

THE IDENTITY OF THE 'PRISONER OF ROXBURGH': MALCOLM SON OF ALEXANDER OR MALCOLM MACHETH?¹

For much of the century between c.1130 and 1230, written sources are full of references to a number of men who were the political opponents of different kings of Scotia. Some of these 'rebels' were designated 'MacWilliams', a segment of the royal dynasty descended from William fitz Duncan, son of King Donnchad mac Máel Coluim (Duncan II, 1094), who was himself the eldest son of King Máel Coluim mac Donnchada (Malcolm III, 1058-93). In many nineteenth-century historical works the MacWilliams became 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 first wife, Queen Ingebjorg. In contrast to the MacWilliams, much less is known about the identity of a man now commonly identified as either Malcolm mac Heth or the 'prisoner of Roxburgh', who was clearly an ally of Oengus of Moray when both men fought against representatives of King David I (1124-53) at the battle of Stracathro in 1130.

During the last 300 years a number of theories have been advanced in an attempt to explain the ancestry of Malcolm. These range from him being a brother of Oengus of Moray,² to an illegitimate son of King Alexander I (1107-24),³ to the son of an early normaer of the province of either Moray or Ross.⁴ Of these propositions, the last has become the most popular in recent historical works. This is for two reasons: first, since an individual called Malcolm MacHeth had been reconciled with King Malcolm IV before 1157 and died holding the earldom of Ross, it has been deduced that the earlier Malcolm of 1130 must be the same person.⁵ Second, a witness to two of King David I's charters, an Earl Eð, or Head, has been associated with the provinces of Moray and Ross, because the holders of all the other earldoms in Scotland during this period are known.⁶ Therefore, Malcolm MacHeth must have been his son. However, during the last few years two historians have publically disagreed with this identification, Archie Duncan and Alex Woolf. Both have argued that Malcolm, the prisoner of Roxburgh, and Malcolm mac Eth were two different people,⁷ but neither has explained the reasoning behind their identification in any detail.

As far as medieval Scottish chroniclers were concerned, the identity of the 'prisoner of Roxburgh' was not in question. One of the earliest identifiable Scottish sources, the thirteenth-century *Gesta Annalia* I called him

¹ The phrase, 'The prisoner of Roxburgh', first seems to have been coined by Alex Woolf. The author is grateful to Dauvit Broun, Sonja Cameron and Alex Woolf for reading this article and making helpful suggestions. I take full responsibility for the remaining idiosyncrasies.

² P. Hume Brown, *History of Scotland to the Present Time*, (Cambridge, 1911), 60.

³ W. F. Skene, *Celtic Scotland: A History of Ancient Alban* 3 vols., (Edinburgh, 1876-80), i, 460.

⁴ G. W. S. Barrow, *Kingship and Unity* (Edinburgh, 1981), 51, [hereafter: Barrow, *Kingship*].

⁵ R. Andrew McDonald, 'Treachery in the Remotest Territories of Scotland: Northern Resistance to the Carnmore Dynasty, 1130-1230', in *Canadian Journal of History*, 33, 1999, 161-92, at 172.

⁶ A. A. M. Duncan, *Scotland: The Making of the Kingdom* (Edinburgh, 1975), 166, [hereafter: Duncan, *Kingdom*].

⁷ A. A. M. Duncan, *The Kingship of the Scots, 842-1292*, (Edinburgh, 2002), 65, [hereafter: Duncan, *Kingship of the Scots*]. I am grateful to Alex Woolf for providing me with a copy of his forthcoming chapter on Argyll during the medieval period.

