

# They Came From Tiree

by  
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## CHAPTER THREE THE MACLEAN YEARS

### Under the Lordship of the Isles

The Macleans first gained a foothold in Tiree in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, when Iain Dubh Maclean of Duart, fourth chief of Clan Maclean, was named as bailie of the southern part of Tiree and as constable of Isleburgh Castle. A charter was issued in 1344 to this effect, but it was probably only confirming what Iain Dubh had held for several years. The bailery of Tiree was comprised of Mannal and Heylipol, and possibly some adjacent territory, while Isleburgh was the fortress of the Lord of the Isles in Loch an Eilean in Heylipol. These were regranted to Lachlan Lubanach by Donald, Lord of the Isles, in 1390. In the beginning such property was only held at the will of the Lord of the Isles, but over time became a hereditary grant. The Macleans of Duart held Isleburgh Castle and the original land of the bailery of Tiree until they were lost to the Campbells in the latter part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, except for a brief period, of say 1492-1509. During those years Maclean of Lochbuie, who also held property on the island, took advantage of the fact that Maclean of Duart was out of favor with the government and managed to be appointed the bailie of the southern part of Tiree. For a while both held the same office, which exacerbated the rivalry between these two branches of the clan, but the pendulum swung back to the Duart group's favor very shortly.

It is impossible to get a clear view of the ownership of Tiree before the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, because of the paucity of documentary evidence. It would appear, however, that the island was divided between a number of different owners in the early days, with the Lord of the Isles the largest landowner. Much of Tiree was apparently in the hands of various church groups up until the Reformation, but throughout this period the Macleans of Duart wielded much influence in island affairs due to their position of power under the Lordship. Under the Lordship the Macleans of Duart acted as constables of Isleburgh, bailies of southern Tiree, stewards of the lands of the Bishops of Iona and responsible for their defense, including those holdings on Tiree.

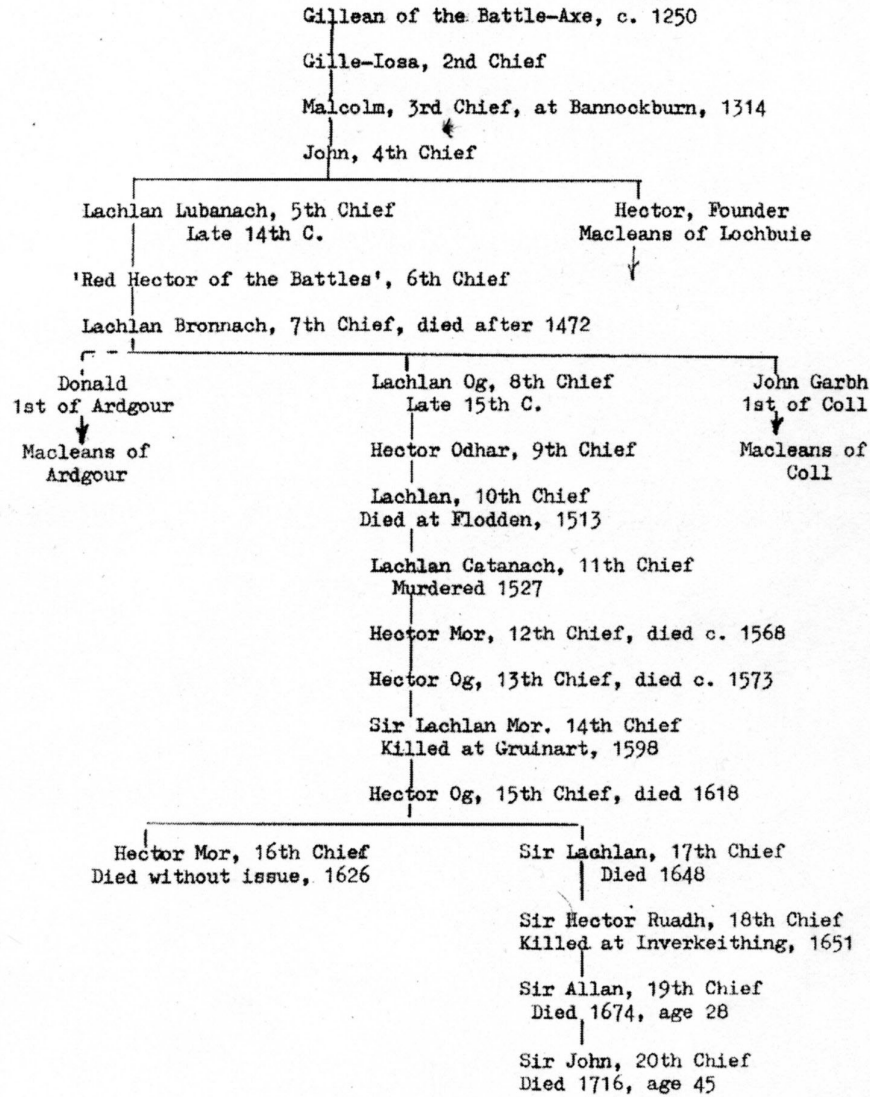
A glimpse of how ownership of Tiree was divided comes from a rental valuation of some of the prime property on the island in 1509, which was after the King of Scots had assumed the lands of the Lordship in 1495.

**TABLE I - OWNERSHIP OF TIREE, c. 1509**

<u>Property</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Valuation</u>
Crown lands in the Parish of Kirkapol	Crown	£28.4.8d
Crown lands in Soroby	Crown	£24.3.8d
Heylipol, Crossapol, Mannal, & 'Nyerin'	Maclean of Duart	£9.0.0
Properties in Kirkapol, Vaul, & Balephuul	Monastery of Iona	£8.13.8d
Land in Caolas	Bishop of Isles	£4.0.0
Gott	Prior of Ardchattan	£1.6.8d

TABLE II

EARLY CHIEFS OF CLAN MACLEAN



In 1517 Lachlan Cattanach was given permission to collect rents south of Ardnamurchan Point, except in lands of the MacIains. He was also given a heritable grant of land worth 100 merks, free of all duties, in Mull and Tiree. The king's council balked at the latter grant, and stipulated that he would only receive the benefits of this property during the minority of the king. This was his reward for bringing to a close the last attempt to put the MacDonald claimant back in power. Many historians mark 1517 as the date when the Macleans of Duart came to control Tiree, but the chiefs of Clan Maclean had great influence in the island prior to that time.

