

**A Historical and Genealogical Hypothesis for the Origins of the
MacEachan / Kaighin Family of the Isle of Man**

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Author's Note

This paper forms part of an ongoing genealogical investigation into the Manx–Scottish origins of the Kaighin family. The historical reconstruction, genetic analysis, and interpretive framework represent the author's own research. ChatGPT was used in the writing of this paper, but strictly as a tool to assist with organization, compilation, and polishing of the final narrative; all research, conclusions and hypotheses remain the author's.

Preface (Acknowledgments)

I gratefully acknowledge the insight and collegial correspondence of my friend, the late Manx historian Nigel Crowe, RBV (1958–2023). His interpretation of Bruce-era settlement as a structured plantation informs the landscape and tenancy analysis in this study.

Similarly, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of both John Creer and Chris Keig, both of whom I consider to be friends. As principal researcher of the Manx Y-DNA project, John has been instrumental in helping me understand how to use Y-DNA to break down genealogical barriers. Chris' own study of Manx Y-DNA has resulted in his conclusion that six extant Manx families are all descended from a single common ancestor who lived on the Isle of Man in the 11th century and was likely one of the Norse Manx kings. Both of their work is truly groundbreaking and opens the door for future Manx genealogists and historians.

Abstract

This study evaluates the possible descent of the MacEachan (later Kaighin) family of the Isle of Man from the Eachanns of Carrick in medieval Ayrshire, Scotland. It distinguishes between verifiable evidence, contextual inference, and informed speculation. Integrating documentary sources, linguistic analysis, and Y-DNA data, it proposes that an ancestor of the Manx MacEachan line may have participated in Robert the Bruce's 1313 invasion of the Isle of Man, receiving land there as a reward for military service. It further situates the family within the wider patterns of Scottish recruitment and settlement that followed Bruce's conquest and examines the subsequent evolution of the surname within the Manx onomastic landscape.

I. Historical Context

During the ninth century, Norse raiders repeatedly struck along the Seine, penetrating as far inland as Paris (notably in 845 and 885–886).¹ These incursions compelled the Carolingian monarchy to negotiate with the Vikings to contain further devastation.

In 911 AD, King Charles the Simple of West Francia concluded the Treaty of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte with the Norse chieftain Rollo. In return for baptism and allegiance to the Frankish crown, Rollo and his followers received the lower Seine valley — territory that became known as Normandy, literally “the land of the Northmen.”¹ Over the next century this Norse-Frankish duchy developed a hybrid culture in which Scandinavian military discipline and maritime experience fused with Frankish feudal institutions, Latin Christianity, and the French language.

By the early eleventh century, the descendants of these settlers — the Norman aristocracy — had become largely assimilated yet retained a distinct martial ethos and outward-looking seafaring tradition. Among them were the lords of Brix, a small barony near Cherbourg from which the de Brus (de Bruis) family took their name.⁵

Following the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, members of the de Brus family accompanied William the Conqueror and were rewarded with estates in Yorkshire. Under King David I of Scotland, they were granted the lordship of Annandale, establishing the Bruces as principal magnates in southern Scotland. In the early thirteenth century, Robert de Brus V, fifth Lord of Annandale, married Marjorie, Countess of Carrick, thereby acquiring estates in Ayrshire. Their grandson, Robert the Bruce, inherited both dominions and was crowned King of Scots in 1306.¹³

Thus, through a sequence beginning with the Norse incursions of Frankish territory, evolving through the Norman settlement of Britain, and culminating in the Scottish crown, the political and cultural environment was established in which families such as the Bruces and their Carrick retainers operated — providing the broader historical framework necessary to situate the later emergence of the Mac Eachainn name within southwestern Scotland. This sequence also provides a historically documented pathway by which Scandinavian paternal lineages, such as haplogroup I-A196, could have moved from Viking Scandinavia into Normandy and subsequently into southwestern Scotland, where they appear in medieval genetic and documentary contexts.¹⁹

II. Sir Hector (Eachann) of Carrick and His Family (Documented Fact)

A particularly significant early attestation of the *Mac Eachainn* name in Carrick appears in a thirteenth-century monastic charter preserved in the *Liber Sancte Marie de Melros*. In this charter, issued by Duncan, Earl of Carrick, a witness named Gillec'st Mecachin (“Gillecrist mac Eachan” in the manuscript orthography) appears alongside prominent Carrick notables.³ The presence of Gillecrist in this diplomatic context demonstrates that a family using the Gaelic patronymic *mac Eachainn*—“son of Eachann”—was firmly rooted in Carrick during the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, at least a generation before the 1260 inquest (RH 5/30) naming Sir Hector (Eachann) of Carrick. This charter

thus provides independent primary-source confirmation that a MacEachainn family was already established among the minor landholding class of Carrick well before the Bruce era. The spelling “Mecachin” reflects predictable Middle Gaelic orthography and phonetic conventions, and its inclusion among major witnesses underscores the local social standing of the family. Collectively, this evidence materially strengthens the argument that the later Manx MacCaighens / Kaighins descend from a medieval Carrick lineage rather than from a Manx-indigenous or unrelated Gaelic family.