'Malcolm son of MacHeth'.⁸ This identification was accepted by Walter Bower and it was not seriously questioned until the sixteenth century when George Buchanan argued that Malcolm's real name was actually Wimund. According to Buchanan's version of events, the people of Ross blinded and castrated Malcolm/Wimund in the mid-1130s before handing him over to the king, who then imprisoned him in Roxburgh castle.⁹ It is now clear that Buchanan's description of the events of the mid-1130s comprises a mix of different people and different events, and Alex Woolf has recently argued that Wimund claimed to be a member of the MacWilliam kindred.¹⁰

In fact, if the text of *Gesta Annalia* I, which may have been based on a slightly earlier (c.1250) Dunfermline source,¹¹ is examined more closely, a completely different picture emerges:

Primo quoque anno regni, regulus Argadiae Sumerledus, et sui nepotes, filii, scilicet, Malcolmi MacHeth, associatis sibi plurimis, insurrexerunt in regem suum Malcolmum, et Scociam magna parte perturbantes inquietaverunt. Erat enim ille Malcolmus filius MacHeth, sed menciendo dicebat, se esse filium Angusii, comitis Moraviae, qui, tempore felicis memoriae regis David, patriam depraedando apud Strucathroch a Scotis cum tota gente sua interfectus est. Quo mortuo, idem Malcolmus MacHeth contra regem David, quasi filius mortem patris vindicaturus, assurgit, et regiones Scociae circumjacentes rapinis et praedis afficiens, tandem capitur, et ab eodem rege David in turre castris de Marchmond arcta custodia traditur. Continuante autem civilia bella Sumerledo, nepos ejus unus filiorum Malcolmi MacHeth, Dovenaldus nomine, per quosdam regis Malcolmi fideles apud Wittherne comprehenditur, et in eadem turre de Marchmond cum patre suo incarceratur. Post cujus captionem, anno sequenti Malcolmus, pater ejus, cum rege pacificatus est, Sumerledo nequiter adhuc suam nequitiam in populo exercente.

(Now in the first year of his reign Somerled the under-king of Argyll and his nephews, that is the sons of Malcolm MacHeth, gathering to themselves a very large following, rose in rebellion against King Malcolm and threw a large area of Scotland into turmoil. That Malcolm was the son of MacHeth, but he used to assert untruthfully that he was the son of Angus earl of Moray. Angus with all his people was killed by the Scots at Stracathro while laying waste his own locality in the time of King David of blessed memory. After his death the aforesaid Malcolm MacHeth rose in rebellion against King David under the pretence of a son intending to avenge the death of a father. After looting and laying waste the adjoining areas of Scotland, he was finally captured, and was confined in close custody by the aforesaid King David in the tower of the castle of Marchmont. Meanwhile, as Somerled was continuing to stir up civil strife, his nephew, one of the sons of Malcolm MacHeth called Donald, was captured by some of King Malcolm's loyal followers at Whithorn, and was imprisoned in the same tower of Marchmont as his father. After his capture, his father Malcolm made his peace with the king in the following year, but Somerled still continued to work his wicked ways among the people.)¹²

⁸ *Chron. Fordun*, 254. 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 *Gesta Annalia* I (GA1) when referring to *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*.

⁹ J. Aikman (translator), *The History of Scotland* 6 vols., (Glasgow and Edinburgh, 1827-29), i, 352.

¹⁰ 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, [hereafter: Woolf, 'Diocese of the Sudreyar'].

¹¹ Broun, '*Gesta Annalia*', 20.

Although this statement seems perfectly straightforward, it is possible that the author of *Gesta Annalia I*, or his source, mistakenly associated one individual called Malcolm with another person known as Malcolm MacHeth because they used both the *Melrose Chronicle*, and more particularly the *Holyrood Chronicle*, as a source for their work. If the two texts (*Holyrood* and *Gesta Annalia I*) are examined together it is obvious where the author of the original *Gesta Annalia I* acquired the information that formed the basis for his identification of Malcolm MacHeth.