Hector Mòr, who followed his father, Lachlan Cattanach, as chief of Clan Maclean, was even more successful in gaining the favor of the government. In 1531 he was granted the rents of the king's lands in Tiree, Mull, Morven, and Islay cementing the Duart family in these properties, which were viewed hereafter as clan lands. A listing in 1541 showed the Tiree portion of the king's rental properties as Ruaig, Vault, Balephetrish, Kenovay, Cornaigmor, Cornaigbeg, Bhiosta, Kilmoluag, Balevulin, Hough, 'Murtoft', Balamanach (Middleton), Barapol, Ceann a' Mhara, Heylipol, Baugh, Heanish, The Reef, and 'Ber'. It would appear that these lands in Tiree, which comprised much of the island, came under the *de facto* control of the Macleans of Duart in 1531 and remained so until they were lost to the Campbells in the latter part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup>

It was the Reformation, however, that formally recognized the control that the Macleans of Duart had long wielded in the region. In 1557 the Bishop of Iona granted Maclean of Duart a feu of the barony of Ross in Mull, other lands in Mull, the island of Iona itself, and his lands in Islay and Tiree. The properties on Tiree consisted of the holdings of the Bishop in Balephuill, Kirkapol, Vault, and Caolas.

A Mr. John Angus, a descendant of Hector Reaganoch and a cleric, who used the Latinised form of his name, was a rector in Morven and later in Iona. He became the owner of the former estate of Knock after the Reformation, which consisted of properties in Mull and Morven, along with Scarisnish on Tiree.

There is evidence that several offshoots of the Macleans of Ardgour came to live on Tiree early in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It would appear, however, that they held their land through the Macleans of Duart, as the entire island, with the exception of the farm of Scarinish, was lost to the Campbells in 1692. This would not have happened unless all this property had been owned by the Maclean chief.

For over three hundred years the fate of the island was bound inexorably to that of the chief of that clan. There are several versions of just how the Macleans obtained a foothold in Mull, the neighboring island to Tiree, from which they no doubt extended their rule over the region. One is that the Maclean chief, Iain Dubh, also called MacGillimore, slew the Mackinnon chief, who held much of Mull, and then abducted Iain, the Lord of the Isles. He was then compelled to swear on sacred stones that he would not punish Maclean, but instead reward him with the some of the lands of the Mackinnons. The second is that Lachlan Lubanach (The Wily), who was Iain Dubh's son, kidnapped the first Lord of the Isles in order to force him to give his daughter Mary in marriage to him. Supposedly the Mackinnon chief was murdered in the course of this, and the Lord of the Isles, approving of the daring of Lachlan, granted him not only his daughter, but some of the Mackinnon lands as well. It is a matter of record that Lachlan Lubanach did marry Mary, the daughter of the first Lord of the Isles, so perhaps this second version is somewhat correct, although the details may be somewhat fanciful. Some historians have believed, however, that Gillean, the founder of Clan Maclean, and his father before him held large possessions in Upper Mull and along the whole northern coast a century or more earlier. If so, the Lord of the Isles was merely confirming Maclean ownership of that land after Lachlan Lubanach married his daughter.<sup>2</sup> Hector Reaganoch a younger brother of Lachlan, also received land from the Lord of the Isles at this same time, according to tradition, and is recognized as the founder of the Macleans of Lochbuie, the oldest cadet branch of the clan.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> These lands would appear to have been considered the property of Hector Maclean of Duart. In 1539/40 he passed these to his son and heir by charter, which stated he owned the lands of Torosay, lands of Brolas, Tiree (with its office of bailery), and other property in Knapdale, Jura, Morven, and Lochaber.

<sup>2</sup> Nicholas Maclean-Bristol, in his *Warriors and Priests, a History of Clan Maclean, 1300-1570*, does not indicate this earlier connection with Mull.

<sup>3</sup> Some authorities believe that Hector Reaganoch was the older brother of Lachlan Lubanach.

Iain Dubh and his sons, Lachlann and Hector, were among the most powerful figures in the Southern Hebrides after the Lord of the Isles. The latter granted the Macleans lands that controlled the inner sea-lanes of his Hebridean possessions, exhibiting a trust in them that was remarkable in its magnitude.<sup>4</sup> Lachlann Lubanach was also named to the influential post of Steward of the Household as well, which enabled him to extend his sway over an even wider area. Over the years the Macleans took a leading role in the armies and warfleets of the Lords of the Isles, and men living on their estates or closely connected with them were found in the forefront of the numerous military actions of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Tiree apparently saw no fighting on its own soil during this period, but its men may well have been bloodied on the many battlefields of that century. Red Hector of the Battles, sixth chief of Clan Maclean, battled an English fleet in Irish waters and extorted tribute from the city of Dublin. If he recruited seamen and soldiers from Tiree for such an adventure, it is not recorded, but his position on Tiree would have assisted him to do just that. The same would have been true for the large invasion force that was led by Hector into mainland Scotland that ended with the inconclusive Battle of Harlaw in 1411. Again, if men of Tiree were involved in the major undertaking of the Lord of the Isles, not all returned home, since 900 Islesmen died at Harlaw, including the Maclean chief.

The indecisive action at Harlaw marked the beginning of a series of attempts by the Lords of the Isles to expand their power to the mainland of Scotland. These challenges to the Scottish throne ultimately led to the defeat and dissolution of the Lordship, but during this time the Macleans steadfastly supported their MacDonald overlords. Men of Tiree probably saw action as the Macleans scoured the Hebrides for men to man the galleys and serve in the ranks of the armies of their Gaelic prince.