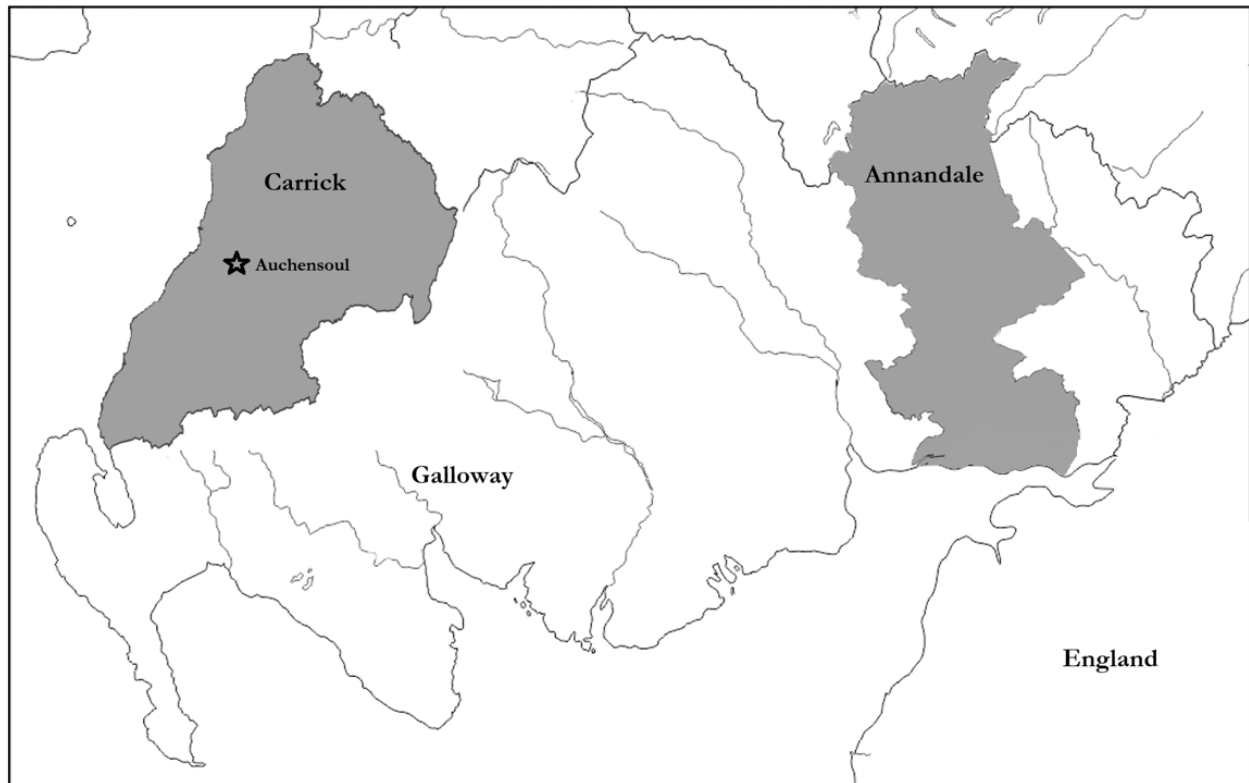


Figure 1. Map of Southwest Scotland

The earliest known record naming a possible member of this family in surviving originals appears in an inquest held at Girvan on 22 September 1260, preserved today as RH 5/30 in the National Records of Scotland.^{2 12} The document was once part of the Chancery Miscellanea series in the Public Record Office (now The National Archives, UK), but was formally transferred to Edinburgh in November 1949.¹⁷ A microfilm copy (formerly PRO 22/21) has since been lost. The inquest is also summarized in the Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland, vol. 1, p. 553, which records the jurors and principal details.²

The document concerns a five-pennyland at Auchensoul and identifies Sir Hector (Gaelic: Eachann) of Carrick, his son Hector, and Samuel MacCann, the younger Hector’s father-in-law. A “pennyland” (Gaelic: peighinn) was a unit of land valuation used in medieval Scotland, especially in the western Highlands and Isles; it did not denote acreage but rather assessed rental or fiscal value. A “five-pennyland” therefore signified land valued at five pennies of annual render — a modest but respectable holding within Carrick’s feudal structure.¹²

