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B. COLLECTION AND RESEARCH

Women Coal-Bearers in a Midlothian Mine
(A Contemporary Drawing of 1786)

B. R. S. MEGAW

Unusual only as the subject of an early drawing, the bearing system whereby coals were carried from the underground pits on the backs of women and girls continued in parts of Scotland up to the passing of Lord Ashley's Bill of 1843.

When Sir John Clerk of Penicuik informed the mining engineer of a Newcastle colliery in 1724 about the methods in use in his own

> coal works at Lonhead . . . that part of them which related to the bringing up coales on men & womens backs surprised him much because no such custome is used in England. But as we discoursed about the strikes & dips of ye Newcastle coals & mine at Lonhead he began to be convinced that a Remedy would be very difficult . . . The coals of Lonhead lye all dipping exceedingly . . . so that it is not easy to command them by an Engine. (Clerk of Penicuik Muniments no. 2106, quoted in Atkinson 1965:531.)

Gangs of women were commonly employed in similar tasks in the Middle Ages (for example, the raising of the earthen

ramparts of Edward I's castles in Scotland), but the late survival of women bearers in the mines of Eastern Scotland seems to have been encouraged by this geological phenomenon. Matthias Dunn, a mine inspector who described the edge seams of Midlothian, in 1831, observed that the Loanhead collieries were still difficult to operate other than by the bearing system.

> The bearing system so peculiar to the coal mining of Scotland seems to have originated in working the Edge seams; and when the difficulty of applying any other means comes to be considered, necessity would appear to plead strongly for such a practice, especially at a period when the means of sinking to the deep Flat coals was so imperfectly understood. But it is difficult to account for a system so replete with poverty, shame and demoralization, and moreover so destitute of real economy, being persisted in throughout the neighbouring flat collieries. (Dunn 1831, quoted in Atkinson 1965:431.)

The illustrations of colliery workings at Gilmerton, Midlothian (Plates I-III), reproduce an inset drawing on an unsigned plan of 1786. The inset is evidently schematic, not a scale drawing, but the diminutive figures of colliers, hewers and bearers with their loaded creels and unprotected lights (rush-lights or dip candles) are realistic enough to recall Hugh Miller's description of the collier woman of Niddry, survivors of old days of servitude, as "marked by a peculiar type of mouth, from which I learned to distinguish them from all other females of the country. It was wide open, thick lipped, projecting equal above and below, and exactly resembled that which we find in prints of savages in their lowest and most brutalised state."

In the evidence recorded in 1840 for the parliamentary commission of enquiry the type of creel employed is described as "a basket formed to the back, not unlike a cockle-shell, flattened towards the neck, so as to allow the lumps of coal to rest on the back of the neck and shoulders . . . it is frequently more than one man can do to lift the burden on her back. The tugs [bands] are then placed over the forehead . . . it not unfrequently happens that the tugs break, and the load falls upon those females who are following." (Report by R. H. Franks, 1840, quoted in McNeill 1883:30-31.) Drawings of women and girl coal-bearers employing the same type of creel are also reproduced in this work (McNeill 1883:facing 13, 28).

PLATE I

Gilmerton Colliery, Midlothian, 1786: schematic section showing women bearers and other details. See also Plates II-III.

PLATE II
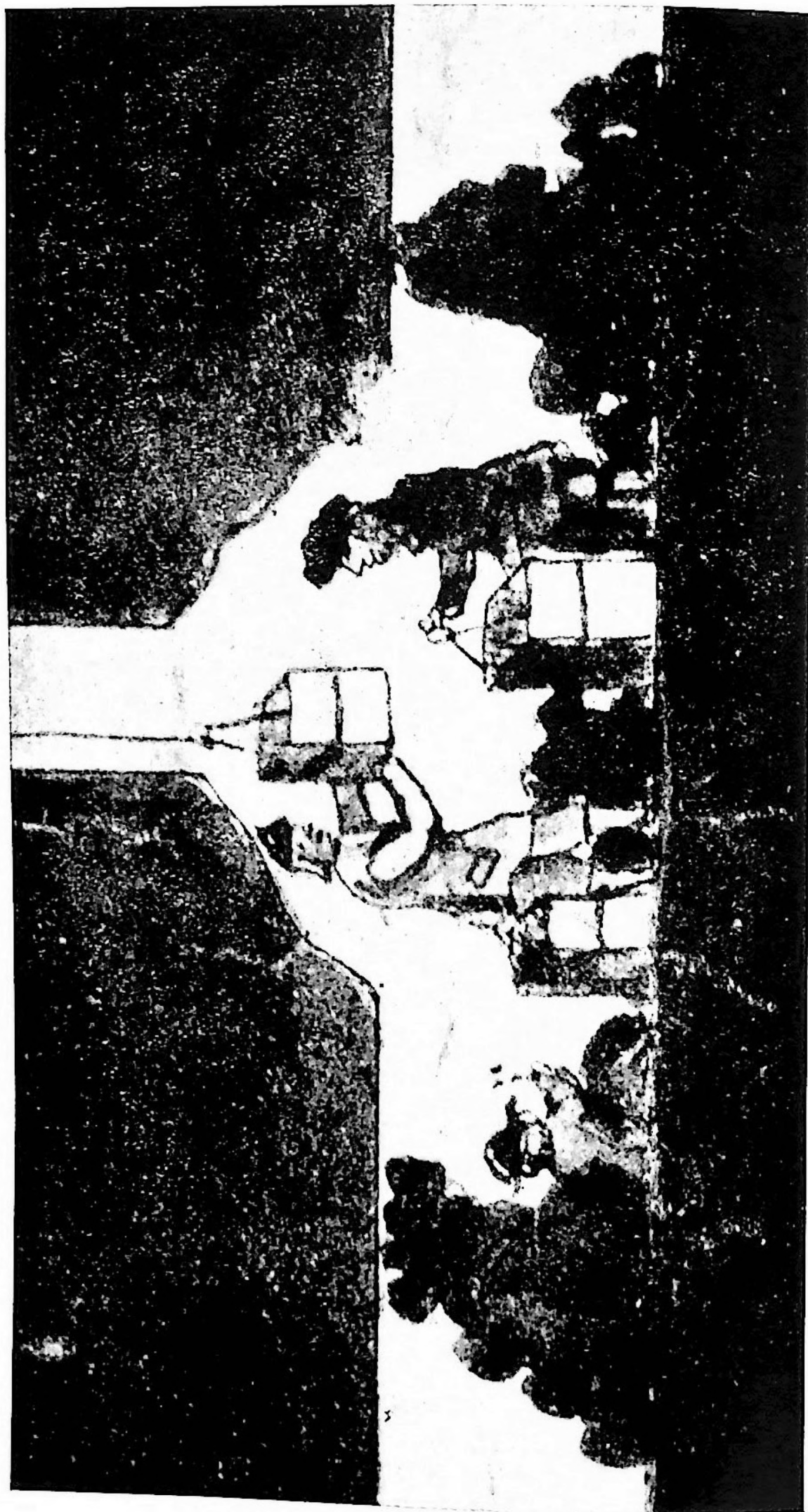
Gilmerton Colliery, Midlothian, 1786: enlarged detail of contemporary drawing. See also Plates I and III.

PLATE III

Gilmerton Colliery, Midlothian, 1786: enlarged detail shewing women bearers and a hewer. See also Plates I-II.

Creels of a different form, but similarly supported by bands from the forehead, are still occasionally used by Newhaven fishwives in the streets of Edinburgh.

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The Humph at the Fuit o' the Glen and the Humph at the Heid o' the Glen

HAMISH HENDERSON

Well, this is the story o' the Humph at the fuit o' the glen, an' the Humph at the heid o' the glen, this wis two men, an' they were very good friends. But the wan at the fuit o' the glen, he wis very humphy, he wis near doublet in two wi' the humph that wis on his back. The other one at the top o' the glen, he wisnae jist quite sae big in the humph, but he wis pretty bad too.

Well, Sunday about they cam' to visit one another, wan would travel up aboot three mile up to the top o' the glen, to spend the day wi' his friend, the Humph at the heid o' the glen. An' then the Humph at the heid o' the glen next Sunday would come down to the Humph at the fuit o' the glen an' spend the day.

So anyway, it wis the wan at the fuit o' the glen, he had to go to see the Humph at the heid o' the glen, it wis his Sunday

to walk up to the heid o' the glen to see his friend. Well, he had a wee bit o' a plantin' to pass, an' when he wis comin' past this plantin', he hears a lot o' singin' goin' on. He says: "Wheesht!"—an' a' the sang they had wis:

> "Saturday, Sunday,
> Saturday, Sunday,
> Saturday, Sunday"

an' that's a' the length they could get.

