

## BLOODY BAY AND THE MACLEODS

The battle of Bloody Bay was fought on some date between 1481 and 1485,<sup>1</sup> say c.1483, and saw the death of William MacLeod of Harris<sup>2</sup> (who had been chief of the *Sìol Tormoid* since the death of his father, Ian Borb, 1463x1469, say c.1466),<sup>3</sup> who was succeeded by his son, Alasdair Crotach (who did not die until 1546/7).<sup>4</sup> With regard to the identity and genealogy of the combatants at Bloody Bay there is no problem with the Harris MacLeods but there is one with the Lewis MacLeods, which is the concern of the second part of this paper.

Citing “Seanachie’s Account of the Clan Maclean (1838), p.24,” which states that the battle “was fought off Barrayraig near Tobermory in Mull, at a place ever since known by the name of Ba ’na falla, or the Bloody Bay”, R. W. Munro wrote “The name Bloody Bay, even in Gaelic, sounds somewhat artificial, and I wonder if anyone has heard it or any other name used by native Gaelic speakers in Mull or elsewhere for the sea-fight”.<sup>5</sup> The requested “any other name” for the battle is found in MacLeod tradition. The chapter on the MacLeods of that ilk (i.e. of Harris) in Douglas’s *Baronage* ends its account of “XI. WILLIAM” with:<sup>6</sup>

“ This William, by order of king James III. went to the assistance of John earl of Rofs against his natural son, and lost his life in a naval engagement in Cammiferaig, or Bloody Bay, in the Sound of Mull, and was succeeded by his only son,  
XII. ALEXANDER”

It might be thought that this account merely substitutes ‘Camus’ (“Cammif”) for “Ba”, leaving “teraig” to be treated as a mis-spelled equivalent of “rrayraig”, but that is not the case. The account of the Harris MacLeods in Douglas is an edited copy of the Dunvegan Memorial MS of 1767,<sup>7</sup> a manuscript copy of which, made in 1872, can be seen in Volume 3412 of the Fraser-Mackintosh library, housed in Inverness Public Library, wherein one finds the following passage:

“7. William known by the appellation of William nam bristidh, or the skirmisher. He went by order of King James II. to assist John Earl of Ross against his bastard son and was lost in a naval engagement in Cammidhearg or Bloody Bay in the sound of Mull.”

Therefore, Douglas’s “teraig” is a miscopying of MS 1767’s “dhearg” and so in MacLeod tradition ‘Bloody Bay’ was known as ‘Camus Dearth’, i.e. ‘(Blood-)Red Bay’,<sup>8</sup> as is shown in the fuller tradition given in the Bannatyne MS,<sup>9</sup> an undated, poor,<sup>10</sup> typescript copy of which contains the following passages (in which I leave the errors uncorrected):<sup>11</sup>

“Alexander Lord of the Isles died AD 1449 and was succeeded by his son John Lord of the Isles and Earl of Ross who entered into a confederacy with the Earls of Douglas and Crawford 1451. He concluded a treaty with Edward IV of England 8 February 1462. In the style and form of a Sovereign Prince dated from Castello nostro Di Ordhorimish and these Acts drew upon him the vengeance of the Scottish Crown to which he was obliged to submit and on the 20th July 1476 he surrendered the Earldom of Ross forever to the Crown of Scotland. These acts of submission on the part of John were indignantly rejected by his son Angus of the Isles who resolved to depose his father as incapable of upholding his rights. The men of the Highlands and Isles were much divided on this occasion but the greater part followed Angus William Macleod who supported John but the Macleod of the Lewes espoused the opposite side.”

“The Clans from all parts of the Isles and Highlands collected under the different standards of John or his son. Several skirmishes took place at last a general engagement mostly in their galleys took place in the Sound of Mull (at a place which from the occurrence is called Camus Dearth or Bloody Bay). William Macleod was killed early in the action. The Macleods began to give way and fell into confusion. At this moment Callum Clerich a Priest (probably Macleods Almoner) induced Murchas Breach the Keeper of the Fairy or Wizzard Flag to unfurl the Sacred Banner. The Lewes Macleods at the sight of the emblem of their race joined the Harris Macleods in a body who renewed the fight with redoubled fury but it was now too late. John Lord of the Isles had been made prisoner by MacKenzie Kental who carried the aged Chief or King to his son who on beholding his father is said to have shed tears but nevertheless confined him (his Father) for life in the castle of Mugarry where he died about the year 1497-8 totally forgotten and despised. A vast number of the Macleods were slain in this engagement and among the number the twelve heroes who stood round the Sacred Banner.

Murcha Breack was mortally wounded in the side by a lance finding himself fall he thrust the shaft of the banner into the wound which was thus kept flying until others came to protect it. William’s body was buried in Iona and Murcha Breack was placed in the same grave with him. The greatest honour which could be bestowed on his remains. William was the last Chief of the Harris Macleods interred at Iona.”

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Regarding John, Lord of the Isles, the above account includes mistakes (“8 February 1462” is more properly ‘8 February 1461/2’, “20th July 1476” should be ‘10th July 1476’ and John’s real fate was to become “a pensioner at the court of James IV” and die in January 1502/3),<sup>12</sup> but in claiming that John was captured at the battle it corroborates a similar claim in MacLean tradition that at the battle “both MacDonald the Father and Maclean were taken prisoners”.<sup>13</sup> However, the Bannatyne MS seems to be unique in claiming that John was captured by MacKenzie of Kintail, which seemingly implausible scenario is made only a little more plausible by Aonghas MacCoinnich’s reassessment of the history of the MacKenzies of that era.<sup>14</sup> The Bannatyne MS implies that the battle was not only maritime but also terrestrial (if so then, one supposes, on Mull, around the harbour in which the galleys of John’s forces had gathered) because it was only mostly “in their galleys” that the general engagement took place: perhaps John’s capture by MacKenzie (if true) occurred on land.

As for the MacLeods, two items must be noted. First, the MacLeods of Lewis were part of Angus Og’s forces and it was only during the course of the battle that they changed sides to rescue the MacLeods of Harris. Second, William MacLeod of Harris “was killed early in the action”, a datum that is at variance with some modern descriptions of the fighting whose authors have been misled by an error in the best-known account of the Battle of Bloody Bay, that given in the Knock MS by Hugh MacDonald, the Sleat Historian, which is copied below.<sup>15</sup> For ease of reference in the discussion that follows, the account is here divided into numbered sections (Sentence/Part).

Sentence	Part	Text
1	1	The Lords and principal men in the Isles gathered together in the Sound of Mull,
	2	and Angus Ogg,
	3	after an interview with his father, Argyle, and the Earl of Athol,
	4	was on the north side of Ardnamurchan with his men detained by bad weather for the space of five whole weeks, and in very great want of provisions; at last, the weather changing, he got round the Point.
2	1	In the meantime, the Laird of Ardgour, coming through the Sound, and perceiving Macdonald and his party, displayed his colours in his galley,
	2	which Macdonald took for Maclean’s; upon which he steered directly towards him.
3	1	They on the other side left their own harbour to the relief of Ardgour,
	2	such as Maclean, William Macleod of Harris, and Macneill of Barra;
	3	the rest of the faction, seeing themselves in danger at least of losing their galleys, thought best to enter their harbour.
4	1	Macdonald coming on as swiftly as he could,
	2	accompanied by Donald Gallich of Sleat, Austin’s son,
	3	and Ranald Bain, Laird of Mudort’s eldest son,
	4	the last of whom grappled side to side with Macleod of Harris’s galley.
5	-	There was one called Edmond More Obrian along with Ranald Bain, who thrust the blade of an oar in below the stern-post of Macleod’s galley, between it and the rudder, which prevented the galley from being steered.
6	1	The galley of
	2	the heir of Torkill of the Lewis,
	3	with all his men,
	4	was taken,
	5	and himself mortally wounded with two arrows,
	6	whereof he died soon after at Dunvegan.
7	1	Angus Ogg and Allan Laird of Mudort attacked Macleod, and took him prisoner,
	2	with a great slaughter of his men.
8	-	Angus Ogg would have hanged Maclean immediately, had he not been prevented by the Laird of Mudort saying, he would have none to bicker with if Maclean was gone.
9	-	Sometime thereafter, giving his oath of fidelity, he was pardoned.
10	-	Macneill of Barra made his escape about Coll, and three galleys in pursuit of him.

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Of these ten sentences, the first three form an introduction to the action that is described in the last seven. One notes that the Sleat Historian differentiates MacLean of Ardgour, whom he refers to as “the Laird of Ardgour” (2/1) and “Ardgour” (3/1), from MacLean of Duart, whom he refers to simply as “Maclean” (2/2) and (3/2). Therefore, “Maclean” in sentence 8 refers to MacLean of Duart and not, as some authors have thought,<sup>16</sup> to MacLean of Ardgour. One also notes that from the way in which sentence 8 follows on from, and complements, sentence 7, it is (or, at least, it should have been) quite obvious that 7’s “MacLeod” is a mistake for ‘Maclean’.<sup>17</sup> This is an instance of the error that can be called “Nominal Dominance”,<sup>18</sup> in which the scribe, in the next sentence after three sentences (4, 5 and 6) concerning MacLeods, mistakenly wrote “MacLeod” again instead of ‘Maclean’.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, sentences 7, 8 and 9 all concern MacLean of Duart, whose rôle as commander of the Islanders’ fleet probably explains the particular antipathy shown towards him by Angus Og (per 2/2, corrected-7 & 8).<sup>20</sup> MacLean of Ardgour figures only in the introduction to the action and not in the action itself, so perhaps he joined “the rest of the faction” (per 3/3) who “seeing themselves in danger at least of losing their galleys, thought best to enter their harbour” – where they may have been followed by part of the MacDonald fleet, so, perhaps, leading to the suggested land-based part of the battle.