Standard Gaelic onomastic authorities agree that Mac Eachain / Mac Eachainn means “son of Eachan/Eachann,” and that the underlying personal name Eachan or Eachann derives from the element *each* (“horse”) and is commonly glossed as “horseman,” “horse-lord,” or “knight.”^{3 6 8} The name and its patronymics are well attested in the western Highlands and Islands; Black’s entry for MacEachan / MacEachain / MacEachen / MacEachin treats them as Gaelic MacEochainn, “son of Eachan,” associated with MacDonald territories in Argyll and the Hebrides.³ It should be noted here that the progenitor of the MacEachans affiliated with Clan Donald was Hector (Eachainn), the second son of Roderick, 3rd Chief of Clan Ranald who was born c. 1390, and therefore could not have been the ancestor of the Manx Kaighins if the hypothesis presented here is correct.

Although the family disappears from extant records soon after 1260, the inquest anchors their existence geographically and chronologically within medieval Carrick. It provides the earliest plausible documentary link to the later Mac Eachainn surname — the Gaelic patronymic meaning “son of Eachann” — later echoed in the Manx form McCaighen / McCaghyn / Kaighin.¹¹

III. Robert the Bruce and the 1313 Campaign in the Isle of Man (Historical Fact)

By 1313 the Isle of Man remained an English stronghold in the Irish Sea. Bruce sought to remove this outpost, which endangered Scottish communication with Ireland and the Western Isles. According to *Chronicon Manniae et Insularum* and summarized accounts by Joseph Train, Bruce organized a swift amphibious operation launched from the Hebrides, employing diversionary tactics toward Cumberland.^{4 16} His force landed near Ramsey, marched south, camping overnight at the Nunnery at Douglas and besieged Castle Rushen (then held by Dungal MacDouall), and compelled its surrender after a three-week investment. Bruce ordered parts of the fortification dismantled.⁴

Shortly afterward, Bruce granted the Isle of Man to his nephew, Thomas Randolph, Earl of Moray, on feudal tenure.¹⁴ This act integrated Man into the Scottish Crown’s administrative system and bound its landholders by military service — an arrangement that likely facilitated the redistribution of land to loyal supporters who had taken part in the conquest.¹³