Warfare would seem to have been a full time occupation of the island chiefs and their close kinsmen. They had a professional class of fighting men at their disposal, whose only occupation was warfare, and who the tenantry was obliged to support as part of their rent. As a general rule each merkland had to support one fighting man. Those men who worked the land were not called to arms, unless there was a dire emergency. When a large military undertaking was planned, others, who we may think of as part-timers, were called upon to fill the ranks of the regiments of the Lord of the Isles. These probably included cattlemen, drovers, herders, small artisans, servants, and young men not yet professional fighting men, nor needed in farming. Tiree, under the Lordship, must have such an obligation. In later centuries Tiree had also to man, and maintain a war-galley for Maclean of Duart as part of its rent, and some such requirement must also have been in place under the Lordship of the Isles.

There is no record of the role that Tiree played in the wars of the Lords of the Isles, but the island and its men are almost certain to have been involved in some way. It would not have been surprising to find that men of Tiree were among those that torched Inverness in 1429, and among those who exulted in the short lived victory at the Battle of Inverlochy in 1431. They may have even have participated in the plundering of Lennox in 1439, when the Macleans led a force of Islesmen into that district, killing Colquhoun of Luss in the process.

In 1466 the Lord of the Isles invaded the mainland once again, with his forces led by Lachlan Og, eighth chief of Clan Maclean. The Islesmen were successful in capturing Inverness Castle and were able to impose their rule upon Inverness, Nairn, Ross, and Caithness. In time, however, the government in Edinburgh was able to squash this uprising and reestablish its authority in the North. It took a number of years for the King of Scots to learn that this action on the part of the Islesmen was part of a plot to divide his realm between Edward IV of England, the banished Douglas, and the Lord of the Isles. When the full extent of his treason was revealed the Lord of the Isles was forced to sue for pardon and his Earldom of Ross was forfeited.

When the Earldom of Ross was forfeited the MacDonald chief also lost the allegiance of most of the mainland clans which had supported him earlier, but his islanders stood firm in their ancient loyalty. In 1480 the Mackenzies, who heretofore had acknowledged the Lord of Isles as their feudal superior, challenged his authority and invaded Lochaber and Badenoch. This brought the Lord of the Isles into insurrection once again as he struggled to maintain his position. The ever faithful Macleans

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<sup>4</sup> The lands were Bealachuain in Seil, guarding the Cuan Sound; Dun Chonnuill in the Firth of Lorn; Kilmory and Maol Buida in Scarba; Barnhill and Ardlussa, controlling the Sound of Jura; Ardlarach on Luing, protecting the Sound of Luing; and property on the upper part of Jura, which dominated the Gulf of Corryveckan.

led 1500 Islesmen into the mainland in this action, but it was again suppressed by the government. Some years later this rebellion became the major charge against the MacDonald chief, when the King of Scots forfeited the Lordship of the Isles.

As long as there appeared to be any chance to reestablish the chief of Clan Donald as Lord of the Isles the Macleans gave him their total and unequivocal support. The caliber of their fidelity was illustrated in 1481, when Angus Og, son of the MacDonald chief, and most of the MacDonald chieftains rose in rebellion against the Lord of the Isles. Although the Lord of the Isles was an inept ruler and had forfeited the trust of most of his subjects, the Macleans of Duart, Lochbuie, and Ardgour loyally stood by him.<sup>5</sup> They suffered a cruel defeat at the hands of the MacDonald rebels at the Battle of Bloody Bay off the north coast of Mull, where Hector, ninth chief of the Macleans, was taken prisoner. Angus Og would have hanged Hector, but MacDonald of Clanranald saved his life by saying he would have none to bicker with if Maclean was gone. His followers were not so fortunate, however, and fifty Maclean survivors of this sea battle were smoked out of a cave on shore where they had taken refuge and slaughtered. This location has ever since been known as the 'Cave of the Heads', indicating the fate of these Maclean clansmen. It is not known if any of the men of Tiree were present in this sea battle, but it was in their own backyard. The island may have answered the call of their chief, and supplied and manned a war-galley, which was part of its obligation. If so, the island may have had a reason to mourn the dead of Bloody Bay.

Tiree, which may have had about 1,000 inhabitants at the onset of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, found it to be a much different world in many respects. The Macleans, to whom the island looked for leadership, were attempting to reestablish the Lordship of the Isles while at the same time adjusting to the new presence of the Scottish king in the Hebrides. This meant that their men might be battling one day in the cause of the King of Scots, while the next day storming Cairnburgh Castle in the name of their MacDonald overlord. Several times in the early part of the century the Macleans faithfully rose in rebellion at the call of the MacDonald claimant to the Lordship, risking the forfeiture of their estates. In 1517, according to one account, they were deceived by the MacDonald pretender into invading Ardnamurchan with him in the belief that this foray had been sanctioned by the government in Edinburgh. The Maclean chief was only able to save himself from the vengeance of the king by renouncing his support of the MacDonald rebel and bringing the insurrection to a close. Another version, which is more credible, is that Maclean only joined the rebels to bring this insurrection to a close. This version fits the facts better. The battle for the Lordship of the Isles ended in 1545 with the death of the last MacDonald claimant to this title, and the Macleans emerged at last as a fully independent clan.

### **Clan Maclean Independent**

The power vacuum left by the forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles brought new and dangerous forces into play in the Hebrides. The internal peace that the MacDonald chief had imposed upon his island principality now began to break down with the passing of his authority. Ancient clan rivalries, long suppressed under the Lordship, now resurfaced and were exacerbated by the deliberate policy of the government in pitting one clan against another. The result was a renewal of warfare between the island clans and even internal dissension among many of them. This was to weaken them all and leave them easy prey later for their enemies.

An example of this was the bitter and ugly war between the Macleans of Duart and Lochbuie. Their feud, which was to reach murderous proportions, began in earnest in 1511 and reached its climax in 1538. At that time John Og of Lochbuie and two of his sons were slain by the Macleans of Duart. Most of this conflict was centered on Mull, and did not involve Tiree.