That “the rest of the faction” perceived danger leads one to think that Angus Og’s fleet was larger than theirs,<sup>21</sup> which thought seems to be borne out by the description of the action, despite the story naming only the main players (which gives the impression, perhaps false, that each clan had only one galley) and despite an apparent attempt to match up those main players one for one, with 3/2’s “Maclean, William MacLeod of Harris, and Macneill of Barra” apparently being matched with sentence 4’s Angus Og “Macdonald”, “Donald Gallich of Sleat” and “Ranald Bain”, so that (per 4/4) Ranald Bain “grappled side to side with MacLeod of Harris” and (per corrected-7 & 8) Angus Og “attacked” MacLean, seemingly leaving one of the three galleys that pursued MacNeil of Barra (per 10) to have been that of Donald Gallich (who is not otherwise mentioned). That MacNeil was pursued by three galleys bears out the presumed disparity in size of the two fleets, as does the information that Maclean was attacked not just by Angus Og but also by “Allan Laird of Mudort” (per corrected-7 & 8). It is not clear from sentences 7 and 8 whether Allan of Moidart commanded his own galley or was on board Angus Og’s galley (in which latter case ‘the’ Clan Ranald galley was commanded by Allan’s son, Ranald Bain), but one suspects that Allan had his own command so perhaps MacLean was captured because his galley was ‘sandwiched’ between those of Angus Og and Allan of Moidart. Then, of course, (per the Bannatyne MS) one must also count the galley(s) of MacLeod of Lewis, who joined the battle on the side of Angus Og.

That sentences 7 to 10 deal with MacLean and MacNeil leaves sentences 4, 5 & 6 for the MacLeods. 4 & 5 are straightforward and concern William MacLeod of Harris. However, sentence 6 seems to be a jumble of data (which jumble may include 7/2) and its reference to “the heir of Torkill of the Lewis” (6/2) has confused several authors. Although some authors<sup>22</sup> have taken 6/1-6/4 or 6/1-6/6 at face value (without fully appreciating what that meant), the majority have followed Gregory in treating 6/2 as a mistake for ‘the heir apparent of Roderick of the Lewis’,<sup>23</sup> with a variation being that this heir apparent of Roderick also bore the name Roderick.<sup>24</sup> However, other authors have taken 6/2 as a mistake for ‘William MacLeod of Harris’, either covertly<sup>25</sup> or, in the case of Steer & Bannerman, overtly.<sup>26</sup>

“ William MacLeod of Harris and Dunvegan ... [p.98] ... was present at the battle of Bloody Bay on the side of John, Lord of the Isles. The *Bannatyne MS* goes on to say that he was killed early in the battle, but MacDonald maintains that he subsequently died of his wounds at Dunvegan.<sup>37</sup>”

<sup>43</sup> MacDonald, *History*, p. 50. There is some confusion in MacDonald’s account of the battle at this point. He says that the “heir of Torkell of the Lewis” died at Dunvegan but the context makes it clear that he meant William MacLeod of Dunvegan. Moreover, Ruari was probably chief of the MacLeods of Lewis from before 1469 to c.1498”.

The Bannatyne MS’s account of the MacLeods of Lewis changing sides can be used to try to clear the confusion in sentence 6 of the Knock MS’s account of the battle of Bloody Bay. 6/1 & 6/4 pertain to William of Harris, but 6/2, 6/5 & 6/6 pertain to the Lewis MacLeods. The action described in sentence 5 rendered unsteerable the galley of the Harris MacLeods, making them particularly vulnerable and leading to Chief William’s early death and the raising of the Fairy Flag (apparently<sup>27</sup>), which induced the Lewis MacLeods (who had entered the battle on the side of Angus Og) to change sides in order to support their kinsmen of Harris. One supposes that this led to the Lewis MacLeods drawing up their galley on the other side of the Harris galley to that occupied by Ranald Bain’s galley (per 4/4), but evidently they were unable to prevent a slaughter of the MacLeods (per the Bannatyne MS) and so they were reduced to rescuing the survivors (and the Fairy Flag and the corpses of Murchad Breac and Chief William) from the unsteerable Harris galley, which would therefore have

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been “taken” (per 6/4) by Ranald Bain. It can only have been on the Lewis galley that the MacLeods escaped, but, during the action “the heir of Torkill of the Lewis” was “mortally wounded with two arrows, whereof he died soon after at Dunvegan” (per 6/2 & 6/5-6/6), whither had sped the Lewis galley because it bore what remained of the Harris MacLeods (with their Chief’s corpse and the Fairy Flag). It may be that 6/3’s “with all his men” should be swapped with 7/2’s “with a great slaughter of his men” so that it was MacLean of Duart who was taken prisoner (which agrees with MacLean tradition) “with all his men”<sup>28</sup> whereas it was “The galley of” MacLeod of Harris that “was taken” “with a great slaughter of his men” (which would then agree with the MacLeod tradition’s “A vast number of the Macleods were slain in this engagement”).

The above attempted clearance of his confusion presumes that the Sleat Historian had difficulty in understanding his source (or, at least, one of his sources), with the result that he pried his data, which merely begs the questions as to what was his source of information on the battle and how could it have been so difficult to understand? The simplest answer to both questions, especially given that Matheson (in treating of the Lewis MacLeods at the battle) noted “a reference to a poem about the son, preserved in Erray House, Tobermory, two centuries ago (Maclagan MS No. 122)”,<sup>29</sup> is that his source may have been a song or poem in which the strictures of fitting data to rhyme and metre had produced ‘terse verse’, thereby introducing ambiguity and causing problems of understanding for the reader.

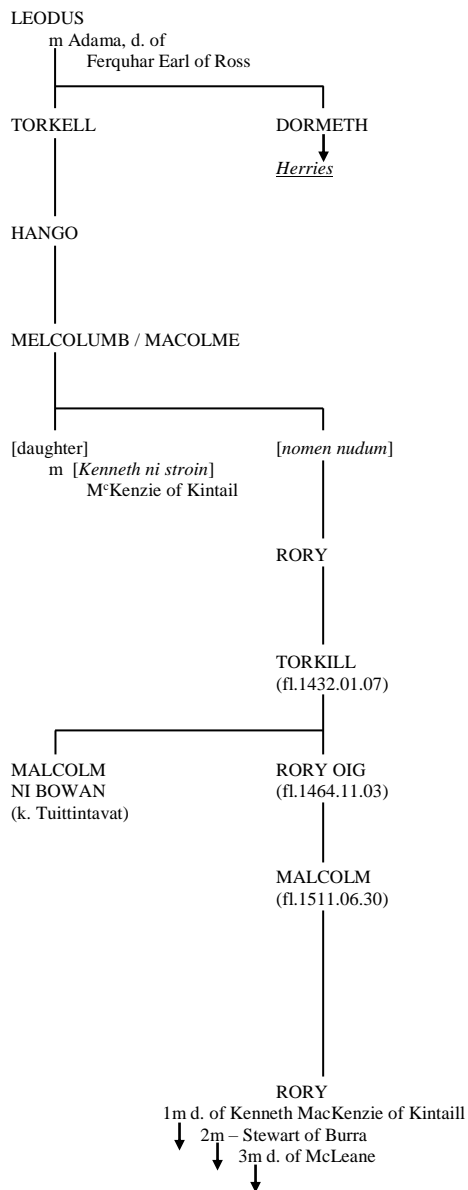
If all the above speculation is acceptable then it would seem to have sorted out the accounts of the MacLeods at Bloody Bay. However, it has not yet identified 6/2’s “the heir of Torkill of the Lewis”, which brings one to the matter of the genealogy of his family.

According to Steer & Bannerman, the “confusion in MacDonald’s account of the battle at this point” stems from the reference to the “heir of Torkell of the Lewis” because “Ruari was probably chief of the MacLeods of Lewis from before 1469 to c.1498”. A similar sentiment is found in the Munros’ account of “MacLeod, Roderick, son of Alexander ... : witness at Oransay in 1492. Might be expected to be Roderick of Lewis who witnessed at Colonsay three days later ... , but that Roderick’s father was Torquill ... , and the name Alexander does not appear in the Lewis genealogy”.<sup>30</sup> The problem here is not that this is the first appearance of the name Alexander amongst the MacLeods of Lewis<sup>31</sup> but that the current understanding of the genealogy of the family has not yet been fully purged of the errors introduced by Sir George MacKenzie (1630-1714.08.17), first Earl of Cromartie, whose paternal grandmother was Margaret, daughter of Torcall Conanach of Coigach (pseudo-son of Old Rory MacLeod ‘last’ of Lewis), and who faked the lineage of his supposed MacLeod ancestors in a nearly-successful attempt to become recognised as the Chief of all the MacLeods.<sup>32</sup> Sir George’s (sadly incomplete) account of the MacLeods of Lewis comes at the end of his account of the MacKenzies (which dates to 1668 x 1678.12.16, i.e. c.1673±5)<sup>33</sup> and is the earliest surviving attempt at providing a genealogy of the whole family. The earliest known published account of the whole family is that by Sir Robert Douglas of Glenbervie which, although prepared c.1769, was not published until 1798.<sup>34</sup> Although different, the two accounts have much in common, so, in origin, Douglas’s account is a development of Cromartie’s. For comparison, their generations from the eponymous Leod to Old Rory are tabulated below.<sup>35</sup>