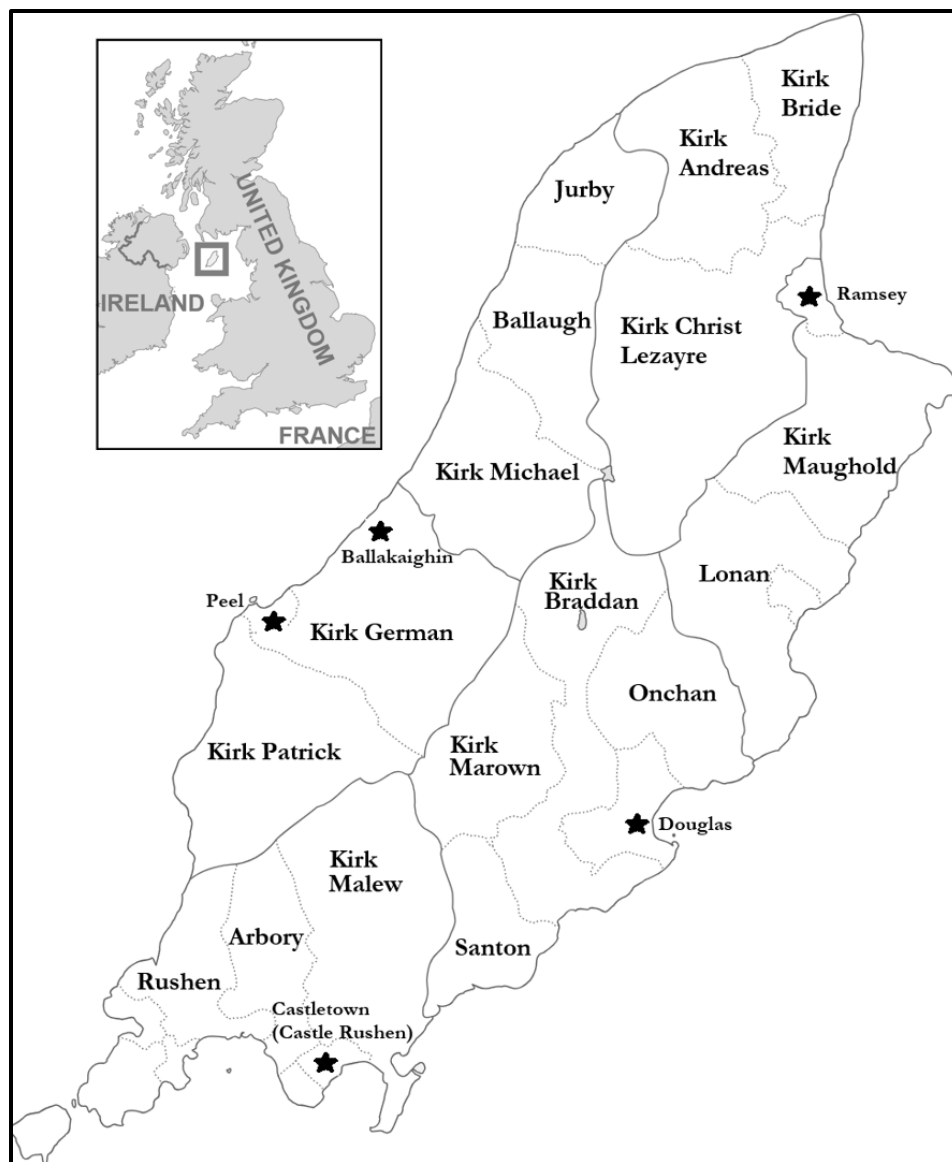


Figure 2. Map of the Isle of Man with Parishes and Relevant Locations Labeled

IV. Genealogical Hypothesis (Speculative but Plausible)

Although Mac Eachanns vanish from surviving Scottish charters after 1269, it is reasonable to suppose that descendants — now using the patronymic Mac Eachainn — remained in Carrick or Galloway into the early fourteenth century and one or more may have joined Bruce's expedition of 1313.

Bruce's recruitment drew heavily from Carrick, Kintyre, and the Western Isles, regions rich in seafaring manpower.¹³ A Carrick landholder of Norse-Gaelic descent, already accustomed to maritime warfare, would have been a natural recruit. If such a man rendered military service in the campaign, a grant of land on the Isle of Man as reward would conform with Bruce's feudal practice. The absence

of a surviving charter is unsurprising, given the destruction or loss of many early Manx deeds, some removed to Norway and others lost in fires at Drontheim (Trondheim), Norway and Castle Rushen.¹⁶

V. The Bruce-Era Settlement and the “Plantation” Model

The late Manx historian Nigel Crowe proposed that Bruce’s conquest was followed by an organized redistribution of Manx lands—virtually a “plantation” of Scottish settlers. In correspondence to the author in 2019, Crowe observed that the Manx landscape, characterized by large, regularized farm blocks recorded in 1490–1513, “must virtually have been a plantation of the island by supporters of Bruce.” He argued that younger brothers and cadet kinsmen of western Scottish chieftains were rewarded with Manx holdings on condition that they fortify the island and maintain its naval defenses.

Crowe’s model accords with clauses in *Rymer’s Foedera* that required vassals to supply a forty-oared galley for forty days’ service — a maritime render reflecting the island’s strategic role in the Irish Sea.¹⁴ If correct, this system would explain how a Carrick-based Mac Eachainn lineage might have become established on Man through royal patronage.

The Manx landscape incorporates major features which date from what must virtually have been a "Plantation" of the Island by supporters of Bruce. My current theory relates this episode to the recruitment of a 'Navy' from the Western Highlands and the Western Isles of Scotland. This was tasked to recover Man after the [previous disaster]. The major chieftains were called upon to provide warships, sailors and fighting men to meet their quotas contained in Charters of their lands granted by Robert Bruce. In order to incentivise/reward the younger brothers and clansmen who made up the force were awarded lands in Man on condition they fortified the Isle and organised themselves to contribute to the defence of the Kingdom of Man and the Isles. Six longships of war, manned and victuelled, were due as military render for Man by the King or Lord of Man to his overlord, and somehow the landholdings here must have been engineered to make the building and manning of these ships possible.

As far as the landscape goes, there are large blocks of arable broken into large regular farms held in 1490/1511/1513 by individuals with distinctive names apparently connected with the Scottish Highlands and Islands. You have seen some of this evidence.

Correspondence from Nigel Crowe to the author, January 2019

VI. Genetic Correlation and Chronological Alignment

Modern Y-chromosome testing among male descendants of the Kaighin family and of a Robertson family with ancestry tracing to Monkton, Ayrshire, places both lines within haplogroup I-

A196, a downstream branch of the broader haplogroup I1 (M253) associated with Norse-Scandinavian ancestry.^{10 19} Haplogroup I1 arose roughly 4,000–5,000 years ago in southern Scandinavia and spread during the Viking Age (c. 750–1050 AD). Its subclades, including I-A196, appear today in regions historically settled by Norse populations.¹⁹

When Rollo’s followers settled in Normandy after 911 AD, their male lineages intermarried with the local Frankish nobility. Some of these paternal lines accompanied the Norman expansion into England and Scotland after 1066.⁵ Given this history, the presence of a Scandinavian-derived haplogroup such as I-A196 in Carrick is most parsimoniously explained by the documented movement of Norse settlers into Normandy, their assimilation into the Norman aristocracy, and their subsequent transplantation to Britain in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.^{1 5} No alternative migration model fits the chronological, geographic, and cultural constraints as effectively.