The passing of the Lordship of the Isles allowed the Earl of Argyll to play the prominent role in Hebridean affairs. The Earl was a very important player in Scottish politics. Although he was a

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<sup>5</sup> As the Macleans flourished under the Lordship of the Isles they formed four branches, which were recognized as independent of one another in 1493. These were the Macleans of Duart, Lachlan's descendants and the house of the chief of the clan; the Macleans of Lochbuie, descendants of Hector and the oldest cadet branch; the Macleans of Coll founded by John, third son of Lachlan Bronnach, seventh chief of Maclean; and the Macleans of Ardgour, who were founded by an illegitimate son of this same Lachlan Bronnach.

firm Protestant, he had remained a Queen's man during the Civil Wars of 1567-1573 and ended up on the losing side. Reconciling with the government of the Regent, he was made Chancellor. It was believed he could raise 5,000 men, and his galleys controlled the Irish Sea. The Campbells came to be the dominant power in the Hebrides from this time forward.

During the latter part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century no clan contributed more to the turmoil in the Hebrides than the Macleans of Duart. Much of this was due to the bellicose nature of Lachlan Mòr, the 14<sup>th</sup> chief of Clan Maclean. He made an enemy of his uncle, the fifth Earl of Argyll, depriving himself and his clan of an alliance, which had been so beneficial to his predecessors. He also created deep fissures in the unity of Clan Maclean, and made many other enemies. The most important and damaging of his opponents were the MacDonalds of Dunnyveg, the MacDonalds of Sleat, the MacIains of Ardnamurchan, and the Campbells of Cawdor. He numbered among his friends the MacNeills of Barra, the MacQuarries of Ulva, the Campbells of Ardkinglas, the Campbells of Glenorchy, and the MacDougalls of Lorn. Lachlan Mòr also projected himself and his clan into the Ulster conflicts of Tudor Ireland, which did little to promote his own interests and was an expensive undertaking. The wars in Ulster were marked by shifting loyalties and outright treachery, but Lachlan Mòr was steadfast in his enmity to Hugh O'Neill, the Earl of Tyrone. At one time he offered to bring 1800 men in support of English interest, but Queen Elizabeth, while keeping him and his clansmen in reserve, never met his terms. Many of the warlike activities of the Macleans of Duart had little, if any, effect on Tír, but his disputes with his own clansmen and his bloody battles with the MacDonalds did, and are described below.

At the beginning of this period Hector Mòr of Duart, chief of Clan Maclean, wisely attached himself and his clan to the interests to the Earl of Argyll, later marrying his son and heir to Lady Janet Campbell, the Earl's sister. During the minority of Lachlan Mòr, Hector Mòr's grandson, he was the ward of the Earl, who, along with Hector Allansoun, his foster-father, looked after the interests of the Macleans of Duart. When Lachlan Mòr reached the age of eighteen in 1576, he rashly took control of his own affairs, defying his uncle, the Earl. He must have been very bitter about his treatment during his minority, because he gathered a force, invaded Coll, captured Breachachadh Castle, abused Coll's tenantry, and seizing his foster-father had him beheaded. This action and the marriage of Lachlan Mòr against the interests of his uncle created a breach between the two, which was to last for the remainder of the Earl's life. It is unclear why Lachlan Mòr moved against Maclean of Coll, except that he must have considered him an ally of Hector Allansoun. This action against his fellow clansmen and particularly his killing of his foster father horrified the Gaelic world, which considered the bond of fosterage inviolate. Lachlan Mòr went on to purchase the wardship of Maclean of Coll's son and heir in 1583, which gave him control of the rents of Coll and the fighting force of the island. He did not relinquish Coll until 1596, when he was forced by the king's council to do so.

Lachlan Mòr also continued the feud with the Macleans of Lochbuie, who still smarted over the brutal treatment they had received in the days of Hector Og. This had so embittered the Macleans of Lochbuie that they never supported Lachlan Mòr in his wars with the MacDonalds, and this breach between the two main branches of Clan Maclean was not healed for many years.

Lachlan Mòr's greatest rival in the Hebrides was James MacDonald of Dunnyveg and the Glens of Antrim. Many had recognized him as the lawful successor to the last Lord of the Isles, and his holdings included property in Kintyre, Colonsay, Islay, Jura, Rathlin Island, Uist, Sunart, and Morven. He had his headquarters in Dunnyveg Castle on Islay, although his lands in Kintyre and Antrim were more extensive. James MacDonald had stood aloof at the time of the last uprising of the MacDonald claimant to the Lordship, and his lands were confirmed by the king as a reward. He renounced all claims to the Lordship in August of 1546. The MacDonalds of Dunnyveg held a very strong position in the Hebrides, if not the strongest, because they usually could depend upon the support of other MacDonald branches, such as those of Clanranald and Sleat, as well as the MacIains of Ardnamurchan. They had a basic weakness, however. The fact that they held lands in both Ireland and Scotland made them a pawn of both governments in the undeclared wars of Tudor Ireland, which worked to their decided disadvantage.

The Macleans of Duart and the MacDonalds of Dunnyveg had long quarreled over the Rhinns of Islay in which each held land. Although this was a very fertile and desirable piece of land, its true value lay in its control of the rich trade route between Argyll and Ulster. This led from Craignish through Islay and on to Lough Foyle. In 1546 Hector Mòr had renounced all rights to the Rhinns of

Islay at the prodding of MacCailein Mòr, but Maclean resentment over the prominent position of the MacDonalds in this territory had never been fully dampened. It resurfaced strongly in 1562, when the Queen made a grant for seven years of 70 merks of land in Islay to James MacDonald, when this property was occupied by tenants of Maclean of Duart. When this quarrel was brought before the Council, it ruled that the Macleans must hold this land as vassals of the MacDonalds. This infuriated the Macleans and kept this dispute at fever pitch. It did not help that these Hebridean rivals that they were also at sword points in Ulster, where the MacDonalds and Maclean were again on opposite sides.

