Scottish Studies

Volume 16 : 1972

part one

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Scottish Studies

The Journal of the School of Scottish Studies
University of Edinburgh

16

1972

SCHOOL OF SCOTTISH STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT
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*Righ Eilifacs**

DONALD A. MACDONALD

Well, chuala mise mar a bha siod-ach ann, fear agus bha e pòsda agus 's e cosnadh a bh'aige, 's ann ag iasgach a bhiodh e . . .† Agus 'n uair a gheibheadh e móran do dh'iasg bhiodh e 'ga chreic ri muinntir a' bhaile a bha 'san àite. Agus cha robh duine teaghlach aige.

Well, tha e colach leam gun do dh'fhàs an t-iasgach car gann air—gu robh e 'fàs gann, an t-iasg. Agus bha e 'latha bh'ann a sheo, bha e muigh ag iasgach agus bha e air ruith air na h-iolachan cho math 's a bh'aige 's a b'àbhaist dha deagh iasgach fhaighinn orra agus . . . cha d'fhuair e móran. Agus bha e dìreach a' pasgadh nan dorgh agus . . . e 'falbh dhachaidh 'n uair a dh'fhairich e plumb aig deireadh na geòladh, na ga brith gu dé seòrsa bàta bh'aige, agus thug e sùil sios rathad an deiridh agus bha seann duine sin-ach agus e 'm barr na bh'as cionn nan aclasan dheth.

"Chan eil thu," ors esan, "a' faighinn an iasgaich idir, a dhuin'," ors esan.

"O chan eil," ors esan.

" 'N dà," ors esan, "ma bheir thu dhòmh-s'," ors esan, "a' rud a dh'iarras mi ort," ors esan, "gheibh thu 'n t-iasg," ors esan, "cho math 's a bha thu 'ga fhaighinn reimhid," ors esan.

"O chan eil fhiosam," ors . . . a' fear eile, "bheil a lethid sin-ach agam-sa bheir mi dhuibh," ors esan.

"O chan eil," ors esan, "ach bithidh e agad," ors esan, "ma ghabhas tu mo chomhairle-sa."

"Dé," ors an t-iasgair, ors esan, "a bha sin?" ors esan.

"Do cheud mhac," ors esan.

"O," ors an t-iasgair, ors esan, "tha mi cinndeach," ors esan, "gu faod mi sin," ors esan, "ma bhios e ann."

"*Well*," ors esan, "geall thusa," ors esan, "gun toir thu dhòmh-s' e," ors esan, "an aois a chóig bliadhn' deug," ors esan.

"O nach fhaod mise sin," or san t-iasgair, ors esan. "Tha mi cinndeach nach bi leithid ann co-dhiùbh," ors esan.

"*Well*," ors esan, "cuir thusa mach na duirgh," ors esan, "agus," ors esan, "a cheud bheothach," ors esan, " . . . a gheibh thu," ors esan, "cuiridh tu air leth e agus bheir thu dhachaidh dhut fhéin e, dha'n bhean," ors esan. "Bheir thu dhachaidh chon na mnathadh e," ors esan, "agus," ors esan, "cumaidh tu rithe 'n t-iasg," ors esan, "e

* A translation follows on p. 9.

† Hesitations or slight stumbles are indicated by . . . in the Gaelic text.

fhéin agus an grùdhan, òrd dhe'n iasg," ors esan, "agus òrd dhe'n ghrùdhan," ors esan, "còmhla ris," ors esan, "gos an teirg e," ors esan.

Well . . . dh'fhalbh am bodach. Dh'fhalbh an t-iasgair 's dh'fheuch e mach an dorgh 's cha do thàrr e chur sios 'n uair a laigh deagh chnapach do bheothach air. Thug e staigh e agus 'n uair a thug e far an dubhain e dh'fhalbh e agus rug e air 's thilg e . . . suas air leth ann an toiseach a' bhàt e. Co-dhiùbh thòisich e ri iasgach agus ma dheireadh gos a robh a taosg gos 'ith as a bhàta a bh'aige, agus bha . . . 'n oidhche 'tighinn. Chaidh e air tìr co-dhiùbh agus bha daoine 'ga fheitheamh mar a b'àbhaist dhaibh airson iasg agus chreic e 'n t-iasg ach . . . an aon bheothach a bh'ann a sheo. 'S e . . . 'n aon bheothach a fhuair e thàrradh dha fhéin, agus thug e leis dhachaidh e agus dh'iarr e air a bhean—dh'innis e dhi mar a bha 'n gnothuch, 's dh'iarr e air a bhean am beothach ad a chumail air leth dhi fhéin agus i 'n grùdhan a thoirt as agus i bhith bruich òrd dhe fhéin agus òrd dhe'n ghrùdhan còmhladh agus . . . i fhéin a bhith 'ga ghabhail.

'S ann mar seo-ach a bha, co-dhiùbh . . . Ghabh a' chailleach e; 's theirg an t-iasg 's thòisich am bodach ri iasgach 's bha e 'faighinn do dh'iasg mar a thairrneadh e. Agus gu dé rinn a' chailleach a seo-ach ach . . . am boirionnach—a bhean a bh'aige, 's i . . . air tighinn go aois, ach fàs trom. Agus fo latha go latha bha 'n gnothach a' dol air aghaidh . . . ors ma dheireadh rug i leanabh gille dha.

Well, bha 'n gille niste . . . bha 'm pàisd ann a shin 's bha 'n ùine 'dol seachad 's bha 'm pàisde 'fàs ors ma dheireadh co-dhiùbh gun tànaig e go am sgoileadh agus bhiodh e 'dol dha' sgoil. Chan eil fhiosam co-dhiùbh bha i fada na goirid bhuaithe, co-dhiùbh, ach bhiodh e 'dol innte. Agus 'n uair a bha e 'teannadh ris . . . suas ma cheithir bliadhn' deug na ioma sin-ach, cha robh oidhche thigeadh e dhachaidh nach biodh athair 's a mhàthair a' caoineadh. Agus bha e 'cur neònachas uamhasach air gu dé bha toirt orra bhith 'caoineadh, agus bhiodh e 'faighneachd dhaibh gu dé bha 'dol 's, ò, cha robh sion, agus co-dhiùbh chaidh an gnothuch air aghaidh mar seo-ach gos a robh e na cóig bliadhn' deug—mach 's a staigh ma na cóig bliadhn' deug—agus thanaig e 'n oidhche bha seo-ach dhachaidh agus bha iad ag obair air caoineadh.

"*Well*," ors esan, "tha e colach," ors esan, "gur ann a chionn," ors esan, "mise bhith tighinn dachaidh," ors esan, "tha sibh a' caoineadh," ors esan, "a chuile h-oidhch'," ors esan, "ach," ors esan, "tha mise gos 'ith clìor is a' sgoil," ors esan, "agus 'n uair a bhios mi clìor 's a' sgoil," ors esan, "bidh mi 'gar fàgail," ors esan.

" 'N dà, 's duilich leam," ors a mhàthair, ors ise, "gu feum thu fàgail," ors ise.

Agus dh'innis iad a seo dha, dha'n ghille, facal air an fhacal mar a bha.

"O seadh," ors esan. "Tha e colach," ors esan, "gu bheil mis' air mo thoirt seachad," ors esan, "brith co aige tha mi," ors esan, agus: "ach," ors esan, " 'n uair . . . a dh'fhàgas mise 'sgoil," ors esan, "tha mi 'fàgail seo," ors esan, "agus gheibh mi mach," ors esan, "gu dé ma dheighinn a' ghnothuich."

Well, co-dhiùbh bha e mach as a' sgoil agus a' latha bh'ann a sheo-ach rinn e airson falbh. Dh'fhalbh e cuideachd agus cha robh sion a dh'fhios aige có 'n taobh a bheireadh e aghaidh na cà rachadh e, ach co-dhiùbh thug e aghaidh air falbh 's tharruinn e.

Rànaig e baile seo-ach a bha sin agus bha daoine 'tachairt ris 's bha daoine 'foighneachd dheth co as a bha e 's co as a thànaig e 's bhiodh e 'g innse. Agus dh'innis e do dh-aon duine a bh'ann a sheo-ach, co-dhiùbh mar a . . . Dh'fhoighneachd an duine seo dheth cà robh e 'dol. Dh'innis e nach robh sion a dh'fhios aige cà robh e 'dol agus dh'innis e dha mar a thachair an gnothuch 's mar . . . a thanaig an duine bha seo-ach am barr aig deireadh na geòladh a bh'aig athair agus mar a dh'iarr e a cheud mac air agus mar a gheall athair—bha e cho cinndeach co-dhiùbh, 's iad air tighinn go aois, nach biodh mac ann—mar a gheall e seachad e agus a chuile sion ma dheaghainn.

"O seadh," ors a' fear seo. "Tha eagal orm, a ghràidhein," ors esan, "gu bheil thu ann an droch lamhan," ors esan, "gur e," ors esan, "a' Fear Millidh fhéin," ors esan, " . . . a bha am barr," ors esan, "aig deireadh geòla d'athar," ors esan, "agus gur h-ann aige tha thu. Ach," ors esan, " 's e 'rud a nì thu," ors esan. "Tha daoin' as a' bhail' tha seo-ach," ors esan, "daoin'," ors esan, "tha triùir ann," ors esan, "agus 'se crèithich[1] a their iad riuth'," ors esan, "agus chan eil iad a' deanamh car," ors esan, "ach ag ùrnuigh," ors esan, "fad an t-siubhail," ors esan, "agus brith," ors esan, "co as tha 'm biadh a' tighinn uc'," ors esan, "tha e 'tighinn uc'," ors esan, "a àit-eigin, agus," ors esan . . . "Chan ann còmhladh a tha iad," ors esan. "Tha iad ann an uigheachan dha chéile," ors esan, "far a bheil iad, ach," ors esan, "tadhail aig a cheud fhear," ors esan, "feuch gu dé chomhairle bheir e ort."

Well, 's ann mar seo-ach a bha. Dh'fhalbh an gille 's fhuair e beul-ionnsaichidh fo'n fhear seo . . . càite robh 'n t-àite. Rànaig e co-dhiùbh 's rànaig e taigh a' chrèithich a bha seo. Bhuail e 'n dorus 's thanaig a' seann duine bha seo-ach a nuas 's dh'iarr e air tighinn a staigh. Chaidh e staigh agus:

"Seadh," ors a' fear a bha staigh, "co as a thàna' tu?" ors esan.