Both the Kaighin and Robertson families fall under subclade I-Y48695, while the Kaighins alone descend further to I-A5554. YFull’s phylogenetic model suggests a most recent common ancestor for I-Y48695 around AD 1075, while STR mutation rates place the genealogical divergence between the Kaighin and Robertson lines around AD 1346 ± 40 years.^{19 20} This range aligns closely with the aftermath of Bruce’s conquest and supports a scenario in which one branch remained in Carrick while another relocated to the Isle of Man. The Manx Y-DNA synthesis work of John Creer and the Kaighin one-name project likewise treat Kaighin as one of a core group of “indigenous” Manx surnames with deep medieval roots.^{20 21}

Within the Kaighin surname cluster, modern Y-DNA testing identifies the earliest historically known carrier of the terminal subclade I-A5554 as Gilchrist McCaghen (born c. 1511), grandson of John McCaghyn of Ballakaighin. All living tested Kaighins share this downstream mutation, making Gilchrist the most recent common ancestor (MRCA) of the entire surname group in its Manx form.¹⁹

²⁰

VII. Documentary Continuity in the Isle of Man

The earliest identifiable Manx bearer of the name is Finlo McCaighen, executed in 1422 for insurrection against the Governor.^{22 23} A. W. Moore, in his classic study of Manx surnames, notes this and later forms such as McCaghen (1511), Kaighin (1611), Caighan (1643), and Kaighan (1667), and explicitly interprets Kaighin / Kaighan as contracted from Mac Eachain, “Eachan’s son.”¹¹ He further remarks that these forms are common on the adjacent coast of Galloway.¹¹

By c. 1490–95, John McCaghyn and his adult son Richard appear in the *Libri Assedationis* (Manorial Rolls) for Kirk German as tenants of the estate later known as Ballakaighin.⁹ Because Richard was of full age, John’s birth can be estimated to about 1439. From this period onward the family is consistently documented in manorial and ecclesiastical sources — land transfers, tenancy rents, wills, and parish records — confirming an unbroken presence at Ballakaighin and surrounding properties into the modern era.^{9 11}

Place-name scholarship reinforces this interpretation. In studies of Manx place-names, Ballakaighin is analyzed as “Kaighin’s farm,” derived from Scottish Gaelic baile ’ic Eachainn — literally “the farm of the son of Eachann.”¹⁵ This directly links the Manx estate-name to the Gaelic patronymic Mac Eachainn and supports the view that the family’s Manx identity preserves a Carrick / west-Highland origin in both surname and landholding.^{11 15}

These data situate the first demonstrable Kaighin generation roughly one hundred years after the Bruce conquest, a plausible interval for the establishment and consolidation of a transplanted lineage on Man. The pattern of their land tenure accords with the type of freehold often granted to Scottish servicemen and their descendants during the fourteenth century.^{11 16}

VIII.a. The 1422 Rebellion and the Scottish Identity of the Insurgents

The uprising of 1422, in which Finlo McCaighen appears as one of the named ringleaders, provides a rare glimpse into the political tensions and ethnic composition of the Isle of Man in the early fifteenth century. Two main sources describe the events: William Cubbon’s *Island Heritage* (1952)²² and Mark Anthony Mills’ transcription of the medieval court proceedings in *The Ancient Ordinances and Statute Laws of the Isle of Man* (1822).²³ Both preserve a cluster of rebel names that are unmistakably Scottish in form.

Cubbon’s summary sets the scene:

In 1422 the Governor, John Walton, was so unpopular that a rebellion on a large scale broke out in the North Side. He had held a Tynwald in the parish of Kirk Michael (exactly where is not stated), on ‘Tuesday next after the Feast of Corpus Christi,’ namely 4th June. Led by Hawley McIssacke, Finlo McCowley, William McCurghey and Finlo McCaighen, Walton and his men were severely handled, and they had to flee to the church and churchyard to save themselves being beaten to death. The Tynwald site therefore could not have been far from the church. Learning of the trouble, Sir John Stanley arrived in Man, and summoned a Tynwald to be held ‘upon the Hill of Reneurling on Tuesday next after the Feast of Bartholomew namely on the 24th August, 1422. A score of the rebels were found guilty by the Deemsters, and they were sentenced to be drawn by horses, then hanged, drawn and quartered, one quarter to be set upon the castle tower over the burne, another at Holme towne, and a third to be set at Ramsey, and a fourth at Douglas.