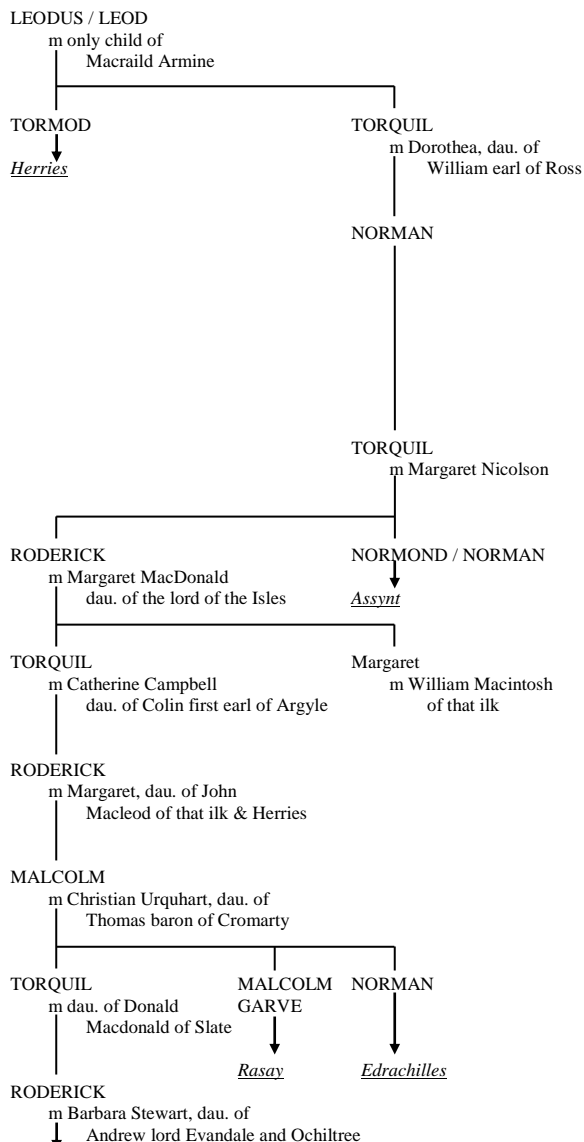
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Table 1. Comparison of two pre-nineteenth-century accounts of the MacLeods of Lewis

CROMARTIE (c.1673±5), published 1876



DOUGLAS (c.1769), published 1798



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Both of these accounts are in part rubbish (especially in the early generations), but that of Douglas provided the basis for subsequent improvements, of which two authors' work may be noticed here. Donald Gregory not only made "Tormod, ancestor of the Macleods of Assint" a "younger son" of the "Roderick Macleod of the Lewis" who lived "early in the fifteenth century" but also wrote "The head of the Siol Torquil, in 1493, was another Roderick, grandson of the former, whose eldest son was mortally wounded fighting for the old Lord of the Isles, at the battle of the Bloody Bay,<sup>3</sup> [<sup>3</sup> Hugh Macdonald's MS.] and died without issue. Torquil, the second son, became heir of the Lewis, and married Katherine daughter of Colin, Earl of Argyle, ...<sup>4</sup> [<sup>4</sup> Reg. of Great Seal, XIII. 377.]" Gregory used public records to reinstate the senior line of the MacLeods of Lewis, i.e. the aforementioned Torquil / Torcall (fl.1498-1506) and his son John (making Torcall the brother of the Malcolm MacLeod of Lewis of 1511) who had been omitted by Cromartie, and he went on to reaffiliate Old Rory to Malcolm (thereby undoing one of the worst errors in Douglas).<sup>36</sup>

The other published improvement to be noticed here is William Matheson's correction to the earlier generations of the MacLeods of Lewis by interpreting various traditions in the light of a surviving Gaelic lineage of the Roderick MacLeod of Lewis on record in 1405 (who equates to the earliest Rory in Cromartie's account), which makes Roderick / Ruadhri son of Torcall son of Murchad son of Tormod son of Leod.<sup>37</sup> Matheson having destroyed Cromartie's inventions concerning the early generations, and Gregory having restored Cromartie's omissions concerning the later generations, that leaves only the middle generations of the MacLeods of Lewis to be potentially free of Cromartie's errors, but, unfortunately, they are not, and the main evidence for that assertion is to be found in the Sleat Historian's account of the battle of Bloody Bay and its aftermath.

Quite simply, the man who was "mortally wounded with two arrows, whereof he died soon after at Dunvegan", was neither 'William MacLeod of Harris' nor 'the heir apparent of Roderick MacLeod of Lewis' but was rightly described by the Sleat Historian as "the heir of Torkill of the Lewis" because he was the then Chief, namely Roderick MacLeod of Lewis himself, who is on record as follows:

- 1464.11.03 "Rorie Oig mc Leoid air to Torquil his fa[the]r of the landis and barronie of the Lewis";<sup>38</sup>  
1465.08.20) ("Rodoricus Maclويد laicis sodoris diocs.  
1466.09.18) ( Et Marcella filia Celestini de Insulis Rossens. Dioc.", dispensation to marry;<sup>39</sup>  
1469.06.28 "Rodrico M<sup>c</sup>leiod de Leoghys", a witness;<sup>40</sup>  
1478.12.22 "Rori Maclويد de Lewes", a witness.<sup>41</sup>

Roderick was the son of his predecessor, Torcall, who is on record as follows:<sup>42</sup>

- 1432/3.01.07 "Torcal son to Rorie mcLeoid", charter from Alexander of Islay;<sup>43</sup>  
1437.09.04 "Torquil M<sup>c</sup>Loyde Lord of Levyhous", a witness;  
1437/8.02.04 "Torquel Roderici Macleoid and Mariota Johannis Macgilleoni", dispensation to marry;<sup>44</sup>  
1440.07.02 "Torquillo M<sup>c</sup>loyd de Lewhaus", a witness;  
1447.11.13 "Torquello MacLeoid domino de Leoghos", a witness;  
1439x1449 "Torquello M<sup>c</sup>leoid de Leohos", a witness;  
1456.06.14 "Torkello M<sup>c</sup>Loyd de Leows";  
1456.06.18 "Torkello M<sup>c</sup>loyd de Leows";  
1456.06.19 "Torkello M<sup>c</sup>loyd de Leows";  
1461.10.10 "Torquall McLeoid of Leoghos", a witness;  
1462/3.02.02 "Torquelli McLeoid domini de Leovis", a witness;

I shall argue here that the first recorded successor of Roderick was a different Roderick MacLeod of Lewis, who is on record as follows:

- 1492.07.29 "Rodrico Alexandri Macleod", a witness;<sup>45</sup>  
1492.08.01 "Rodrici M<sup>c</sup>Leod domini de Leowis", a council witness;<sup>46</sup>  
1494.06.28 "Roderico Makleod de Lewys", a witness.<sup>47</sup>

There is no historical reason to believe either that the Roderick MacLeod of Lewis of 1464-1478 was the same man as the Roderick MacLeod of Lewis of 1492-1494 or that the Roderick MacLeod of Lewis of 1492-1494 was not the same man as the "Rodrico Alexandri Macleod" of 1492.07.29. The Munros rejected the identification of "Rodrico Alexandri Macleod" with the "Rodrici M<sup>c</sup>Leod domini de Leowis" of 1492.08.01 because the latter's "father was Torquil",<sup>48</sup> but the latter's father is named neither in the 1492.08.01 record nor in the 1494.06.28 record of "Roderico Makleod de Lewys" and the Munros' rejection is based purely on the dogma (born of Sir George MacKenzie's error) that all the Rodericks MacLeod of Lewis between the Torcall MacLeod of Lewis of 1432/3-1462/3 and the

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Malcolm MacLeod of Lewis of 1511 were the same man. In the witness lists of 1492.07.29 and 1492.08.01 both Rodericks MacLeod (“Alexandri” and “domini de Leowis”) are followed immediately by Colin MacNeil of Gigha (respectively “Colino Nigelli Gewa” and “Colini M’neall de Gygha”),<sup>49</sup> which would be remarkable if the ‘untitled’ “Rodrico Alexandri Macleod” were not the same man as the ‘titled’ “Rodrici M’Leod domini de Leowis”. It looks very much as if, at some time in the three days from 1492.07.29 to 1492.08.01, John, Lord of the Isles, had recognised ‘Rodrico Alexandri’ as being MacLeod of Lewis.

That it was MacLeod of Lewis himself (the Roderick of 1464-1478, son of Torcall) who had died of wounds soon after the battle of Bloody Bay is borne out by the Sleat Historian’s account of the subsequent events leading up to the assassination of Angus Og MacDonald (in 1490):<sup>50</sup>

“There was another circumstance which shortened Macdonald’s days, viz. there was a lady of the name of Macleod, daughter of Rory, surnamed the Black, who was tutor to the lawful heir of the Lewis, married to the Laird of Muidort. The tutor, her father, being resolved not to acknowledge, by any means, the true heir of the Lewis, and engross the whole to himself, was displaced by Macdonald, and the rightful heir put in possession. This lady having a spite at Macdonald for dispossessing her father, together with John Mackenzie, contrived his death ...”

Clearly, if “the lawful heir of the Lewis” required a tutor then he was not yet of full age, in which case he cannot have been the same man as the Roderick MacLeod of Lewis who was clearly adult when he was on record in 1464-1478 and whose time as MacLeod of Lewis must therefore have ended a while before Angus Og’s assassination in 1490. The Knock MS bears a coherent story about the Lewis MacLeods: “the heir of Torkill of the Lewis” (Roderick, chief of the MacLeods of Lewis) died of wounds sustained in the battle of Bloody Bay (c.1483) and was succeeded by a minor (presumably his son), whose tutor, “Rory, surnamed the Black” (which ‘surname’ (i.e. byname), one assumes, is a translation of the Gaelic byname *Dubh*), tried to usurp the chiefship from his ward, but was thwarted by Angus Og, who supported the rightful heir but who subsequently fell victim (1490) to an assassination plotted in revenge by Rory the Black’s daughter and the MacKenzies. This coherent story contradicts only the dogma built upon Sir George MacKenzie’s erroneous genealogy of the MacLeods of Lewis; it does not contradict the facts of history. Instead, it complements the historical records to the extent that it removes the only impediment to the inherently likely identification of 1492.07.29’s “Rodrico Alexandri Macleod” with 1492.08.01’s “Rodrici M’Leod domini de Leowis”.

In her history of the MacLeods, I. F. Grant ended her account of the battle of Bloody Bay thus:<sup>51</sup>

“... According to the MacDonald account the galley of the heir of Torquil of Lewis was captured with all his men. He himself had been mortally wounded by two arrows and he died soon afterwards at Dunvegan. From other accounts it appears that the Chief of Lewis was killed. MacLean of Duart was captured but the galley of MacNeil of Barra escaped.”