Dh'innis e, 's dh'innis e dha o thùs go éis mar a thànaig e—mar a thachair an duine 's a chuile sion ri athair. Agus thug e uige leabhraichean 's thòisich e air leabhraichean, a' leughadh—'ruith romhpa 's a' coimhead air a feadh agus co-dhiùbh, seo-ach:

" 'N dà," ors esan, "chan eil mise 'faicinn sion a seo," ors esan, "do bhonn 'sa' bith air rudan, ach tha fhiosam," ors esan, "gur h-ann," ors esan, "aig an Fhear-Millidh a tha thu," ors esan, "gur a h-è bh'ann," ors esan, "gur h-e 'n t-Abharsair fhéin . . . a bha sin," ors esan.

"Ach," ors esan, "tha fear eil'," ors esan, "agus 's e 's sine na mis'," ors esan. "Tha e," ors esan, "coiseachd lath' as a seo," ors esan, "agus math dh'fhaoidt'," ors esan, "gu faigh thu mach a sin e," ors esan, "gum bi barrachd fiosraichidh aig an fhear seo agus a th'agam-s'," ors esan.

Ach co-dhiùbh, seo-ach, aig am suipearach, co-dhiùbh, thanaig calamain, agus bha suipeir an dithis ac', uige.

"O *well*," ors . . . an Crèitheach, ors esan, "tha deagh chomharra seo," ors esan. "Tha do shuipeir air tighinn a seo," ors esan, "còmhla ri mo shuipeir-s'," ors esan.

Well, ghabh iad a suipeir 's chaidh iad a chadal 's a làirne-mhàireach 'n uair a dh'éirich iad, 's a fhuair iad air dòigh le biadh 's a chuile sion, dh'fhalbh an gille.

"Nist," . . . ors an crèitheach ris, ors esan, "ma thilleas tu," ors esan, "beo . . . an taobh seo," ors esan, "gu bràch," ors esan, "na deirg seachad orm-s'," ors esan.

"O cha téid," ors an gille. "Ma thig mise rathad seo," ors esan, "tadhlaidh mi agaibh-se."

"Glé cheart," ors esan, "ma-tha. Bu mhath leam," ors esan, "fhaighinn a mach gu dé mar a theid dhut."

Well, dh'fhalbh an gille 's dh'fhàg e slàn aige agus ann am beul anmoch na h-oidhche rànaig e taigh an fhir eile. Bhuail e 'n dorus co-dhiùbh 's . . . thanaig a' leth-sheann fhear a bha seo-ach a nuas co-dhiùbh 's dh'iarr e air tighinn a staigh. Chaidh e staigh.

Well, dh'innis e. Dh'fhoighneachd e co as a thànaig e 's dh'innis an gille. Thòisich e air innse na h-eachdraidh—mar a thànaig e chon an t-saoghail seo 's man a chuile sion 's . . . am bodach a chunnaig athair aig a gheòla 's mar a rinn e, 's a chuile sion a dh'iarr e air a dheanamh; agus gu robh e raoir ann an taigh a' chrèithich a bha seo-ach agus nach d'fhuair e sion—gu robh e 'ruith air leabhraichean ùine mhór dhe'n oidhch' agus nach d'fhuair e sion . . . a dh'innseadh gu dé ghabhadh deanamh ris, agus gu robh e 'falbh feuch a faigheadh e e fhéin a shaoradh . . . air dhòigh air choireigin. *Well*, thòisich a' fear seo, 'n uair a fhuair iad biadh, thòisich a' fear seo e fhéin air leabhraichean agus bha e 'g obair air leabhraichean airson treis mhór dhe'n oidhche 's:

"O, ma-thà," ors esan, "chan eil sion a dh'fhiosrachadh as na leabhraichean a th'agam-s' a seo," ors esan, " . . . na bu mhutha na bh'aig an fhear eil'," ors esan, "ach," ors esan, "tha fear eil'," ors esan, "ma choiseachd lath' as a seo-ach," ors esan, "agus tha e," ors esan, "fad," ors esan, "na's fhearr na mis'," ors esan, "agus math dh-fhaoidt'," ors esan, "gu faigh thu mach aig an fear sin," ors esan, "gu dé 'n dòigh a ghabhas tu na gu dé 'n t-innleachd a nì thu," ors esan, ["? chum a bhith orra] shaoradh, ach," ors esan . . .

Ach aig am suipearach a sin thanaig a bhiadh uige mar a thanaig e raoir còmhla ri biadh a' chrèithich agus:

"O seadh," ors an crèitheach. "O, *well*," ors esan, "tha mi smaoindeachadh," ors esan, "gun téid . . . glé mhath dhut," ors esan. "Tha do shuipeir air tighinn a seo-ach," ors esan, "mar a tha i air tighinn ugam-s'," ors esan, "agus," ors esan, "na biodh droch mhisneachd agad idir," ors esan, "ach tha mi smaoindeachadh gun téid glé mhath dhut fhathast," ors esan.

Agus chaidh iad a chadal, co-dhiùbh, 's a làirne-mhàireach 'n uair a dh'éirich iad 's a fhuair iad biadh, rinn an gill' air son falbh.

"Nist," ors an crèitheach, ors esan, ris, "ma thilleas tu," ors esan, "gu bràch," ors esan, "air a' rathad seo," ors esan, "na deirg seachad orm-sa."

"O cha téid," ors an gille, "mi seachad oirbh idir," ors esan. "Ma thilleas mise beò mar seo," ors esan, "tadhlaidh mi agaibh-se," ors esan.

"O seadh," ors an créitheach, "ma-thà," ors esan. "Bu mhath leam fhaighinn a mach," ors esan, "gu dé mar a rachadh dhut," ors esan.

Agus, co-dhiùbh, dh'fhalbh e agus feasgar a' latha sin rànaig e taigh an fhir eile agus, 'n uair a rànaig e taigh an fhir sin, bhuail e 'n dorus 's thanaig a' fear seo a nuas

's dh'fhosgail e 'n dorus dha 's dh'iarr e air tighinn a staigh. Bha 'fear seo gu math na bu shine na càch, agus dh'fhoighneachd e co as a thànaig e, 's dh'innis e—gu robh e air tighinn a taigh a' chrèithich a bha siod, gur ann a chuir e 'n oidhche raoir seachad agus an oidhche roimhe sin gu robh e 'n taigh an fhir eile agus roimhe sin gur ann as . . . an taigh a dh'fhalbh e, agus dh'innis e dhaibh (*sic*) an eachdraidh o thùs go éis, mar a thànaig e agus . . . a' rud a chunnaig athair 's a chuile sion a dh'iarr a' rud a chunnaig e air—am bodach a chunnaig e air tighinn am barr aig deireadh na geòladh.

Well—agus thòisich a' fear seo e fhéin. Thug e uige leabhraichean 's thòisich e orra agus bha e . . . 'g obair orra go treis mhath dhe'n oidhche. Ach, co-dhiùbh, aig am suipearach, thànaig . . . na calamain agus a suipeir aca—go chéile.

"O," ors an crèitheach, ors esan, "biodh misneachd agad-s'," ors esan. "Tha do shuipeir a seo," ors esan, "air tighinn," ors esan, "mar tha mo shuipeir-s'," ors esan, "agus tha thu ceart gu leòr fhathast co-dhiùbh," ors esan. "Tha," ors esan, "ar deagh mhisneachd againn. Tha mi smaoindeachadh gun teid dhut glé mhath," ors esan.

Agus 'n uair a fhuair iad an t-suipeir seachad co-dhiùbh, lean esan air na leabhraichean gos na ruith e orra as a lethoir agus:

"*Well*," ors esan, "chan eil mise 'faicinn," ors esan, "sion," ors esan, "ma dheaghainn," ors esan, "rud dhe'n t-seòrsa sin ann a sheo, idir," ors esan, "ach," ors esan, " 'se 'rud a nì thu màireach," ors esan: "tha fear ann a sheo-ach," ors esan, " 's chan eil e fad' 'sa' bith air falbh," ors esan, "ris an can iad Righ Eilifacs," ors esan, "agus tha e fhéin a nist," ors esan, "air tighinn go laighe leapadh," ors esan, "agus," ors esan, "tha leab' aig," ors esan, "as an Droch Aite agus 'n uair a bha e fhéin gu math," ors esan, "bhiodh e dol 'ga coimhead an dràsda 'sa rithist," ors esan, "ach," ors esan, "tha cù aige 'n dràsd," ors esan, "agus 's e bhios a' dol ann, agus," ors esan, . . . " na faigheadh tu," ors esan, "ann am *plan* an duine sin," ors esan, "'s gu faigheadh tu falbh còmhla ris a' chù," ors esan, " 's gu faigheadh tu," ors esan, "chon an t-saoghail eil'," ors esan, "dh'fhaoidte gu faigheadh tu do shaoradh a sin," ors esan.

Well, cha robh air a seo-ach ach seo fhéin, co-dhiùbh. Làirne-mhàireach ghluais iad 's fhuair iad air dòigh 's dh'fhalbh an gille agus:

"Nist," ors an crèitheach, ors esan, "feuch nach téid sibh seachad orm-sa 'n uair a thilleas tu," ors esan.

"O cha téid," ors an gille, "Ma thilleas mise beò . . . 'n taobh seo," ors esan, "tadhlaidh mi agaibh-se," ors esan.

Dh'fhalbh e nise 's fhuair e beul-ionnsaichidh far a robh taigh Righ Eilifacs . . . bho'n chrèitheach agus rànaig e 'n taigh co-dhiùbh agus chaidh e staigh agus bha duin' ann a shin 's e air leabaidh agus dh'fhoighneachd e dha co as a thànaig e. Dh'innis e dha—gu robh e 'n taigh nan crèitheach a bha seo, gur h-iad a stiùir ann a sheo e agus dh'innis e dha mar a bha o thùs go éis.

"O seadh," . . . orsa Righ Eilifacs, "tha deagh sheans," ors esan, "ceart gu leòr," ors esan, " 's ann aig an Fhear Mhillidh a tha thu," ors esan, "ach," ors esan. . . . "Bha mise mi fhìn," ors esan, " 'dol a . . . sin-ach," ors esan. "Bha leab' agam ann," ors

esan, "agus bha mi 'dol ann," ors esan, " . . . fhad's a b'urrainn dhomh," ors esan, "ach tha 'n cù tha seo agam," ors esan, "theid e ann an diugh," ors esan, "agus falbhaidh tusa còmhla ris a màireach," ors esan, "agus bheir e ann thu agus chì thu," ors esan, "dé ghabhas deanamh riut a sin," ors esan.