Mills’s edition of the 1422 court records preserves the charges in more detail, including the key names, spelled here as in his text:

In the same court Hawley McIssacke was arraigned for that he feloniously rose upon John Walton, Lientenant of Mann, sitting in the court of Kirk Michael, upon Tuesday next after the Feast of Corpus Christi, in the Yeare of our Lord God 1422, and Men there being with him, did beate and misuse the Lientenant’s

Men in the Church and Church-yard. And there Hawley McIssacke came and utterly withsaid all his Deeds, and put him to the Country and to the Deemsters. And the Deemsters answered and said, For as much as it is done Trayterously to rise upon the said Lieutenant, and he seeing it, the Law of the Land deems that he should not be received to Quest; for he rose with strong Hand, and therefore the Law deems that the said Hawley ought to be drawne with Horses, and after hanged and beaded; and after Sentence given, he put himself to the King's Grace. And in the same Court Finloe M'Cowley, Mould M'Owen, Willm. M'Curghy, Lawrence Banestor, and Finlow M'Caighen were arraigned; that they felloniously and treyterously rose upon John Walton, Lieutenant of Man, sitting in the Court the Day and Year above said, to kill him; the which appeared and withsaid the Treason, and therefore put them to Inquest; and to this the Deemsters answered and said, for as much as they rose against the Lieutenant to kill him; therefore the Law is, that and said Finlow M'Cowley, Mould M'Owen, W. C, L. B., and F. M'C to be drawne with Horses and their Heads smitten off; and after Judgment given, they asked Grace of the King. And in the same Court Gilbert M'Carrayne, Donald M'Kissag, Peter M'Gilconill, Donald Waterforth, and Gubon-John Norres, and Gubbon M'Crowton, were arraigned for traiterously riseing against John Walton, Lieutenant, him to kill, sitting in the Court at Kirk Michaell, the day and year abovesaid, and his men there with him being beaten in the Church and Church-yard, the which Gubbon and all his Fellows put themselves to the Lord's Grace. And in the same Court Donald M'Craine, Son of Patrick M'Craine was arraigned as others above, and appeared and acknowledged the Treason, and put himself unto the Lord, and the Lord of his speciall Grace forgave him the Treason. In the same Court Mould M'Christine and John M'Hawe were arraigned of Treason, for rising against John Walton, Lieutenant of Man, at the Tynwald, and acknowledging that they would have putt him down, and the Laws of the Land, and constrained the Lieutenant there; and upon this they answered and said, not Guilty, and that they would be tryed by God and the Country. The Deemsters answered and said, insomuch as they have committed Treason to constraine the King, his Lieutenant, he seeing it, the Law is, the said Mould and John to be drawn with wild Horses, and after that their Heads to be cutt off, as it is above adjudged in the like Case. In the same Court was Symon Kynyne arraigned as others above said, and put himself to the Lord his Grace

Almost all the principal rebels bear Scottish Gaelic patronymics: McIssacke, M'Cowley, M'Curghy, M'Owen, M'Carrayne, M'Kissag, M'Gilconill, M'Christine, M'Hawe, Kynyne (modern Kneen, derived from McCianain) and notably M'Caighen. In a conversation with the author in 2016, Nigel Crowe drew attention to this striking preponderance of Scottish names and argued that the insurgents represented a community of Scottish-descended landholders established on the Island during the period of Scottish rule before 1408. In Crowe's view, their grievances likely arose from the imposition of English-style land tenure and rent demands under the Stanley lords after the Island

reverted to English control, combined with lingering loyalties to the Scottish Crown and to the customary and hereditary rights of land tenure they had enjoyed under Scottish administration.

In this context, Finlo McCaighen is best understood not as an isolated Manxman with a “Scottish-sounding” name, but as a member of a broader Scottish settler population whose presence on the Island is consistent with a fourteenth-century migration from places such as Carrick, Galloway, or the Western Isles. The revolt reinforces the interpretation that the Mac Eachainn / MacCaighen line belonged to a Scottish, likely Carrick-derived, stratum of Manx society whose roots go back to the Bruce period or prior.

VIII.b. The Onomastic Transition: Dropping of “Mac” (1560–1580)

As observed in the author’s own linguistic study and in the leading Manx onomastic authorities (Moore, Kneen, Gill), there exists no statute abolishing the Mac/Mc prefix in Manx names.^{6 7 8 11} Rather, the change reflects a sudden phonological and administrative Anglicization between 1560 and 1580, when the introduction of English-language clerks under the Stanley lords of Man coincided with the erosion of Gaelic literacy. Manorial rolls from 1511–1515 retain Mac or the feminine -Ine in nearly all surnames; by 1703 fewer than five percent preserve it.^{7 11} After 1580, most former Mac surnames retained the phonetic “K” stump in Mac and thenceforth most of those names began with K, Q or C and retain that form to the present day.

