse custos Moravie nam comes de Fife Malcolmus non multum ante venerat ad regem cum ipso locuturus. Justiciarius autem volens ipsum Gothredum vivum regi presentari pervenit usque Kincardin, ubi cum audisset voluntatem regis scilicet quod nollet eum vivum videre, cum et

³⁰ Stubbs, *Gesta Regis Henrici*, ii, 7-9.

³¹ *RRS*, ii, 13.

³² Richard D. Oram, 'David I and the Scottish Conquest and Colonisation of Moray', in *Northern Scotland*, 19, 1999, 1-19, at 10.

³³ To date only A.A.M. Duncan seems to have translated *parentes* as 'kin', [cf: Duncan, 'Roger of Howden', p.141]

ipse Gothredus iam pene defecisset quia postquam captus fuerat refici victu renuit, decollatum et truncatum per pedes suspenderunt. Qui Gothredus anno precedenti circa Epiphaniam de consilio ut dicitur thanorum de Ros venit ad partes illas ex Hibernia, queque obvia conculcans, et in plerisque locis regnum infestans.

(In 1211 William king of Scotland sent a huge army together with all the nobles of his kingdom into Ross against Guthred MacWilliam. The king himself followed when he was able some time between the Nativity of St John and the autumn. On his way he built two castles, laid waste pretty well all of Ross, and took or killed as many of the said Guthred's supporters as he could find. But Guthred himself always avoided the king's army, meanwhile laying ambushes for it whenever he could by night or day, and driving off booty from the lord king's land. At last the lord king sent 4000 men picked from his army to seek out Guthred in the area where they thought he was hiding. He put in command of them four military men: the earls of Atholl and of Buchan, Malcolm Morgrund and his doorward Thomas de Lundie. They came to an island on which Guthred himself had gathered together provisions, and from which he had carried off his treasure, and there they engaged Guthred's men. Many were killed on both sides, but more from among the rebels. those of them who remained retreated for the moment to the nearest forest and to safer places. About Michaelmas the lord king returned from there with a strong force and left Malcolm earl of Fife as guardian of Moray. But no sooner had the king departed than the said Guthred besieged one of the castles built by the king in Ross just a little earlier. He had made ready his siege engines and was just on the point of capturing it, when the garrison within lost their nerve and surrendered it of their own accord to save their lives, if nothing else. This Guthred granted them, and setting fire to the castle burned it down. The king was enraged on hearing of this, but put off making any expedition because of the severe winter weather. But next summer Sir Alexander the lord king's son on his father's orders set out from Lothian for Ross with a large army a little before the Nativity of St John. The king intended to follow him after a short interval with another army drawn from his territory. Meanwhile Guthred MacWilliam was betrayed by his own followers, captured, put in chains and taken to Moray to William Comyn earl of Buchan, the lord king's justiciar, for he was guardian of Moray at that time, since Malcolm earl of Fife had not long since gone to the king to discuss matters with him. The justiciar, who wanted Guthred brought before the king alive, got as far as Kincardine. There when he learned the king's will, which was that he did not want to see him alive, they beheaded Guthred, dragged him along by the feet and hung him up. He was already very close to death, for he had refused food ever since his capture. This Guthred had come to those parts from Ireland in the previous year around Epiphany, as part of a plot (as is commonly said) [hatched by] the thanes of Ross. He trod underfoot everything he encountered and plagued many parts of the kingdom of Scotland.)³⁴

However, this extract does not tell the whole story. A contemporary English source, the so-called *Barnwell Chronicle*, provides an even clearer exposition of what King William had to do in order to defeat Guthred:

³⁴ *Chron. Bower* (Watt), iv, 464-67. At least half of this extract was copied from *Gesta Annalia I*, [cf: *Chron. Fordun* (GA I), 278-79:

Gothredus, filius Macwilliam, prodicione suorum captus et vinculatus, domino Alexandro filio regis apud manerium regis et castrum de Kyncardin praesentatus, ibidem capite truncato per pedes est suspensus. Idem autem Gothredus, filius Macwilliam, anno praecedente circa Epiphaniam Domini, de consilio, prout dicebatur, thanorum de Ross, venit in partes illas ex Hibernia, conculcans obvia quaeque, et in pluribus regnum Scociae infestans. Contra quem repente missus est regis exercitus, ut aut ipsum occideret aut ageret ex patria. Quem ipse rex Willelmus secutus, eadem aestate sequenti illis in partibus duo extruxit oppida, quorum alterum, post decessum regis, Godhrede cum suis succendit, ultro tradentibus se custodibus.

(Guthred, the son of MacWilliam, by treason of his followers was captured and chained, and presented to the Lord Alexander, the king's son, at the king's manor and castle of Kincardine, and was there hanged by the feet after his head had been cut off. The same Guthred, son of MacWilliam, had in the previous year, about the Lord's Epiphany [6 January 1211] by counsel, it was said, of the thanes of Ross, come into these parts from Ireland, overcoming all obstacles, and in many ways molesting the kingdom of Scotland. Against him, the king's army was sent in haste, either to kill him, or to drive him out of the land. King William himself followed the army, and in the same summer following, he built two fortresses in those parts. Of these, Guthred with his followers burned down the one, after the king's departure, the guards surrendering of their own accord.)

Scottorum rex Willelmus jam aetatis provectae, cum interiores regni sui partes seditione turbatas pacificare non posset, ad Anglorum [regem] confugiens, se et regnum, filiumque quem unicum habebat, ejus commisit provisioni. At ille cingulo militari commendatum sibi donans, in partes illas cum exercitu proficiscens, dimissis per interiora regni suis, Cuthredum cognomento MacWilliam seditionis ducem cepit, et patibulo suspendit. Erat hic de Scottorum regum antiqua prosapia, qui Scottorum et Hibernensium fretus auxilio, longas contra modernas reges, sicut et pater suus Dovenaldus, nunc clam, nunc palam, exercuit inimicitias. (Since William, king of Scots, who was now of advanced age, was not able to pacify the interior districts of his kingdom, disturbed by revolt, he fled to the king of the English and intrusted to his care himself, and his kingdom, and the only son whom he had. And [John] presented [the son] who was commended to him with the belt of knighthood, and set out with an army to those parts; and sending his men through the interior of the kingdom he seized the leader of the revolt, Guthred, surnamed MacWilliam, and hanged him on the gallows. [Guthred] was of the ancient line of Scottish kings; and, supported by the aid of the Scots and Irish, had practised long hostility against the modern kings, now in secret, now openly, as had also his father Donald.)³⁵

From these two extracts it is obvious that King William mounted two expeditions against Guthred during 1211 and 1212. The first of these expeditions had only limited success, even though King William wasted much of the province of Ross. After the king left the area, Guthred seems to have regained territory he had previously lost to the king's forces. Indeed, it might be speculated that Guthred actually obtained more local support because of the king's actions in wasting Ross in 1211.³⁶ Such a scenario could also account for the reason why King John also sent Brabantine mercenaries under the command of an English noble to King William's aid in 1212 to fight against Guthred.³⁷ Perhaps one reason why the Scottish sources do not mention King William's use of English military aid is that Fordun and Bower were editing and writing their respective texts both during, and in the aftermath, of the wars of independence. To them it may no longer have seemed appropriate to state that a King of Scots needed English aid to regain his kingdom.

These descriptions of the events of 1211 and 1212 are also quite unanimous in stating that the local lords in Ross were somehow involved in the conspiracy against King William. Like the invasions of Guthred's father, Donald bán, between 1179 and 1186, there is no mention of any Moravian support for Guthred. Indeed, when Guthred was finally captured it was stated that he was taken "to Moray". This surely demonstrates that both Moray, and the Moravians, had remained loyal to King William I. Instead, it was local lords in Ross that were blamed for supporting the MacWilliams.