Well, 's ann mar seo-ach a bha. Chuir e seachad an oidhche sin an taigh Righ Eilifacs agus a làirne-mhàireach,co-dhiùbh, dh' fhalbh e . . . rinn e deiseil agus fhuair e e 's dh'fhalbh e fhéin 's an cù. Thug an cù leis esan. Agus rànaig iad a' saoghal eile agus 's e cheud fhear a chunnaig e co-dhiùbh, 's e Mac Dé a chunnaig e agus thanaig e far a robh E.

"Seadh," ors Esan, "tha thu air tighinn."

"Tha," ors an gille.

"O," ors Esan, " 's luideach a rinn d'athair," ors Esan.

"O *well*," ors an gill', ors esan, "chan eil comas air tuilleadh," ors esan.

"Ach," ors Esan, "feuchaidh sinn," ors Esan, "ri d'fhaighinn air do shaoradh," ors Esan, " . . . bhuaithe," ors Esan. "Chan eil còir 'sa' bith aig or'-sa ann an dòigh," ors Esan. "Cha do rinn thus'," ors Esan, " . . . dad a chron," ors Esan, "a gheibheadh e greim ort," ors Esan, "ach," ors Esan, " 's e d'athair thug seachad thu," ors Esan, "agus leis a sin," ors Esan, " . . . feuchaidh sinn," ors Esan, "gu faigh sinn . . . orra shaoradh thu, ach theid sinn," ors Esan, . . . "leat," ors Esan, "far a bheil e," ors Esan, "feuch gu dé ni e riut."

Agus dh'fhalbh Mac Dé 's thug e leis e 's chaidh e far a robh 'n Deomhain.

"*Well*," orsa Mac Dé ris, ors Esan, "tha gille seo," ors Esan, "a fhuair thu," ors Esan, "agus chan eil còir agad air idir," ors Esan. "Cha do rinn an gille sion riamh," ors Esan, " . . . a gheibheadh tu greim air ann an dòigh 'sa' bith," ors Esan, "agus 's e athair thug dhut e," ors Esan, "agus . . . chan eil comas 'sa' bith aig a' ghill' air a sin," ors Esan, "agus leis a sin," ors Esan, "saor an gille seo," ors Esan.

"O, cha saor," ors esan, "cha saor mi idir e," ors esan. "Bha 'n gille sin agam-s'," ors esan, "air a ghealltainn dhòmh-s'," ors esan, "ma'n deach a ghineadh am broinn a mhàthair," ors esan.

"O tha fhiosam," ors . . . Mac Dé ris, "gu robh, ach saor thusa 'n gill'," ors Esan, "neo cuiridh mise leithid seo a sheineachan eil' ort," ors Esan.

"Ged a chuireadh tu orm," ors esan, "a chuile seine b'urrainn dhut," ors esan, "cha . . . saor mi 'n gill'," ors esan.

"*Well*, mar a saor thu 'n gill'," orsa Mac Dé ris, ors Esan, "cuiridh mi ann a . . . leaba Righ Eilifacs thu," ors Esan.

"*Well*," ors esan, "ni mi rud 'sa' bith," ors esan, "ach . . . na cuir a sin mi," ors esan. "Ni mi rud 'sa' bith a dh'iarras tu orm fhad's . . . nach cuir thu 'sin mi," ors esan.

"*Well*," ors Esan, "chan eil mi 'g iarraidh ort," ors esan, "ach an gille seo a shaoradh," ors Esan, "nach bi . . . cuid na gnothach agad ris as an dòigh seo."

"O *well*," ors esan, "nì mise sin," ors esan. "Tha e chòr is mis'," ors esan.

Agus: "*Well*, a nist," orsa Mac Dé, ors Esan. "Tha thu ceart gu leòr a nist," ors Esan. "Faodaidh tu bhith falbh a nist," ors Esan.

Well, thanaig an cù, co-dhiùbh, an cù bh'aig Righ Eilifacs, agus dh'fhalbh e fhéin agus mac an iasgair. Agus rànaig iad . . . taigh Righ Eilifacs agus bha 'm bodach a sin-ach air leabaidh.

"Seadh," ors esan, " 's dé mar a chaidh dhut?"

Dh'innis an gille dha facal air an fhacal mar a bha eadar . . . iad fhéin 's a chuile sion . . . a' Fear Millidh 's Mac Dé 's a chuile sion . . . gos ma dheireadh gun do rànaig e gun d' mhaoidh e air gun cuireadh e ann a leaba Righ Eilifacs e agus gur ann an uairsin a shaor e e.

"Och, och," ors esan, Righ Eilifacs, "bidh mis'," ors esan, "marbh a nochd," ors esan.

Agus: "O cha bhì," ors an gille.

"O bithidh," ors esan, "agus fanaidh tus' ann a sheo a nochd," ors esan. "Na biodh eagal 'sa' bith ort," ors esan, "agus a màireach," ors esan, " 'n uair a gheibh thu air dòigh," ors esan, "adaigh tein'," ors esan, "math—deagh theine math," ors esan, "agus caithidh tu mis' ann," ors esan, "dha'n tein'," ors esan, "agus," ors esan, "fanaidh tu," ors esan, "gos an teid mi 'nam luathaidh," ors esan, " 's cumaidh tu 'n teine 'dol," ors esan, "gos . . . (?nach) bi sion ann ach torr luatha, nach bi cnaimh na sion dhiom-s' ann," ors esan. "Agus," ors esan, "cumaidh tu sùil a mach," ors esan, "agus thig trì fithich," ors esan, "as an airde tuath," ors esan, "agus thig trì chalamain as an airde deas," ors esan, "agus," ors esan, "ma's e na fithich as luaithe bhios agam-s'," ors esan, "na na calamain," ors esan, "na gabh turus rium," ors esan. "Fàg a' luatha far a bheil i," ors esan. "Ach," ors esan, "ma's e na calamain," ors esan, "as luaithe bhios agam," ors esan, "na na fithich," ors esan, "cruinnichidh tu," ors esan, "a' luath agam," ors esan, "agus tiodhlaigidh tu i."

"O *well*," ors an gill', ors esan, "nì mise sin," ors esan.

Well, 's ann mar seo-ach a bha, co-dhiùbh. Brith co-dhiùbh chaidh e chadal 's gos nach deachaidh, co-dhiùbh, thànaig a' latha. Agus bha Righ Eilifacs marbh. Dh' fhalbh e agus thòisich e air togail teine agus thog e teine muigh agus thog e teine math cuideachd agus 'n uair a thog e 'n teine fhuair e esan a shlaodadh a mach agus a chur dha'n teine—agus bha e ann a shin a' gabhail 's a' leaghadh 's a' falbh . . . leis an teine, ors ma dheireadh nach robh ann ach torradan beag do luathaidh. Agus bha 'n tein' air a dhol as.

Well, thòisich e seo—bha e 'coimhead uige 's bhuaithe feadh na h-iarmailt . . . feuch a faiceadh e nist an tigeadh an gnothuch a bha 'n duine 'g ràdha. Agus, an Dia, shaoil leis a seo as an airde tuath gu fac' e trì . . . rudan dubha, beaga dubh' ann . . . a' tighinn agus bha e 'ga *watch*-adh mar seo-ach 's rinn e seo-ach a mach gur e eòin a bh'ann. Agus bha e sior choimhead as an airde deas agus cha robh tuar air sion noch-dadh agus bha e—'rud a bh'as an airde tuath a' tighinn—bha iad a' tighinn gu math. Ach thug e sùil a seo as an airde deas agus chunnaig e trì rudan eile 'tighinn as an airde

deas agus ma bha 'n fheadhainn a bha 'tighinn as an tuath a' falbh gu math 's ann a bha 'falbh gu math iad seo . . . ors ma dheireadh, thànaig iad, na trì chalamain, dìreach, agus chlap iad iad fhéin timchioll na luathadh. Agus thànaig na trì fithich as an deagh-aidh.

"Siùdaibh," ors na fithich, ors esan [*sic*],[2] "togaibh a mach as a sin," ors esan. " 'S ann dhuinn'," ors esan, "a bhuineas . . . seo."

"O chan ann. Chan eil teagamh," ors na calamain, ors esan, "nach ann dhuibh a bhuineadh e reimhid," ors esan, "ach chan ann dhuibh a bhuineas e 'n diugh idir," ors esan.

"O, 's ann dhuinn," ors esan, "a bha e 'g obrachadh riamh," ors na fithich.

"O, 's ann," ors na calamain, "ach 's ann dhuinne rinn e 'n car ma dheireadh, agus leis a sin," ors à-san, "bith . . . " [end of track A: contd. on track B].

Agus: " 'S ann dhuinne rinn e 'n car ma dheireadh," ors na calamain, "agus leis a sin," ors esan, "bitheadh sìbhse 'falbh as a seo."

Well, dh'fhalbh na fithich agus dh'fhalbh na calamain iad fhéin agus 'n uair a dh' fhalbh iad, fhuair esan deiseil agus chan eil fhiosam cà na chuir e luath' aige ach, co-dhiùbh, thiodhlaig e 'luatha aig Righ Eilifacs agus dh'fhàg e slàn aig a' chù agus dh' fhalbh e.

Bha e nist a' cumail roimhe agus chùm e dìreach air taigh a' chrèithich ma dheireadh as a robh e. Rànaig e sin.

"A seadh," ors an crèitheach, "tha thu air tighinn."

"Tha," ors an gille.

"Seadh, dé mar a chaidh dhut?"

Dh'innis an gille dha o thùs go éis mar a bha, agus ma dheireadh gun do mhaoidheadh a chur a leaba Righ Eilifacs agus gur e sin an dòigh as . . . na shaor e air deireadh e.

Agus: "O seadh," ors an crèitheach.

Agus bha iad a nist ann a shin agus iad a' seanchas 's a' bruidhinn 's bha e 'tighinn air am suipearach agus cha tànaig suipeir. Agus co-dhiùbh, seo-ach, bha e anmoch ma'n tànaig na calamain.

"A dhuine, dhuin'," ors an crèitheach, ors esan, "gu dé rud," ors esan, "a bha . . . cearr a nochd," ors esan, " 'n uair a tha sibh cho fad'," ors esan, "gun tighinn go daoine le suipeir," ors esan.