"Gosh!" he says, "I could pit a bit tae that song." An' he goes:

> "Saturday, Sunday,
> Monday, Tyoooosday!"

O, an' he heard the laughs an' the clappin' o' the hands.

"God bliss me," he says, "what can that be?"

But this wis three kind o' fairies that wis in the wood. An' the wan says to the other:

"Brither, what dae ye wish that man," he says, "for that nice part that he put tae our song?"

"Well," he says, "I wish him that the humph will drop an' melt off his back," he says, "that he'll be as straight as a rush. An' whit dae you wish him?"

"Well," he says, "I wish him to have the best of health," he says, "an' happiness. An' whit dae you wish him, brither?"

"Well," he says, "I wish him full an' plenty, that he'll always have plenty, tae he goes tae his grave."

"Very good!"

Och, this man wis walkin' up the glen, an' he feels hisself gettin lighter an' lighter, an' he straightens hissel' up, an' he's wonderin' what's come owre him. He didnae think it was hisself at all, that he could jist march up, like a soldier, up this glen.

So he raps at the door when he came tae his friend, the Humph at the heid o' the glen, an' when he cam' out, they askt him whit he wantet, they didnae know him.

"Oh," he says, "I want to see So-an'-So, my friend."

"But who are you?"

"Och," he says, "ye know," he says, "the humphy man that lives at the fuit o' the glen," he says, "I'm his friend, ye know me." An' told his name.

"Oh my!" he says, "whit whit whit happent tae ye, whit come owre ye?"

"Oh wheesht," he says, "if you come down," he says, "wi' me, or when ye're comin' down next Sunday, listen," he says, "at the wee plantin' as ye're goin' doon the road, an' ye'll hear singin'." An' he told him that they only had "Saturday, Sunday, Saturday, Sunday," but he says; "I pit a bit tae their song; I says 'Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tyoooosday', an' I felt mysel'—everything disappearin' from me." An' he says, "if you come down, you'll be made as straight as whit I am."

Anyway, this man's aye wishin' it wis next Sunday, an' he's comin'—when Sunday come—he's comin' marchin' down the road, an' jist at the wee plantin' he hears them a' singin', this song, the bit that the ither humph pit oot tae it, ye know. They're goin':

> "Saturday, Sunday,
> Monday, Tyoooosday!"

"Wheesht," he says, "I'll pit a bit tae that." He goes:

> "Saturday, Sunday,
> Monday, Tuesday,
> Wednesday, Thursday,
> Friday, Saturday,"

an' then he waitet. Ah, an' he got no clap.

He says, "Whit dae ye wish him, brither?" he says, "that man, for destroyin' our lovely song?"

He says, "I wish him that if his humph wis big, that it'll be a thousand times bigger: an' whit dae you wish him?"

"I wish him," he says, "to be the ugliest man that ever wis on the face o' the earth, that nobody can look at him: an' whit dae you wish him?"

"I wish him," he says, "to be in torture an' punishment tae he goes tae his grave."

Well, he grew, an' he grew tae he wis the size o' Bennachie —a mountain! An' he could hardly walk up, an' when he come tae his house, he couldnae get in no way or another. Well, he had to lie outside, an' it would have ta'en seventeen pair o' blankets to cover him, to cover him up. An' he's lyin' out winter an' summer till he died an' it ta'en twenty-four coffins to hold him. So he's buried at the top o' the glen.

The above version of Aarne-Thompson Tale-type 503 ("The Gifts of the Little People") was recorded in July 1955 from Mrs. Bella Higgins, Blairgowrie, Perthshire. Although 503 is fairly common among Gaelic storytellers in both Scotland and Ireland, this is the first version in Lowland Scots to be recorded.

At the Aberdeen Folk Festival in November 1965, the folk-singer Norman Kennedy re-told in racy Aberdonian Scots a Gaelic version of 503, which he had heard told in English on Barra by the late Annie Johnston.

Riobaidh agus Robaidh agus Brionnaidh

DONALD A. MACDONALD

The text printed below is a good version[1] of its type, A.T. 1535,[2] and as such, well worthy of a place in this journal. I prefer, however, to publish it rather as a tribute to a fine story-teller, the late Neil Gillies (Niall Mhìcheil Nill) of Glen, Barra, from whom I recorded it[3] on the 30th of March 1965[4] (SA 1965/15.B.2).

Neil Gillies's qualities as a reciter of traditional tales have been noticed elsewhere by competent authorities (MacLean 1952:126, 1956:29; Jackson 1961:55). I should like to add only that the three afternoons which I spent with him and his sister last spring represent one of the highlights of my work as a collector in the Hebrides.

He was in his 79th year and, though he had been in failing health for some time, he was still very alert and responsive. When I returned to Barra in June, I was shocked to hear that he had died suddenly a month before. Niall Mhìcheil Nill was one of the last of his kind—an exponent of a narrative tradition which, at its best, is now on the point of extinction.

Bha dà bhantraich a' siod reimhid agus bha dithis ghillean aig té dhiu agus bha aon ghill' aig an t' éile, agus 's e Riobaidh is Robaidh a bh'air an dithist agus Brionnaidh air an fhear nach robh aig a mhàthair ach e fhéin; agus bha cruit an t-aon aca agus bha mart an t-aon aca. Agus bha Brionnaidh cho math dha'n bhoin—bha e cho iasgaidh—ach Riobaidh is Robaidh, cha robh sgath ach gu robh 'bhó aca beò leis cho leasg 's a bha 'ad airson rud a dheanamh dhi. Agus an turus a bha seo-ach ghabh 'ad farmad ri Brionnaidh cho math 's a bha 'bhó bh'aige seach an té aca fhéin agus an oidhche bha seo-achd

chaidh 'ad dha'n bhàthaich agus dh'éirich 'ad air a' mhart—
air a' bhoin aig Brionnaidh—gos na mharbh 'ad i 's 'n'air a
mharbh 'ad i dh'fhàg 'ad a' siod i 's thug 'ad an taigh orra.

'N'air a dh'éirich Brionnaidh a' la'irne mhàireach 's a
chaidh e mach dha'n bhàthaich bha 'bhó marbh. . . . Dh'ainich
e taghta có rinn e: bha e cinndeach gur a h-èad a rinn e,
ach, co-dhiù, cha robh arach air. Thug e mach a' bhó as a'
bhàthaich a dh'ionnsaigh a' chnuic agus thòisich e ri feannadh
na bà agus 'n'air a dh'fheann e i 's a ghlan e 'n t-seiche thòisich
e air a pasgadh suas 's bha e 'cuir leth-chrun as a ch-uile *corner*
a bh'air an t-seichidh mar a bha e 'ga pasgadh 's 'n'air a rinn
e sin, chàirich e air a mhuin i 's rinn e air a' bhaile mhór.

Bha à-san a nist aig an taigh—Riobaidh is Robaidh—'ga
watch-adh: 'ad a' coimhead a ch-uile car a bha e 'cuir dheth,
ach chàirich esan air dha'n bhaile mhór leis an t-seichidh agus
chaidh e go taigh na dhà a' sin-achd 's thuirt e riutha 'n
ceannaicheadh 'ad seiche mairt 's nach robh uair 'sa bith a
chrathadh 'ad i nach fhalbhadh na leth-chruin aisde. Co-dhiù,
cha robh duine 'sin 'ga chreidsinn.

Thanaig e ma dheireadh go . . . dh'ionnsaigh an taigh-òsda
agus thanaig fear an taigh-òsda mach dha'n dorust agus thuirt
e ri fear an taigh-òsda e . . . 'n t-seiche cheannach agus nach
robh uair 'sa bith a bhiodh e 'g iarraidh airgiod gu fóghnadh
dha 'n t-seiche . . . chrathadh 's bha na leth-chruin a' tuiteam
aiste.

"Siuthad a nist," ors esan—fear an taigh-òsda—ris, "crath a
nist i," ors esan, "fiach a faic sinn," ors esan, "an dig 'ad
aiste."

Thug esan crathadh air an t-seichidh 's a mach na leth-
chruin. "O," ors esan, "ceannaichidh mi i gun teagamh," os
esan. "De bhios tu 'g iarraidh orra?"

"O," ors esan, "bidh mi 'g iarraidh a leithid seo orr'," os
esan.

Co-dhiù, phàigh fear an taigh-òsda dha 'n t-seiche 's
'n'air a rinn e sin rinn e air an taigh le deannan math airgid
airson na seiche, 's 'n'air a nochd e ris an taigh bha à-san aig
an taigh 'ga *watch*-adh.