In the *Holyrood Chronicle* the year entry for 1156 states: "Dofnaldus filius Malcolm apud Witerne captus est, et cum patre suo incarceratus" (Donald son of Malcolm was captured at Whithorn and imprisoned with his father).¹³ The next entry in the chronicle (under 1157) begins: "Malcolm Mabeth cum rege Scottorum pacificatus est [...]" (Malcolm MacHeth was reconciled with the king of the Scots [...]).¹⁴ *Gesta Annalia I* states: "[...] Post cujus captionem, anno sequenti Malcolmus, pater ejus, cum rege pacificatus est [...]" (After his [Donald's] capture, his father Malcolm [MacHeth] made his peace with the king in the following year). Looking at these three extracts it seems obvious that the author of *Gesta Annalia I* ran the two Holyrood extracts together and assumed that the Malcolm MacHeth of 1157 was the father of Donald son of Malcolm who had been mentioned in the preceding entry. Also, as Duncan has already remarked, the patronymic given to the 1157 Malcolm mac Heth must have been deliberately done to distinguish him from the Malcolm of 1130 (and 1156).¹⁵

The suggestion that the scribe responsible for *Gesta Annalia I* combined two different entries about two different people from the *Holyrood Chronicle* and applied all the information to Malcolm MacHeth is further strengthened by another extract from the same passage of *Gesta Annalia I*. This named the father of the earlier (1130) Malcolm as Oengus of Moray. This extract concerning the paternity of Malcolm, and the fact that he wished to avenge the death of his father (Oengus), are very reminiscent of a passage in the *Chronicle of William of Newburgh* (c.1135-98)¹⁶ regarding Bishop Wimund:

[...] Denique congregans viros inopes et audaces, iudicium veritatis non veritas, proposuit se esse filium comitis Muraviensis, hæreditate patrum suorum a rege Scottorum spoliatum, cordi sibi esse non solum jus suum prosequi, sed etiam ulcisci injurias, illos se velle habere periculi et fortunæ consortes, rem quidem esse aliquanti laboris et periculi, sed magnæ claritatis, et plurimi emolumenti. [...]

(At last he collected men needy and daring, and, respecting not the judgement of truth, announced that he was the son of the earl of Moray, despoiled by the king of Scots of the patrimony of his fathers; and that he was minded not only to prosecute his right but also to avenge his wrongs: that he wished to have them as sharers of his peril and fortune; that while the affair was one of considerable labour and danger, yet it was one of great distinction and of the highest gain).¹⁷

¹² *Chron. Fordun* (GA 1), 254-55. Translation taken from: *Chron. Bower* (Watt), iv, 253.

¹³ *Chron. Holyrood*, 128.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, 129-30.

¹⁵ Duncan, *Kingship of the Scots*, 71-72.

¹⁶ Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, i, c.550-c.1307, (London, 1974), 263, [hereafter: Gransden, *Historical Writing*].

¹⁷ R. Howlett, *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I* 4 vols., (London, 1884-89), i, 73-76,

The fact that both of these passages are concerned with men who claimed to be sons of Oengus of Moray, and both men wished to avenge the death of their father, might indicate either that both chroniclers shared a common source, or that one was based on the other. Even though the words used were not identical, it is the gist of the passage that is important in this instance. This casts further doubt upon the reliability of the identification in *Gesta Annalia* I, or its exemplar, of Malcolm MacHeth as the Malcolm of 1130 who was allied to Oengus of Moray. There is now just as good a possibility that they were two different people.

More importantly, later Scottish attempts to equate Malcolm of 1130 with Malcolm MacHeth are not supported by twelfth-century foreign chroniclers. Under the year-date 1124 Orderic Vitalis stated:

Anno ab incarnatione Domine MCXXV Alexander rex Scottorum uita exuit, et Dauid frater eius regni gubernacula suscepit. Melcofus autem nothus Alexandri filius regnum patruo preripere affectauit, eique duo bella satis acerrima instaurauit; sed Dauid qui sensu et potentia diuitiisque sullimior erat illium cum suis superauit.