Unfortunately, she did not identify what those “other accounts” were that suggested that the Chief of Lewis had also been killed at Bloody Bay. The possibility that there were such other accounts might explain how the information came to the Raasay family that the Lewis MacLeod who fell there was named Roderick. However, it is likely that Grant was here in error because she made no mention of those other accounts in her later treatment of the subject:<sup>52</sup>

“... In 1478 the name Ruairidh is recorded and it was this man’s son who was killed in the Battle of Bloody Bay. In 1496 the name Ruairidh again appears as the chief of the Macleods of Lewis, and it is always assumed that he was the same man. But was he? A Torquil is mentioned in a charter of 1492 and a chief of this name appears in 1496, and rather more is known about him. I think that it is possible that the Ruairidh of 1478 died and was succeeded by a minor, a grandson, the son of the young man killed at Bloody Bay, and that Rory the Black tried to displace this boy and was foiled by Angus Og, but that, during the confusion that followed the death of Angus Og, Rory the Black once more seized power but was quickly and permanently displaced. ...”

There are problems with some of Grant’s above-listed records: the charter of 1492 that mentions Torquil is unidentified (as it is also in her earlier work),<sup>53</sup> as is the record of 1496 in which he appears as chief. As for the record of 1496 in which Ruairidh appears as chief, one supposes it is that which Matheson described in “Perhaps his last appearance on record is on 2nd June 1496, when he grants a charter of the lands of Assynt to Neil MacLeod and to Angus, his son”, for which he cited the *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* “Vol. XXIV. 380.”<sup>54</sup> The source of this information was a Process of Spuilzie that Neil MacLeod of Assynt (having been robbed of his estate papers) instituted against the Earl of Seaforth and others in 1692, in which Process “the Writs taken from him

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are enumerated, beginning with Charter by Roderick Macleod of Lewis to Neil Macleod and his son, Angus, of the lands of Assynt, 2nd June, 1496, and extend over 200 items, a most interesting paper".<sup>55</sup> Unfortunately, not only would this supposed charter be completely at odds with the genealogy of the MacLeods of Assynt (in 1496 MacLeod of Assynt would have been either Old Angus or his son Ian, and the only Neil MacLeod of Assynt who is known to have had a son named Angus was executed in 1576/7) but also it does not appear (thirty years earlier) in "Ane perfynt list and Inventure of all the writs and Evidents yait Apperteineth and belongeth to Neill mcCLEod of Assint The nynteint day of Novemb<sup>r</sup> 1662 yeiris",<sup>56</sup> which starts with

“  
Item ane Chartour Be Roderick mc CLeod of Leaüs To Neill mcCLEod~  
Angussone onn the Lands off assint of the dait the Seconnd day of Junii  
Ane Thovsand fyve Hundred and Seavintie Tua yeiris  
”

This would seem to explain as a mistake the names, day and month of the supposed charter of 1496.06.02, in which case the year is possibly to be explained by the third item in the "Inventure", which is "daitit the Aught day of November Ane Thovsand fyve Hundred and nyntie Six yeiris", albeit in both cases the supposed charter's date is one hundred years too early. One suspects that the otherwise unknown records of 1492 and 1496 for Torquil may also be mistakes.<sup>57</sup> In summary, it would seem that Ruadhri MacLeod of Lewis is on known record no later than 1494 and Torcall MacLeod of Lewis is on known record no earlier than 1498.

It would seem that, until now, only I. F. Grant has treated seriously the Sleat Historian's story concerning the MacLeods of Lewis, and, although her attempt to correct the genealogy of the family was hampered by her acceptance that the Lewis MacLeod who was mortally wounded at Bloody Bay was the son of the Roderick of 1464-1478, it seems right to follow her in identifying:

- (a) the son of that mortally wounded MacLeod with
  - (i) that Torcall (first on record in 1498) who "was married to one of Argyll's daughters" and who "devotedly supported Angus Og's son, Donald Dhu, in his attempt to regain the Lordship of the Isles" and
  - (ii) the ward of Rory the Black;<sup>58</sup> and
- (b) Rory the Black with the Roderick MacLeod of Lewis of the 1490s.

Grant had some trouble in placing Rory the Black on the pedigree. She introduced him as "Rory the Black, MacLeod of Lewis' brother" but noted "The pedigree of the Macleods of Lewis is somewhat sketchy. Rory the Black was possibly an elder brother of the chief by an irregular marriage. This would explain the similarity of name and excuse his attitude; or he might have been a younger half-uncle", although she then went on to make him MacLeod of Lewis's son: "... young Torquil ... had just lost his father and his grandfather. He had never liked his uncle, Rory the Black, ...".<sup>59</sup> However, identifying Rory the Black with Roderick son of Alexander refutes all three of Grant's suggestions,<sup>60</sup> so, to place him on the pedigree one must start from first principles.

As the tutor to "young Torquil" (who is actually named "Torcul Óg" in verse),<sup>61</sup> Rory the Black / Ruadhri \*Dubh was probably his ward's nearest-related, adult, male-line kinsman. He probably belonged to the generation of his ward's father, i.e. to the same generation as the Roderick MacLeod of Lewis of 1464-1478 (son of the Torcall of 1432/3-1462/3), but identifying him with the Roderick MacLeod of the 1490s, and thus with the "Rodrico Alexandri Macleod" of 1492.07.29, means that he cannot have been Roderick MacLeod of Lewis's brother and so was most likely his first cousin instead, with them both being grandsons (and probable namesakes) of Ruadhri Mor MacLeod of Lewis (on record 1405-1433).<sup>62</sup> This implies that Roderick MacLeod of Lewis (fl.1464-1478) had no brothers.<sup>63</sup>

In his account of the MacLeods of Lewis, Sir George MacKenzie blended Roderick, son of Torcall, and Ruadhri \*Dubh, son of Alexander, into "Rory Oig, i.e. young. He entered by a kind of precept of *clare constat* ... daited 3 Nouember 1464. This Rory leived very long. To him succedit Malcolm".<sup>64</sup> It seems likely that this Ruadhri Og was not quite of full age when his father, Torcall, died c.1463, so explaining not only his byname<sup>65</sup> but also why it was not until 1466 that he married. He was probably only about forty years of age when he was mortally wounded at Bloody Bay. Sir George's claim that he "leived very long" is an invention, either (innocently) as an attempted explanation for the 47-year gap between Ruadhri Og's 1464 and Malcolm's 1511 records, or (cynically) as a smokescreen for his pedigree-faking because it seems likely that Sir George's descent was not from *Ruadhri Og mac Torcaill* but was instead from *Ruadhri \*Dubh mac Alasdair*.



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In Ruadhri \*Dubh we see the origin of a junior line of chiefs of the MacLeods of Lewis and the start of (and explanation for) the civil war amongst the MacLeods of Lewis (and their branches) that began as a split between pro- and anti- Angus-Og-of-the-Isles factions that evolved, via pro-(Earldom-of-Ross)/Lordship-of-the-Isles and pro-Crown factions, into a split between pro-MacDonald and pro-MacKenzie factions that ended with the destruction of the MacLeods at the hands of the MacKenzies, who took their lands from them. Ruadhri Og and his family were pro-Lordship / pro-MacDonald, and his son, Torcall Og, repaid his debt to Angus Og MacDonald (for protecting him against Ruadhri \*Dubh) by supporting the first attempt of Angus Og's son, Donald Dubh, to regain the Lordship of the Isles, even to the extent of losing his own estates through forfeiture (for that rebellion) and exile,<sup>66</sup> after Lewis had been invaded and taken by Crown forces under the Earl of Huntly in 1506. As was shown by Matheson, the sons of Tormod Mor MacLeod of Uig (a brother of a MacLeod of Lewis) took part in that invasion,<sup>67</sup> and perhaps another participant was the eventual beneficiary, Malcolm "MAKCLODE, filio et heredi quondam Rory Makcolde (*sic*) de Lewis," whose royal charter for the Lewis estates of 1511.06.29 was granted "pro bono servitio".<sup>68</sup> Such an action is more likely to have been performed by kinsmen not of Ruadhri Og but of Ruadhri \*Dubh, whose first attempt at becoming MacLeod of Lewis had been thwarted by Angus Og, whose subsequent assassination (in 1490) had been plotted by Ruadhri \*Dubh's daughter and the MacKenzies. The MacDonalds rallied under Alexander of Lochalsh, whose invasion of Ross in 1491 came to grief in battle against the MacKenzies.<sup>69</sup> This seems to have led to 'régime change' in Lewis, because the next year, 1492, saw Ruadhri \*Dubh finally recognised as MacLeod of Lewis (according to this present interpretation of the evidence). One of Malcolm's daughters married (as his second wife) Allan MacLeod of Gairloch, whose first wife had been a MacKenzie, and Malcolm's only acceptable son, Old Rory, had a MacKenzie as his first wife, albeit that marriage was such a disaster that it threw Old Rory into the pro-MacDonald camp, with the pro-MacKenzie faction instead realigning itself behind Torcall Conanach (Old Rory's pseudo-son from his MacKenzie wife), but that is another story.

Returning to the Sleat Historian's description of Roderick MacLeod of Lewis at the battle of Bloody Bay and the suggestion that a source for his account may have been Gaelic verse, one suspects that "the heir of Torkill of the Lewis" may have been a translation of an original '*oighre Torcaill Leòdhasaich*'. There are grounds for thinking that in this instance, rather than being a general description of his place of origin, *Leòdhasach* may have been Torcall's byname. The tradition amongst the MacLeods of Assynt (from what can be called 'MS 1739 (1)') was that<sup>70</sup>

"The frist of the name of M<sup>c</sup>Leod that possesd Assint personally and under the title of Laird of that Country was Norman M<sup>c</sup>Leod Eldest lawfull son to Rory M<sup>c</sup>Leod Laird of Lews, who was son to Torke[ll] M<sup>c</sup>Leod of that ilk and suposd to be the second Laird of that name yt were heretors of the Island of Lews, Whilk Norman the sd Rory M<sup>c</sup>Leod of Lews his fayr sent to ffoster very young To Caall Carr ane old Residenter in the Country ... The sd Norman takeing fancy when he came to be a man of Assint & Cogiach he would not Returne to possess the estate of Lews nor would he allow any of his sons to attempt the same, tho they thought to make good yr indoubted title to the sd Island severall tymys But allow[ed] his second Broyr to possess Lews."