Phut Riobaidh Robaidh 's phut Robaidh Riobaidh. Siod an
coinneamh Bhrionnaidh a ghabh 'ad 's chuir 'ad fàilt air
Brionnaidh:

"Seadh a Bhrionnaidh, tha thu air tighinn."

"Tha," ors esan—Brionnaidh.

"'S ciamar a chaidh dhut?"

"Chaidh," ors esan, "glé mhath. Nach seall sibh na fhuair mi," ors esan, "na fhuair mi," ors esan, "do dh-airgiod airson . . . air an t-seichidh."

"Tha gù dearbh fhéin," os à-san. "Nach fhearr dhuinne nist," os esan, "a' bhó againn fhìn a mharbhadh," os esan, "agus falbh leis an t-seichidh aice."

"'N dà gu dearbh fhéine 's fhearr," os esan—Brionnaidh.

Seo a' rud a rinn 'ad. Ghabh 'ad 'n a' bhàthaich. Dh'éirich 'ad air a' bhoin gos na mharbh 'ad i 's 'n'air a mharbh 'ad a' bhó, thug 'ad a mach i 's dh'fheann 'ad i, 's 'n'air a dh'fheann 'ad i 's a phaisg 'ad suas i, chàirich 'ad orra 'na' bhaile mhór a' dol 'ga reic.

Co-dhiù, 'n'air a rànaig 'ad am baile mór, thoisich 'ad ri éigheach:

"Có cheannaicheas seiche mairt?"

Cha robh, a ghràidh, ach cha robh duine beò 'gan ogh-naigeadh. Ma dheireadh mhaoidh na poilismein orra mar a clìreadh 'ad a mach as a' bhaile gu rachadh an cur 'na' phrìosan. Cha robh, a ghràidh, ach rinn 'ad air an taigh.

Bha nist fios aig Brionnaidh gu robh 'ad ann a' rùn nan tuadh dha 's gun deanadh 'ad rud 'sa' bith air na faigheadh 'ad cothrom air. Cha robh ach an oidhche bha seo-achd, thuirt e ri mhàthair:

"'S fhearr dhuibh-se, mhàthair," os esan, "a nochd," os esan, "a dhol dha'n rùm agam-s'," os esan, "'s theid mise dha' rùm agaibh-s'," os esan.

"Seadh," . . . ors ise—'mhàthair.

Seo a' rud a rinneadh. Chaidh esan a rùm a mhàthar 's chaidh a mhàthair dha' rùm aige fhéin a chadal.

'N'air a shaoil Riobaidh is Robaidh bha Brionnaidh 'na shuain, rinn 'ad air an taigh aige 's chaidh 'ad a staigh ann 's dh'éirich 'ad air màthair Bhrionnaidh gos na mharbh 'ad i 's 'n'air a rinn 'ad seo-achd rinn 'ad air an dorust.

Dh'éirich Brionnaidh 'sa mhaduinn. Chaidh e sios a choimhead air a mhàthair: bha 'mhàthair marbh.

O *well*, cha robh àrach air. Bha fhios aige taghta có rinn e.

Co-dhiù, 'n'air a chunnaig e sin dh'fhalbh e 's chuir e 'mhàthair 'na . . . seasamh 's chuir e orra ch-uile rioba b'fhearr a bh'aice agus dh'fhalbh e leatha air a mhuin dha'n bhaile mhór.

Rànaig e 'm baile mór agus . . . seadh, iomall a' bhaile co-dhiù, agus thachair tobar mór ris ann a shin-achd agus lig e as a mhàthair agus chuir e 'na seasamh os cionn an tobair i

agus chuir e bata 'ga cumail 'na seasamh; 's bha taigh mór pios an taobh thall dha'n tobar 's chaidh e null dha'n taigh mhór agus bhuail e 'n dorust agus thanaig bean an taighe dha'n dorust agus dh'fhoighneachd i dheth gu dé bha e 'g iarraidh.

"*Well,*" os esan, "tha mi 'g iarraidh," os esan, "deoch," os esan. "Tha mi," os esan, "air tighinn," os esan, "air astar mór," os esan, "agus," os esan, "tha 'm pathadh orm."

"Seadh," os ise, "ghcibh thu sin," os ise. "Thig a staigh," os ise.

'S chuir i 'na (*sic*) suidh' aig a' bhòrd e 's chàiricheadh a ch-uile seòrsa bidhidh air a' bhòrd.

"Siuthad a nist," os ise, "gabh do bhiadh ann a shin," os ise.

"*Well,*" os esan, "dh'fhàg mi mo mhàthair," os esan, "thall aig an tobar," os esan, "'s tha fhiosam," os esan, "gun gabhadh i fhéi' rud," os esan, "na faigheadh i e, agus 's fhearr dhomh-s'," os esan, "falbh 'ga h-iarraidh."

"Chan fhalbh thù," os ise. "Gabh thusa do bhiadh," os ise, "ach falbhaidh a' nighean," os ise.

"*Well,* ma dh'fhalbhas a' nighean," os esan, "tha i car bodhar. Nam biodh tu 'g éigheach dhi 's nach cluinnt i thu, feumaidh tu dhol suas agus crathadh beag thoirt orra."

Agus seo a' rud a . . . rinneadh. Dh'fhalbh a' nighean 's thòisich i ri éigheach 'na' chaillich 's i 'na seasamh os cionn an tobair, 's cha robh 'chailleach a' toirt hó-ró orra. Co-dhiù, chaidh i suas agus chrath i 'chailleach 's siod a' chailleach an comhair a cinn dha'n tobar.

Och, thill a' nighean dhachaigh ann am breislich a bàis a dh'innse gun do thuit a' chailleach dha'n tobar an comhair a cinn:

"'S tha mi 'creidsinn," os ise, "g'eil i air a bàthadh."

Cha robh, a ghràidh, ach a mach bean an taighe 's a mach an duine fhéin a null 's a mach Brionnaidh. Cha robh ach:

"'S fhearr dhut gun ghuth thoirt air," os esan—an duin' uasal. 'Se duin' uasal a bh'ann, 's coltach.

"Tiodhlaigidh sinn," os esan, "do mhàthair," os esan, "on a thachair an gnothuch mar a thachair e," os esan, "agus," os esan, "thcid alairidh mhór," os esan, "a dheanamh dhi," os esan, "agus," os esan, "ghcobh thu duais mhath," os esan, "a bharrachd air a sin," os esan, "gun ghuth thoirt air mar a thachair," ors esan.

"O, cha dobhair," ors esan—Brionnaidh.

Cha robh, a ghràidh, ach . . . chaidh a' chailleach a thoirt a null a thaigh an diùc, agus ciste 's anart a chuir orra agus

tiodhlaigeadh mór a dheanamh dhi agus 'n'air a rinn 'ad seo ...
thug an diùc—ma's e diùc a bh'ann: 'se duin' uasal a bh'ann
co-dhiù—sìneantas mór airgid do Bhrionnaidh agus gun ghuth
thoirt air mar a thachair an gnothuch.

'S rinn Brionnaidh air an taigh, 's bha à-san aig an taigh
'ga *watch*-adh gos an dànaig e, 's 'n'air a mhuthaich 'ad dha 's
a bha e 'tighinn goirid dha'n taigh, siod . . . phut Riobaidh
Robaidh agus phut Robaidh Riobaidh agus siod an coin-
neamh Bhrionnaidh a ghabh 'ad.

"Seadh, a Bhrionnaidh, tha thu air tighinn."

"Tha," ors esan, Brionnaidh.

"'S de-mar a chaidh dhut?"

"Chaidh," ors esan, "glé mhath," os esan. "Reic mi mo
mhàthair," os esan, "'s fhuair mi," os esan, "na bha sin a
dh-airgiod orr'," os esan, 's e coimhead a' phocain dhaibh.

"Seadh gu dearbh," os à-san.

"Fhuair," os esan.

"'S nach fhearr dhuinn' air màthair fhéin a mharbhadh
agus falbh leath'?"

" 'N dà, gu dearbha, 's fhearr," ors esan—Brionnaidh.

Seo a' rud a bh'ann. Ghabh 'ad dhachaigh. Dh'éirich 'ad
air a màthair gos na mharbh 'ad i, 's 'n'air a rinn 'ad sin,
chàirich 'ad orra 'na' bhaile mhór leatha. Agus 'n'air a rànaig
'ad am baile mór, bha 'ad ag éigheach:

"Có cheannaicheas seann chailleach mharbh? Có chean-
naicheas seann chailleach mharbh?"