"O," ors na . . . calamain, ors iad, "bha greadhnachas mór againn-n' ann a Flathanas an diugh."

"Dé seo?" ors . . . an crèitheach.

"Bha Righ Eilifacs againn-n'," ors esan, "ann a Flathanas an diugh," ors esan, "agus rinneadh greadhnachas mór ris," ors esan, "a thaobh a dhol ann," ors esan.

Thuit an crèitheach marbh far a robh e.

"Fhalbh, fhalbh!" ors na calamain, ors esan. "Bi thusa falbh as a seo-ach," ors esan. "Na fan idir," ors esan. "Gabh do shuipeir," ors esan, " 's bi tarruinn," ors esan. "Na fan a seo-ach idir," ors esan.

Well, ghabh an gille shuipeir agus dh'fhalbh e. Rànaig e taigh a' chrèithich eile brith gu dé 'n t-am dhe'n oidhche na mhaduinn a rànaig e e. Rànaig e e, co-dhiùbh, 's fhuair e steach 's . . . rinn a' fear seo toileachadh mór ris, 's dh'fhoighneachd e . . . dé mar a chaidh dha.

Dh'innis e dha 's dh'innis e dha ma Righ Eilifacs 's mar a bhàsaich e 's mar a thiodhlaig e e 's mar a thànaig e chon a' . . . gun tànaig e raoir a thaigh a' chrèithich a bha seo agus . . . 'n uair a chual' an crèitheach a bha seo-ach gu robh Righ Eilifacs ann a Flathanas, gun do thuit e marbh far a robh e, agus gun do dh'iarr na calamain air e falbh, gun fuireach idir.

"O seadh," ors an crèitheach, ". . . rinn iad glé mhath," ors esan. "Rinn thu math gu leòr," ors esan. " 'S è," ors esan, "a' farmad," ors esan, "a th'air a chur sios," ors esan, " . . . ach," ors esan, "bidh esan ann a leab'," ors esan, "Righ Eilifacs," ors esan, " 's bidh Righ Eilifacs ann a Flathanas," ors esan. "Bha e cho," ors esan, "farmadach," ors esan, "gun d'fhuair Righ Eilifacs an duine bochd," ors esan, "gun d'fhuair e gu ruige Flathanas," ors esan.

Agus ghabhadh aige ann a shin . . . an taigh a' chrèithich sin agus dh'fhalbh e 'n uairsin . . . a làirne mhàireach agus rànaig e 'fear eile agus chuir e seachad an oidhche sin. Dh'innis e 'n eachdraidh dha'n fhear sin e fhéin, mar a dh'eirich dha'n chuile sion a bh'ann agus chuir e seachad an oidhche sin còmhla ris an fhear sin.

Agus chaidh e 'n uairsin agus chùm e air an taigh agus 'n uair a rànaig e 'n taigh, bha athair agus a mhàthair, bha iad dall, bodhar. Agus dh'aithnich iad e ach . . . cha chluinneadh iad sion. Ach thòisich e air bruidhinn riutha agus cha robh facal a thigeadh as a bheul nach robh trian dhe'm boidhre[3] 's trian dhe fradhrac a' tighinn uca, ors ma dheireadh gu robh iad a cheart cho math 's a bha iad riamh agus dh'fhalbh mis' as agus thug mi m'aghaidh air an taigh 's dh'fhàg mi mar sin iad. Chan eil fhiosam dé 'n corr a thachair.[4]

TRANSLATION

The King of Eilifacs

Well, I heard that there was once a man and he was married and he made his living by fishing. And when he got a lot of fish he used to sell it to the people in the village that was in that place. And he had no family.

Well, it seems that the fishing got rather poor—that the fish was getting scarce. And one day he was out fishing and he had covered the banks as well as he could, where he used to get good catches, and he had not got very much.

And he was just folding away his lines and going home when he heard a splash at the stern of his yawl or whatever kind of boat he had—and he glanced down towards the stern and there was an old man there out of the water from the armpits up.

"You're not having much success with the fishing, man," said he.*

"O, no," said he.

"Well," said he, "if you give me what I ask of you, you shall get the fish just as well as you used to," said he.

"O, I don't know," said the other, "if I have such a thing to give you."

"O, no," said he, "but you shall have it if you take my advice."

"What was that?" said the fisherman, said he.

"Your first son," said he.

"O," said the fisherman, said he, "I'm sure I can do that, if I have one."

"Well," said he, "you promise that you will give him to me when he is fifteen years of age."

"O, I might as well," said the fisherman, said he. "I'm sure that the like will never be anyway".

"Well," said he, "you cast out your lines, and the first thing you catch, you will set it aside and take it home for yourself, for your wife. You will take it home to your wife and you will keep giving her the fish, itself and the liver—a portion of the fish and a portion of the liver with it—until it is all done."

Well, the old man disappeared. The fisherman went and cast out the line and he had scarcely let it down when a good sized fish took it. He pulled it in and when he had taken it off the hook he went and took it and threw it up in a place apart in the bows of the boat. Anyway he began to fish until at the last his boat was almost full up to the gunwales; and night was falling. He went ashore, anyway, and there were people waiting for him as usual for fish and he sold the fish—all except this one. It was the only one he managed to hold on to for himself, and he took it home with him and he asked his wife—he told her how the matter was, and he told his wife to keep that fish aside for herself and to take the liver out of it and to be cooking a portion of it and a portion of the liver together and to be taking it herself.

This was how it was, anyway. The old woman took it; and the fish was all used up and the old man started fishing and he was getting as much fish as he could pull in. And what should happen now but that the old woman . . . the woman—his wife, who was well up in years, became pregnant. And from day to day the matter went on until at last she bore him a baby boy.

Well, now the boy—the child was there and time passed and the child was growing until at last, anyway, he came to school age and he went to school. I don't know whether it was far away or near at hand, but he went there, anyway. And when he was getting on for . . . approaching fourteen years of age or thereabouts, there was not a night he came home but his father and mother were crying. And it puzzled him greatly what was making them cry and he would ask them what was going on and, O, there was

* In translating, I have not attempted to reproduce all the instances of "said he" which are so much a feature of the Gaelic text.

nothing, and, anyway, things went on in this way until he was fifteen—round about fifteen—and this night he came home and they were both crying away.

"Well," said he, "it looks as if it's because I am coming home that you are crying every night, but I'm just about finished with school and when I am finished with school, I'll be leaving you".

"Indeed," said his mother, "I am sad that you have to go," said she.

And then they told him, the boy, word for word how the matter stood.

"O yes," said he. "It seems that I have been given away, whoever it may be who has me in his power, but when I leave school, I am leaving here and I shall find out what this business is about."

Well anyway, he finished with school, and this day he made ready to go. He went, too, and he had no idea which way he should turn or where he should go, but, anyway, he set about going and off he went. He came to a town, then, that was there and he was meeting people and they were asking him where he was from and where he had come from and he was telling them. And he told one man there, anyway, how . . . This man asked him where he was going. He told him that he had no idea where he was going and he told him how the thing had happened and how this man had come up at the stern of his father's boat and how he had asked him for his first son and how his father had promised—he was so sure, anyway, now that they were getting on in years, that there would be no son—how he had promised him away and everything about it.

"O yes," said this man, "I'm afraid, my dear lad, that you are in bad hands; that it was the Destroyer himself who came up at the stern of your father's boat and that it is he who has you in his power. But this is what you must do. There are men in this town," said he, "men—there are three of them, and they call them hermits and they do nothing but pray, all the time, and wherever their food comes from, it comes to them from somewhere, and you go . . . They don't live together. They live some distance apart, where they are, but call on the first one," said he, "to see what advice he can give you."

Well, that was how it was. The lad went off, and he got directions from this man where the place was. He got there, anyway, and he came to the house of this hermit. He knocked at the door and this old man came down and asked him to come in. He went in and:

"Yes," said the man who was in the house; "where have you come from?" said he.

He told [his story] and he told from start to finish how he had come—how his father had met the man and everything. And he [the hermit] took down books and he began to read books—going through them and searching here and there in them and, anyway, then:

"Indeed," said he, "I can see nothing here that is of any use for [such] matters, but I know that it is the Destroyer who has you in his power, that it was he, that it was the Adversary himself there. But there is another, and he is older than me. He is a day's

walk from here and it may be you will find the answer there, that this man may have more information than I have."

But anyway, now, at supper-time, doves came and they brought him supper for both of them.

"O well," said the hermit, said he, "here is a good omen. Your supper has come here along with mine."

Well, they had their supper and went to sleep and next day when they got up and got things in order, with food and everything, the lad went off.

"Now," said the hermit to him, said he, "if you ever come back alive this way, do not pass me by."

"O no," said the lad. "If I come this way," said he, "I shall call on you."

"Very well, then," said he. "I should like to find out how you got on."

Well, the lad went and said goodbye to him and late at nightfall he came to the house of the other one. He knocked at the door, anyway, and this man getting on in years came down and asked him to come in. He went in.

Well, he told [his story]. He asked where he had come from and the lad told him. He began to tell the story—how he came into this world and everything and about the old man his father had seen at the boat, and what he had done and everything he had asked him to do; and that he had been last night in the house of this hermit and how he had found out nothing—that he had gone through books for a great part of the night and that he had found nothing to tell him what could be done about him, and that he was journeying to see if he could get himself set free somehow. Well, this man started, when they had eaten, this man too started on books, and he worked at the books for a good part of the night and:

"O well," said he, "there is no information in the books I have here, any more than the other man had, but there is another one about a day's walk from here and he is far better than I am and it may be that you will find out from him what way you can take or what plan you can devise [?so that you may be] set free, but," said he . . .

But at suppertime, then, his food came to him as it had come last night along with the hermit's food, and:

"O yes," said the hermit, "O, well," said he, "I think you will be quite successful. Your supper has come here as mine has come and do not despair, for I think you will be quite successful yet."

And they went to sleep, anyway, and next day, when they got up and had eaten, the lad got ready to go.

"Now," said the hermit to him, said he, "if you ever come back this way, do not pass me by."

"O no," said the lad, "I shall not pass you by," said he. "If I come back alive this way, I shall call on you."

"Very well, then," said the hermit, said he. "I should like to find out how you got on."