(In the year of our Lord 1125 [recte 1124] Alexander, king of Scotland, died, and his brother David took up the government of the kingdom. Malcolm, a bastard son of Alexander, made a bid for his father's kingdom, and instigated two bitter wars against him; but David, being wiser, more powerful and wealthier, defeated him and his supporters).¹⁸

This passage categorically describes a man known as Malcolm son of King Alexander I. Orderic Vitalis also seems to describe the same man under the year-date 1130:

Anno ab incarnatione Domine MCXXX dum Dauid rex in curia Henrici regis caute iudicium indagaret, et de reatu perfidiae quam Goisfredus de Clintonia ut dicunt contra regem agitauerat diligenter discuteret; Aragois comes Morafiae cum Melcolfo et quinque milibus armatorum Scotiam intrauit, totamque regionem sibi subigere studuit. Porro Eduardus Siwardi filius qui sub Eduardo rege tribunus Merciorum fuit, princeps militiae et consobrinus Dauid regis exercitum aggregauit; et hostili repente exercitui obuiauit. Tandem facta congressione Aragois consulem occidit; eiusque turmas prostrauit, cepit atque fugauit. Deinde cum cohortibus suis iam triumpho elatis fugientes auide insecutus est; et Morafiam defensore dominoque uacantem ingressus est, totumque regionis spaciosae ductatem Deo auxiliante nactus est. Sic Dauid aucta potestate super antecessores suos exaltus est; studioque eius religionis et eruditus personis regio Scottorum decorata est. En causa Scottorum qui ab antiquis temporibus adhererunt catholicae fidei, et christianae grater seruiuerunt simplicitati; inceptam epanalepsim aliquantulum protelauit, sed nunc ad propositum nitor opus de nostris regredi.

(In the year of our Lord 1130, while King David was carefully investigating a case in the court of King Henry, and meticulously examining a charge of treason which Geoffrey of Clinton was said to have committed against the king, Angus earl of Moray and Malcolm entered Scotland with five thousand armed men, attempting to gain control of the kingdom. Then Edward, son of Siward who had been a thane of Mercia in King Edward's time, himself a constable and a kinsman of King David, mustered the army and fell without warning on the enemy forces. In the course of the conflict he killed the earl of Moray and shattered his troops, killing some and putting the rest to flight. He and his forces, triumphant at their victory, hotly pursued the fugitives into the territory of Moray which no longer had a lord and defender, and with God's aid conquered the whole of that extensive duchy. In this way

[hereafter: Howlett, *Chronicles*].

¹⁸ M. Chibnall (editor and translator), *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, 6 vols., (Oxford, 1968-80), iv, 276, [hereafter: Chibnall, *Ecclesiastical History*]. In both passages, 1124 and 1130, Chibnall inserted the name 'MacHeth' into her translation of the original Latin. She was quite clearly wrong to do so because MacHeth, or its Latin equivalent, does not occur in the original Latin passages. This practise seems to have started with A. O. Anderson and his text, *Early Sources of Scottish History*.

David grew more powerful than his predecessors, and the kingdom of Scotland became famous for its religious zeal and learning. This is why I have somewhat prolonged this digression on the Scots, who have adhered to the catholic faith from ancient times, and have had great regard for the Christian religion. Now however I propose to return to my intended work on our own people.)¹⁹

Robert de Torigni, abbot of Mont-Saint-Michel between 1154 and 1186, also gave a version of the events of 1130 in his continuation to the *World Chronicle*:

Eodem anno Aragois, comes Morafiae, cum Melcolmo notho filio Alexandri fratris regis David, qui ante eum regnaverat, et cum quinque milibus armatorum, Scotiam intravit, totamque regionem sibi subijcere voluit. David rex tunc curiae regis Anglorum intererat; sed Edwardus, consobrinus ejus et princeps militiae, cum exercitu illis obviavit, et Aragois consulem occidit, ejusque turmas prostravit, cepit, atque fugavit. Deinde Morafiam defensore dominoque vacantem ingressus est, totiusque regionis spatiosae ducatus, Deo auxiliante, per Edwardum extunc David regi religioso subditus est.²⁰

(In the same year Angus, earl of Moray, with Malcolm, illegitimate son of Alexander, who was brother of King David and had reigned before him, and with five thousand armed men entered Scotland, and wished to reduce the whole region to himself. At that time David was present in the court of the king of the English; but Edward, his kinsman and leader of his knighthood, went against them with an army and slew Angus, and overthrew, captured and routed his troops. Then he entered Moray, which lacked a defender and a lord; and control of the whole spacious region was, with God's help, through Edward made subject thenceforth to the religious King David.)