Cha robh, a ghràidh, ach siod na poilismein 'n am bad—
'ad clireadh a mach as a' bhaile air neo gu rachadh an cur 'na
phrìosan, nach fhaigheadh 'ad as ri maireann, . . . leis a
chaillich.

Cha robh ach thill Riobaidh is Robaidh dhachaigh le
'màthair agus toilichte gun d'fhuair 'ad clir, agus bha nist fios
aig Brionnaidh gum biodh 'ad 'ga fheitheamh air n-ais—gu'n
deanadh 'ad rud 'sa' bith air fiach an cuireadh 'ad crioch air.
Agus 'n'air a chunnaig Brionnaidh 'ad a' tighinn, rinn e air a'
bheinn, agus siod à-san as a dheoghaidh—Riobaidh is Robaidh.
Ach bha Brionnaidh na bu luaithe na à-san agus bha e 'dea-
namh a' ghnothuich orra.

Co-dhiù, air dha dhol pios dha'n bheinn có . . . dé thachair
ris ach cìobair agus grùnn chaorach aige agus cù. Ghabh e far
a' robh 'n cìobair:

"'S fhearr dhut," os esan, "t-aodach a chuir dhiot," os
esan, "agus gu'n cuir mis' orm e," os esan, "agus cuiridh mise

dhiom m'aodach fhéin," os esan, "'s cuiridh tus' ort e," os esan, "agus chan eil mi 'g iarraidh ort seo a dhianamh," os esan, "ach son greiseag bheag," os esan, "agus gheobh thu," os esan, "am pocan airgid tha sin," ors esan, "ma nì thu e," ors esan—Brionnaidh.

"Seadh," os esan—an cìobair, "ni," ors esan.

'S rinn e sin: chuir an cìobair dheth an t-aodach 's chuir esan dheth an t-aodach aige fhéin, 's chuir an cìobair air aodach Bhrionnaidh 's chuir esan air aodach a' chìobair.

"Seadh a nist," os esan, "Cum a nist romhad," os esan, "mar a bha mi fhìn a' falbh," os esan, "'s gabhaidh mis'," os esan, "mar a bha sibhse 'gabhail," os esan, "leis na caoirich," os esan, "'s leis . . . a' chù," os esan.

Nochd à-san, Riobaidh is Robaidh 's lean 'ad Brionnaidh, ma b'fhior, gur e Brionnaidh a bh'ann. Dh'éirich 'ad air leis na clachan 's leis na cnuic (sic)[5] gos 'n do chuir 'ad a mach air loch mór a bh' ann a shin e, 's 'n'air a rinn 'ad sin, chaidh a . . . 'n duine bhàthadh as a' loch, 's thill 'ad dhachaigh. 'S chaidh Brionnaidh a' falach: cha robh sgial air Brionnaidh.

Co-dhiù, dh'fhalbh Brionnaidh agus rinn e air an taigh leis na caoirich agus leis a' chù agus deise 'chìobair air. Cha robh, a ghràidh, ach mhuthaich à-san dha a' tighinn.

"A Dhia beannaich m'anam, an dù tha seo, a Bhrionnaidh?"

"'S mì," os esan, "tha mi air tighinn," os esan.

"Ach shaoil mi," os esan, "gu'n deach do bhàthadh a's a' locha."

"O, cha deachaidh," os esan. "'N'air a ràna' mis'," os esan, "grùnn a' locha," os esan, "bha 'n duine còir ann a sheo," os esan, "romham," os esan, "'s dh'iarr e orm tilleadh," os esan, "cho luath 'sa rinn mi riamh," os esan, "agus gu'n doireadh e dhomh," os esan, "an cù agus na caoirich agus aodach cìobair: 's sin a' rud a rinn mi," os esan. ". . . Thug an cìobair dhomh," os esan, "aodach fhéin," os esan, "'s chuir mi orm e," os esan, "'s thug e dhomh na caoirich," os esan, "'s an cù."

"Ma-tha, nach fhearr dhusa sinne chuir a mach air a' locha gun fhios nach fhaigheamaid sinn fhìn e."

"'N dà, gu dearbha 's fhearr," os esan—Brionnaidh.

Seo a' rud a bh'ann. Dh'fhalbh Brionnaidh as an deoghaidh, 's dh'éirich e orra leis na clachan 's leis na cnuip gos 'na chuir e mach air a loch 'ad. 'S 'n'air a rinn e sin, thill e dhachaigh, 's cha do chuir 'ad dragh tuilleadh air Brionnaidh.

Sin mar a chuala mise.[6]

G

Riobaidh and Robaidh and Brionnaidh

There were once two widows and one of them had two sons and the other had one son, and the two were called Riobaidh and Robaidh and the one who was his mother's only son was called Brionnaidh; and they had a croft each and a cow each. And Brionnaidh was so good to the cow—he was such a willing worker—but as for Riobaidh and Robaidh, their cow could scarcely keep alive because they were so lazy about providing for it. And they became envious of Brionnaidh because his cow was so much better than their own, and one night they went to the byre and set about the cow—about Brionnaidh's cow—until they had killed it and when they had killed it they left it there and took themselves off home.

When Brionnaidh rose next morning and went out to the byre, the cow was dead. He knew fine who had done it: he was certain that it was they who had done it, but anyway, there was nothing that could be done about it. He took the cow out of the byre, outside, and began to skin the cow, and when he had skinned it and cleaned the hide he began to fold it up, and he put a half-crown in every corner of the hide as he folded it, and when he had done that, he put it on his back and made for the city.

Now, *they* were at home—Riobaidh and Robaidh—watching him: they were watching every move he made, but he made off to the city with the hide and he went to one or two houses there and he asked them (i.e. the occupants) if they would buy a cow's hide which would give out half-crowns every time they shook it. Anyway, no one there believed him.

At last he came to the inn and the innkeeper came out to the door and he said to the innkeeper that he should buy the hide and that, any time he wanted money, all he had to do was shake the hide and half-crowns would fall out of it.

"Go on now," said he, the innkeeper, to him, "shake it now," said he, "till we see," said he, "whether they come out of it." He gave the hide a shake and out came the half-crowns

"O," said he, "I'll certainly buy it," said he. "How much will you want for it?"

"O," said he, "I'll want such and such for it," said he.

Anyway, the innkeeper paid him for the hide and when he had done that he set off for home with a good sum of money for the hide, and when he came in sight of the house, *they* were at home watching him.

Riobaidh nudged Robaidh and Robaidh nudged Riobaidh. Off they went to meet Brionnaidh and they greeted Brionnaidh:

"Well, Brionnaidh you've come."

"Yes," said he—Brionnaidh.

"And how did you get on?"

"I got on very well," said he.

"See," said he, "how much money I got for the hide."

"Yes indeed," said they. "Hadn't we better," said he (*sic*), "kill our own cow now," said he (*sic*), "and go off with her hide."

"Well indeed you had," said he—Brionnaidh.

This is what they did. They made for the byre. They set about the cow until they had killed it and when they had killed the cow they took it out and skinned it, and when they had skinned it and folded it up (i.e. the hide) they set out for the city to sell it.

Anyway, when they reached the city they began to shout: "Who will buy a cow hide?"

And, oh dear, not a soul would have anything to do with them. At last the police threatened them that unless they cleared out of the town they would be put in prison. Oh dear, there was nothing else for it; they made for home.

Brionnaidh now knew that they really hated him and that they would stop at nothing if they got a chance at him. So this night he said to his mother:

"You had better, mother," said he, "to-night," said he, "go to my room," said he, "and I'll go to your room," said he.

"Yes," said she—his mother.

This was what happened. He went to his mother's room and his mother went to his room to sleep.

When Riobaidh and Robaidh thought Brionnaidh was asleep they made for his house and they went in and set about Brionnaidh's mother till they had killed her, and when they had done this they made for the door.

Brionnaidh rose in the morning. He went down to see his mother: his mother was dead.

O well, it couldn't be helped. He knew fine who had done it.

Anyway, when he saw this he went and set his mother standing up and dressed her in all the best clothes she had and set off with her on his back to the city.

He reached the city—well, the outskirts of the city anyway—and he came upon a big well there and he set her upright above the well and put a walking-stick to keep her upright; and there

was a big house a short distance beyond the well and he went over to the big house and knocked at the door and the lady of the house came to the door and asked him what he wanted.

"Well," said he, "I want a drink," said he. "I've come a long way," said he, "and I'm thirsty," said he.

"All right," said she, "you'll get that," said she. "Come in," said she.

And she set him down at the table and laid out all sorts of food on the table.

"Go on then," said she, "and take your food there," said she.