The accounts of the events of 1211 and 1212 also introduce a new element into the equation. This is that it is explicitly stated that Guthred and his forces had set out from Ireland to invade Scotia and it is the first time that Ireland is mentioned in connection to the MacWilliam kindred. Fortunately, the Annals of Ulster may provide a clue as to where this Irish support for the MacWilliams was coming from. Under the year date 1212 they record that:

Tomas, mac Uchtraigh, co macaibh Raghnaill, mic Somarligh, do thaidhecht do Dhaire Coluim-cille co ré longaibh rechtmogadh ocus in baile do mílliudh doibh co mór ocus Inis-Eogain co huilidhi do milliudh doib do Cheniul-Conaill.
(Thomas, son of Uchtrach, with the sons of Raghnaill, son of Somhairle, came to Daire of Colum-cille with six and seventy ships and the town was completely destroyed by them and by the Cenel-Conaill.)³⁸

³⁵ William Stubbs (editor), *Memoriale Fratris Walteri de Coventria* 2 vols., (London, 1872-73), ii, 206.

³⁶ A.O. Anderson and M.O. Anderson (editors), *The Chronicle of Melrose from the Cottonian Manuscript, Faustina B ix in the British Museum: a complete and full-size facsimile in collotype*, (London, 1936), 110-12 [hereafter: *Chron Melrose*] states: et Rex scocie filium macWilliam Guthred .s. persequendo propriosque seductores destruendo. multorum cadauera inanimata reliquit. (And also the king of Scotland left behind him the lifeless corpses of many men, when he pursued the son of Mac-William, Guthred, and destroyed those responsible for perverting him.) In this and in the following quotes all contractions have been silently expanded.

³⁷ Thomas Arnold (editor), *Memorials of St Edmund's Abbey* 3 vols., (London, 1890-96), ii, 20.

³⁸ William Hennessy and B. MacCarthy (editors and translators), *Annála Uladh: Annals of Ulster; otherwise Annála Senait, Annals of Senait; a Chronicle of Irish Affairs from A.D. 431 to A.D. 1540* 4 vols., (Dublin, 1887-1901), ii, 252-53.

The 1212 raid was followed by a second in 1214:

Tomás, mac Uchtraigh ocus Ruaidhri, mac Raghnaill, do argain Dairi go huilidhi ocus do breith shet Muinntere Daire ocus Tuairceirt Erenn archena do lár tempaill in reiclera ímach [...] Castel Cula-rathain do dhenum le Tomas, mac Uchtraigh ocus le Gallaibh Uladh. Ocus roscailedh reilce ocus clachana ocus cumdaichi in baile inle, cennotha in tempall amain, cuicesein.

(Thomas, son of Uchtrach and Ruaidhri, son of Ragnall, plundered Daire completely and took the treasures of the Community of Daire and of the North of Ireland besides from out the midst of the church of the Monastery [...] The castle of Cuil-rathain was built by Thomas, son of Uchtrach and by the Foreigners of Ulidia. And all the cemeteries and fences and buildings of the town, save the church alone, were pulled down for that.)³⁹

These two campaigns have been commented on by a number of historians and it has been argued that the MacWilliams had a base in Ulster and were supported by Áed Ó Néill, king of Tír Eóghain, who was actively resisting the attempts of the kings of Scotia and England to destroy his power-base in Ireland. According to Stringer, for example, Anglo-Scottish campaigns in northern Ireland in 1212 and 1214 can be construed as retaliation against the MacWilliam invasion of Ross in 1211. He found it difficult to resist the conclusion that the MacWilliams had traditionally used Gaelic Ulster as a haven and a place where large bodies of caterans could be readily recruited.⁴⁰ More recently, McDonald has expanded on this theory and stated that given the close links between Gaelic Ireland, MacWilliams and MacEth's it was hardly surprising that there were campaigns in Ireland between 1212 and 1214 to destroy MacWilliam bases in the Irish Sea region. He developed the argument further and noted that MacWilliams and MacEth's also maintained close links to the Hebrides where they recruited caterans for their campaigns.⁴¹

