

From: Murray Papers, Volume 7, ff.169-172 (*nb* “**Adv.MS.29.1.1/vii**”).

*Probably written for Sir Alexander Murray of Stanhope*¹ (-not in his hand, certainly). Dated 1735. The writer was certainly a Jacobite, and is proposing that St Kilda and the Long Isle be established as a Jacobite Enclave.

Handwritten. Because of stains on the paper, the first page is almost illegible, the last page only slightly less so, and at least one final page is missing.

Physical pages are numbered [n] in the transcript below. Illegible text marked by [.....] Some text scored out in the text has been included, but struck through. Some of the arithmetic is erratic. Spelling is accurately transcribed.

The title “A politicall whim...” has been added in a different hand, possibly Sir Alexander Murray’s, probably at a later date.

A politicall whim concerning St Kilda one of the Western Isles of Scotland, written in the year 1735.

[1]

The Island of St Kilda is in breadth 1 and in length 2 computed miles - and if Mr. Adair² is right allowing 2500 paces to each computed mile[.....]

[the rest of this page is virtually illegible, but appears to describe the size of St Kilda, the layout of the islands. Probably relies on Martin Martin. Calculates the total area to be 4½ square miles, equating to 2880 acres. Some text is legible as follows:]

“Boreray two leagues to the north of St Kilda” “Isle Soa”.

“Best barley in the Western Islands”

“The Number of the Inhabitants is about 200 inhabitants and the Area of the Island being about 2880 Acres that is 14 acres of land for every one of the Inhabitants.”

“Fishing and fowling”

[2]

There is plenty of Codd and Ling of a large size round this Isle.

Solan Geese and severall other fowls are very Numerous.

This little Mainland and its small adjacent Islands is an excellent Epitome of the whole world and by the above description we have a view of it as being possessed with a few poor, ignorant and indolent people who by their poverty Ignorance and Simplicity are not at all or but very little either serviceable or hurtfull to the Rest of Mankind.

We shall in the next place consider it as possessed by a people whom we shall suppose are powerfull Rich and wise enough to defend their own properties and to mollest at least if not tottally conquer & subdue the other adjacent islands; and by Degrees subject to themselves not only the Dominion of the Seas and North part but even of the whole Brittanick Continent & Islands.

In order to [show] this we shall consider how many persons this Island is capable to maintain and this will be very soon done since by the above Calculation we find

¹ **Sir Alexander Murray**, 3rd Baronet Stanhope. 1687-1743. Stanhope is an estate near Drumelzier.

² **John Adair**, map-maker, made maps of Scotland, 1655-1722

every person on the Island has but 14 acres of land to subsist on where as every person in the Shire of Argyle has about 80 acres. This Difference must happen by the plenty of fowls and fish which these the present indolent & lazy Inhabitants come at so easily.

[3]

Now find our supposed wise and powerfull possessors of this Island so far that every 4 acres could maintain one person. Then may this little main land and its Islands belonging to it maintain 770 souls - and if we can believe Sir Will. Petty³ when he tells us in his politicall arithmetick:

“That he could have set down the very numbers of acres that would bear Bread & Drink-Corn together with flesh, butter and cheese sufficient to victuall 9000000 of persons as they are victualled on Ships and Regular families but says he I shall only say in generall that 12 millions of acres will do it.”

I say if we can believe him in this as we have very good reason to do from the Example of the Dutch who have little more than one acre of land to every person then is our Island above mentioned capable to maintain 2310 souls without any Trade or Industry out of their own little territories.

And if we further consider the situation of this Island with Respect to Conveniency of fishing and fowling then the first especially is what we propose the whole inhabitants may be employed about one way or other the husbandmen excepted and we hope it will not be thought absurd if we say that as many people may be employed about and live upon the fishing as can live upon the land & fowling in this Island and if so the number of people who possibly could live on the product of this Island by Land and Watter will be about 5000.

[4]

Thus far we have considered this Island in its [arguable? in-sable?] and known capacity of affording the neccessarys of Life to a number of five thousand souls.

Besides which it's very probable that I can afford us as yet an unknown Subterranean Treasure - for it hath been shown that the West Cost of Scotland is richly stored with Mines of Lead Coppar Iron &c. and that the Islands of Brittain have all been joined to the Continent of Europe and to one another so that the Island of St Kilda has as good a Chance of Mines as the west side of the Mainland of Scotland and the other adjacent Islands: and we are inform'd by Mr. Martin that the natives of N.Uist and the Harras do affirm that gold Dust has been found at Griminis on N.Uist and Copveaul on Harris. Now those are the places to which St Kilda is directly opposite & nearest of any other of the larger Western Islands.

If this should prove true then would it and the fishing trade abovemention'd be two almost inexhaustable commodities. The Managing, Manufacturing & Carrying of which to proper Markets would employ as many hands as could probably have houses to Lodge in the Island which might be about twenty thousand ---- But by this time some will readily say we have carryed this point as high as we can and object that tho all we have said were really true yet this want of a harbour in the Island Ruins our whole scheme.