"Well," said he, "I left my mother," said he, "over at the well," said he, "and I know," said he, "that she'd take something too," said he, "if she could get it, and I'd better go for her," said he.

"You won't," said she. "You have your meal," said she, "but the girl will go," said she.

"Well, if the girl goes," said he, "she's rather deaf. If you shout at her and she can't hear you, you have to go up and shake her gently."

And this is what happened. The girl went and started shouting to the old woman who was standing over the well and the old woman paid no attention whatever. Anyway, she went up and shook the old woman and the old woman went head first into the well.

Och, the girl returned home in a mortal panic telling that the old woman had fallen head first into the well.

"And I believe," said she, "that she's been drowned."

And, oh dear, out rushed the lady of the house and over rushed the man himself and out rushed Brionnaidh. And then it was:

"You'd better not say a word about it," said he, the gentleman. He was a gentleman, it seems.

"We shall bury your mother," said he, "since things have happened as they have," said he, "and," said he, "a great wake will be held for her," said he, "and," said he, "you will get a good sum," said he, "over and above that," said he, "if you don't say a word about what has happened," said he.

"O, no, I won't," said he—Brionnaidh.

What happened then, my lad, was that the old woman was taken over to the Duke's house and a coffin and shroud provided

for her and a great funeral arranged for her, and when this was done, the duke—if he was a duke: he was a gentleman anyway—handed over a great sum of money to Brionnaidh, and not a word to be said about what had happened.

And Brionnaidh made for home and *they* were at their house watching for him till he came and when they saw him and he was getting near the house, then Riobaidh nudged Robaidh and Robaidh nudged Riobaidh and off they went to meet Brionnaidh.

"Well, Brionnaidh, you've come."

"Yes," said he—Brionnaidh.

"And how did you get on?"

"Very well," said he. "I sold my mother," said he, "and I got," said he, "all that money for her," said he—showing them the bag.

"Did you indeed," said they.

"I did," said he.

"And hadn't *we* better kill our own mother and go off with her?"

"Yes, indeed, you had," said he—Brionnaidh.

And so it was: they went off home. They set about their mother till they had killed her, and when they had done that, they set off for the city with her. And when they reached the city they were shouting:

"Who will buy an old dead woman? Who will buy an old dead woman?"

What happened, my lad, is that the police swooped upon them—they were to clear out of the city with the old woman or they would be put in prison and never get out as long as they lived.

There was nothing for it then but that Riobaidh and Robaidh went back home with their mother, relieved to have got away with it, and Brionnaidh now knew that they would be out to get him again—that they would do anything to him to finish him off. And when Brionnaidh saw them coming he made for the hills and off they went in pursuit—Riobaidh and Robaidh. But Brionnaidh was faster than them and was getting the better of them.

Anyway, when he had gone some distance into the hills, whom should he meet but a shepherd with a number of sheep and a dog. He made straight for the shepherd.

"You'd better," said he, "take off your clothes," said he, "so that I can put them on," said he, "and I'll take off my own

clothes," said he, "and you'll put them on," said he, "and I'm only asking you to do this," said he, "for a short time," said he, "and you'll get," said he, "that bag of money," said he, "if you'll do it," said he—Brionnaidh.

"Yes," said he—the shepherd. "I will," said he.

And he did that: the shepherd took off his clothes and he took off his own clothes and the shepherd put on Brionnaidh's clothes, and he put on the shepherd's clothes.

"Well, now," said he, "Carry on now," said he, "in the direction in which I was going," said he, "and I'll go," said he, "the way you were going," said he, "with the sheep," said he, "and with the dog," said he.

They appeared, Riobaidh and Robaidh and they followed Brionnaidh, thinking that it was Brionnaidh. They set upon him with stones and clods till they had driven him out into a big loch that was there and when they had done that the man was drowned in the loch and they returned home. And Brionnaidh had hidden; there was no sign of Brionnaidh.

Anyway, Brionnaidh went and made for home with the sheep and with the dog and wearing the shepherd's clothes. Well, my lad, they noticed him coming.

"God bless my soul, is this you, Brionnaidh?"

"Yes," said he, "I have come."

"But I thought," said he, "that you had been drowned in the loch."

"O, no, I wasn't," said he. "When I reached," said he, "the bottom of the loch," said he, "this good man," said he, "was there before me," said he, "and he told me to go back," said he, "as quickly as ever I could," said he, "and that he would give me," said he, "the dog and the sheep and a shepherd's clothes: and that was what I did," said he. "The shepherd gave me," said he, "his own clothes," said he, "and I put them on," said he, "and he gave me the sheep," said he, "and the dog."

"Well then, hadn't you better drive *us* out into the loch, and who knows but that we may find him too."

"Well indeed I had," said he—Brionnaidh.

This was what happened. Brionnaidh went after him and set upon them with stones and with clods till he had driven them out into the loch. And when he had done that he returned home and they never troubled Brionnaidh again.

That is how I heard it.[6]

NOTES

[1] Other Scottish Gaelic versions of A.T. 1535:

The present text and the other one referred to in Note 4, below, from the same reciter, are the only full versions noted in the indices to the School of Scottish Studies Sound Recording Archive. The late Dr. Calum MacLean recorded a version in December 1959 (SA 1960/8.A.4) from John MacMillan, South Uist, which begins with the death of the mother and then proceeds along more or less similar lines. My colleague John MacInnes recorded a version in August 1953 (SA 1953/170.5) from Catriona MacPherson, Skye, which begins with the death of the first mother and ends with the failure of the attempt to sell the body of the second.

A version very similar to the present text was written down in March 1952 (L.S.N. 1. xxx.1:51-8) by Professor Kenneth Jackson from the late Miss Annie Johnston, Barra—see also Note 6 below. A version of A.T. 1539 taken down by Donald John MacDonald from Miss Mary Ann MacInnes, Stilligarry, South Uist (D.J.M. MSS. 41-2: 3881-907), incorporates the episodes of substitution for the shepherd and the death of the enemies by drowning.

John F. Campbell of Islay printed four versions of 1535 (Campbell 1890:232-52) from Barra, Ardnamurchan, Bernera-Harris, and "somewhere in Argyleshire". Only in the case of the Barra version does Campbell give a Gaelic text.

[2] Distribution as noted by Thompson (1961: 440):

Finnish, Finnish-Swedish, Estonian, Livonian, Lithuanian, Lappish, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Icelandic, Scottish, Irish, French, Spanish, Catalan, Dutch, Flemish, German, Italian, Rumanian, Hungarian, Czech, Slovenian, Serbocroatian, Russian, Greek, Turkish, Indonesian, India, Japanese, English-American, Spanish-American, Portuguese-American, West Indies, American Indian, African.

[3] I was accompanied by Miss Lisa Sinclair, formerly Archivist in the School of Scottish Studies, who introduced me to Mr. Gillies and whose help I gratefully acknowledge.

[4] Another recording (SA 1953/268 A2-269 A1) of the same tale was made by the late Dr. Calum MacLean from Neil Gillies in 1953. The plots are identical but the story is rather better told in the present text.

[5] For *cnuip* (see last paragraph of text).

[6] Neil said he could not remember from whom he had heard the story. He learned tales in his youth from a number of old men, including his father.

The close similarity between his text and that of his late neighbour Miss Annie Johnston (see Note 1 above) suggests a number of possibilities:

(*a*) That one of them may have learned it from the other.

(*b*) That they both knew the story and that one version may have influenced the other.

(*c*) That both texts stem from a common, not too distant source.

(*d*) A combination of (*b*) and (*c*) is possible.

Miss Johnston told Professor Jackson that she had learned the story from another neighbour of hers in Glen, Elizabeth Mackinnon.

In a note to a version of A.T. 506 (Johnston 1934:50) Miss Johnston says of Elizabeth Mackinnon (Ealasaid Eachainn) that she had been born in Vatersay 76 years before and had spent much of her early life in Sandray where her father was shepherd. Their house in Sandray had been a favourite haunt of fishermen from Mingulay, Pabbay and Castlebay and the evenings were whiled away with storytelling.

Now, Neil Gillies's parents were both from Mingulay. It is almost certain that Elizabeth Mackinnon's parents were also from that island, and, according to their daughter, their house in Sandray had been a haunt of Mingulay fishermen.

Thus it seems very likely that the present text represents a Mingulay version of A.T. 1535, though it is almost certainly impossible now to determine the exact provenance.