There are, however, a number of problems with these theories. Firstly, only one member of the MacWilliam kindred is ever expressly described as coming from Ireland. This was Guthred in 1211. There is no indication from where the other members of the kindred set out to invade Scotia. This might suggest that Guthred's invasion was unusual in that he had stopped off in Ireland beforehand to pick up caterans. If this was the case the men of Tír Eóghain could have linked themselves to Guthred's cause because of the pressures being put on them in Ulster by Kings John and William and because they saw Guthred's planned invasion as an opportunity to open a second front against the royal allies, thus diverting the joint military resources of these two kings away from Ulster.

The second, and probably the greatest, problem with the theory that MacWilliams commonly used Ireland and the Hebrides as a base for their invasions of Scotia is a simple matter of geography. It has long been recognised that the two castles built by King William I in 1179, Dunskeath and Redcastle, respectively protect the sea and land approaches to Moray from the north.⁴² In addition, Dunskeath also guarded the strategically important northern end of a sea route that removed the need for long journeys by land round the deeply indented Moray, Beaully and Cromarty Firths. In themselves, these would be quite acceptable reasons for the constructions of these fortifications were it not for the fact that before 1211 the MacWilliam fleets were clearly operating in eastern waters. The castle of Auldearn (nearby Loch Loy may have been the southern end of the sea route to Dunskeath) was betrayed by the royal marischal to Donald bán MacWilliam sometime between 1179 and 1186,⁴³ and that the seat of the see of Moray was shifted away from its coastal location at Spynie to an inland site during the early thirteenth century.⁴⁴

So, perhaps an additional reason for the geographic siting of these two castles that before 1211 the bulk of the MacWilliam naval threat was seen to come from the waters off east coast, rather than the west. If so, it is much more likely that the MacWilliam naval base was situated somewhere out-with Scotia but

³⁹ *ibid.*, 256-57.

⁴⁰ Keith Stringer, 'Periphery and Core in Thirteenth-Century Scotland: Alan son of Roland, Lord of Galloway and Constable of Scotland', in A. Grant and K. Stringer (editors), *Medieval Scotland* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 82-113, at 87-88.

⁴¹ MacDonald, 'Treachery', 184.

⁴² A.A.M. Duncan, *Scotland The Making of the Kingdom*, (Edinburgh, 1975), 193.

⁴³ *RRS*, ii, no.258.

⁴⁴ *Mor. Reg.*, no.26.

within easy sailing distance of the east coast since this would avoid repeated journeys through the dangerous waters of the Pentland Firth.

There is no firm evidence with which to locate this base. However, the progenitrix of the MacWilliam kindred was Queen Ingebjorg of Orkney. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that King David I had interfered in the succession of the earldom of Orkney c.1139. In addition, King William I was clearly interfering in the earldom of Caithness, also claimed by Earl Harald Maddadson of Orkney, during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. This interference resulted in at least one Orcadian/Caithness military expedition into Moray, three royal expeditions into Caithness, and three different submissions by the earls of Orkney/Caithness to the kings of Scotia until a final settlement between the two sides was reached in 1202.⁴⁵

Bearing these facts in mind, the main MacWilliam base of operations could have been located somewhere in the Northern Isles. This would have been to the advantage of MacWilliams who could have relied on the kindred of their great-grandmother for protection and support. For the earls of Orkney, and particularly Harald Maddadson, the presence of MacWilliams in the Northern Isles would have had two advantages. Firstly, MacWilliams would have been a valuable ally to help resist the interference by kings of Scotia in northern affairs. Secondly, the earls of Orkney would have earned the goodwill of a number of potential kings of Scotia by sheltering MacWilliams. Although this is nothing more than speculation, it should be noted that the *Orkneyinga Saga* is the only medieval source that is actually pro-MacWilliam.⁴⁶

Accordingly, armed with this information it is possible to suggest that before 1202 the MacWilliam kindred had been based in Orkney and received support from the Earls of Orkney and Caithness as descendants of Queen Ingebjorg. Thereafter, increasing military pressure from the kings of Scotia could have forced Harald Maddadson to evict the MacWilliams from their Northern base as part of a diplomatic settlement with the kings of Scotia. This may have resulted in the MacWilliams opening a new base of operations in the Irish Sea world on the lands of Tír Eóghain in Ulster.