In 1564/65 James MacDonald of Dunnyveg and the Glens went to Ireland with a band of mercenaries, where he was met and was soundly defeated by O'Neill and died of wounds. The bitterness between the Macleans and MacDonalds only increased when Katherine Maclean, the widowed step-mother of Duart, married O'Neill. Although this marriage did not last very long, it had wide ranging effect in future years. Irish politics continued to play a large part in the feud between these two rival clans, as did other events in the Hebrides. One of the later was a raid made by the followers of Hector Og on the island of Gigha, which the Macleans had lost earlier, but still made claim to. It was valuable property owned by the widow of James MacDonald of Dunnyveg, which made it a double target.

In 1573 the Earl of Argyll had been successful in forcing a settlement of the feud between the Macleans of Duart and the MacDonalds of Dunnyveg. Unfortunately this proved to be only a temporary respite, because in 1578/79 Hector Og's brother, John Dubh, again raided Gigha, killing nine men, two women, and carrying off 500 horses and mares, along with 2000 sheep. The Macleans continued to think of this as a target, and resented the loss of Gigha.

During the remainder of the 1570s and in the early 1580s the MacDonalds of Dunnyveg and the Macleans of Duart traded blows over the Rhinns of Islay, which each claimed as their own. Much of this was in the form of minor skirmishes, which featured raids upon the property of each other's followers. This changed drastically in 1585, however, when Donald Gorm MacDonald of Sleat and his followers were forced by a storm to take refuge on Jura. Enemies of MacDonald of Sleat then stole some cattle from the Macleans on the island hoping that the Sleat men would be blamed. This plan worked to perfection. The Macleans were infuriated by what they considered an abuse of their hospitality and attacked the MacDonald, killing 60 of them. Fighting now broke out in earnest on several fronts, highlighted by treachery and a lust for blood on the part of both adversaries. It finally reached a point where Sir Lachlan Mòr rallied all his clansmen and vassals, including the MacNeills of Barra, the Mackinnons, and the MacQuarries. He then led his powerful army in a devastating invasion of Islay, where it put to death "all the men capable of bearing arms belonging to Clan Donald of Islay". This savage attack created great outrage among all the MacDonalds, who called for vengeance. This enabled the Dunnyveg branch to enlist the MacDonalds of Skye, Kintyre and Clanranald, along with the MacIains of Ardnamurchan, the MacNeills of Gigha, the MacAllisters of Loup, and the MacPhees of Colonsay in a league against the Macleans of Duart. Later the MacDonalds and their allies, numbering 2500 men, invaded Mull, where they were opposed by Maclean of Duart with 1200 men or less. The outnumbered Macleans took to mountain of Ben More in a tactical retreat with the island's cattle, leaving the lowlands unprotected. Maclean of Boreray, one of the tenants of MacDonald of Sleat, was with the invaders, but he was able to convince MacDonald of Sleat that he faced disaster and death by remaining on Mull. He was able to do this because MacDonald believed strongly in the ability of poetry to predict the future, and Boreray concocted a poem with such a result. The MacDonald invaders left Mull to occupy the small island of Bach, southwest of Kerrera in the Firth of Lorn. Maclean of Duart now had time to send out the fiery cross for reinforcements, and accompanied by Maclean of Boreray, who had changed sides, assaulted the MacDonalds on Bach. The galleys of Maclean directed such a storm of arrows upon the MacDonald force that the Macleans were able to get ashore and engage the enemy in hand to hand fighting. The result was a complete victory for Lachlan Mòr, whose forces killed 340 of the enemy. If men of Tiree were not with Lachlan Mòr on Mull initially, they probably were among those that answered his desperate call for reinforcements prior to the Battle of Bach.

After making a temporary peace in Ulster, Angus MacDonald of Dunnyveg was able to convince Lachlan Mòr that he wanted peace with the Macleans as well. The two long-time opponents met in Mull to seal this reconciliation, which was celebrated by feasting and drinking. A Maclean

bard apparently was unable to restrain himself during this occasion and produced a satiric poem mocking the MacDonald guests. This was bitterly resented by the MacDonalds, who only waited for a time to avenge what they considered an intolerable insult. This came about shortly afterward, when Lachlan Mòr and his followers came to Islay in July of 1586 to put the final touches upon their peace agreement. While the Macleans lay sleeping the MacDonalds surrounded their quarters in Mulindry, called upon them to give themselves up, offering them amnesty if they did so. The chief of Clan Maclean and his retinue had little choice but to allow themselves to be taken prisoner, but when they did so the promised amnesty was treacherously revoked. The MacDonalds now proceeded to execute two Macleans each day, murdering John Dubh, the uncle of Lachlan Mòr, the first day. The next day when Lachlan Mòr was scheduled for execution, he was only saved by Angus MacDonald falling from his horse and fracturing his leg. The king in Edinburgh was horrified when he heard of the events in Islay, calling them, "Murder under Trust", and worked hard for the release of Lachlan Mòr. This he was able to accomplish in April of 1587, but only after agreeing that Angus MacDonald would be forgiven for his crimes. Nevertheless Lachlan Mòr had to leave many hostages behind, including some of his strongest supporters among the MacLeods, MacKinnons, and MacNeills.

The war between the Macleans of Duart and the MacDonalds of Dunnyveg now resumed in earnest. Lachlan Mòr gathered his forces and invaded the rich lands of the MacDonalds in Kintyre, where his followers left a bloody path strewn with enemy dead. Angus MacDonald retaliated by raiding Tìree, leaving it in flames.

In 1588 Lachlan Mòr took a step to avenge the murder of his uncle on Islay. Somewhat uncharacteristically he resorted to treachery to do so. Under the guise of making peace with John MacLain of Ardnamurchan, whom he felt was most culpable in the murder of John Dubh, he drew him into a marriage with his widowed mother. After the marriage feast the Macleans fell upon the MacLains, slaying 18 them. John MacLain was only saved at the last moment by the mother of Lachlan Mòr.