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MacMhuirich and The Old Woman from Harris

JOHN MACINNES

The following was recorded from the late Duncan MacDonald, Peninerine, South Uist, by the late Dr. Calum I. Maclean while employed by the Irish Folklore Commission prior to the establishment of the School of Scottish Studies, and is reproduced with the kind permission of Professor J. H. Delargy, Honorary Director of the Commission:

'Se Mac Mhuirich ann a Stadhlaigearraidh a bha a' cumail sgrìobhadh agus eachdraidh suas air chuimhne air

gach nì a bhuineadh do Chlann Raghnaill agus bha a' chùis
coltach gu robh e a' dèanamh a leithid eile air a chuile nì a
bhuineadh do thighearnan eile a bha 'sa' Ghàidhealtachd agus
bhiodh e a' dol man cuairt aig am sonruichte 'n a' bhliadhna
a thogail aon chìos a bha air a chuir a mach dha air son seo.
Agus a nis bha MacLeòid na h-Earadh a' fàs sgìth dhe bhith a'
pàigheadh cìseadh airson a bhith cumail suas eachdraidh a
theaghlaich. Ach air a' làimh eile bha e glé mhór leis a dhol a
ràdha facal 'sa' bith ann an aghaidh Mhic Mhuirich neo
chailleadh e ainm na h-uaisle. Agus 'se a' rud a rinn e, dh'
fhasdaidh e seana chailleach as na h-Earadh airson agus gum
bitheadh i a staigh a' latha thigeadh Mac Mhuirich a
dh'iarraidh na cìseadh agus gu labhradh i ris gu math tàmail-
teach air chor agus gu fògradh i e agus nach bitheadh e a'
tilleadh tuilleadh. Fhuair e a' chailleach agus bha i a'
feitheamh ann a siod gus an dànaig Mac Mhuirich. Agus
thànaig e a seo agus nuair a nochd e a staigh a thaigh Mhic
Leòid ris a' chaillich, labhair a' chailleach mar seo:

"Ad mhor," ors i fhéin, "is leotha na an criathar,
  Air ceann liathghlas na blcideadh,
  A thànaig 'ugainn a Uibhist
  A thogail fuidheall gach seideadh."

Sin nuair a labhair Mac Mhuirich:

"Tha buaidh," ors e fhéin, "air Mac Leòid na h-Earadh
  Nach 'eil air uaislean Innsibh Gall
  Cailleach air dhath an Diabhail
  Gach uair ag iarraidh rud ann.   ·
  Nam bitheadh tu ann an ceardach Bhulcain
  Anns a' ghleann am biodh an nimh
  Séideadh a' bhuilg aig a' ghobha
  Iorasglach odhar dhuibh thoir an dorus ort."

Agus dh'fhalbh a' chailleach agus ann an ceann tiotan
thàinig Mac Leòid a nuas far a robh Mac Mhuirich agus chuir
e fàilte air agus cha do lig e air gu robh leithid na caillich
riamh an aon taigh ris.

Translation

It was MacMhuirich in Stilligarry who kept a written
record of the history of all that pertained to the Clan Ranald.
It would appear that he was doing the same for other Gaelic
lords: at a particular time of the year he used to go around to
collect certain dues that were apportioned to him for that work.

Now MacLeod of Harris was getting tired of paying dues to have his family history preserved. Yet, on the other hand, he was very loth to say anything to MacMhuirich's face, otherwise he would lose his noble reputation. What he did was this. He hired an old woman from Harris so that she might be in the house on the day that MacMhuirich came to collect the dues. She was to speak pretty cuttingly to MacMhuirich so that she would drive him away never to return. MacLeod got the woman, who waited until MacMhuirich arrived. MacMhuirich did arrive, and when he came inside and into the old woman's presence, she spoke like this:

"A big hat," says she, "wider than a riddle
    On the flattering hoary head
    Of him who has come to us from Uist
    To lift the sweepings of the shake-downs."

At that point MacMhuirich said:

"MacLeod of Harris possesses a property
    Alone of the nobles of the Isles—
    A hag of the Devil's hue
    In his house constantly begging.
    If only you were in Vulcan's smithy
    In the venomous glen
    Blowing the bellows in the smith's service—
    Swarthy black apparition, out of the door!"

The old woman disappeared and in a moment MacLeod came to MacMhuirich and greeted him and never as much as let on that anybody like the old woman had ever been in the same house as him.

Verse contests, of which the above is an example, are fairly common in Gaelic tradition. They are usually short and frequently coarse. The reference in the present text to Vulcan, who appears in medieval literary tradition,[1] is interesting in view of the MacMhuirich family's own role in Gaelic literature and society.

It is also interesting that Duncan MacDonald was aware of that; no doubt his information derived from oral tradition, but it may have been reinforced by reading. (He was, according to the late Dr. Calum MacLean, literate in English and Gaelic.[2]) In the current oral tradition of Uist, the MacMhuirichs, as has been pointed out by my colleague, Mr. D. A. MacDonald,

"are remembered as magicians and warriors rather than learned men." (*Scottish Studies* 7:214.)

According to the late Anthony Currie,[3] Lochboisdale, South Uist, the author of the verse was Lachlainn Dubh mac Dhòmhaill 'ic Mhuirich,[4] of whom he says:

"A nise bha sgoil-dhubh aig MacMhuirich agus 'se Lachlainn Dubh a mhac, a' fear mu dheireadh dhe'n teaghlach a fhuair ionnsachadh ann an collaiste 'san Eadailte." (Now, MacMhuirich possessed the black art and Black Lachlan was his son; he was the last of the family to have been educated at college in Italy.)

A variant of the verse contest was also known to Anthony Currie. It runs as follows:

Chaidh Lachlainn Dubh do na Hearadh a thogail cìs a' righ. Bha cailleach sgaiteach aig Mac Leòid na Hearadh agus thuirt [i]:

> Seana cheann liath na bleide
> A thanaig thugainn a Uibhist
> A thogail fuidheall gach seide

[Thuirt Lachlainn Dubh:]

> Tha dàimh aig Mac Leòid na Hearadh
> Chan ann ri uaislean Innse Ghall
> Ach cailleach bheag air dhath an Diabhail
> Is [a] h-uile gas liath 'na ceann
> Bidh thu 'sa' ghleann 'sam bi an nimh
> A séideadh nam balg aig an Deomhainn
> Iutharnach a' ghobhail dhuibh
> Thoir an dorus ort.

Translation

Black Lachlan went to Harris to collect the King's taxes. MacLeod of Harris had a witty old woman who said:

> Flattering old grey head
> Who has come to us from Uist
> To lift the sweepings of the shake-downs

[Black Lachlan said:]

> MacLeod of Harris is kin
> Not to the nobles of the Isles
> But to a little old hag of the Devil's hue
> And every hair of her head is grey.
> You will be in the venomous glen
> Blowing the bellows in the Devil's service
> Black-crutched hellcat, out of the door!

NOTES

[1] E.g. in "Oidedh Con Culainn" (ed. A. G. van Hamel, *Compert Con Culainn and Other Stories*, Mediaeval and Modern Irish Series Vol. 3. Dublin 1956).

Balcan Gobha also appears in "Eachdraidh Mhánuis" (ed. K. C. Craig, *Sgialachdan Dhunnchaidh*, Glasgow n.d.). The storyteller was the same Duncan MacDonald. *Eachdraidh Mhànuis* does not seem to be known outside South Uist: it may itself be a story preserved by the MacMhuirich family.

[2] "Hebridean Traditions", *Gwerin* 1 (1956-7): 21-33.

[3] Photocopy of MS. in the School of Scottish Studies. The name Currie, incidentally, is one of the anglicised forms of MacMhuirich.

[4] A Lachlann mac Dhomhnaill is mentioned in the genealogy supplied by Lachlann MacMhuirich in 1800, *v.* W. J. Watson: *Rosg Gàidhlig*, Inverness 1915, p. 139. This Lachlann mac Dhomhnaill must have flourished in the sixteenth century.

# A Simple Tape-Loop Repeating Device

F. E. KENT

At the School of Scottish Studies it has been found that a tape-loop repeating device is an essential aid for accurate and convenient transcription of speech and music. Repeaters designed to be connected to existing tape machines as separate units[1] have been in use in the Phonetics Department of this University and the School for a number of years. It is possible to obtain the same facilities, however, with a separate conventional machine, and from the number of enquiries received it is clear that there is a need for a description of the modifications required. Technicalities will be kept to a minimum but of course the use of some technical terms will be unavoidable. These notes should be sufficient to enable a departmental technician or a competent radio service firm to modify commercially available equipment, i.e. two suitable tape recorders. These modifications can be employed without detracting from the normal functions of the recorders.