In any event, the two Scottish raids on Ulster, in 1212 and 1214, if they were intended to destroy a MacWilliam base, must have failed in their purpose. One year later, Donald bán MacWilliam invaded Scotia, although it is not known where he landed:

Intraverunt in moreviam hostes domini Regis scocie scilicet Dovenaldus ban filius macWali et kennauh mac aht et filius cuiusdam Regem hybernie cum turba malignantium copiosa In quas irruens machentagar hostes regis ualide prostravit capita detruncauit et nouo regi noua munera presentauit.

(The lord king of Scotland's enemies entered Moray, namely Donald bán, the son of MacWilliam; and Kenneth mac Heth; and the son of a certain king of Ireland, with a numerous band of malignants. Mac in t-sacairt attacked them, and mightily overthrew the king's enemies; and he cut off their heads, and presented them as new gifts to the new king.)⁴⁷

The death of Donald bán in 1215 did not end MacWilliam attempts to be recognised as legitimate contenders for the kingship of Scotia. *Gesta Annalia I* noted the efforts of other members of the MacWilliam kindred in Scotia during the 1220s:

Per idem tempus emerserunt quidam iniqui de genere MacWilliam scilicet Gillascoph et filii ejus et Rodericus, in extremis Scociae finibus. Qui cum regnum opprimere vi niterentur, tradidit eos Deus cum suis fautoribus in manus regis Alexandri, et sic terra de cetero ab eorum malitia requieuit.

(During this same period some wicked men of the race of MacWilliam, namely Gillescop and his sons and Roderick appeared in the furthest limits of Scotland. But when they strove to overwhelm the kingdom by force, God delivered them and their accomplices into the hands of King Alexander, and thus the land was no longer troubled by their wickedness.)⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Barbara Crawford, 'The Earldom of Caithness and the Kingdom of Scotland, 1150-1266', in *Northern Scotland*, 2, 1974-75, 97-118, at 25-43.

⁴⁶ H. Pálsson and P. Edwards, *Orkneyinga Saga*, (Harmondsworth, 1978), 76.

⁴⁷ *Chron. Melrose*, 59.

⁴⁸ *Chron. Fordun (GA I)*, 290.

Unfortunately, the internal chronology of this part of *Gesta Annalia I* is extremely vague. The editor of the most recent edition of Bower's *Scotichronicon*, which included this passage, tentatively placed this event in 1223.⁴⁹ However, matters are further complicated by a later entry by Bower under the year-date 1228:

Anno domini m cc xxviii Scotus quidam nomine Gillescop succendit quasdam municiones ligneas in Moravia et occidit quendam latronem nomine Thoman de Thirlestane nocte ex improvise municionem eius invadens. Postea succendit | magnam partem de Invernes et de terris domini regis circumvicinis abduxit predas circa Nativitatem Beate Marie. Dominus autem rex cum paucis suorum illac festinans, cum aliquamdiu illuc moram fecisset, commisit custodiam terre Moravie comiti de Buchan justiciario suo tradens ei magnam peditum multitudinem.