This never-ending feud continued with raids and counter-raids as in the past. In July of 1589 Lachlan Mòr harried Colonsay, and Angus MacDonald retaliated by hitting Mull, Coll, and once again Tìree. In 1589 Sir Lachlan Mòr ravaged the Isles of Rhum and Eigg, which were the property of MacDonald of Clanranald, and did the same to Canna, Muck, and Ardnamurchan, which were in the possession of the MacLains of Ardnamurchan, another branch of the MacDonalds. Not content to limit his activities to Scotland Sir Lachlan Mòr continued to interfere aggressively in Irish affairs, leading his clansmen into Ulster on more than one occasion. All this warlike activity on the part of the Macleans did not escape the notice of the king in Edinburgh. Responding to the entreaties of the enemies of Sir Lachlan Mòr, he took the opportunity to declare his lands forfeit, and extracted an extremely high fine before restoring them to him. By 1594, however, Sir Lachlan Mòr was again in the good graces of his monarch, and led his Maclean clansmen in his cause at the Battle of Glenlivet, where he distinguished himself as one of the foremost warriors of the day.

It is again not clear what part Tìree might have played in the bloody battles in Islay or in the defense of Mull. In each case it is likely, however, that the forces of Lachlan Mòr probably included contingents from outside his estates on Mull. It would appear that he would have needed to call upon his clansmen from other areas, such as Tìree or Morven.

The enmity that existed between the Macleans of Duart and the MacDonalds of Dunnyveg erupted into bloodshed once again in 1598. Although the Rhinns of Islay had been confirmed in the possession of Sir Lachlan Mòr by the crown, Sir James MacDonald of Dunnyveg, who was himself a nephew of Sir Lachlan Mòr still smarted at the treatment his clan had received at the hands of the Macleans. Using a subterfuge he lured his uncle into battle at Gruinart in Islay, where the badly outnumbered Macleans lost their famous champion and chief, along with 280 of their clansmen. The Macleans had their revenge upon the MacDonalds, however, as Sir Lachlan Mòr's successor, Hector Og was successful in gaining the support of the MacKinnons, the MacLeods of Dunvegan, the MacNeills of Barra, and the Camerons of Lochiel in another invasion of Islay. There the Macleans and their allies decisively defeated a smaller MacDonald force at the Battle of Benbigrie, and in an orgy of revenge wreaked havoc on the lands of the MacDonalds.

An official report, written sometime between 1577 and 1595, evaluated the number of fighting men that the Maclean of Duart and other clan chiefs could call upon. The chart shown on the following page outlines the strength of Clan Maclean in the Hebrides. It does not include any of the



mainland possessions of the Macleans, such as Argour and Kingerloch. If these were included, the total fighting strength of Clan Maclean would have easily exceeded 2000 men. It should also be noted that this total manpower does not include those men that could usually be called upon as vassals or allies of the Macleans, such as the MacNeills of Barra, and the MacQuarries of Ulva. Following this is another chart showing the strength of some of the other clan chiefs with Hebridean interests.

The number of fighting men include the professional soldiers of the clan, or 'household men', similar in function to the Galloglas of Ireland, as well as those men the clan could call upon for part-time service. As indicated earlier each merkland was expected to support the service of one professional soldier, but this is but an approximation. Sleat, for example, was organized almost exclusively for war. Although the property of MacDonal of Sleat was only rated at 30 merklands, he could count on 700 men when he went to war. Tiree, rated at 140 merklands, was judged to be able to put 300 men in the field, when called upon by Maclean of Duart.

**TABLE III - STRENGTH OF CLAN MACLEAN IN THE HEBRIDES, 1577-1595**

<u>Island and Owner</u>	<u>Arable Land (Merklands)</u>	<u>Number of Fighting Men</u>
<b>Mull</b>		
Maclean of Duart	170	600
Maclaine of Lochbuie	60	200
Maclean of Coll	20	
Mackinnon	20	100
<b>Scalpa</b>		
Maclean of Duart	4	20
<b>Gometra</b>		
Maclean of Duart	4	16-20
<b>Coll</b>		
Maclean of Coll	30	140
<b>Tiree</b>		
Maclean of Duart	140	300
<b>Islay (1/2 of Island)</b>		
Maclean of Duart	180	400
<b>Jura</b>		
Maclean of Duart	15	83
<b>Scarba</b>		
Maclaine of Lochbuie	4	17

The rental structure in place in the Hebridean communities during this period is not entirely clear. It is known that in the beginning the rent owed by the sub-tenant to his tacksman was paid in kind and service, and only later included a cash payment. The most obvious way in which a sub-tenant could raise some cash would have probably been through the sale of cattle and whisky. Although it is not known just how the professional fighting men were maintained, it seems likely that they were quartered in each farmstead, with their number in each dependent upon the ability of the individual farmstead to support them. Their support was probably the responsibility of the tacksmen, who had to organize and direct a fighting force of the clan, when called upon to do so by their chief. It is known that Tiree had an additional obligation to maintain a war-galley and pay for

the entertainment of Maclean of Duart and his retinue, when they wintered in Isleburgh Castle on the island. This, too, must have been expensive, because the chief of Clan Maclean usually traveled with at least 100 men in his company, including his bard, musicians, falconers, and the like. It is probable that the latter obligation was the responsibility of the bailie of Tiree, who was in charge of Isleburgh Castle, but the war-galley may have been supported by all the tacksmen of the island and not just the bailie.

The custom among the Highland clans of maintaining a class of professional soldiers to defend the chief and the interests of the clan can be traced back to Ireland and the warrior aristocracy of Celtic tribal days. The raiding parties of the Norsemen were also made up of men the leader had recruited to play the part of his household men, and were merely enlarged by the petty kings who carved out holdings in the Hebrides. The ranks of the professional soldiers of the clan were filled with the younger sons of younger sons of the Gaelic aristocracy, now landless, who could in this fashion maintain their position among the elite and not sink to becoming tillers of the soil or herders. They spent their entire time in honing their skills as seamen and soldiers, and were formidable warriors.