Description

Two recorders are required, one for playback and the second to act as a loop repeater. These machines will be referred to as "Recorder 1" and "Recorder 2" respectively.

Recorder 1. This can be any type of conventional recorder
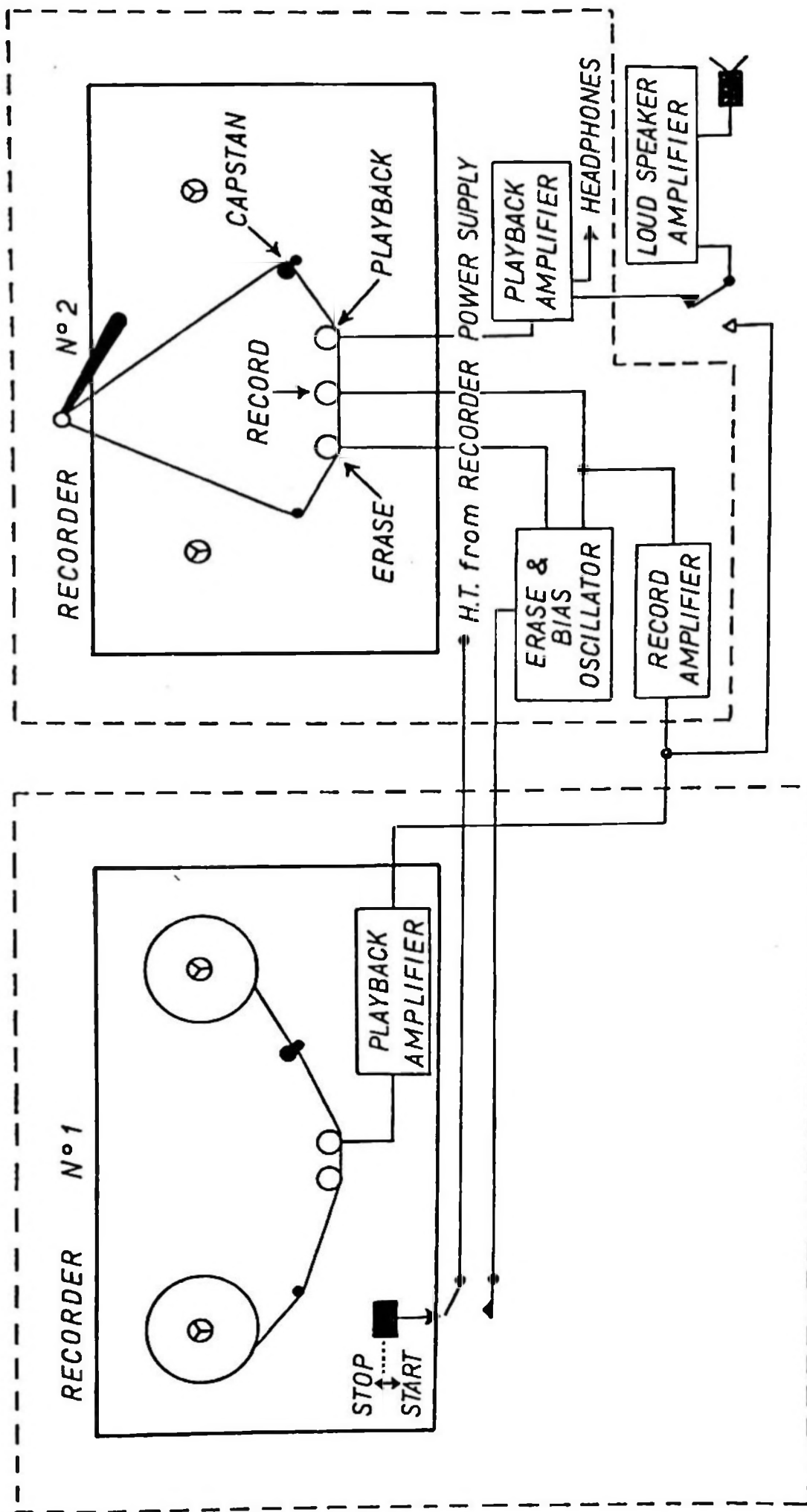
provided it has the speeds and playback facilities required for the tapes to be transcribed.

The playback output from this recorder is fed into the appropriate socket in Recorder 2. The only modification to Recorder 1 will be described later.

Recorder 2. This recorder must be of a type which has separate record and playback heads and amplifiers. This is to enable the continuous monitoring of what has been recorded. The recorders are arranged as for normal tape-copying purposes with the following modifications (applying specifically to recorders with thermionic valve amplifiers although similar modifications could be made to transistorised tape recorders):

Instead of a continuous length of tape running from one spool to the other, a short loop is made of standard tape. The length of tape in the loop is arranged to suit the individual requirements of the user. Three or four feet (approximately 100-120 cm.) has been found to be sufficient at the School, and the playing time of this can of course be adjusted by using different tape speeds. The tape loop is fitted to the recorder in the same manner as a normal tape but should be supported by an adjustable arm with a roller tape-guide to hold the loop under slight tension to prevent it from becoming entangled in the recorder capstan. The tension should be very slight to avoid curling or stretching of the tape, and unnecessary wear to the heads. The loop should also be replaced frequently as it naturally wears out quite quickly.

If apart from the capstan motor, the recorder employs separate motors for forward and reverse spooling, an additional switch is needed to switch these off when the recorder is used with a loop, as the noise they make may be distracting. If the machine is of the single-motor type, i.e. one which employs belts, pulleys and clutches to drive the take-up and re-wind turntables, it is probably unnecessary to stop these, provided that the loop runs clear of them. If, on the other hand, they are to be stopped, it should be fairly easy to fit a lever which would disengage the drive to the clutches or turntables. It would not be advisable simply to apply a brake to the turntables as this would cause undue wear to parts of the mechanism.

The only other modification required to Recorder 2 is the interruption of the High Tension (H.T.) Voltage supply to the Bias Oscillator, so that the *erase* and *recording head bias* may be switched off during the repeating cycle, and on during the recording cycle.

Rather than merely removing the erase and bias voltages, it is more convenient to switch the Bias Oscillator H.T. supply off and on. The former method is liable to cause undesirable magnetisation of the record head, and since the switching is done by Recorder 1, it is not feasible to take the bias voltages to this machine and back to Recorder 2.

A convenient socket should be fitted to allow the Bias Oscillator H.T. to be fed to Recorder 1. In addition, either a switch to short circuit this socket, or a shorting link, should be fitted to Recorder 2, to enable it to be used as a normal tape-recorder independently of Recorder 1.

If the material recorded on the loop is to be monitored on a loudspeaker, a separate power amplifier is required if this is not already part of the recorder, but if headphones are sufficient these can be fed from the playback pre-amplifier.

Recorder 1. The only modification needed for Recorder 1 is the provision of a switch, which should be synchronised with the stop/start buttons or lever, so that, when the machine is stopped, the switch is open, and when the machine is restarted, the switch is closed. This switch should be connected to the Bias Oscillator H.T. supply via the socket on Recorder 2. To minimise electrical interference on recordings, this switch should be capable of high speed action (e.g. a micro-switch) and of handling 40 milli-amps or more at 300 volts D.C., depending on the type of recorder used. It should also be suppressed to minimise sparking, thus prolonging its life and avoiding recording clicks on the tape. A 0·1 microfarad 500 v. D.C. capacitor across the contacts of the switch should be sufficient for this purpose.

Method of Operation

The tape is placed on Recorder 1 which is switched to the play-back function, and the item to be transcribed is selected. Recorder 2 is set to record and the loop is started. Recorder 1 is now started and this automatically switches the Bias H.T. supply to Recorder 2 on. Since Recorder 2 has separate record and playback heads, the material being recorded can be monitored immediately on headphones (or on a loudspeaker). When the loop is running, Recorder 2 is monitored, but for item location on the original tape and pre-transcription listening, Recorder 1 is monitored (and the loop may be stopped).

When the first phrase to be transcribed has been recorded on the loop, Recorder 1 is stopped, and, as this removes the

erase and bias voltages from Recorder 2, the loop will repeat this phrase as often as desired. As soon as Recorder 1 is re-started the loop is automatically erased and re-recorded. This process continues as long as Recorder 1 is running; therefore during the recording cycle the loop must not be allowed to make more than one revolution before Recorder 1 is switched off. With practice, an overlap can easily be arranged by starting Recorder 1 immediately the last word or note of the first phrase on the loop has been heard, and by stopping it before the loop has made one complete revolution. This leaves the last words or notes of the first phrase on the tape, and these are immediately followed by the first word or note of the succeeding phrase, etc. If Recorder 1 does not start instantaneously it may be necessary to move the tape being transcribed back slightly before re-starting it.