(In 1228 a certain Scot called Gillescop set fire to some wooden defensive works in Moray and killed a certain thief called Thomas de Thirlestane after attacking his castle unexpectedly during the night. Afterwards he burned a large part of Inverness, and about [the time of the feast of] the Nativity of the Blessed Mary [8 Sept] he plundered some neighbouring lands belonging to the lord king. But the lord king hurried there with a few of his men, and after making a stay there for some time entrusted the custody of the land of Moray to his justiciar the earl of Buchan, providing him with a large number of troops.)⁵⁰

Bower also referred to a man called Gillescop in 1229: "In this year the Gillescop who has been mentioned above was killed along with his two sons, and their heads were brought to the lord king."⁵¹ While all three events, in 1223, 1228 and 1229, would seem to refer to the same man and his kindred, there is one good reason for assuming that the entry for 1223 has been misplaced in Bower's chronology: if Gillescop had been captured in 1223, it is surely unlikely that King Alexander II would have released him since every other captured MacWilliam had been executed.

There is only one entry in English sources that refers to these events. Under the year-date 1230, the *Lanercost Chronicle* noted that:

Quo anno emerserunt in Scotia quidam iniqui, de genere Mach William videlicet, et filius ejus, et quidam Rotherike, insidias agentes in extremis finibus Scotiae, et multum iniquorum copiam sibi ex eodem regno associantes, volentes regnum vi obtinere; sed traditi sunt, Deo vindice, et complices eorum, et inimicis prospere subactis, aliquantulum in sanguinem occisorum crudelius vindicatum est. Nam ejusdem Mac Willelmi filia, adhuc recens de matris utero edita, ante conspectum sori sub voce praeconia, in burgo de Forfar, innocens traditur neci, capite ipsius ad columnam crucis eliso et cerebro excusso, e contra dicente Domino, "non occidentur filii pro patribus," et caetera.

(In this year there arose in Scotland certain wicked men of the race of MacWilliam, and his son, and a certain Roderick, they raised up treachery in the remotest territories of Scotia, and wished to obtain the kingdom by force, by allying with themselves a great number of wicked men of that realm. But, by the vengeance of God, they and their accomplices were betrayed. And after the enemy had been successfully overcome, a somewhat too cruel vengeance was taken for the blood of the slain. The same MacWilliam's daughter, who had not long left her mother's womb, innocent though she was, was put to death in the burgh of Forfar, in view of the market-place, after a proclamation by the public crier; her head was struck against the column of the cross, and her brains dashed out. Yet God says to the contrary effect, "sons shall not be slain for their father's", and so on.)⁵²

This version of the events of the 1220s, in contrast to *Gesta Annalia I*, does not state unambiguously that Roderick was a member of the MacWilliam kindred. This has led to him being identified as Ruairidh mac Raghnaill, lord of Garmoran, who had been expelled from Argyll by King Alexander II

⁴⁹ *Chron. Bower* (Watt), v, 116-17.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 142-43.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, 144-45.

⁵² J. Stevenson (editor), *Chronicon de Lanercost* (Edinburgh, 1839), 40-41, [hereafter: *Chron. Lanercost*].

in 1221-22.⁵³ Because of the proximity of Garmoran to Lochaber and Badenoch, the identification of Roderick as Ruairidh mac Raonaill has further led to the identification of Lochaber and Badenoch as lands held by Gillescop MacWilliam, and as the centres of 'revolt' against the crown in 1229.⁵⁴ McDonald, writing in 1999, took this identification, together with the support offered by Ruairidh mac Raonaill for Gillescop as proof of the political connections between the western Gaelic kindreds descended from Somairle, Máel Coluim MacHeth (of 1130), and MacWilliams.⁵⁵

However, this theory depends on accepting the evidence from the *Lanercost Chronicle* and rejecting the evidence from *Gesta Annalia I*. It may be wrong to do so. While it has been persuasively suggested that *Gesta Annalia I* was based on an earlier Dunfermline exemplar, perhaps completed by c.1250, the *Lanercost Chronicle* was written towards the end of the thirteenth century.⁵⁶ Accordingly, it is probably wrong to place too much emphasis on the wording of this source and instead accept that *Gesta Annalia I* contains the more contemporary and accurate information regarding Roderick; namely, that he was probably another MacWilliam.