[5]

³ Sir William Petty - noted political economist, 1623-1687.

This is indeed a very formidable objection but would have been very much more before the art of building ships & boats was known for then it would be said how should we get thither ---- but now as we know how to build boats & ships and how in them to be conveyed thither so we know how to make harbours or places to preserve them from the Rigours of a tempestuous ocean when we re there and that with being at no great expence because at the same time that the people are quarrying stones for building houses to Dwell in they may order also as to be making harbours for their boats ---- And if we cannot make harbours for Ships of any burthen here they may ly in the opposite Islands where harbours are good and plenty ---- Long boats will serve our turn especially if we are at peace with our Neighbours ---- and in Deed we cannot well propose this little State or Government can make or long maintain War without the aid and assistance of some one or more powerfull potentates who have all or a Great Share of the Dominion of the Sea except they are at the same time possessed of the Long Isles viz: Lewis Harris and North & South Uists what they might do if possessed of these (tho now poor and contemptable) places shall be the subject of the following part of these papers.

[6]

Having in one of the above paragraphs supposed the Islands of St Kilda may be inhabited by a people wise rich & powerfull ---- enough to begin easy Neighbours to apparently more powerfull more numerous & richer Governments and Societys of Men ---- to illustrate this Supposition I have already shown what Number of people may live upon the product of its Land and Sea and to remove all objections ~~which May be made of the Naturall impediments~~ of its want of harbours, its being situat in a rough & tempestuous ocean &c. I suppose the inhabitants ~~possessed of the neighbouring Islands~~ are likewise possessors of the neighbouring Islands which are not so inconsiderable or contemptable as some may imagine the [superficial??] contents of Lewes Harris North & South Uists exclusive of the vast number of lessor Islands lying closs upon their Coasts is about 967 square miles or 616880 ⁴ square acres which allowing 4 acres to each person would afford mainttainance to 129220 souls of which we may well enough suppose 40 thousand are men fitt to carry arms.

Now as these Islands are capable of furnishing the necessarys of Life to such a number of people the Lochs and Bays numerous and well stored with fishes of all kinds. Great numbers of ships can ly at anchor in safe and commodious harbours. The Island of St Kilda being Naturally so well fortified that the Arms Amonition and Stores of all kinds may be lodged there and defended by a small number (even) of invallids against the most powerfull fleet in Europ considering the Situation of it.

[7]

And if there are mines in these Isles as probably there is (for reasons already given) it is an advantage superior and almost double to all the rest.

I say supposing these Islands possessed with a wise and industrious people able skillfull and willing to make use of Luck Naturall advantages as is immediately above mention'd who can deny but they will be in a capacity of being Dangerous Neighbours especially if they have any considerable share of the Dominion at Sea.

Possibly it will be said here that tho' all this may be allowed yet such a thing can never come to pass have we not now a powerfull and well disciplined Land army are

⁴ Two mis-calculations here and following: $(967 * 1760\text{yds} * 1760\text{yds}) / 4840\text{acres} = 618880$; and 616880 divided by $4 = 154220$ (or $618880 / 4 = 154720$). However, $516880 / 4 = 129220$...

not our Ambassadors and plenipotentiaries abroad; men of the best conduct, prudence & penetration. Are not those at the head of affairs at home men of the greatest parts, & best skill'd in politicks of any another Nation, is not our fleet at sea the bulwark of Brittain, and Terror of Europe.

I answer this is the sum of all that can be said to allay our fears and I shall in my turn take the Liberty of proposing a few Questions of the like Nature.

[8]

And first [.....] by all the former flourishing Empires Kingdoms and States that were conquered and overthrown by one another and by the Romans were all constrained to [.....]

[...] had that the Great Empire once much more Reason to look upon her self [...] than either Great Brittain or any of her Government show in [...] has ---- and yet nothing remains of that Mighty Empire [*ie. Rome*] to this day but only the Name.

Was it not the lesser powers (in almost all conquests) that by degrees over Lands far greater. Was it not from having possession of the small Isle of Thanet after wards [...] of Kent that the Saxons made their most entire Conquest of Brittain that ever any one people or Nation made of another.

Was it not by having possession of the Isles of Orkney that the Norwegians & Danes so mollested and disturbed the Scots in the north and the Saxons when possessed of the South parts of Brittain.

Do we not read that the Brittaines (who were for years under the Government of the Romans) became acquainted with the learning and politeness of their conquerors so that when they were conquer'd by the Saxons they were [...] as at this day.

And what [.....] Neighbour of our Ships of War of this day [.....] 2600 [.....] by King Edgar notwithstanding which and of the large addition made to that fleet by Ethelred his successor the Danes [.....] for the

There is at least one further page, missing from the manuscript.