And he went off, anyway, and on the evening of that day he came to the house of the other one, and when he came to his house, he knocked at the door and this man came down and opened the door and asked him to come in. This man was a good deal older than the others, and he asked him where he had come from and he told him—that he had come from the house of that hermit, that he had spent last night there and the night before that, that he had been in the other one's house and that he had come from home before that and he told them [*sic*] the story from start to finish, how he had come and what his father had seen and everything that the thing he had seen had asked of him—the old man he had seen coming up at the stern of his boat.

Well, this man also started—he took down books and started to read them and he worked at them till a good part of the night was spent. But, anyway, at supper-time the doves came bringing their supper to both of them.

"O," said the hermit, said he, "have courage. Your supper has come here, like mine, and you are all right so far anyway. We have been given good encouragement. I think you will get on quite well," said he.

And, anyway, when they had got supper over, he went on with the books until he had gone over them one after the other, and:

"Well," said he, "I can see nothing about anything of that kind here at all, but here is what you will do tomorrow. There is a man here, and he is not very far away, who is called the King of Eilifacs, and he is bedridden now, and," said he, "he has a bed in the Evil Place and when he was fit himself, he used to go to see it now and again, but he has a dog now and it is the dog that goes, and if you could get to know that man and you could get to go with the dog and get to the other world, perhaps you could get yourself set free there".

Well, that was that, anyway. Next day they got up and got everything in order and the lad went and:

"Now," said the hermit, said he, "see that you do not pass me by when you come back."

"O no," said the lad. "If I come back alive this way, I shall call on you," said he.

He went off then and he got directions for the house of the King of Eilifacs from the hermit and he came to the house, anyway, and went in, and there was a man there lying in bed and he asked him where he had come from. He told him, that he had been in the houses of these hermits, that it was they who had directed him here, and he told him how the matter was, from start to finish.

"O yes," said the King of Eilifacs, "there is a good chance, right enough, that it is the Destroyer who has you in his power, but I myself used to go there. I had a bed there, and I used to go there as long as I was able, but I have this dog, and it is able to go there now, and you will go with it tomorrow and it will take you there and you will see what can be done for you there."

Well, so it was. He spent that night in the house of the King of Eilifacs and, anyway, next day he set off . . . he got ready and got it (the dog) and he and the dog set off.

The dog took him along. And they came to the other world, and the first person he saw, anyway, it was the Son of God that he saw and he came to Him.

"Well," said He, "you have come."

"Yes," said the lad.

"O" said He, "your father did a very foolish thing," said He.

"O well," said the lad, said he, "it can't be helped now."

"But," said He, "we shall try to get you set free from him. He has no right to you in a way. You did no wrong at all that he could get you into his power, but it was your father who gave you away, and because of that we shall try to get you set free . . . but we shall go to him . . . with you to him, to see what he will do about you."

And the Son of God went and took him with Him and went to the Devil.

"Well," said the Son of God, said He, "here is a lad you got hold of and you have no right to him at all. The lad never did anything that you should get him in your power in any way and it was his father who gave him to you, and the lad is not at all to blame for that and so you release this lad."

"O, I will not," said he. "I will not release him at all. This lad was mine, promised to me before he was conceived in his mother's womb."

"O, I know he was," said the Son of God, "but you release the lad or I shall put so many other chains on you."

"Though you should put on me every chain you could," said he, "I shall not release the lad."

"Well, unless you release the lad," said the Son of God, said He, "I shall put you in the bed of the King of Eilifacs."

"Well," said he, "I shall do anything, but do not put me there. I shall do anything you ask as long as you do not put me there."

"Well," said He, "I am asking nothing of you except that you should release this lad—that you shall have nothing at all to do with him in this way."

"O well," said he, "I shall do that. He is free of me," said he.

And: "Well, now," said the Son of God, said He, "you are all right now. You are free to go now."

Well, anyway, the dog came, the dog that belonged to the King of Eilifacs, and he and the fisherman's son set off. And they came to the house of the King of Eilifacs and the old man was there lying in bed.

"Well," said he, "and how did you get on?"

The lad told him word for word what had passed between them and everything . . . the Son of God and the Destroyer and everything, until at last he came to the point where He threatened to put him in the bed of the King of Eilifacs, and that it was then that he had set him free.

"Alas, alas," said he, the King of Eilifacs, "I shall be dead tonight."

And: "O, no," said the lad.

"O yes, I shall," said he, "and you shall stay here tonight. Have no fear," said he,

"and tomorrow, when you have got things in order, kindle a good fire, a good strong fire, and you shall throw me in it, into the fire, and you shall wait till I am burnt to ashes and you shall keep the fire going till there is nothing left but a heap of ashes so that no bone or any part of me is left. And you shall keep a look-out," said he, "and three ravens will come from the north and three doves will come from the south, and if it is the ravens that get to me first, before the doves, take nothing to do with me. Leave the ashes where they are. But if the doves get to me first before the ravens, you shall gather up my ashes and you shall bury them."

"O well," said the lad, said he, "I shall do that."

Well, anyway, so it was. Whether he went to sleep or not, the day came, anyway. And the King of Eilifacs was dead. He went and started to build a fire. And he built a fire outside, and built a good fire too and when he had built the fire he managed to drag him outside and put him in the fire—and he was there burning and melting, and wasting away with the fire until at last there was nothing but a little heap of ashes. And the fire had gone out.

Well, now he began—he was looking far and near in the sky to see if it would happen as the man had said.

And, here, suddenly it seemed to him, in the north, that he saw three black things, little black things there, coming, and he kept watching them now and he made out that they were birds.

And he kept looking south and there was no sign of anything appearing and it—what was coming in the north—was coming fast. But now he took a look to the south and he saw three other things coming from the south and if the ones coming from the north were moving fast, these were really moving, until at last they came, the three doves, there, and they clapped themselves down around the ashes. And the ravens came after them.

"Go on," said the ravens, said he [*sic*],[2] "get out of there. This belongs to us."

"O no it doesn't. There is no doubt," said the doves, said he, "that he belonged to you before, but it is not to you he belongs today."

"O, it was for us," said he, "that he was working all his life," said the ravens.

"O yes," said the doves, "but it was for us that he did his last deed, and so," said they . . . [end of track A. Contd. on track B]. And "It was for us that he did his last deed," said the doves, "and so," said he, "you get away out of here."

Well, the ravens went away and the doves went away too and when they had gone, he got ready and I do not know where he put his ashes but he buried the ashes of the King of Eilifacs, anyway, and he said farewell to the dog and went away.

He kept going now and made straight for the house of the hermit where he had last been.

"O well," said the hermit, "you have come."

"Yes," said the lad.

"Well, how did you get on?"

The lad told him how it was from start to finish, and how at last it had been threatened that he [the Devil] would be put in the bed of the King of Eilifacs and that that was how he had set him free at last.

And: "O yes," said the hermit. And now they were there talking away and it was getting on for supper-time. And no supper came. And, anyway, it was late at night before the doves arrived.

"Man, man," said the hermit, said he, "what was wrong tonight that you are so late in coming to people with their supper?"

"O," said the doves, said they, "we had great rejoicing in Heaven today."

"How was that?" said the hermit.

"We had the King of Eilifacs in Heaven today," said he, "and he was greeted with great rejoicing because he had got there."

The hermit fell down dead on the spot.

"Away, away!" said the doves, said he. "You get away from here. Do not stay. Have your supper and be off. Do not stay here at all."

Well, the lad had his supper and set off. He came to the house of the other hermit, whatever hour of the night or morning it may have been when he got there. He got there anyway and got in and this one gave him a great welcome, and he asked him how he had got on.

He told him and he told him about the King of Eilifacs and how he had come to . . . that he had come last night to the house of this hermit and when this hermit had heard that the King of Eilifacs was in Heaven, that he had fallen down dead on the spot, and that the doves had told him to go, not to stay there at all.

"O yes," said the hermit, "they did very well," said he. "You did quite right," said he. "It is envy that has put him down, but he will be in the bed of the King of Eilifacs and the King of Eilifacs will be in Heaven. He was so envious," said he, "that the King of Eilifacs, poor man, had got into Heaven."

And he was well cared for there, in the house of that hermit and he went off then next day and came to the other one and spent that night there. He told the story to that one too, how it had all turned out, and he spent that night along with that one.

And then he went and made for his home and when he got home his father and mother were blind and deaf. And they recognised him but they could hear nothing. But he began to talk to them and with every word that came out of his mouth, part of their hearing and part of their sight came back to them[3] until at last they were as well as they had ever been and I came away from there and headed for home, and I left them like that. I don't know what happened afterwards.[4]

I recorded this version of *The Devil's Contract* (AT 756B) from Donald Alasdair Johnson[5] of Ardmore, South Uist in April 1971 (SA 1971/54A–B1). Mr Johnson had first told me part of the story in July 1970, saying that he thought it would all come

back to him, given time. A few days later he recorded a full text for myself and Angus John MacDonald[6] (SA 1970/193B). It is very close to the text printed here but the present one is, on balance, the better telling of the two.

AT 756B is distinctly rare in Scottish Gaelic tradition.[7] The only other full version known to me is one published by my colleague John MacInnes in *Scottish Studies* 7 (MacInnes 1963: 106–14). That text was written down in Eriskay in 1933 by Mr Donald MacDonald, being an item in a manuscript collection of tales which he made for the Irish Folklore Commission.

Mr Johnson learned the story from his father, Iain Mór mac Dhomhnaill 'ic Iain 'ic Raghaill, who was born in Eriskay of South Uist stock but moved to South Uist as a young man and settled there for the rest of his life.

The immediate and obvious inference is that Eriskay could be an important common factor in the provenance of both versions, and that they could well derive from a common source not very far back. A closer examination, however, reveals important differences and suggests that they are probably derived from two distinct oecotypes. The following table summarises the main points of the story. 'A' is the hypothetical archetype as outlined in the Aarne-Thompson Classification (Thompson 1961: 260–1), 'B' is the present text and 'C' the 1933 Eriskay text.

A	B	C
I. *Journey for the Contract.* (a) A boy who has been sold to the Devil before birth journeys to Hell to get back the contract. (b) A hermit, from whom he has asked the way, directs him to a robber, his brother. (c) The robber takes him to Hell.	I. A fisherman with no children promises his first son to an old man, who appears out of the sea (the Devil), in exchange for good fishing.[8] He feeds his wife with fish as instructed by the Devil and a son is born.[9] The boy journeys to secure his release. A man directs him to a hermit who directs him to an older hermit who directs him to another yet older. Doves bring the hermits' food from Heaven. The oldest hermit directs him to the King of Eilifacs. The King of Eilifacs is now too old and infirm to guide the boy to Hell though he used to go to see the bed prepared for him there. However he sends his dog to guide the boy to the other world.[10]	I. A young priest gives a written promise of marriage to an evil spirit in the guise of his former sweetheart. He realises he has come under the power of an evil spirit. His father directs him to Michael Scot, a noted magician who uses the Devil as a horse: Michael Scot directs him northwards. He meets an old man who directs him to the entrance to Hell.