In contrast to previous MacWilliam attempts to take the kingship of Scotia, the descriptions of the deeds of the MacWilliam kindred between 1215 and 1230 give no direct indication that they were setting out for Scotland from elsewhere. In common with the pre-1215 MacWilliam invasions there is no specific mention of any Moravian involvement in the MacWilliam expeditions post-1215. The sources are, however, very clear that members of the MacWilliam kindred were still receiving help from people within Scotia, though not from Moray. This would indicate that the domination of the kingship of Scotia by the ruling segment of the royal kindred was still not universally accepted before 1230, even though by this stage some men were clearly finding it more profitable to betray members of the MacWilliam kindred than to support them fully. This perception is strengthened by King Alexander's 'final solution' for disposing of the MacWilliam kindred altogether: the pre-meditated murder of the last MacWilliam infant at Forfar in 1230.⁵⁷ This act was tantamount to the deliberate extinction of a segment of the royal kindred. In ordering this murder King Alexander II ensured that any male heir he might have would be inaugurated without opposition from the kindred of MacWilliam. It worked. When King Alexander III was inaugurated at Scone on 13 July 1249 he was possibly the first king of Alba or Scotia whose reign was free of alternate claimants.

So, to sum up so far: having examined all of the information relating to the MacWilliams there is no indication that they ever received help or military support from any Moravian between 1179 and 1230. This is something of a problem given the sheer volume of literature aimed at proving a connection between the MacWilliams and Moray. Instead, the focus of the MacWilliam invasions seems to have consistently been the province of Ross. Accordingly, probably the best way of reconciling the unjustified but troublesome reputation of the Moravians between c.1170 and 1230 in later texts with the complete lack of evidence that they were rebels, is to suggest that the Moravians were slandered through association. Since William fitz Duncan may have been earl of Moray between c.1130 and c.1150, and since some of his descendants had repeatedly invaded Scotia, possibly to gain the kingship for themselves, it is easy to see how the following equation could have formed in the minds of many chroniclers: Moray = MacWilliams = trouble and revolt.

If so, royal propaganda may also have helped them form this opinion. Recent work by Dauvit Broun has investigated two king-lists produced between 1198 and December 1214. The first of these, the *Verse Chronicle*, demonstrates a remarkable dislike of Moravians and claims, untruthfully, that two previous kings of Alba had been murdered in Moray. According to Broun, the basis for this denigrating commentary on Moray and Moravians is revealed in the treatment of King Duncan II by the *Verse Chronicle*, mainly because he is the only king of Scotia whom the author of the *Verse Chronicle* deliberately discredited. Broun argued that the reasoning behind this treatment could be found in the activities of Duncan's descendants, the MacWilliams, who had launched a number of challenges against the descendants of King Malcolm. Because many of the MacWilliam kindred landed in Ross or

⁵³ A. A. M. Duncan and A. L. Brown, 'Argyll and the Isles in the Earlier Middle Ages', in *PSAS*, 90, 1956-57, 192-220, at 199-200; R. Andrew McDonald, *The Kingdom of the Isles: Scotland's Western Seaboard, c.1000-c.1336*, (East Linton, 1997), 82.

⁵⁴ Young, *The Comyns*, 27-28.

⁵⁵ McDonald, 'Treachery', 184.

⁵⁶ Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England, c.500-c.1307*, (London, 1974), 495.

⁵⁷ *Chron. Lanercost*, 41.

Moray before launching their attacks on the kings of Scotia, the inhabitants of those areas also became closely associated with rebellion against the crown.