Even though these last two accounts appear to be closely related the information contained within them cannot be ignored in favour of a much later source (*Gesta Annalia*). Two near-contemporary sources, Orderic Vitalis and Robert de Torigni, call the Malcolm of 1124 and 1130 'Malcolm son of Alexander'. Accordingly, Malcolm would have been a member of the royal kindred, a son of King Alexander I and grandson of King Máel Coluim mac Donnchada and Queen Margaret.

There might, however, be a problem with such an identification. Orderic Vitalis also stated:

Vltor itaque et successor fratris aliquot annis Alexander regnavit, et filiam Henrici regis Anglorum ex concubina uxorem duxit, moriensque sine liberis David fratri suo regnum dimisit.

(Alexander reigned for some years, the successor and avenger of his brother; he married a natural daughter of King Henry of England and, dying without children, left the kingdom to his brother David.)²¹

This second passage by Orderic Vitalis would seem to indicate that King Alexander did not have any children. This is something of a problem because Orderic Vitalis has clearly contradicted himself. A solution to this contradiction may lie in the suggestion that Vitalis had miscopied his information about King Alexander's lack of progeny from an earlier work by William of Malmesbury (c.1095-1143).²² He stated that:

¹⁹ *ibid.*, 276-78.

²⁰ Howlett, *Chronicles*, iv, 118.

²¹ Chibnall, *Ecclesiastical History*, iv, 274-75.

²² Gransden, *Historical Writing*, i, 158 and at 166-68.

[...] Edgardo fatali sorte occumbente, Alexandrum successorem Henricus affinitate detinuit, data ei in coniugium filia notha, de qua ille uia nec sobolem, quod scian, tulit [...]

(Edgar in his turn having died, Henry bound his successor Alexander by ties of relationship, giving him his own illegitimate daughter in marriage, during her lifetime, however, he had no children by her).²³

This last statement is a far cry from the assertion that King Alexander I had no children at all. However, even if Orderic Vitalis did not borrow his information from William of Malmesbury it is still possible that his passage has been slightly mistranslated. The key lies in the use of the noun *liberi*. Although *liberi* (children) has been correctly translated by the most recent editor of Vitalis, it also carries a strong connotation of legitimacy.²⁴ Consequently, Orderic Vitalis may well have been referring to King Alexander's lack of legitimate children with Queen Sybilla when he said that the king died without children.

So, the contemporary evidence strongly indicates that the Malcolm of 1124 and 1130 was a son of King Alexander I. If anything, this perception is strengthened by the timing of Malcolm's first 'revolt' in 1124. While no exact date is ever given for this 'revolt', it is probably no coincidence that 1124 was the same year that King David I was inaugurated. It is thus possible that David I's accession to the kingship of Scotia in that year was challenged by another member of the royal kindred, his nephew Malcolm son of Alexander. In order to challenge for the kinship of Scotia, Malcolm presumably possessed the necessary resources and support to mount an alternative bid to be inaugurated. However, it might also be presumed that the new king did not consider Malcolm's challenge in 1124 serious enough to warrant either imprisonment or disfiguration, otherwise Malcolm would not have been at large to challenge the king again in 1130.

It also seems fairly clear that Malcolm son of Alexander was not captured in the aftermath of the battle Stracathro in 1130. In its entry for 1134 the *Chronicle of Melrose* states: "Melcolmus capitur et in arcta ponitur in turre rokesburg custodia." (Malcolm was taken, and placed in close custody in the keep of Roxburgh.)²⁵ This is a frustratingly brief statement. Fortunately, Ailred of Rievaulx in his work *Relatio de Standardo*, probably written between 1155 and 1157,²⁶ provided more detail:

[...]Recole præterito anno cum aduersus Malcolmum, paterni odii et persecutionis hæredem, Anglorum auxilium flagitares, quam læti, quam alaxres, quam ad auxilium prompti, quam proni ad periculum Walterus Espec aliique quamplures Anglorum proceres tibi apud Carleolum occurrerint, quot paraverint naves, quæ arma intulerint, qua iuuentute munierint, quomodo omnes tuos terruerint hostes, donec ipsum Malcolmum proditum caperent, captum vincirent, vinctum traderent. Ita terror noster ipsius quidem membra, sed magis Scottorum animos, vinxit, omnique spe præficiendi frustrata, audaciam abstulit rebellandi. [...]²⁷

²³ R. A. B. Mynors and Rodney M. Thomson (editors), *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, 2 vols., (Oxford, 1998 and 1999), i, 725-77, [hereafter: Mynors and Thomson, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*].