This valuable manuscript provides an early-eighteenth-century view of the early generations of the MacLeods of Lewis that is not only independent of Sir George MacKenzie's pedigree-faking but also in accord with Matheson's correction to the genealogy. Moreover, an edited version of the manuscript (that can be called 'MS 1739 (2)') names the ancestral MacLeod of Assynt as "Normand Afsintach",<sup>71</sup> which thereby supplies his Gaelic byname.

That the manuscripts claim that Tormod Assintach was the elder brother of Torcall MacLeod of Lewis (fl.1432/3-1462/3), son of Ruadhri MacLeod of Lewis (fl.1405-1433), could be put down to pedigree-faking on behalf of the Assynt family but for two reasons. The first reason is that the Book of Clanranald corroborates the order of the two brothers in its account of the Battle of Harlaw:<sup>72</sup>

"oir cethrar do chuarar amach as anárm roimh chuidechta no phártuigh do tslúagh do chúaidh leó .i. Tormód m<sup>c</sup> Leoid 7 Torcuill a bhrathair • Lochluinn mac Giolla mhaoil Giolla Pádrúig mac ruaighri do marbhadh Giolla Padruig mac ruaighri 7 Lochluin m<sup>c</sup> Giolla maoil 7 tainic Tormód 7 Torcuill as an rúaig slán"

"For there were four that went out of the army before any part of the main force went with them, viz., Norman Macleod and Torquill his brother, Lochluinn mac Gillemhaoil and Gilpatrick mac Rory. Gilpatrick mac Rory and Lochluinn mac Gillemhaoil were killed, but Norman and Torquill escaped safe from the pursuit."

The wording here quite clearly implies that Norman was the elder brother.

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The second reason is that, despite two earlier accounts (by Sir Robert Gordon in 1630<sup>73</sup> and by Lachlan Mackintosh of Kinrara c.1680<sup>74</sup>) both making Norman the son of Roderick Mor MacLeod of Lewis, in the MacKenzie-influenced Geanies genealogical scroll, written during the lifetime of Sir George in 1685/1695, (and in the related account of the MacLeods of Lewis by Douglas)<sup>75</sup> Norman is made the younger brother of Roderick (Mor). This should be seen not as a mistake but as pedigree-faking. Making Norman the younger brother of his father, Roderick, would have been wholly unnecessary if he had really have been the younger brother of Torcall son of Ruadhri Mor. What we have here is an example of the error of ‘Youncler’, in this instance, specifically a ‘Youncler-back’, with an elder brother having been moved back a generation to become a younger uncle.<sup>76</sup>

This is one of three instances in which the pedigree of the MacLeods of Lewis was faked in order to make Sir George MacKenzie appear to be the heir of the senior line of all the MacLeods:

1. Of the two main branches of the MacLeods, the Lewis MacLeods (*Siol Torcaill*) were made senior to the Harris MacLeods (*Siol Thormoid*) by their eponymous ancestor, Torcall (who was really a younger grandson of the Harris MacLeods’ eponymous ancestor, Tormod, who was the only certain son of the eponymous Leod), being moved from his true place in the pedigree and misplaced as the eldest son of Leod.
2. Within the *Siol Torcaill*, the senior branch, descended from *Tormod Assintach*, eldest son of *Ruadhri Mor*, suffered the error of ‘Youncler-back’ so that Tormod Assintach became the younger brother of Ruadhri Mor.
3. Within the MacLeods of Lewis proper, the senior line, the descendants of *Ruadhri Og*, suffered the error of ‘Refusal’ (in which embarrassing or contradictory evidence is ignored or omitted),<sup>77</sup> being written out of history when their ancestor suffered the error of ‘Misidentification’<sup>78</sup> with *Ruadhri \*Dubh*, the ancestor of the junior line (from which Sir George MacKenzie probably descended).

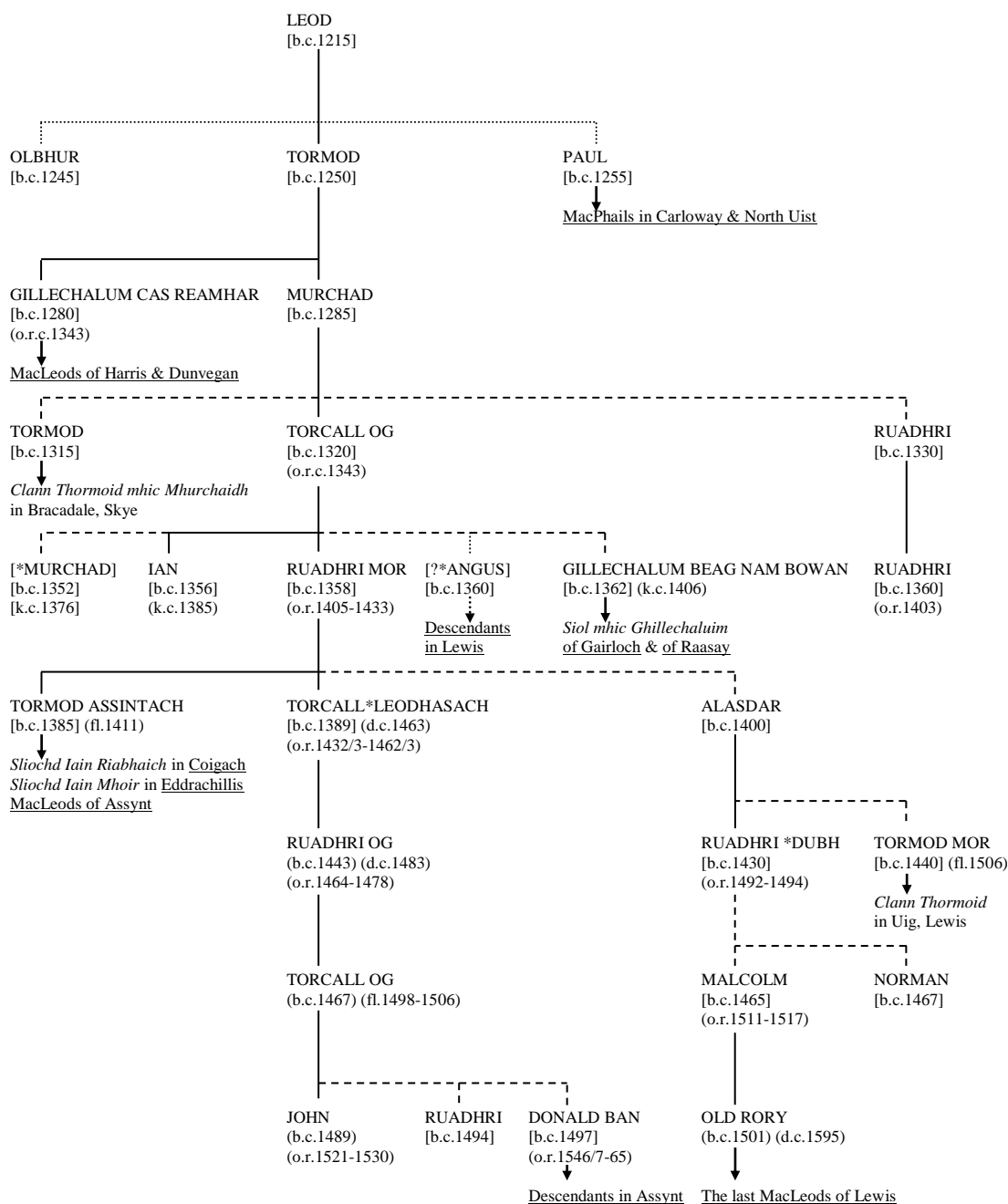
Thus all lines senior to that producing Sir George were made junior to his line, albeit instance 2. was a late development because in Sir George MacKenzie’s own account of the MacLeods of Lewis *Tormod Assintach*’s line suffered ‘Refusal’ (just like the senior line of the MacLeods of Lewis) by being completely ignored (and so omitted).

The argument here is that *Tormod Assintach* was the eldest son of *Ruadhri Mor*, just as MS 1739 (1) and MS 1739 (2) claim. Those MSS also claim that *Tormod Assintach* forsook his title to Lewis in order to stay on the mainland of Scotland, in Assynt, and allowed “his second Broyr to possess Lews”. Such an arrangement may lie behind Alexander of Islay’s 1432/3.01.07 charter of Lewis and Waternish “to Torcal son to Rorie mcLeod” “be vertew of the said Rorie his resignation”.<sup>79</sup> It is suggested here that this traditional arrangement between the two brothers was reflected in their acquisition of bynames, with Tormod acquiring the byname *Assintach* (as is shown by MS 1739 (2)), and Torcall correspondingly acquiring the byname *Leòdhasach*, as is suggested not only by inference from Tormod’s *Assintach* but also by interpretation from the Sleat Historian’s description of his son at the battle of Bloody Bay as “the heir of Torkill of the Lewis”.

In summary, then, ‘Bloody Bay’ was known as *Camus Dearg* and the battle (fought c.1483) was responsible for the deaths of both chiefs of the MacLeods, William of Harris (who was killed early in the battle), and Roderick of Lewis (who died of his wounds, at Dunvegan, soon after the battle). Acknowledging that Roderick died c.1483 removes another error from Sir George MacKenzie’s faked account of the MacLeods of Lewis and requires the genealogy of that family to be rewritten. I present below a skeletal version (shorn of wives and daughters) of my own view of the pedigree, leaving the fuller version for a deeper analysis of the subject than can be covered here.

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Table 2. Speculative skeletal Pedigree of the MacLeods of Lewis and their kin



## KEY

—————	attested relationship	b. = born	fl. = <i>floruit</i>
-----	probable relationship	c. = <i>circa</i>	k. = killed
.....	possible relationship	d. = died	o.r. = on record

[ ] enclose dates that are guesses extrapolated from other dates

( ) enclose dates that are based on evidence and so will only be a few years off true, if any

\* means that the immediately following name or byname is inferred (by either kinship or translation)

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper was put together in less time than I would have liked and so not all the permissions to quote from the relevant sources have been acquired, therefore I apologise to the relevant parties for such omissions. However, I acknowledge with gratitude permissions from the following:

Aonghas MacCoinnich, for (unpublished tràchdas PhD, Oilthigh Obair Dheathain, 2004) “Tùs gu Iarlachd: Eachdraidh Clann Choinnich c.1466-1638”.