Brightly coloured splicing tape can make a convenient marker on the loop for estimating when to stop and start Recorder 1.

NOTE

[1] J. Anthony, Magnetic Sound Recording Transcribing Apparatus. British Patent No. 730,664, 1953. For a short account of this see Peter Ladefoged, *A Phonetic Study of West African Languages.* West African Language Monographs I (Cambridge 1964) pp. xvi-xvii.

C. OTHER NOTES

Skirling Fair and the Painter James Howe

B. C. SKINNER

Contemporary genre painting can provide a useful supplement to documentary sources in folk-life studies. An excellent example of this is provided by a series of three large oil-paintings by James Howe, one of which is here reproduced.[1] They illustrate the horse-and-cattle fairs formerly held at Skirling, Peeblesshire, in May, June and September each year.

The Skirling fairs date from the burgh-grant of 1592 and continued to be held until 1864 when the June and September meetings were transferred to Biggar.[2] The June fair was one of the more important livestock markets in the Scottish drover's

PLATE IV

Horse-fair at Skirling, Peeblesshire. After an original oil-painting (36 × 45¾) by James Howe, dated 1829, reproduced by permission of Mrs. Wheeler-Carmichael.

year with, to quote the *New Statistical Account*, "a large attendance of queys, cows and horses, and there is much business done". Skirling village still retains the open-square lay-out indicated in Howe's paintings, but its importance as a community and trading centre has lapsed and it does not now boast the two inns of Howe's day.

James Howe (1780-1836) shared with Carse and Geikie first place as painter of the Scottish domestic scene at this period, but his concern, unlike theirs, is primarily with the countryside and the delineation of farm-beasts rather than with human eccentricity. He was born at Skirling manse and seems all his life to have retained a sensitivity for the most intimate details of country living. Howe served apprenticeship to Walter Smeaton in Edinburgh, worked for a year in the south, painting the horses in King George III's stud, and visited the Battlefield of Waterloo in 1815, exhibiting in the British Institution of the following year a "Panorama of the Battle". Apart from these excursions, he lived and worked in Edinburgh and Peeblesshire, trying unsuccessfully in 1818 for the post of master in the Trustees Drawing Academy.

From 1808 onwards Howe exhibited animal studies and country scenes in the Edinburgh exhibitions and in 1811 was commissioned by the Board of Agriculture to paint the principal breeds of British cattle. He prepared other series of definitive pictures of breeds of horses and cattle for the Highland Society and for Sir John Sinclair and some of them were issued separately as plates, while some were used as illustrations in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Howe died on Townhead Farm, Skirling, and is buried in the parish church-yard.

Not very many of his paintings are recorded. Apart from the three Skirling Fair pictures, there are two large and detailed canvasses of All Hallows Fair, Edinburgh, which show the confusion of stalls and animals that annually assembled either in the Grassmarket, on the Burgh Muir, or on Calton Hill.[3] Two paintings of Musselburgh Races also exist,[4] and several versions of his well-known painting of Malcolm Fleming of Barrochan hawking for game. "Side-elevations" of prize bulls and stallions by Howe may still be found in farmhouses but apart from these and the other pictures listed here, Howe is known today only by his engraved plates and by series of quick pen-and-ink sketches that exist in the National Gallery of Scotland Department of Prints and Drawings and in various private collections. Some of these sketches, though slight, can

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be of remarkable value in catching the movement of a moment
and in providing contemporary documentation just as useful
as in the case of Howe's paintings.

NOTES

1 The three paintings are in the collection of Mrs. Wheeler-Carmichael of
   Skirling House who has kindly given permission for the present re-
   production. They are:
       (i) Cattle-fair at Skirling, canvas 36½×48½, signed *Howe*, and
           showing the figures of Sir Thomas Gibson-Carmichael and
           his wife.
       (ii) Stallion-fair at Skirling, canvas 32×47½.
       (iii) Horse-fair at Skirling, smithy in background, canvas 36×45¾,
           signed *How*, and dated 1829 (see Plate IV).
2 William Hunter: *Biggar and the House of Fleming* (1867) p. 348.
3 One (canvas 36×58, signed *Howe*) is in the collection of Huntly House
   Museum, Edinburgh; the other (canvas *c.* 48×96, signed *Howe*) is
   owned by Messrs. John Swan, Auctioneers, Gorgie Market.
4 In the collections at Musselburgh Town Buildings (canvas 24×37, dated
   1835) and Prestonfield House (canvas 42×61½, signed "*J. Howe,
   Edin*"). One or two other oil paintings by Howe have been recorded in
   the Edinburgh salerooms, such as "The Opening of Granton Harbour",
   sold in 1960.

" *Evening in a Scots Cottage* "—a note on the stock-and-horn

J. V. S. MEGAW

The recent publication of a watercolour of about 1805-10
attributed to Alexander Carse and now in the National
Gallery of Scotland (Megaw 1965:106) prompts me to add a
few notes on the primitive reed-pipe or stock-and-horn as
shown being played in the painting. In fact recent publications
have been devoted not only to the stock-and-horn itself
(Langwill 1952) but also to the general European family of
hornpipes of which it is simply a regional member (Baines
1960, esp. 30-32); as Langwill demonstrates, David Allen's
vignette criticised by Burns has a pretty close parallel in one
of the two extant examples of the Scottish pipe, now in the
Royal College of Music, London (Langwill 1952: Pl. XV, 2).
From Wales, we have the *pibgorn* which has a horn chamber,
matching the bell, over the reed, enabling the player to inhale
through the nose and blow into the instrument at the same time.
There are actually three examples (not two as quoted by
Langwill and Baines) dated to the eighteenth century and now
in the Welsh Folk Museum, St. Fagans—including one with

the actual wooden pipe square in section, as well as that in the collections of the Society of Antiquaries, London, of similar date; at the close of the century this type was apparently restricted to Anglesey (Jones 1794:116). No certain pendant for Burns's sheep-bone and cowhorn pipe exists though a possible hornpipe of deer-bone has been noted in the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin (Galpin 1910:172). The Anglo-Saxon *swegel horn* ("shin-bone and horn") is the ancestor of the *pibgorn*, and all these bone instruments must represent the simplest peasant products in their class in the same way as bone end-blown pipes may be compared with the more sophisticated recorder family (Megaw 1963).

Recently it has been suggested that parts at least of some of the simple Late Bronze Age Irish "horns" may have formed instruments of the reed-pipe class (Coles 1963:342); and a similar claim noted by Coles has been made for a Late-Bronze/Iron Age find from the Volga region (Gurina 1963:107), a comparison for which is the present-day Russian peasant hornpipe, the *jaleika*.

Two square-sectioned wooden fragments from the tenth/eleventh century Anglo-Danish levels of Hungate, York, published as a "flute" (Richardson 1961: 63, 85, and fig. 19, 20), could also be from a reed pipe though it would not strictly fit into our hornpipe class (Megaw 1961: 179, n. 17). However this may be, if Scotland's national poet may not exactly have had musicological right on his side he at least was blissfully ignorant of A. H. Frere's theory (quoted by Langwill 1952: 180, n. 2) of a significant link in the similar distribution of the hornpipe and megalithic tombs! And neither point detracts from the iconographic interest of Carse's picture of a humble cousin of Scotland's misnamed "national musical instrument", the bagpipes.

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D.   BOOK REVIEWS

Place Names of Northeast Angus. By C. P. Will. Arbroath: The Herald Press. 1963. 68 pp. 6s.

The region between the Firth of Forth and the River Dee on the Scottish east coast has so far been largely neglected in published accounts and studies of Scottish place-names. Whereas Aberdeenshire in the north can boast the late Dr. Alexander's excellent Third Spalding Club publication, and the place-names of two counties to the south—West Lothian and Midlothian—have been treated in detail and with authority in two Edinburgh University Ph.D. theses of the 'forties, the counties of Kinross, Fife, Angus and Kincardine have never found the person who had the knowledge and the courage to investigate their place-names systematically on a regional basis. The reason for this lack of published data—and indeed of research into the subject—is not difficult to find: the four counties mentioned are probably the most taxing in the whole of Scotland with regard to the problems they present in their place-nomenclature. Pictish, Gaelic, Lowland Scots, these three languages appear to have followed each other comparatively quickly in this part of the country, and the distinction of Pictish from another (preceding?) branch of Celtic, British or Brittonic, is not always easy. The result is a multi-lingual mixture whose historical sequence and stratification it takes patience and a good knowledge both of the local conditions and the languages concerned, to unravel. The most important