²⁴ Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, (London, 1966), [hereafter: Lewis and Short, *Latin Dictionary*].

²⁵ *Chron. Melrose*, 33. All Latin contractions have been silently expanded.

²⁶ Gransden, *Historical Writing*, i, 213.

²⁷ Howlett, *Chronicles*, iii, 193.

(Remember when in a previous year you asked for the help of the English against Malcolm, the heir of his fathers' hatred and persecution, how joyful, how eager, how willing to help, how ready for danger Walter Espec and many other English nobles hastened to meet you at Carlisle, how many ships they prepared, how they waged war, how they built defenses, how they terrified all your enemies until they captured Malcolm himself betrayed; captured, they bound him; bound, they delivered him. Thus the fear of us bound his limbs, but bound even more the courage of the Scots, and having quenched all hope of success, removed the audacity to rebel.)

Even though this passage belongs to a dramatic speech allegedly made by Robert de Brus before the battle of the Standard (1138), it is possible that the sheer scale of the military expedition outlined in the passage is accurate. There are hints in another source that the campaign of 1130 and the battle of Stracathro were not as decisive a victory for David I as is sometimes imagined. The *Annals of Ulster* recorded that 1,000 men of Alba fell in a counter-attack after the battle.²⁸ It is difficult to reconcile this information with the image of the victorious Edward son of Siward rushing into Moray immediately after the battle and taking it for King David.

If the *Annals of Ulster* are correct, it would seem that Malcolm son of Alexander still possessed considerable resources and support from somewhere either within, or close to, Scotia to continue to press the fight against his uncle immediately after Stracathro. Interestingly, it is also noticeable that according to both the skeleton itinerary of David I and his surviving charters, there is no indication of the king travelling north of the Forth-Clyde line, or even being in Scotland between 1130 and 1134.²⁹ Accordingly, it is possible that the battle of Stracathro in 1130 was not a decisive victory for King David I and that it took a further four years, together with a second major military campaign, at least part of which was conducted in the Western Sea, for Malcolm son of Alexander to be betrayed and captured by his own supporters before they handed him over to King David's forces.

Even this second campaign, however, cannot have been straightforward. The reference to the king's forces making defences before 1134 implies that they either expected, or were subjected to, counter-attacks. This would again imply that between 1130 and 1134 a number of people still thought that Malcolm son of Alexander had a better right to be king than King David I, and they were prepared to support the alternative claimant.

This continued resistance to King David I raises two further issues concerning the events of 1130. First, although Oengus of Moray is always named before Malcolm in the primary sources, possibly implying that he was the senior of the two allies, both men belonged to the royal kindred of Scotia, Clann Custantín meic Cináeda. Malcolm was the son of King Alexander I, Oengus the grandson of King Lulach. Obviously, even if they had defeated King David's forces, only one of the two men could have been inaugurated. Therefore, an agreement must have been reached between the two men regarding the seniority of their respective claims

²⁸ *Ann. Ulster*, 1030.4. The figure of 1000 men was later reduced to 100 by an interlinear gloss.

²⁹ G. W. S. Barrow (editor), *The Charters of David I* (Woodbridge, 1999), 38-38.

to the kingdom, perhaps mirrored in the sequence in which their names appear in the records. If there was a pact between the two men it could have been broadly similar to the arrangement between Domnall Bán and Edgar after November 1094, when Edgar may have been King Donald's designated successor.³⁰ Secondly, if Edward son of Siward did enter Moray after Stracathro, the ability of Malcolm son of Alexander to continue to pursue his claim for kingship after the death of Oengus strongly suggests that Malcolm's resources and supporters were based outwith Moray.