The second king-list that Broun examined is found in the *Chronicle of Melrose*. The first part of this king-list begins with the succession of King Máel Coluim mac Donnchada and finishes with the birth of Prince Alexander in 1198. This part can therefore be dated to 1198x1214. A continuation in a different hand then carries the list on to the birth of Alexander III on 21 January 1264. According to Broun, the first part of this king-list was written with the senior male line of the royal family very much in mind. It is the only extant Scottish king-list which deliberately begins with King Máel Coluim mac Donnchada, and which follows the reigns of the king's descendants from his second marriage to Queen Margaret. There is a heavy emphasis on hereditary rights to kingship and on primogeniture. For example, we are told that King Máel Coluim mac Donnchada's brother, King Donald bán mac Donnchada, usurped the kingship sending the legitimate heirs, the sons of Queen Margaret, into exile. Furthermore, the king-list also describes King Donnchad mac Máel Coluim as illegitimate, thus damning his progeny and their offspring. Therefore, both of these king-lists are heavily committed to King Alexander II's right to rule in Scotia, to the extent that previous legitimate kings are categorised as either usurpers or illegitimate. As with the *Verse Chronicle*, Broun argues that the king-list in the *Chronicle of Melrose* was inspired by the repeated MacWilliam challenges faced by King Alexander II.⁵⁸

There is a third Scottish source that is extremely negative about Moravians. This is found in Book 2 of *Chronica Gentis Scottorum*, first compiled by John of Fordun between 1371 and the mid 1380s. It is a quite remarkable story that relates how the Moravians originated in Pannonia and why they were disposed to rebellion. It states that while the Moravians were living in Pannonia they slaughtered a Roman legion and, fearing the consequences of Nero's wrath, built a fleet of ships and sailed down the Danube to the North Sea. They then turned into North Sea pirates, raiding shipping and ports, before forming a treaty of perpetual peace with the Picts. The Moravians were eventually given Pictish daughters as brides and land to cultivate in north Britain.⁵⁹ The origin legend aims to make two key points about Moravians: Firstly, it was usual for Moravians to rebel against authority. Secondly, the Moravians were pirates who plundered the seas around Britain.

Unfortunately, though, there seems to be no reason why anyone would have wanted to classify all Moravians as rebellious murderers and traitors at the time this text was compiled by Fordun. On this basis, it seems logical to suggest that Fordun copied the Moravian origin legend from an earlier text that could be dated to a time when it was safe to freely slander all Moravians. One fact that might support this suggestion is that the leader of the piratical Moravians in the origin legend and one of the leaders of the last MacWilliam invasion of Scotia share the same name, Roderick. If the name of the Moravian prince in the origin legend was based on contemporary thirteenth-century events, this would then provide a date of c.1214x30 for the original hypothetical text that contained the origin legend later copied by Fordun.

Of course, formulating this Moravian origin legend also meant that the received pseudo-history of Scotland was radically altered. From this point the Scots were descended from three, not two, separate races. It is just possible that this deliberate alteration in the pseudo-history of the Scots provides a measure of the lengths to which crown propagandists were willing to go in order to denigrate and marginalize one segment of the royal kindred. It is also perhaps a measure of the seriousness of the threat posed by the MacWilliams to kings of Scotia.

In fact, it is just possible that the person, or persons, responsible for creating the Moravian origin legend realised that he or they were radically rewriting Scottish pseudo-history. This may be why the legend contains the long and curious argument that that Pannonia was really part of Lower Scythia. During the medieval period people believed that the Picts originated in Scythia. Therefore, the author of the origin-tale was attempting to prove that the Moravians were also really just Picts, but from a slightly different region of continental Europe. However, it must have been felt that this argument was weak and this may be why the message is reinforced by the revelation that the Moravians were very rapidly absorbed into the native Pictish population in north Britain, after which they all lived happily

⁵⁸ Broun, 'Contemporary perspectives on Alexander II's succession: the evidence of king-lists', forthcoming, 8-9. My thanks to Dr Broun for allowing me to read a copy of this article before publication.

⁵⁹ *Chron. Fordun*, 57-58.

ever after. Since everyone reading or hearing this origin legend, together with the two king lists examined by Broun, would know that the Moravians and MacWilliams had been Pannonian pirates, rebels and murderers since recorded history began, they would agree that Alexander II was completely justified in utterly exterminating them. In the eyes of many people after 1230, due to royal propaganda it must have seemed that the only good Moravian was a dead Moravian.