Hugh MacLeod of MacLeod, for I. F. Grant (1959/1981) *The MacLeods The History of a Clan*.

Mrs Jean Munro, for Jean Munro & R. W. Munro (1986) *Acts of the Lords of the Isles* and for R. W. Munro, ‘Bloody Bay’ (*NOTES & QUERIES of the Society of West Highland and Island Historical Research [Series 1] Number XVI*, September 1981, pages 19-20).

Historic Environment Scotland (HES), for K A Steer & J W M Bannerman (1977) *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands*.

Inverness Public Library, for Volume 3412 of the Fraser-Mackintosh library.

The National Library of Scotland, for NLS Ch.15326 and for NLS MS 19308.

I would also like to record my thanks to Aonghas MacCoinnich for his help with the early historical records concerning the MacLeods of Lewis.

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<sup>1</sup> K A Steer & J W M Bannerman (1977) *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands*, page 23; Colin M. MacDonald (1950) *The History of Argyll up to the beginning of the sixteenth century*, pages 254 & 261.

<sup>2</sup> According to Alick Morrison (1986) *The Chiefs of Clan MacLeod*, pages 57-59, William survived until c.1500, but no supporting evidence is provided for that claim which is not only unique and egregious but also wrong in detail: William was dead by 1498.06.15 when his successor received a royal charter as “ALEXANDRO MAKCLOID filio et heredi quondam Willelmi Johannis Makcloidsoun de Dunvegane” – James Balfour Paul (1882) *Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland A.D. 1424-1513*, page 514, item 2420.

<sup>3</sup> [PSHS 4/22] Jean Munro & R. W. Munro (1986) *Acts of the Lords of the Isles*, pages 266-267.

<sup>4</sup> [PSHS 4/22] Jean Munro & R. W. Munro (1986) *Acts of the Lords of the Isles*, page 268.

<sup>5</sup> R. W. Munro, “Bloody Bay” (*NOTES & QUERIES of the Society of West Highland and Island Historical Research [Series 1] Number XVI*, September 1981, pages 19-20), page 20.

<sup>6</sup> Sir Robert Douglas of Glenbervie (1798) *The Baronage of Scotland*, page 376.

<sup>7</sup> The 1767 Memorial MS “is subscribed W.B. which seems to prove that it was the work of the distinguished antiquary and judge, Sir William MacLeod Bannatyne, alias Lord Bannatyne of Kames” (1743.01.26-1833.11.30) – Alick Morrison (1986) *The Chiefs of Clan MacLeod*, page 5; the late Rev. Dr. Donald MacKinnon & Alick Morrison (1968/1999) *The MacLeods - The Genealogy of a Clan Section Two*, pages 86-87.

<sup>8</sup> Compare William Gillies, ‘The Invention of Tradition, Highland-Style’ (A. A. MacDonald, Michael Lynch and Ian B. Cowan (1994) *The Renaissance in Scotland*, pages 144-156) page 152, footnote 22, distinguishing between *dearg* ‘(blood-)red’ and *ruadh* ‘(russet-)red’.

<sup>9</sup> The Bannatyne MS seems to have been written in the 1830s by Dr Bannatyne William MacLeod (1790-1856.10.03), who seems to have had access to the papers of his kinsman, Sir William MacLeod Bannatyne, Lord Bannatyne of Kames - the late Rev. Dr. Donald MacKinnon & Alick Morrison (1968/1999) *The MacLeods - The Genealogy of a Clan Section Two*, pages 82 & 85-86; the late Rev. Dr. Donald MacKinnon & Alick Morrison (1970/1999) *The MacLeods - The Genealogy of a Clan Section Three*, pages 71, 74 & 76; Alick Morrison (1986) *The Chiefs of Clan MacLeod*, page 6.

<sup>10</sup> It was evidently made by someone who not only had difficulty in reading the exemplar but also had no background in ‘MacLeodery’, as the many mis-spelled place-names and personal names show.

<sup>11</sup> The two passages are separated by an account of a battle in Skye in which the *Sìol Tormoid* were attacked by the Clan Ranald and Alexander MacLeod received the wound that gave him his hunched back (*Crotach*).

<sup>12</sup> [PSHS 4/22] Jean Munro & R. W. Munro (1986) *Acts of the Lords of the Isles*, pages 111-116, 172-173 & 311. Although the Bannatyne MS’s date for John’s death of c.1497-8 is wrong by five years, curiously, it is matched by the date given in the Rev. A. MacDonald & the Rev. A. MacDonald (1896) *The Clan Donald Vol I.*, pages 281 & 282 footnote 1, which cites the same source (the High Treasurer’s Accounts) as that used by the Munros, only at five years difference (thus a remittance of payment is dated 1498.02.05 instead of 1503.02.05). The Bannatyne MS does have the 1502/3 death-date but applies it to Angus Og.

<sup>13</sup> ‘A Brief Genealogical Account of the Family of Maclean from it’s First Settling in the Island of Mull and Parts adjacent in the Year 1716’ ([PSHS 1/33] James Toshach Clark (1900) *Genealogical Collections Concerning Families in Scotland, made by Walter MacFarlane 1750-1751, Vol. I.*, pages 118-143) page 127.

<sup>14</sup> Aonghas MacCoinnich, “‘Kingis rabellis’ to ‘Cuidich ’n Rìgh’? Clann Choinnich: the emergence of a kindred, c.1475-c.1514” (Steve Boardman & Alasdair Ross (2003) *The exercise of power in medieval Scotland, c.1200-1500*, pages 175-200) pages 188-194 & 198-199.

<sup>15</sup> The Iona Club (1847) *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis, Consisting of Original Papers and Documents relating to the History of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.*, pages 316-317 (see also [PSHS 2/5] J. R. N. MacPhail (1914) *Highland Papers Volume I*, pages 49-50).

<sup>16</sup> The Rev. A. MacDonald & the Rev. A. MacDonald (1896) *The Clan Donald Vol I.*, pages 267-268; Colin M. MacDonald (1950) *The History of Argyll up to the beginning of the sixteenth century*, page 256.

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<sup>17</sup> Taking the Knock MS's account at face value at this point, Colin M. MacDonald (1950) *The History of Argyll up to the beginning of the sixteenth century*, page 256, stated that "MacLeod of Harris was taken prisoner with his men". Perhaps this helps to explain Alick Morrison's rejection of the MacLeod tradition that William MacLeod of Harris was killed at Bloody Bay.

<sup>18</sup> See Andrew Piers MacLeod (2017.10.17) 'Types of Error in Clan History and Genealogy' (posted to [www.imwe.co.uk/genealogy/apm/errors.pdf](http://www.imwe.co.uk/genealogy/apm/errors.pdf) on 2018.09.01), page 2.

<sup>19</sup> Compare M. Livingstone (1908) *Registrum Secreti Sigilli Regum Scotorum – The Register of the Privy Seal of Scotland Vol. I. A.D. 1488-1529*, page 391, item 2579, which contains a short list of Island chiefs that includes "Lachlano Makclane de Dowart, Malcolmo Makclane de Lewis, Alexandro alias Alistar Makcloid de Dunvegane", in which Malcolm of Lewis has wrongly been given the preceding Chief's surname, "Makclane", instead of his proper surname, 'Makcloid'. The similarity in spelling between the names "MacLean" and "MacLeod" makes them particularly prone to fall foul of this error.

<sup>20</sup> 'A Brief Genealogical Account of the Family of Maclean from its First Settling in the Island of Mull and Parts adjacent in the Year 1716' ([PSHS 1/33] James Toshach Clark (1900) *Genealogical Collections Concerning Families in Scotland, made by Walter MacFarlane 1750-1751, Vol. I*, pages 118-143) page 127.

<sup>21</sup> According to the Bannatyne MS, concerning the civil war in the Lordship of the Isles, "The men of the Highlands and Isles were much divided on this occasion but the greater part followed Angus".

<sup>22</sup> Colin M. MacDonald (1950) *The History of Argyll up to the beginning of the sixteenth century*, page 256; I. F. Grant (1959/1981) *The MacLeods The History of a Clan*, page 54; John Sadler (2010) *Blood on the Wave Scottish Sea Battles*, page 72.

<sup>23</sup> Donald Gregory (1836/1881) *The History of the Western Highlands and Isles of Scotland*, page 73: "The head of the Sioil Torquil, in 1493, was another Roderick, grandson of the former, whose eldest son was mortally wounded fighting for the old Lord of the Isles, at the battle of the Bloody Bay,<sup>3</sup> [<sup>3</sup> Hugh Macdonald's MS.] and died without issue." Alexander Mackenzie (1889) *History of the Macleods*, page 289: "Roderick of the Lewis ... married, first, Margaret, daughter of John MacLeod, VI. of Harris and Dunvegan, with issue— 1. A son who was mortally wounded at the Battle of the Bloody Bay near Tobermory, while fighting for John, Lord of the Isles, against his bastard son, Angus Og. He died shortly afterwards on his way home, at Dunvegan Castle, without issue.‡ [‡ The Sleat Seanachaidh says in his description of the engagement that "the galley of the heir of Torkill [should be Roderick] of the Lewis, with all his men, was taken, and himself mortally wounded with two arrows, whereof he died soon after at Dunvegan."—*Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis*, p. 317.]". W. C. Mackenzie (1903/1974) *History of the Outer Hebrides*, page 98: "William MacLeod of Harris was killed; the galley of his nephew, with all the Lewismen, was captured, and the heir of Roderick was himself mortally wounded by two arrows, succumbing to his injuries soon afterwards at Dunvegan." Alick Morrison (1974) *The MacLeods – The Genealogy of a Clan Section Four*, pages 3-4: "Roderick married, as his first wife, Margaret, daughter of John MacLeod VI of Harris [p.4] (Iain Borb), with issue, a son, who was so badly wounded in the Battle of Bloody Bay in Mull in 1480 that he died on his way home at Dunvegan Castle." Donald MacDonald (1978) *Lewis A History of the Island*, page 24: "Roderick's eldest son was mortally wounded at the Battle of Bloody Bay, near Tobermory, in 1480, between the forces of John, Lord of the Isles and his natural son, Angus Og." William Matheson (1979.04.11) "The MacLeods of Lewis" (*Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness Volume LI 1978-80* (1981) pages 320-337) pages 330 "It has been stated that Roderick was twice married, first, to Margaret, daughter of John MacLeod of Dunvegan,<sup>78</sup> with issue: (1) A son, who was mortally wounded at the battle of Bloody Bay (*Bàgh na Fala*) off the north coast of Mull, dying at Dunvegan when on his way back to Lewis.<sup>79</sup>" & 335 "78. Douglas, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*; followed by later writers. But documentation seems to be lacking." & "79. *Highland Papers* I. 50; where the Sleat historian erroneously calls the father Torquil. There is a reference to a poem about the son, preserved in Erray House, Tobermory, two centuries ago (MacLagan MS No.122)."