The next time the name 'Malcolm' appears in Scottish chronicles, soon after the death of King David I in 1153, provides the first clue as to where some of that support might have come from. The *Holyrood Chronicle* noted:

[...] Stephanus rex Anglie cum Henrico nobilissimo comite Andegavie pacem et fidem perpetuam, in die festo sancti Leonardi abbatis, iniit. Eo die apud Scotiam Sumerlede et nepotes sui, filii scilicet Malcolmi, associatis sibi plurimis, insurrexerunt in regem Malcolm, et Scotiam in magna parte perturbantes inquietaverunt.

(Stephen king of England made peace and a lasting agreement with Henry, the most noble count of Anjou, on the festival of St Leonard the abbot [6 Nov]. On that day, in Scotland, Somerled and his nephews, the sons of Malcolm, allied with themselves very many men, and rebelled against King Malcolm (IV), and disturbed and disquieted Scotland to a great extent.)³¹

This is shortly followed by a related entry in the same chronicle for 1156: Dofnaldus filius Malcolm apud Witerne captus est, et cum patre suo incarceratus. (Donald son of Malcolm was captured at Whithorn, and imprisoned with his father.)³² The *Chronicle of Melrose* provides slightly more information: "Dovenaldus filius malcol apud Witerne captus est et incarceratus in turre de rokesburg cum patre suo." (Donald son of Malcolm was captured at Whithorn and imprisoned in the keep of Roxburgh with his father.)³³ Although there is no direct evidence for a family connection between the Donald son of Malcolm of 1153 and Malcolm son of Alexander (1130), it is likely that the two men were actually son and father. This connection can be suggested for two reasons. First, because Roxburgh castle was the place of imprisonment of both men and also the place where Malcolm son of Alexander had been incarcerated in 1134. Second, because the timing of Donald's first 'revolt' of 1153 occurred shortly after the death of one king (David I) and the inauguration of another, Malcolm IV, King David I's grandson.³⁴ This may imply that Donald son of Malcolm thought that he had a good right to be considered for inauguration.

The *Holyrood Chronicle* casually admits that Donald had allies in 1153. If there was a connection between this 'revolt' and the inauguration of Malcolm IV, presumably these allies were people who also thought that Donald had good rival claim to the kingship of Scotia. Being a grandson of King Alexander I and a member

³⁰ Duncan, *Kingdom*, 125. My thanks to Dauvit Broun for this point.

³¹ *Chron. Holyrood*, 124-25.

³² *ibid.*, 128.

³³ *Chron. Melrose*, 35.

³⁴ David I died on 24 May 1153 and his body was then brought from Carlisle to be buried at Dunfermline [cf: *Chron. Bower* (Watt), iv, 251]. Malcolm IV may have been inaugurated before the old king's burial [cf: Duncan, *Kingship of*

of the royal *derbfine* would certainly count as such a claim. These three entries also make it clear that Malcolm son of Alexander was married to a sister of Somerled of Argyll, probably before 1134 since it is unlikely that Malcolm would have been allowed to marry and procreate while imprisoned in Roxburgh castle. Assuming that both Malcolm and his son Donald were members of the royal kindred means that Somerled also had a connection to the royal kindred. This makes the so-called ‘rebellion’ of Somerled and his nephews in 1153 more logical. Although some historians have cast the events of 1153 as Celtic conservatives fighting against the alienation and suppression of Gaelic culture by new feudal influences,³⁵ Somerled can be seen to be supporting his nephews while they were trying to claim the kingship of Scotia for their own segment of the royal kindred.

One final entry that may relate to a member of the segment of the royal kindred descended from King Alexander I occurs in the *Holyrood Chronicle* under the date 17 November 1186 when the earl of Atholl violated the sanctuary of Coupar Angus church to kill an outlaw:

In subsequenti hyeme, scilicet xv kal. Decembris, pervim Malcolmi comitis Aetholie violata est pax sancte ecclesie apud Cupro; quia Adam, cognomento et filius Duvenaldi, captus est, qui utlagus regis fuit; et quidam sociorum, [scilicet nepos] ejus, ante altare decollatus; ceteri vero, numero quinquaginta octo, in abbatis hospicio exusti et occisi fuerunt.