Contd. over

II. *The Fires of Hell* (a) In Hell the youth obtains his contract and (b) sees the fiery bed or chair prepared for the robber.	II. In the other world the boy meets Christ who takes him to Hell. The Devil defies threats but finally releases the boy on being threatened that he will be put in the bed of the King of Eilifacs.	II. The spirit of the girl is summoned to the door of Hell among many others of the same name. She at first refuses to give up the contract but finally gives it up when threatened by 'the person working the (door)-chain', that she will be put in Michael Scot's bed. The priest is shown the bed, with green flames on one side, ice on the other.
III. *The Penance.* Thereupon the robber does penance until his staff puts forth fresh blooms and fruit; assured of forgiveness, he dies happy. *Cf.* Type 756C.	III. The boy returns to the King of Eilifacs and tells his story.[11] The King of Eilifacs says he will die that night. The boy is to burn his body next day. Three ravens will come from the North and three doves from the South. If the ravens are first to the ashes, the ashes are to be scattered. If the doves, the ashes are to be carefully buried. The doves are first. The doves and ravens dispute. The ravens go off and the boy buries the ashes.[12]	III. The priest returns to Michael Scot and tells him of the bed. Michael Scot says he will do penance on his knees till he dies. When he dies the priest is to burn his body. A raven and a dove will come. If the raven takes some of his ashes the rest are to be scattered to the winds. If the dove, they are to be carefully buried. The dove and raven dispute. The dove takes up some of the ashes and the priest buries the rest.
IV. *The Hermit.* (a) The hermit is astonished but reconciles himself to God's judgment; or (b) blasphemes God and is damned.	IV. The boy returns to the house of the oldest hermit and tells his story. The doves are late in coming with food and say they have been delayed by celebrations in Heaven for the arrival of the King of Eilifacs. The hermit falls down dead. The boy spends the night with the next hermit who tells him that envy has been the downfall of the oldest hermit who will now be in the bed of the King of Eilifacs in Hell and the King of Eilifacs will be in Heaven. The boy spends the next night with the first hermit and then returns home. His father and mother are deaf and blind but as he tells his story they recover their health.	IV. A hermit lives in a cave and has his food brought from Heaven by a bird. One day the bird is late and says it was delayed by celebrations in Heaven for the arrival of the soul of Michael Scot. The hermit is enraged and disappears in a blaze of fire. He got Michael Scot's place in Hell and Michael Scot got his place in Heaven.

Among other motifs listed by Thompson (*loc. cit.*) as relevant to the story are the following:

(1)	S211	Child sold (promised) to devil (ogre).
(2)	F81.2	Journey to Hell to recover Devil's contract.
(3)	N843	Hermit as helper.
(4)	H1235	Succession of helpers on quest. One helper sends to another who sends to another, *etc.*
(5)	Q561	Bed (kettle, seat) heating in Hell for certain person.
(6)	J172	Account of punishments prepared in Hell brings about repentance.
(7)	Q521.1.1	Penance: crawling on knees (and watering a dry staff until it blooms).
(8)	Q172.2	Man admitted to Heaven for single act of charity.
(9)	E756.3	Raven and dove fight over man's soul.
(10)	Q312.3	Punishment for finding fault with God's forgiveness of sin.

Of these, B lacks (6) and (7)
C lacks (1), (3) and, assuming that Michael Scot is admitted to Heaven for his penance, rather than his help to the priest, (8).
B and C share (2), (4), (5), (9), (10).

A comparison of the summary outlines in the table makes it clear that B and C differ from each other considerably in plot as well as in matters of detail. B is clearly closer to A than C is. Further, B and C each have certain features in common with A which B and C do not share with each other. This is further confirmed by the motif structure.[13]

The most obvious difference between B and C is, of course, in section I which deals with the manner in which the hero falls into the Devil's power. Here B agrees with A on the promise of the unborn child to the Devil. However, the episode of priest and marriage contract as found in C is not simply an isolated aberration. It occurs, for instance, in some Irish versions.[14] Irish versions also feature the Devil being used as a steed. John MacInnes (*loc. cit.*), commenting on the latter motif,[15] has suggested tentatively the possibility of a Gaelic-Irish oecotype of 756B. The episode of priest and marriage contract could be used to supply further backing for this hypothesis.

To sum up briefly, the evidence outlined above suggests that B and C are derived from divergent branches of 756B, B being closer to the general archetypal structure and C possibly representing a Gaelic-Irish oecotype. This, however, does not necessarily mean that both could not have existed side by side in Eriskay. Even in such a small homogeneous community, family tradition, for example, could well maintain a flourishing independent existence for its own particular version of a story for generations. It does, however, strongly suggest that Duncan MacInnes, the teller of C, and Iain Mór Johnson did not learn their story from the same source.[16]

What does strike me as remarkable is, granted the existence of two such fine versions of 756B in Eriskay and Uist in the middle of this century, why more texts of this tale have not been noted in the course of more than a hundred years of field-work.[17]

The name *Righ Eilifacs* is a curious one. "The King of Halifax" is what immediately comes to mind. In a version corresponding so closely to the archetype one would certainly expect this character to be a robber or similar evildoer. The answer may lie in a saying that was current in Uist within my own memory: *Cuiridh mi dha na Hailifacs thu* ["I shall send you to (the) Halifax"]. Variants of this serio-comic threat or imprecation are also well attested from other Hebridean areas. I am indebted to the Rev. William Matheson for the suggestion that this probably refers to the prison of Halifax, Virginia, where loyalist prisoners, many Highlanders among them, were interned during the American War of Independence in rather grim conditions.

On this assumption, I think it possible that Righ Eilifacs may mean something like "The Prison King" or "The Robber King" in much the same way as one might refer to a notorious criminal as "The King of Peterhead" or "The King of Dartmoor." Whether this be the real explanation or not, the idea appeals to me.

Appendix

I am grateful to my colleague Dr. A. J. Bruford who has supplied the following information based on N. P. Andrejev's study of AT 756B (Andrejev 1927):

Andrejev's study has to some extent been outdated by subsequent collection. It is based on 226 versions, chiefly Slavonic, including only two from Ireland and one from Scotland, whereas 261 versions and closely related tales are listed in *The Types of the Irish Folktale* (Ó Súilleabháin and Christiansen, 1963). It may, however, be worth noting that Andrejev (1927:290) suggests Brittany as the ultimate source of the story, and that not only is our version (B) in general close to the "Western redaction" and especially the Breton forms of it, but that the Scottish and Breton versions alone seem to share the episode of the raven(s) and dove(s). This may well prove to exist in Irish versions, but the three known to me (see note 14: one each from Munster, Connaught and Ulster) contain neither it nor the characteristically "Western" final motif of the indignant hermit sent to the sinner's place in Hell. The Scottish versions differ from the Breton only in two minor particulars: the (last) hermit and the sinner (regularly a robber in Breton) are not brothers—a detail which may have been lost over the years—and the sinner's place in Hell is a bed, not a seat. (Overall the bed is most common, but in the "Western redaction" a seat is usual: Irish versions, however, mention a room or a bed). It would be rash as well as unfashionable to build too much upon resemblances between a mere six versions, but this may serve as an indication of the place of the Scottish versions in an international context.

Two other brief mentions (in English from Gaelic sources) make it clear that the story was once more widespread in the Highlands: Grant Stewart (1823:86), the one Scottish version available at second hand to Andrejev, and Campbell (1900:288). In both the sinner is Michael Scot. Campbell has only the dove and raven episode, but mentions that "the

devil . . . had long been preparing a bed for Michael": Grant Stewart introduces it rather differently from our story, for the visitor to Hell is Michael Scott's enemy, sent there as a punishment, who is delighted to discover what is in store for the enchanter. Michael here has his heart cut out and exposed on a pole for the dove and raven to quarrel over. If we add to these the use of the dove and raven episode of Coinneach Odhar (for references see MacInnes, 1963: 115), there is more than adequate evidence for this characteristic part of the story in Scottish Gaelic tradition.

NOTES

1 *crèithich* [kr'ɛ:-iç] nom. plur. of *crèitheach* [kr'ɛ:-əx], see *passim*. I take this form to be from *cràibh(th)-each* by the same process of fronting and palatalisation as occurs in *e.g. bràighe* > *brèighe* [br'ɛ:-ə] in Uist. *Cràibheach* does not appear in Dwelly's Dictionary, but Dineen's Irish Dictionary gives *cráibh-theach* = 'religious', 'pious', 'devout', *etc.* The 1933 Eriskay text has *cràidheach*, which may also represent [kr'ɛ:-əx]. I have used *hermit* as translation as it fits the description of a holy man living alone and being fed by birds, and also because the archetype has a hermit for this character.

2 The alternation between 'said he' and 'said they' when the doves and ravens are speaking can be understood in terms of the storyteller's image of the situation switching from group to spokesman and back again.

3 Literally 'a third of their deafness and a third of their sight came back to them.' Probably a slip by the storyteller. One would expect *claisneachd*, 'hearing'. Incidentally, this motif of parents recovering their health or faculties on the return of the hero also occurs in other Gaelic tales.

4 Mr Johnson frequently uses a formula of this type to end a tale. It is a well-known story-telling device.

5 For further information on Mr Johnson and two other stories recorded from him see *Scottish Studies* 14: 133–54 and *Tocher* 2: 36–57.

6 Research student, see also *Scottish Studies* and *Tocher* as in 5.

7 Indeed Religious Tales (AT 750–849) in general are rather poorly represented in Scotland. The Irish situation presents a sharp contrast.

8 Interestingly enough, Mr Johnson tells a version of AT 302 (The Ogre's Heart in the Egg) with a near identical beginning—the only difference being that the unborn hero is promised to a mermaid, not to the Devil. The motif of the child promised to the Devil in return for a large catch of fish is listed by Thompson as S227 (Thompson 1957: 316).

9 The motif of conception from eating fish, T511.5.1 (Thompson 1957: 391) occurs in other tales, for instance *The Twins* (AT 303) and in AT 705. It occurs also in the introduction to Mr Johnson's version of AT 302 (see note 8 above).