<sup>24</sup> John Burke (1838) *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol. IV.*, page 586 (*sub* MacLeod, of Raasay): "RODERICK, seventh Baron of Lewis. He married Mary, daughter of Macleod of Herries, and had three sons, Roderick, Torquil, and Malcolm. The eldest, Roderick, being killed in the battle of the Bloody Bay, in 1480, where he was fighting in the cause of John, Earl of Ross, and Lord of the Isles." This seems to have been a source of information for Capt. F. W. L. Thomas (1880.06.14) 'Traditions of the MacAulays of Lewis' (*Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland 1879-80 Vol. XIV* (1880) pages 363-431) page 397: "Roderick's eldest son, Roderick, was killed at Mull, in the battle of the Bloody Bay, in 1480."

<sup>25</sup> The Rev. A. MacDonald & the Rev. A. MacDonald (1896) *The Clan Donald Vol I.*, page 267: (of William MacLeod of Harris) "Ranald Bane grappled Macleod's galley, ... which immediately became unmanageable, and was captured with all on board. Macleod was mortally wounded, and died shortly afterwards at Dunvegan."

<sup>26</sup> K A Steer & J W M Bannerman (1977) *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands*, pages 97-98.

<sup>27</sup> I. F. Grant (1959/1981) *The MacLeods The History of a Clan*, pages 53-54, doubts that the flag was unfurled at this battle.

<sup>28</sup> John Sadler (2010) *Blood on the Wave Scottish Sea Battles*, page 72, having quoted 6/1-6/6 with reference to the MacLeods of Lewis, commented "This passage rather suggests that, with their skipper immobilised by wounds in the opening exchange, his crew lost heart and struck their colours, counting on the winner's clemency, which was clearly extended. Had the brawl on board begun, the losers might not have found the victors so inclined to magnanimity." This explanation would fit better the MacLeans of Duart: their galley apparently having been 'sandwiched' between the galleys of Angus Og and Allan of Moidart so that there was no escape, and being outnumbered two-to-one and about to be boarded on both sides, they could have "struck their colours" before "the brawl on board" had begun, leading to the capture of MacLean "with all his men".

<sup>29</sup> William Matheson (1979.04.11) "The MacLeods of Lewis" (*Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness Volume LI 1978-80* (1981) pages 320-337) page 335, end-note 79.

<sup>30</sup> [PSHS 4/22] Jean Munro & R. W. Munro (1986) *Acts of the Lords of the Isles*, page 267.

<sup>31</sup> The same generation also sees the first appearance of this forename amongst the MacLeods of Gairloch, a corrective account of which family must be left for another paper.

<sup>32</sup> Andrew Lang (ed., 1898) *The Highlands of Scotland in 1750 from Manuscript 104 in the King's Library, British Museum*, page 35 (on Coigach): "About 70 years ago it was the property of M<sup>c</sup>Leod of Coigach, and falling to an Heiress, who was married to George the first Earl of Cromartie, who being an Antiquary, pretended to prove that this was the first family of the M<sup>c</sup>Leods, and in order to set himself up as Chief of that Clan he obtained from the Crown the Title of Lord M<sup>c</sup>Leod for the Secondary Title of his Family." This is a classic case of the error in Clan History and Genealogy that I call 'Sons-and-Lovers' (in which an heiress becomes the wife of one of her descendants who is a founding father) (See Andrew Piers MacLeod (2017.10.17) 'Types of Error in Clan History and Genealogy' (posted to [www.imwe.co.uk/genealogy/apm/errors.pdf](http://www.imwe.co.uk/genealogy/apm/errors.pdf) on 2018.09.01), page 2): the "Heiress" was Margaret, daughter of Torcall Conanach, and she was Earl George's paternal grandmother, not wife. See also I. F. Grant (1959/1981) *The MacLeods The History of a Clan*, page 31 footnote 1.

## BLOODY BAY AND THE MACLEODS

<sup>33</sup> William Fraser (1876) *The Earls of Cromartie Their Kindred, Country, and Correspondence, in Two Volumes. Vol.II*, pages 462-513, with the account of the MacLeods of Lewis, and their supposed ancestors, starting on page 504. Page 468 supplies the dating parameters, with the recipient of Murdo Riach's sword in 1668 evidently having been Kenneth, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Seaforth, who succeeded in 1651 and died on 1678.12.16, rather than Kenneth, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Seaforth, who was only baptised on 1661.12.08. – Duncan Warrand (1965) *Some Mackenzie Pedigrees*, pages 19-21.

<sup>34</sup> Sir Robert Douglas of Glenbervie (1798) *The Baronage of Scotland; containing, an Historical and Genealogical Account of the Gentry of that Kingdom Vol. I*, pages 384-385. From the Preface, we learn (page IV) that "SIR Robert Douglas seems to have lent to the press, without method, the history of each family, as the materials came to hand;" but, having sent the first 562 pages of his work to the press, he died on 1770.04.24 and his editors took twenty-eight years to complete and publish the book; a planned second volume never materialised. Sir Robert's accounts of all the MacLeods were prepared consecutively and occupy pages 374-388 of the work, wherein the latest date mentioned is "1768" in a marginal note on page 387. Given that before his death Sir Robert prepared another 172 pages after those of the MacLeods, it is reasonable to suggest that he prepared his accounts of the MacLeods c.1769.

<sup>35</sup> I have added to the Cromartie account the name of Malcolm's son-in-law, "Kenneth ni stroin", from page 466, it having been left blank on page 511. I have omitted from the Douglas account the few dates that he supplied because they are later accretions that obscure the similarity with the Cromartie account. Perhaps I should also have omitted (for the same reason) the marriages of the first Roderick and his son Torquil, whose named wives were really the wives of their respective homonymous grandsons. Intermediate between the Cromartie and Douglas accounts (although more similar to the latter than to the former) is a pedigree of the family (traced down to Sir George MacKenzie himself) that appears in the Geanies genealogical scroll that purports to date from 1685 but which seems to be a slightly inaccurate copy made c.1695.

<sup>36</sup> Donald Gregory (1836/1881) *The History of the Western Highlands and Isles of Scotland, From A.D. 1493 to A.D. 1625*, pages 73, 96-97, 102, 111 & 130-131.

<sup>37</sup> William Matheson (1979.04.11) 'The MacLeods of Lewis' (*Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness Volume LI 1978-80* (1981) pages 320-337).

<sup>38</sup> Aonghas MacCoinnich (unpublished tràchdas PhD, Oilthigh Obair Dheathain, 2004) "Tùs gu Iarlachd: Eachdraidh Clann Choinnich c.1466-1638", page 421.

<sup>39</sup> Aonghas MacCoinnich (unpublished tràchdas PhD, Oilthigh Obair Dheathain, 2004) "Tùs gu Iarlachd: Eachdraidh Clann Choinnich c.1466-1638", page 73, footnote 230, citing "[Cambridge] U[niversity] L[ibrary] Doc 4143" & "Archivum Apostolicae, S. Penitentiarum, Reg. Matrimii et Divers. 12, 32r". Compare [PSHS 4/22] Jean Munro & R. W. Munro (1986) *Acts of the Lords of the Isles*, page 244 item B41 and Nicholas Maclean-Bristol, 'Further Extracts from the Vatican Archives' (*Notes and Queries of the Society of West Highland and Island Historical Research [Series 1] Number XXX*, February 1987, pages 8-13) page 9, item 6. In an e-mail to me of 2017.10.11, 13:59h, Aonghas MacCoinnich wrote:

"In terms of Mairsaili's marriage to Ruairidh of Lewis, permission for the marriage was granted at the papacy, 20 August 1465, and this permission for, 'Rodoricus Maclouis sodoris diocis. Et Marcella filia Celestini de Insulis Rossens. Dioc.' was proclaimed by Bishop Cockburn at Chanonry 18 September 1466 (not the 13<sup>th</sup> September, I think)."

<sup>40</sup> [PSHS 4/22] Jean Munro & R. W. Munro (1986) *Acts of the Lords of the Isles*, page(s 152-)154(-156), item 96.

<sup>41</sup> [PSHS 4/22] Jean Munro & R. W. Munro (1986) *Acts of the Lords of the Isles*, page(s 179-)182, item 113.

<sup>42</sup> Except where otherwise stated, the source for these entries is [PSHS 4/22] Jean Munro & R. W. Munro (1986) *Acts of the Lords of the Isles*, pages: (40-)41, item 26; (51-)53, item 34; (70-)71, item 47; (74-)76, item 50; (90-)91(-92), item 62; (92-)93(-94), item 63; (94-)95(-96), item 64; (107-)108(-109), item 73; & (117-)119, item 76.

<sup>43</sup> Aonghas MacCoinnich (unpublished tràchdas PhD, Oilthigh Obair Dheathain, 2004) "Tùs gu Iarlachd: Eachdraidh Clann Choinnich c.1466-1638", page 421.

<sup>44</sup> Annie I. Dunlop & David MacLauchlan (1983) *Calendar of Scottish Supplications to Rome Volume iv 1433-1447*, page 107, item 439.

<sup>45</sup> [PSHS 4/22] Jean Munro & R. W. Munro (1986) *Acts of the Lords of the Isles*, page(s 194-)195, item 122.