(In the following winter, on the fifteenth before the kalends of December, the peace of holy church was broken at Coupar through the violence of Malcolm earl of Atholl. For Adam, surnamed also Donald’s son, who was the king’s outlaw, was captured; and one of his companions, [his nephew], was beheaded before the altar; and the others, numbering fifty-eight, were burned and put to death in the abbot’s guest-house.)³⁶

It is likely, given the length of this entry, that Adam, though an outlaw, was somebody important in Scotia. He is usually called a grandson of Malcolm MacHeth,³⁷ although this identification depends on shifting an interlinear gloss — *scilicet nepos* — so that the phrase relates to Adam’s relationship to Malcolm, earl of Atholl, and not to a member of Adam’s entourage.³⁸ If this identification is discarded, the patronymic ‘Donald’s son’ could instead refer to two men: either Donald MacWilliam or Donald son of Malcolm son of Alexander. Both tried to assert their own rights to the kingdom during the twelfth century and it is difficult to determine which of them, if either, was Adam’s father. However, the place where Adam was captured seems to favour the theory that Adam son of Donald could be connected to Donald son of Malcolm son of Alexander, rather than Donald MacWilliam. Coupar was one of the four royal estates that comprised the province of Gowrie and Bower stated that Alexander’s uncle, the earl of Gowrie, had granted him lands in the Gowrie as a baptismal gift.³⁹ While this is admittedly rather shaky evidence on which to base a claim that Adam son of Donald was the grandson of King Alexander I, the scenario is possible.

the Scots, 71.

³⁵ Barrow, *Kingship*, 48; R. Andrew McDonald, *The Kingdom of the Isles* (East Linton, 1997), 62-63.

³⁶ *Chron. Holyrood*, 170-71.

³⁷ Duncan, *Kingdom*, 194.

³⁸ *RRS*, ii, 24, n. 47. It is also noted here by Barrow that Adam’s Gaelic name may have been Aed. If so, the Kenneth mac Eth who was allied to Donald Bán MacWilliam in 1215 could have been the son of Adam, rather than the son of Malcolm mac Heth, earl of Ross. My thanks to Dauvit Broun for raising this point.

Perhaps slightly better evidence to suggest that Adam was someone important in Scotia and a member of the royal *derbfine* are the quite extraordinary events that took place in Coupar that day. A man was slain in front of the high altar and a part of the monastic establishment was destroyed by forces that must have been loyal to King William since Adam was specifically designated as 'the king's outlaw'. We have no way of knowing what the outcome of these acts was, though we could perhaps use the example of Robert Bruce in 1306, after he had killed John Comyn of Badenoch, to gauge what the papal reaction might have been to the events of 1186 and to the mass-murder of men within an ecclesiastic environment. That Earl Malcolm of Atholl was willing to incur severe papal displeasure to kill Adam and his supporters must be a good indication both of Adam's importance and how desperate the crown was to get rid of him.

If I have identified all three of these men correctly (Malcolm, Donald and Adam), it is very likely that they were all members of one segment of the royal kindred of Scotia descended from King Alexander I. At least two of these men, Malcolm and Donald, were able to muster sufficient economic resources and military support to present a credible threat to the ruling segment of the royal *derbfine*, King David I and his descendants, over a long period of time. These identifications, if acceptable, should also allow for a complete re-appraisal of the career of Somerled during the twelfth century. Instead of type-casting him as some kind of Gaelic traditionalist, reacting to and rebelling in the face of new European influences, we should perhaps be looking at Somerled in a different light; as someone who acted as both kingbreaker and kingmaker in Mann, and who was equally determined to advance the claims of his nephews to be considered for inauguration as kings of Scotia.

³⁹ *Chron. Bower* (Watt), iii, 105.