By the late 16<sup>th</sup> century most of the professional soldiers of Clan Maclean had discarded the axes, which had wrought such havoc among their foes in past centuries, and were armed with matchlocks and pikes. The pike had revolutionized warfare on the European continent a century before, when it allowed infantry to stand up against the charge of cavalry. The earliest form of matchlock, such as the old-fashioned arquebus, is believed to have been carried by the Hebridean vanguard at the Battle of Glenlivet. They by themselves were not capable of stopping a determined cavalry charge, and these weapons created so much smoke that they obscured the vision of all on the battlefield. This created a problem for those who had the wind in their face, and it is said this played a part in the islesmen losing the Battle of Glenlivet.

The native Hebridean heavy infantryman, however, still used the traditional weapons of the past. In addition to bows, Lochaber axes and swords, some also were armed with throwing spears, or javelins, and targes. These spears were attached to the thrower by a cord, which allowed him to retrieve his missile. They were very effective in close quarters but no match for muskets or other firearms. Targes were circular shields made of leather, wood, and brass, and later versions of this versatile weapon had a screw-hole in the center upon which a bayonet could be attached.

In past centuries the armored infantry of the Hebrides had been armed with bows and arrows. By the time of Lachlan Mòr, however, the bowmen wore little or no armor, because its weight reduced their mobility. Although the Irish were not known for their archery, the bowmen of the Hebrides were considered very accurate at 150-200 yards. The claymore, the great two-handed sword of the Highlander was becoming popular in the era of Lachlan Mòr. Its effectiveness was, of course, limited to close quarters, but it could be used effectively against cavalry.

Lachlan Mòr is described as wearing a sleeveless jacket of mail, over a quilted leather jacket, and a steel helmet, when he went into battle. He was armed with an axe, which could be grasped with both hands to add weight to the blow. It was the weapon of his Norse ancestors, and was used with devastating effectiveness on both land and in a sea fight. Lachlan Mòr was generally recognized as the foremost warrior of his day, and his performance at the Battle of Glenlivet won him praise throughout the Gaelic world and the temporary favor of the king.

The Macleans reached the zenith of their power as an independent clan under the militant Sir Lachlan Mòr, but during his tenure as chief the seeds of the clan's destruction were sown as well. The disastrous feud with the MacDonalds weakened each and left them easier prey later for their Campbell enemies. It also convinced the government in Edinburgh that the unruly clans of the Isles must be curbed and their power blunted. The result was the 'Daunting of the Isles', where the king brought the island chiefs to heel and compelled them to accept the Statutes of Icomkill. This limited the size of chiefs' retinues, banished their bards, substituted Lowland for Gaelic culture, ordained a place of residence for each chief, and essentially ended their day as independent rulers. The position of the professional soldier and seaman among the island clans was now threatened, as their importance waned as the king's peace began to take hold in the region. They did not, of course, disappear all at once, but only pockets of such professionals remained in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. After that time it was the common men of the clan that rose in answer to the call of their clan chief, and, although equally brave, they did not have the skills of the warriors of the past.

In order to put the position of Clan Maclean in some perspective a chart of the strengths of some of the other island chiefs is shown below.

**TABLE IV - STRENGTH OF CLAN CHIEFS WITH HEBRIDEAN INTERESTS  
1577-1595**

<u>Clan Chief</u>	<u>Number of Fighting Men</u>
<b>MacDonald of Sleat</b>	
Skye (Sleat)	700
North Uist	<u>300</u>
Total	<b>1000</b>
<b>Macleod of Lewis</b>	
Lewis and Castle Stornaway	700
Bernera	60
Raasay	<u>80</u>
Total	<b>840</b>
<b>Macleod of Harris</b>	
Harris	140
Skye	240
Bracadale	140
Pabbay	<u>40</u>
Total	<b>600</b>
<b>MacIain of Ardnamurchan</b>	
Ardnamurchan	200
Muck	<u>16</u>
Total	<b>216</b>
<b>MacDonald of Clanranald</b>	
Uist	300
Eigg	60
Canna	20
Rhum	<u>6</u>
Total	<b>386</b>
<b>MacNeill of Barra</b>	
Barra	<b>250</b>
<b>Mackinnon</b>	
Skye	160
Mull	<u>100</u>
Total	<b>260</b>
<b>MacDougall of Lorn</b>	
Shuna Only	<b>60</b>
<b>MacDonald of Dunnyveg</b>	
Islay	400
Jura (1/2 half of island)	100
Gigha	100
Rathlin Island	<u>100</u>
Total	<b>700</b>
<b>MacQuarrie of Ulva</b>	<b>60</b>

During the first part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Campbells made certain that they were useful to the government in checking the power of the island clans. At the same time they shrewdly recognized that any turmoil in the Hebrides was to their advantage and did not scruple to foment unrest in the region. This calculated policy of the Campbells was successful in 1608 in stirring the MacDonalDs of Dunnyveg to rebellion, for which they lost their lands in Kintyre. These MacDonalDs unwisely rose again in 1614, having been goaded past endurance by their enemies, and were summarily stripped of their remaining lands in Islay. The forfeited estates of the MacDonalDs of Dunnyveg were granted to the Campbells in recognition of their so called ‘assistance’ in suppressing these insurrections. The MacIains of Ardnamurchan, another MacDonalD branch, were also dispossessed of their property in a similar manner in 1625 and ceased to exist as a clan.