10 The dog as guide on the journey to Hell is a fine touch which may be unique to this version.

11 As the King of Eilifacs has already seen the bed, he cannot repent and do penance on hearing it described by the hero as happens in A and C. The King of Eilifacs is therefore presumably admitted to Heaven for his single act of charity (motif Q172.2, Thompson 1957: 199) in helping the hero. This detail probably represents a deviation in B. In terms of plot, A and C are really more satis-factory here.

12 For reference to the occurrence of the raven and dove motif elsewhere in Scottish Gaelic tradition see MacInnes (*loc. cit.*).

13 Even where B and C share motifs there is sometimes a difference. In B there are three hermits who act as guides, whereas there is only one in C, who comes in at the end. The hermits in B are old, older and oldest and the King of Eilifacs is a very old man. This is the 'sending to the older' type of

motif, F571.2 (Thompson 1956: 171) which does not apply to the succession of guides in C. In C, but not in B, the hero sees the bed in Hell and it is described. There are three doves and three ravens in B as against one of each in C.

14 See *Béaloideas* I (1929) 304–5: 'Brian Bráthir' (in Séamus Ó Duilearga, 'Measgra Sgéal ó Uibh Ráthach'); *Béaloideas* XXI (1951–2) 65–73 and 73–8: 'An Seomra i nIfreann' *a* and *b* (in Séan Ó Súilleabháin, 'Scéalta Cráibhtheacha'); *etc.*

15 For references see MacInnes (*loc. cit.*).

16 There is, however, one instance of near verbal identity where the doves and ravens are disputing.

B: "O, 's ann," ors na calamain, "ach 's ann dhuinne rinn e 'n car ma dheireadh . . . "

C: " 's ann," ars' an calman, "ach 's ann dhomh-sa a rinn e an car mu dheireadh."

This may indeed indicate local contact of some kind between the two versions.

17 For two summary versions in English see Appendix.

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A Recently-Discovered Manuscript: 'ane taill of Sir colling ye kny''

MARION STEWART

Bishop Percy's celebrated account of his discovery, in a friend's house in Shropshire, of the Percy Folio Manuscript: 'I saw it lying dirty on the floor under a Bureau in ye Parlour: being used by the Maids to light the fire' (Hales and Furnival 1867–8: lxiv) underlines the fact that much early poetry owes its survival to mere chance. There is always the hope therefore that items hitherto overlooked may yet come to light. Such an item is the poem entitled 'ane taill of sir colling ye knyt' which I recently found within Register House, Edinburgh, amongst a collection of miscellaneous fragments of which there is now no known or recorded provenance. The 246-line poem is complete and consists of ten pages in a small, neatly written quarto manuscript of which only twenty-eight pages now remain. The bulk of the manuscript appears to have been lost and that for some considerable time as can be seen by matching the numerous stains and holes on the remaining pages. The paper is badly marked and damaged by damp and portions of some pages have become stuck together and are consequently very fragile. Those leaves which are least badly stained reveal a French watermark of 1582, a crowned jug with a band round its middle bearing the initials TC. (Briquet 1907: 639, no. 12814).

The only clues as to the origin of the manuscript are provided by names scribbled in the margins and by portions of legal documents contained within it. Following 'Sir Colling' are two precepts of warning in the name of Marion Cockburn 'relict of umquhyll Hew Douglas of Borg', one of which is noted as 'done at Langnidrie, xviii March, 1582'. Marion Cockburn's name recurs amongst the marginalia on a later page of the manuscript along with the name 'John Sinclar of Hirdmanstoun'. There is also part of another precept of warning, this time by 'Sir William Sinklar of Hermistoun, knight'. A link between the families of Sinclair and Cockburn can be seen in the recording in the Privy Seal Register of a charter to Sibilla Cockburne, spouse of Sir William Sinclare of Hirdmestoun in April 1569 (p. 120, No. 592), and of a gift to Samuel Cokburne by Sir William Sinclare of Hirdmanstoun following upon a reversion by his deceased father John Sinclare of Hirdmanstoun in November 1572 (p. 338, No. 1779). In view of this and of the fact that the other pages of the manuscript are entirely taken up with literary or pious material rather than with the orderly sequence of legal items one would expect to find in a protocol book, it seems that some member of

either of these families may have employed someone to compile a book of literary and pious pieces, perhaps on the lines of the Maitland Folio Manuscript which was being collected at this time. The copyist may have been the Thomas White whose name occurs most frequently throughout the pages, at one place accompanied by the words 'with my hand'. The date of his work was probably 1583 since that date is scribbled several times at the end of this poem.

'Ane taill of sir colling ye knyt' is clearly an earlier version of Child's 'Sir Cawline' (Child 1898: 58–60) which he obtained from the 'unique' copy in the Percy Folio Manuscript of 1650, which copy, he says 'shows very great carelessness on the part of the transcriber or some predecessor' (*op. cit:* 56). Bishop Percy also speaks critically of this source in his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (p. 157):

> This old romantic tale was preserved in the Editor's folio manuscript, but in so very defective and mutilated a condition (not from any chasm in the manuscript, but from great omission in the transcript, probably copied from the faulty recitation of some illiterate minstrel), and the whole appeared so far short of the perfection it seemed to deserve, that the Editor was tempted to add several stanzas in the manner which appeared to him most interesting and affecting.

It is consequently of considerable interest that this sixteenth-century version of the poem should have come to light, for not only is it complete (other than a few words and phrases lost through marks or holes in the manuscript) but it contains elements of high quality and interest that are missing from the later version.

The transcript that follows is published with the approval of the Keeper of the Records of Scotland. The Scottish Record Office reference number is RH13/35.

Heir beginnis ane taill off Sir colling ye kny^{t}

Jesus Chryst and tryniti
Yat deitt wes on ye ruid
to send him grace in all digne
yat luiffis ye Scottis bluid
yis be ane kny^{t} corporall 5
hardie vas and guid
Sir Coling vas ye kny^{t}s name
ane kingis sone vas hie
v^{t} Edvaird ye bruce he fuir to fecht
In Irland biyond ye sie 10
Intill argyll I hard men say
ane lord roinit in yat land
ane vorthie variour and ane fell
sa lang as his dayis my^{t} ring
he had ane dochtar fair of face 15

ane lustie luifsum thing
Off flesche and bluid was nain sa fair
Yair was nain my^{t} be hir peir
Sir Colling luifit hir best of ane
Scho lay his hairt sa neir 20
he luifit hir ane ȝeir and mair
bot he durst newer his erand say
quhill it fell anis vpone ane day
Sir colling in cairbed lay
and he caist wp his armis braid 25
it fell wpone ye mununday
ye king sat at his dyne
he luikit amang his kny^{t}tis all
he missitt sir colling
he sayis q^{r} is sir colling my kny^{t} 30
I see him nocht w^{t} my ei
Yan bispak ane eldrane kny^{t}
yat was off sir collings kin
ye kny^{t} lyis seik will newer mend
gif he get guid leiching 35
he sayis get wp my dochtar deir
yow art ane leiche full fyne
tak baikin breid and vyne sa reid
and beir to sir colyne
w^{t} yat ye ladie was no^{t} sveir 40
hir madinis schon it syne
quhill scho com to sir collingis chalmar
that sir colline was in . . .
scho sayis win wp sir gud kny^{t}
ly newer sa couar[dly] 45
he sayis yis is for [ȝour] luif ladie
all [ye] dollair yat ye . . .
wald ye me confort w^{t} ane kiss
I ly na langir heir
yan war I [brot] fra baill to blis 50
gif na better may be
gif yat I be sa sempill ane kny^{t}
I may not be thy peir
sum deidis of armis ȝe wald me wiss
to be ȝowr bachleir 55
scho sayis [vpone] ȝone allreche [hill]

[Yair]on standis ane thorn
and ȝe wald valk ane vinter nicht
and baldlie blaw ȝour horn
ane alreche knyt is mikill of myt 60
will compeir ȝow biforne
yair com never ane away wt lyf
sen ye first tyme yat I vas borne
yair my hand said sir collyne
I sall valk at yt thorne 65
outher ane vad to bring away
or ellis my lyf to be forlorne
yair my hand said sir collyne
I sall valk at yat plain
ouyair ane vad to bring away 70
or ellis newer to cum agane
scho loutit doun oue[r] [his hed stok?]
and raucht him kises thrie
and richtlie [yair him went]
[ane auell knyt . . .] was hie 75
he lap wpone his mekill steid
and fuir furth fra ye toun
ye thunder and ye fyr flanchis
can ouer ye bentis broun
at midnyt quan ye mone did ryss 80
it schew him littill lyt
he saw betwein him and ye sey
full fast cumand ane knyt
ane grit steid in his cumpany
bot and ane lady bryghtt 85
ye gold yat ye ladie voir on hir guidlie vys
it schew sir colling lyt
loud on sir colling can he cry
said freik I vid ye flie
or I sall brikin ye full ryt 90
In dispyt off yi kin and ye
yow speikis sa littill of godis myt
ye weill var I trow ye
sir collyne gat ane speir [in hand]
and neir him culd he ryd 95
this alreche knyt [was] stif and stuir
and stiflie culd he ryd

ye tric bitwix yam tua thai bair
In schudderis doun [it] fell
and yai haue drawin yair nobill brandis 100
and neir wyair ar yai gain
yis alreche knyt vas stif and stur
and stiflie culd he stand
sir collyne w^{t} ane straik sa hie
fra him he straik ye hand 105
and heich it flew abond his heid
and ly^{t}it on ye hie land
wt yat ye ladie gaif ane schout
yat fast scho was cumand
away away yow kirsin kny^{t} 110
thow smett my lord na mair
he sall newer cum in y . . .
nowther be laitt nor air
[If] for to fecht w^{t} ane kirstin kny^{t}
yat leiris of godis lair 115
last quhan I had him in my armis
I thocht him sveir as svair
and now he lyis wpone . . .
lyk for to leif na mair
bot for ye luif yat yow luifis best 120
his vondit bodie gif me
Bot for ye luif yat I luif best
his vondit bodie I gif ye
bot his ry^{t} hand and nobill brand
be god sall ga w^{t} me 125
syne furthe to ye mikill hand he fuir
quhair it lay on ye lie
and till ane fingar in yat hand
yairin was ringis thrie
and ilkane of yai gold ringis 130
yairin was on stain
yai war worthe ane erldome of land
In his contrie at hame
wp he tuik ye alreche svord
was hard as ony flint 135
say ye not bot he buir ane bla[d]
yat all thir touellis tint
he lap apon his steid agane