The surname Mac Eachainn underwent the same contraction, appearing successively as Mac Caighen (1422), McCaghen (1511) and Kaighin (1611), as summarized by Moore.¹¹ Spelling variants reflected the phonetic interpretations of English scribes rather than deliberate family choices. Modern etymological reference works, including the Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland, now simply define Kaighin as Manx Mac Eachain.¹⁸

IX. The Loss of Early Records

The near-absence of fourteenth-century documentation from the Isle of Man has long frustrated historians. Joseph Train noted that a substantial body of medieval charters was removed to Norway during Norse rule or lost in the previously mentioned conflagrations.¹⁶ Without these sources, land grants from the Bruce era must be inferred indirectly from later tenancy patterns, field boundaries, and continuity of estate names. The distinctive regularization of farmland observed by Crowe and others may therefore represent a material residue of that lost corpus.¹⁶

X. Synthesis and Probable Migration Path

Combining the historical, linguistic, and genetic evidence yields a coherent reconstruction of the Kaighin family’s early trajectory. The Y-DNA framework (I-A196 → I-Y48695 → I-A5554) identifies a Norse-Scandinavian paternal origin that reached southwestern Scotland by the High Middle Ages.¹⁹

²⁰ The shared ancestor of the Kaighin and Robertson families — haplogroup I-Y48695 — dates to

roughly 950 years before present (approximately AD 1075), coinciding with the Norse–Norman synthesis following Rollo’s settlement.¹⁹

Subsequent divergence within the clade, estimated at AD 1346 ± 40 years, aligns with the aftermath of Bruce’s 1313 campaign.^{10 19} The most economical interpretation is that one branch of this Carrick lineage remained in Ayrshire (the Robertsons), while another joined Bruce’s Manx expedition and established itself permanently on the island. The first documentary appearance of Finlo McCaighen (1422) then represents the earliest surviving trace of that transplanted line.^{22 23}

Taken together, these elements identify a single, consistent, and parsimonious migratory route: Scandinavia → Normandy (post-911) → Britain/Scotland (post-1066) → Carrick (thirteenth century) → Isle of Man (post-1313). Each stage of this route is historically attested and aligns chronologically with the branching structure of the relevant Y-DNA haplogroups.^{1 2 5 13 19}

XI. Chronological and Cultural Integration

9th century	Lower Seine, France	Viking incursions into West Francia; raids on Paris. ¹
911 AD	Normandy, France	Treaty of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte — Rollo receives the duchy. ¹
11th century	Brix, Normandy, France	Emergence of the Bruces; Norman feudal culture. ⁵
1066	Britain	Norman Conquest; Bruce estates in Yorkshire. ^{5 13}
c. 1075	Britain	Haplogroup I-Y48695 formed
12th–13th centuries	Annandale & Carrick, Scotland	Expansion of Bruce power; integration into the Scottish realm; Gillecrisp Mecachin recorded as a Carrick witness under William the Lion. ³
22 September 1260	Girvan, Ayrshire, Scotland	Inquest naming Sir Hector (Eachann) of Carrick and his son Hector (Eachann) (RH 5/30). ^{2 12 17}
1313	Isle of Man	Bruce’s campaign; probable recruitment of Carrick seafarers. ^{4 13 14 16}
1346 ± 40 years	Carrick, Scotland or Isle of Man	Kaighin / Robertson split ²⁰
1422	Isle of Man	Execution of Finlo McCaighen. ^{22 23}
1490–95	Kirk German, Isle of Man	John McCaghyn and son Richard recorded at Ballakaighin. ⁹
1560–1580	Isle of Man	Anglicization of surnames; dropping of “Mac”. ^{6 7 8 11}
1611–1745	Isle of Man	Progressive spellings Kaighin / Caighan / Kaighan / Caighin in Manx records. ¹¹
Modern	Isle of Man	Continuous Kaighin lineage, I-A5554, with a common ancestor, Gilchrist McCaghyn born c. 1511. ^{19 20}

XII. Alternative Theories and Their Limitations

Two alternative scenarios for the arrival of the Mac Eachainn / Kaighin line on the Isle of Man deserve brief mention, although neither is as well supported as the Scandinavian → Normandy → Carrick → Man pathway outlined above.