At first the Macleans were able to fare quite well as Edinburgh tightened its grip on the Hebrides. Their chief, who was not as bellicose as Sir Lachlan Mòr, found favor with the king, who shrewdly used the Macleans as a counter-balance to the MacDonalDs. Tìree was able to enjoy peace for almost an entire generation as the Macleans were satisfied to follow the dictates of the King of Scots. It is ironic that the new-found allegiance of the Macleans to the Stuarts was in the end to be their ruin. Their embrace of the Stuarts came at a time when this dynasty was beginning to pursue its own destructive path. The first false step by the Macleans in this drama came during the Civil Wars of the 1640s, when they loyally supported the monarchy. The revolt against King Charles had been initiated by Calvinist Lowlanders, who were led by the Earl of Argyll, the Campbell chief. This was enough for most of the island clans to declare for the monarchy, since they were not unaware of the Campbell machinations against the MacDonalDs of Islay and the atrocities they had suffered. If they were Catholic, as were many of the MacDonalDs and even Maclean of Lochbuie, they had a double motive, because the Calvinists threatened their faith. Maclean of Duart, however, was a Protestant, and had no liking for the Church of Rome, but probably upheld the monarchy out of tradition. There is every reason to believe that he felt his clan could withstand the Campbell threat, at least at the onset of the Civil Wars. It was only in the later stages of the struggle that he came to realize that his very future and that of his clan depended on a royalist victory.

Sir Lachlan Maclean, 17<sup>th</sup> chief of Clan Maclean, was an active adherent of Montrose during the Civil Wars. He and thirty of his close clansmen rushed to join Montrose before his spectacular victory at Inverlochy in 1645, where the Campbells were surprised and completely routed. Later Montrose was joined by 1100 men, whom Sir Lachlan’s brother had assembled. Of these 750 were Maclean clansmen, with the remainder being MacNeills and MacQuarries. It is probable that the men of Tìree were with this Maclean army, since time had been taken to muster as many men as possible. The full weight of the Macleans was felt at the Battle of Kilsyth, which at first light appeared to seal the victory for the king’s cause in Scotland. In fact the victors were so confident that they virtually disbanded. The Macleans made their way home, while Sir Alastair MacDonalD, called ‘Colkitto’, who was Montrose’s second in command, joined the Lamonts in a vengeful raid into Campbell territory in Cowal.<sup>6</sup>

The triumph of Montrose proved to be short-lived. His sadly depleted army met a crushing defeat at Philipaugh later in 1645 at the hands of Sir David Leslie, and soon the king’s enemies were masters of Scotland once again. Throughout the country the king’s friends paid a steep price for their loyalty. The garrisons of the Lamont castles of Toward and Ascog were massacred at Dunoon in 1646, after receiving written pledges of safe conduct if they would surrender.<sup>7</sup> The defenders of Dunverty Castle in Kintyre met a like fate, after obtaining a similar pledge from Sir David Leslie.

After the Dunverty massacre Sir David Leslie was joined by the Campbell chief. Their combined force, now swollen to some 5000 men, poured into Islay plundering and killing all in their path. From there they invaded Mull with an overwhelming army, which was much too large for the

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<sup>6</sup> Sir Alaisdair MacDonalD was the son of the chief of the MacDonalDs of Antrim, which was the location in Ulster in which the MacDonalDs of Dunnyveg had settled after being ousted from their holdings in Islay.

<sup>7</sup> Sir James Lamont, the Lamont chief, after attempting to play both sides against the other, finally embraced the Stuart cause. He and his clan joined ‘Colkitto’ in a vengeful raid against his Campbell neighbors, with whom his clan had feuded with for several centuries. Atrocities were committed by both sides, but the Lamonts paid a cruel price when over 200 were massacred at Dunoon in 1646 and the clan scattered across Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Macleans to offer any but token resistance. Threatened with the death of his son, who the Earl of Argyll, the Campbell chief, had kidnapped at his school, and the further devastation of Mull, where the invaders had committed many atrocities, Sir Lachlan surrendered Duart Castle. The Maclean chief was then imprisoned by the Campbells, where he was brought near death by the mistreatment he suffered. In desperation he finally signed a bond acknowledging the debt that the Earl of Argyll claimed to have against his estate. With that he was allowed to go home to die in 1648.

It is not known whether Tiree suffered any depredations at the hands of Leslie and the Campbells at the time of the invasion of Mull. The island must have felt very vulnerable, however, throughout this period. Never in the past had the homeland of Clan Maclean been occupied for any length of time by an enemy, and the people of Tiree must have been both saddened and stunned by this event.

The Macleans had to endure even further losses before the Civil Wars ended. They staunchly once again answered the call of Charles II in 1651 and rose in arms to oppose Cromwell. Red Hector the chief of the Macleans, raised 1500 men for the Stuart cause, of which 800 were his own clansmen and 700 were Buchanans. They met disaster at the Battle of Inverkeithing later that year when the Maclean chief resolutely refused to turn tail in the face of a much larger enemy force. The Macleans and Buchanans stood firm after being deserted by the remainder of the king's army and were virtually annihilated. Only 40 Macleans escaped with their lives in this debacle, which saw Hector and eight of his renowned bodyguard slain. These last rallied around their chief and interposed their bodies between him and the enemy. As each was slain another would rush forward shouting, "*Fear eile air son Eaochainn*", another for Hector. Most of the prominent families of Clan Maclean suffered severe losses at Inverkeithing. John Garbh Maclean of Coll had a son and nephew killed and another son and brother severely wounded. Two sons of Maclean of Ardgour were killed in the battle, Maclean of Inverscaddell also lost a son, and Maclean of Torloisk's brother died as well. The Macleans of Brolas, Kinlochaline, and Treshnish suffered wounds, but the greatest losses were experienced by the Maclean contingent from the Ross of Mull, which lost 140 men. The terrible loss of over 700 Macleans must have been felt in every part of the territory of the clan and Tiree would have been no exception. Lauchlan Maclean of Hynish captained a company in the Maclean ranks and was killed the battle along with his two sons. It is likely he raised his company from men of Tiree, and they no doubt suffered a number of additional casualties as well. The doleful name of Inverkeithing was long remembered on the island, where many a family was touched by this tragedy.

The economy of the Maclean estates in Mull, Morven and Tiree suffered a long term downturn due to the manpower losses at Inverkeithing. Some townships lost so many of their able-bodied men that they literally were laid to waste. This disruption in the economy of the Maclean estates was still being felt twenty-three years later, when 32 of 140 townships were still not producing any rentals for their proprietors. Tiree was doubtless effected, but the extent of the impact on the island is not known.