<sup>46</sup> [PSHS 4/22] Jean Munro & R. W. Munro (1986) *Acts of the Lords of the Isles*, page(s 195-)196(-197), item 123.

<sup>47</sup> James Balfour Paul (1882) *Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland A.D. 1424-1513*, page(s 469-)470, item 2221.

<sup>48</sup> [PSHS 4/22] Jean Munro & R. W. Munro (1986) *Acts of the Lords of the Isles*, page 267.

<sup>49</sup> [PSHS 4/22] Jean Munro & R. W. Munro (1986) *Acts of the Lords of the Isles*, pages 194-197. 'Colin' is here a 'swap' for Gille-Colum; see K A Steer & J W M Bannerman (1977) *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands*, page 79.

<sup>50</sup> The Iona Club (1847) *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis, Consisting of Original Papers and Documents relating to the History of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.*, page 318 (see also [PSHS 2/5] J. R. N. MacPhail (1914) *Highland Papers Volume I*, pages 51-52).

<sup>51</sup> I. F. Grant (1959/1981) *The MacLeods The History of a Clan*, page 54.

<sup>52</sup> I. F. Grant (1969) *Angus Og of the Isles*, page 167, end-note 2. The lack of any reference to those "other accounts" leads one to suspect that in her earlier history's "From other accounts it appears that the Chief of Lewis was killed", "Lewis" is an error for 'Harris', in which case her "other accounts" may have been the 1767 Memorial MS and the Bannatyne MS.

<sup>53</sup> In I. F. Grant (1959/1981) *The MacLeods The History of a Clan* (which nowhere else refers to the record), page 41 gives a list of Chiefs of Siol Torquil that includes "Torquil on record 1492".

<sup>54</sup> William Matheson (1979.04.11) 'The MacLeods of Lewis' (*Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness Volume LI 1978-80* (1981) pages 320-337) pages 330 & 335 end-note 77.

<sup>55</sup> Charles Fraser-Mackintosh (1901.01.24) 'Neil Macleod, last of the Macleods of Assynt' (*Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness Volume XXIV 1899-1901* (1904) pages 370-383) page 380.

<sup>56</sup> National Library of Scotland, Ch.15326.

<sup>57</sup> Compare Alexander Mackenzie (1889) *History of the Macleods with Genealogies of the Principal Families of the Name*, page 15, which claims that "In a charter by John of Isla, Lord of the Isles, dated the 22nd of December, 1478, in favour of *Alexandro Leslie de Wardes*, among the witnesses ... are found the names of William Macleod of Glenelg and Harris, and of Torquil Macleod of Lewis". This is quite clearly item "113" in [PSHS 4/22] Jean Munro & R. W. Munro (1986) *Acts of the Lords of the Isles*, pages 179-182, but in the witness list there (page 182) "Willelmo M'loïd de Glenelg" is followed not by any Torquil but by "Rori Macloïd de Lewes".

<sup>58</sup> I. F. Grant (1969) *Angus Og of the Isles*, pages 167-168, end-note 2.

<sup>59</sup> I. F. Grant (1969) *Angus Og of the Isles*, pages 113, 117 end-note 1 & page 165.

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<sup>60</sup> As “MacLeod of Lewis’ brother” he would have been Rory son of Torcall. As MacLeod of Lewis’s “younger half-uncle” he would have been Rory son of Rory. As “young Torquill ... his uncle” he would have been Rory son of Rory.

<sup>61</sup> William J. Watson (1937) *Scottish Verse from the Book of the Dean of Lismore* (pages 100-105), page 102, verse 12, line 1 (overall, verse-line 1013).

<sup>62</sup> [PSHS 4/13] Francis McGurk (1976) *Calendar of Papal Letters to Scotland of Benedict XIII of Avignon 1394-1419*, page 139 (1405.06.09, “the nobleman Roderic Macleord, baron of Leows”); Annie I. Dunlop & David MacLauchlan (1983) *Calendar of Scottish Supplications to Rome Volume iv 1433-1447*, page 25 (item 106, 1433.10.19, “Roderick McLeoyd, lord of Leows”).

<sup>63</sup> Strictly speaking, the implication is that Roderick MacLeod of Lewis had no brothers who survived the Battle of Bloody Bay, but, to date, there being no known evidence for the existence either of any such brothers or of any families that such brothers might have had, the likelihood must be that if he had any brothers at all then they all died young.

<sup>64</sup> William Fraser (1876) *The Earls of Cromartie Their Kindred, Country, and Correspondence, in Two Volumes. Vol.II*, page 511.

<sup>65</sup> Andrew Piers MacLeod, “Usage: the Byname Og” (*West Highland Notes & Queries Series 4 No. 5* (November 2017) pages 19-24), pages 20-21. See also Andrew Piers MacLeod (2017.10.17) ‘Usage: the Byname “Og”’ (posted to [www.imwe.co.uk/genealogy/apm/og.pdf](http://www.imwe.co.uk/genealogy/apm/og.pdf) on 2018.09.01), page 1, under ‘C. Tertiary Use of ‘Og’.

<sup>66</sup> John L. Roberts (1999) *Feuds, Forays and Rebellions History of the Highland Clans 1475-1625*, page 30 states “Torquill MacLeod apparently took refuge in Antrim”, but the source for that claim is not identified.

<sup>67</sup> William Matheson (1968.02.07) ‘The Historical Coinneach Odhar and Some Prophecies Attributed to Him’ (*Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness Volume XLVI 1969-1970* (1971) pages 66-88) pages 82-84; William Matheson (1979.04.11) ‘The MacLeods of Lewis’ (*Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness Volume LI 1978-80* (1981) pages 320-337) pages 328-329.

<sup>68</sup> James Balfour Paul (1882) *Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum – The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland A.D. 1424-1513*, page 770, item 3578.

<sup>69</sup> Donald Gregory (1836/1881) *The History of the Western Highlands and Isles of Scotland*, pages 56-57.

<sup>70</sup> “The Geneoagie of the family of Afsint”, National Library of Scotland (NLS) MS 19308 (folios 2r-3v), folio 2r. These two folios were folded in such a way that the bottom half of folio 3v became the outer ‘wrapper’, on which, in a different hand, was written “The Geneoagie of the family of Afsint 1739”. Folio 4 of MS 19308 contains another version of the account (edited for pedigree-faking on behalf of the line of the eventual MacLeod lairds of Assynt), headed “The Geneoagie of the family of Afsint” and folded such that the bottom half of folio 4v became the outer ‘wrapper’, on which, in a different (?) hand, was written “The Geneoagie of the family of Afsint from Normand Afsintach 1739”. These two versions of the Assynt genealogy can be termed MS 1739 (1) and MS 1739 (2). NLS MS 19308 also contains other, later and less valuable accounts of the family. It forms part of the papers of the MacLeods of Geanies that were sold to the Library in 1971.

<sup>71</sup> “The Geneoagie of the family of Afsint”, National Library of Scotland (NLS) MS 19308 (folio 4), folio 4v.

<sup>72</sup> Alexander MacBain, M.A., and Rev. John Kennedy (1894) *Reliquiae Celticae Texts, Papers, and Studies in Gaelic Literature and Philology left by the late Rev. Alexander Cameron, LL.D.*, pages 212 (original Gaelic) & 213 (English translation). That one of the brothers was named “Torcuill” shows that they were of the *Sìol Torcaill* and that they were active in 1411 shows that they belonged to the generation of either the sons (per Ruadhri Mor MacLeod of Lewis, fl.1405-1433) or grandsons of the eponymous Torcall (fl.c.1343). As the names of *Tormod* and *Torcall* are not known to have been used for brothers of Ruadhri Mor but are known to have been used for his sons, it is easy to identify the Book of Clanranald’s *Tormod* and *Torcuill* with Tormod Assintach and Torcall of Lewis. W. C. Mackenzie (1903/1974) *History of the Outer Hebrides*, page 93, silently reversed the order of the two brothers to what, one assumes, he felt ‘should’ have been: “When the Lewismen set out on the campaign which terminated at the battle of Harlaw, the “Red Priest” accompanied Torquill and Tormod, the sons of Roderick Macleod, with one “Lochluinn MacGillemhaoil”; and these four “went out of the army before any part of the main force with them.” ...” [*sic*, APM]

<sup>73</sup> Sir Robert Gordon of Gordonstoun, Baronet, (1813) *A Genealogical History of the Earldom of Sutherland, from its Origin to the Year 1630*, page 262. Sir Robert diplomatically avoided the question of primogeniture in his statement that “Tormat Macloyd, Laird of Assint, was one of the sons of Rory Moir Macloyd of the Lewes”!

<sup>74</sup> Jean Munro (2009) *A Chronicle of the Family of Mackintosh to the year 1680 by Lachlan Mackintosh of Kinrara*, page 19.

<sup>75</sup> Sir Robert Douglas of Glenbervie (1798) *The Baronage of Scotland*, page 384.

<sup>76</sup> See Andrew Piers MacLeod (2017.10.17) ‘Types of Error in Clan History and Genealogy’ (posted to [www.imwe.co.uk/genealogy/apm/errors.pdf](http://www.imwe.co.uk/genealogy/apm/errors.pdf) on 2018.09.01), page 5.

<sup>77</sup> See Andrew Piers MacLeod (2017.10.17) ‘Types of Error in Clan History and Genealogy’ (posted to [www.imwe.co.uk/genealogy/apm/errors.pdf](http://www.imwe.co.uk/genealogy/apm/errors.pdf) on 2018.09.01), page 4.

<sup>78</sup> See Andrew Piers MacLeod (2017.10.17) ‘Types of Error in Clan History and Genealogy’ (posted to [www.imwe.co.uk/genealogy/apm/errors.pdf](http://www.imwe.co.uk/genealogy/apm/errors.pdf) on 2018.09.01), page 4.

<sup>79</sup> Aonghas MacCoinnich (unpublished tràchdas PhD, Oilthigh Obair Dheathain, 2004) “Tùs gu Iarlachd: Eachdraidh Clann Choinnich c.1466-1638”, page 421.