The first derives from the entry in *Chronicon Manniae et Insularum* recording that in 1092 King Magnus Barelegs “compelled the men of Galloway” to bring timber to the Island for a fortification at what is now Peel Castle.⁴ It has been suggested that an ancestor of the Kaighins might have been among this contingent. While this cannot be entirely ruled out, the theory rests on no direct evidence: the chronicle does not list individual names; no MacEachainn-type surname is attested on Man for several centuries thereafter; and the Y-DNA evidence places the divergence between the Kaighin and Robertson lines in the mid-fourteenth century, not the eleventh. At best, the Magnus Barelegs episode demonstrates an early linkage between Galloway and Man, but it does not provide a plausible anchor point for the origin of the Kaighin family.

A second hypothesis envisions the Carrick Eachanns as descended from Norse settlers moving southward through the Hebrides and Irish Sea islands into Ayrshire in the tenth to twelfth centuries. This would be broadly consistent with the known pattern of Norse activity in the region, and it would still accord with the Scandinavian origin of haplogroup I-A196. However, it lacks any specific documentary linkage between Hebridean Norse groups and the named MacEachainn family in Carrick. The earliest known members of that family—Gillecrisp Mecachin and Sir Hector (Eachann) of Carrick—appear in explicitly feudal, Norman-influenced legal contexts rather than in an insular Norse environment.^{3 12 17}

By contrast, the Norman-route model aligns simultaneously with the estimated age and geographic spread of I-A196 and I-Y48695, the documentary appearance of MacEachainn individuals in Carrick under the Bruces and their predecessors, the historical circumstances of Robert the Bruce’s 1313 reconquest of the Isle of Man, and the subsequent emergence of the Mac Caighen / McCaghyn / Kaighin line in Manx records. For these reasons, while the Magnus Barelegs and Hebridean-Norse scenarios remain conceivable in a general sense, they are best regarded as low-confidence alternatives to the better-corroborated Norman–Carrick–Man pathway.

XIII. Conclusion

The Kaighin family’s demonstrable Manx lineage, extending from Finlo McCaighen (1422) through John McCaghyn (1490/95) to later documented descendants, coheres chronologically with a Carrick origin in the fourteenth century.^{9 11} The Y-DNA evidence situates their paternal ancestry within a Norse-derived haplogroup (I-A196) whose earliest branching in Britain coincides with the post-Viking, early-Norman era.^{10 19}

Although it is tempting to link Finlo McCaighen directly as an ancestor of John McCaghyn (presumed to have been born c. 1439)²⁰, it is important to stress that no surviving document explicitly

states such a relationship. The chronological gap, surname continuity, location in the neighboring Manx parishes of Kirk German and Kirk Michael and shared Scottish context strongly suggest that both men belonged to the same lineage, but the connection between them remains a genealogical inference rather than a proven descent.

Historically, this genetic signature and its divergence pattern are consistent with a Norse-Gaelic family that integrated into the feudal network of Carrick under the Bruces.¹³ The convergence of linguistic, documentary, and phylogenetic data — including Gaelic onomastic analysis (Mac Eachain / Mac Eachainn “son of Eachan”), Manx surname evolution (Mac Caighen → McCaghen → Kaighin), and place-name evidence for Ballakaighin as “the farm of the son of Eachann” — therefore supports the hypothesis that the Mac Eachainn progenitor of the Kaighin family was a Carrick retainer who took part in Bruce’s Irish Sea campaign and was rewarded with Manx land.^{3 7 8 11 15 18} In this context, the Scandinavian origin of the haplogroup is not incidental: it provides the crucial chronological and geographic anchor for the family’s deeper history, making the Viking → Norman → Carrick → Man pathway the most parsimonious and historically coherent explanation for the presence of I-A196 among Manx Kaighins.^{1 2 5 13 19} No alternative route accounts simultaneously for the timing, location, cultural milieu, and genetic evidence.

Archival correspondence from both The National Archives (UK) and the National Records of Scotland in 2025 confirms that the original 1260 inquest survives as RH 5/30 in Edinburgh and is partially published in a major scholarly reference.^{12 17} This strengthens the documentary foundation for the earliest known bearer of the name Eachann in Carrick. Onomastic authorities such as A. W. Moore, W. W. Gill, J. J. Kneen, and the Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland independently converge on the same etymology and historical trajectory for Kaighin as Manx Mac Eachain, “son of Eachan,” confirming that the Manx surname preserves both the Gaelic personal name and its deeper Norse–Norman background.^{6 7 8 11 18}

Although absolute proof must await further genetic sampling and possible recovery of additional medieval documents, the multidisciplinary evidence now available allows a historically plausible reconstruction: a Norse-Gaelic lineage rooted in the maritime culture of the southwest Scottish coast, transplanted to the Isle of Man during the Scottish reconquest of 1313, and enduring there under successive Manx spellings for more than six centuries.^{10 16 19 20}

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