and he fuir to ye toun
full redy wes ane gay porter 140
Sir colling in to lett
And als reddy wes ane fair lady
In airmis him to plett
yair was na [mair] as I haird say
bot vesche and go [to] meit 145
full reddie . . . vas ye ladie gay
set w^t him at ye meit
quhan yai had eittin and drukin veill
and greit mirth yai had maid
four and tventie greit schipis 150
vas strukin in ye raid
and fra yam com ane fellon freik
he was bay^t lang and braid
thrie heidis on his hals he buir
he was ouer meikill maid 155
tuik wp ye cup befoir ye king
drank out ye vyn yat was yairin
And pat ye cup in his sleif
he sayis Sir king w^{t}outin lat
yis was my erand heir 160
other to bruik your landis braid
Or haue yi dochtar deir
Other to find me ane freik to fecht
[Upon] yi bentis broun
[Or els] yow aucht to be na king 165
Nor yett to weir ye croun
ye king cryis vpon his [men]
his hairt wes vunder sair
quha will feche me my coupe again
foir it I dar weill say 170
and yai sall haue my dochtar deir
and all efter my day
sir collyne drew neir ha . . . by
his awin erand to say
hald wp ȝour hand sir king he said 175
I sall do and I may
And yan bespak ye may
sat be hir fayairis syd
scho sayis gif it bityd my fayair deir

yat sir colling be slane 180
ȝe burne me heich vpone ȝone hill
or ȝon foull theif cum agane
*ȝe burne me heith wpone ȝon hill
and ding me in pouldar small
or ȝon foull theif cum agane 185
to burne me quyt away
he sayis fetche me my alreche svord
als haird as ony flint
bitwix him and ye foull theif
ȝe sall sie monie ane dint 190
ye steid yat sir collyne raid on
he wes bery broun
and all yat saw sir colling
geff him yair bennisoun
the steid yat ye fowle theiffe red on 195
and he was rewin blak
and all yat saw ye foule theif
bad sorrow mit him tak
yai met into ye feild
into ye feild of veir 200
and doun he dang ye foule theif
bay[t] w[t] scheild and speir
thrie heidis on his hals he buir
and of he culd yam scheir
and hame yan bro[t] him sir collyne 205
w[t] greit sollemnitie
at ye kirk duir of lyme and stain
wadit him and ye gay ladie
yair was ane stewart in yat hall
was [cum] of [hallie] kin 210
he [l]ed ane lyone in ane [leiche]
Intill ane dungin lay
And all to sla him sir collyne
ye mair yat was his sin
sir collyne had ye ladie win 215
. . . baill wald newer . . .
Quhill anis itt fell vpone ane day
. . . ane dawing off ane day

* Line 183 is scored through in the text.

sir colling ȝeid furth in his oratour
his matteinis for to say 220
he tuik nathing him about
bot ane mantill of gray
he opinit wp ye dungen deip
ye lyon saw ye ly^{t}
he kenit weill his maisteris call 225
and s[cop] wpone ye kny^{t}
sir collyne saw yat it was sa
he trowit his deid vas dicht
he vapit his mantill about his arme
and fuir till him sua ry^{t} 230
and he hes borne him bacvard mair
till ane pillar of trie
And sickane vreist he gaif him yair
his hart vas brakin in thrie
ye vachman cryit wpone ye vallis 235
sayis sir collyne is slane
ye ladie rampis and raif hir hair
My^{t} not be stanchit yan
ye king fuir to his dochtaris bour
to confor his dochtar deir 240
and ry^{t} sua did sir collyne
to conffortt his lady deir
sixtein bairnis ye lady buir
And all in saxtein ȝeir
And deid—[th ?] is cummitt in ye land 245
ye ladie is borne in beir.

This is ye end of ye maist pairt of Sir Collyne ye kny^{t}.

Interesting differences immediately become apparent between this version and the English 'Sir Cawline'. With regard to rhyme, 'Sir Colling' shows a conscious artistry that is missing from the conventional ballad rhyme schemes of 'Sir Cawline'. 'Sir Cawline' is written mainly in 4-line stanzas rhyming ABCB, with an occasional 6-line stanza ABCBDB. In 'Sir Colling' however, the pattern of rhymes is much subtler and very varied. The manuscript shows no division into stanzas at all and, from the multiplicity of rhyme patterns within it, it would appear that the copyist's original manuscript was not split up into regular stanzas either. There are in the poem many 4-line groupings rhyming either ABCB or ABAB, and a number of 6-line gatherings rhyming ABCBDB, but often the rhyme is carried on beyond this unit and forms quite intricate

patterns of words. Such is the case in lines 80–93, rhyming ABCBCBABDDBEBE—the rhyme being on the words lyt, knyt, bryghtt, lyt, ryt, and myt. A rather simpler rhyme scheme is seen in lines 56–67 which rhyme ABCBDBEBFBGB, the B rhyme being here thorn, horn, biforne, borne, thorne, and forlorne. Another pattern is seen in lines 148–56, rhyming ABCBDBEB—maid, raid, braid, maid; and another in lines 21–6, rhyming AABBBCB, the rhyming words being say, day, lay, and mununday; and yet another is provided by lines 170–77 which rhyme ABACADAA—say, day, say, may and may.

The loss in subtlety and sophistication in the rhyming from 'Sir Colling' to 'Sir Cawline' is best seen in a comparison of two similar passages. 'Sir Colling''s sustained rhyme on '-orn' in lines 56–67

scho sayis vpone ȝone allreche hill
yairon standis ane thorn
and ȝe wald valk ane vinter nicht
and baldlie blaw ȝour horn
ane alreche knyt is mikill of myt
will compeir ȝow biforne
yair com never ane away wt lyf
sen ye first tyme yat I vas borne
yair my hand said sir collyne
I sall valk at yt thorne
outher ane vad to bring away
or ellis my lyf to be forlorne

has been split up into three stanzas in 'Sir Cawline' to become

Vpon Eldrige Hill there growes a thorne
Vpon the mores brodinge,
And wold you, Sir Knight, wake ther all night
To-day of the other morninge?

Ffor the eldrige king that is mickle of might
Will examine you beforne;
And there was never man that bare his liffe away
Since the day that I was borne.

But I will ffor your sake, ffair ladye,
Walke on the bents soe browne,
And Ile either bring you a readye token
Or Ile never come to you againe. stanzas 14–16

The skill of the 'Sir Colling' poet becomes apparent here in comparison to the very ordinariness of the 'Sir Cawline' version where not only is no attempt made to retain

the continuity of rhyme on '-orn'—the 'thorn' at the end of the first of these stanzas is not utilised as a rhyme—but also the internal rhyme in

> ane alreche knyt is mikill of my[t] l. 60

is lost in the otherwise same line in 'Sir Cawline'

> Ffor the eldrige king that is mickle of might stanza 15.

A similar decline in craftmanship is to be seen when one compares the carefully and logically planned 'Sir Colling' with its more haphazard English version.

The first two stanzas of the Percy Folio 'Sir Cawline':

> Jesus, Lord mickle of might,
> That dyed ffor us on the roode,
> To maintaine vs in all our right
> That loves true English blood.
>
> Ffor by a knight I say my song,
> Was bold an fful hardye;
> Sir Robert Bruise wold fforth to ffight,
> In-to Ireland over the sea.

are omitted by Child in his ballad number 61 'as belonging to another ballad'.

In this earlier Scottish version however the first eight lines are integral and relevant to the rest of the poem establishing its events within a time and place. The patriotic note of the first verse is appropriate to introduce a hero who has fought with Edward Bruce in his Irish campaigns and this authentic local note is continued in the choice of a daughter of the lord of Argyll as his lady.

Child claims that there are only two adventures in 'Sir Cawline', the fight with an elritch knight and that with a five-headed giant, though he thinks there may be traces of a third in the unintelligible twenty-ninth stanza which, if it was meant to bridge the gap between the first and second adventures, fails lamentably. The continuity of action from the first to the second adventure in the Scottish 'Sir Colling' is clearly provided in the feast held in celebration of the hero's victorious return from his first fight when his second opponent makes his appearance:

> quhan yai had eittin and drukin veill
> and greit mirth yai had maid
> four and tventie greit schipis
> vas strukin in ye raid
> and fra yam com ane fellon freik ll. 149–53

and offers his insulting challenge:

> tuik wp ye cup befoir ye king
> drank out ye vyn yat was yairin
> and pat ye cup in his sleif . . . ll. 157–9.

Another structural difference between the Scottish and English poems lies in the fact that the third adventure in the poem, the fight with the lion, which Child seems to have overlooked although it is in his version in stanzas 41 to 44, is given much greater structural prominence in 'Sir Colling'. In 'Sir Cawline' this whole episode is tagged on after what would seem the natural end of the poem, as a postscript bearing no relation to what has gone before. In 'Sir Colling', however, the ground is laid for the approaching adventure by the mention, immediately after the wedding of Sir Colling and the lady, that

> yair was ane stewart in yat hall l. 208

who was keeping a lion in a dungeon

> and all to sla him sir colling l. 212.

The poem then returns to the unsuspecting happiness of the hero and his bride thus adding to the dramatic tension of the sudden encounter with the lion when it does come. The fight itself is described with much greater detail than the rather tame affair in 'Sir Cawline' and is sufficiently exciting to measure up to the two previous adventures and so strengthen the structural balance of the poem.

Leaving aside variations in the spelling of common words, there is scarcely a line that is the same in the Scottish and English versions of the poem although both tell a very similar story. There are very many differences in detail between the two versions. In 'Sir Cawline' the lovesick knight claims that without the lady's love

> ere noone I shalbe dead stanza 5;

the king, her father, sits at his meal

> when our parish masse that itt was done stanza 6

and he misses Sir Cawline

> that was wont to serve me with ale and wine stanza 6;

he sends his daughter to the sick knight with 'doe' as well as 'baken bread' and 'wine soe red'—all of which details are lacking in 'Sir Colling'. On the other hand, when she sends him off to his vigil on the haunted hill, Sir Colling's lady dismisses him with 'kises thrie' (l. 73) while Sir Cawline's lady simply returns to her chamber with her maidens (stanza 17). When Sir Colling waits on the hill

> ye thunder and ye fyr flanchis
> can ouer ye bentis broun ll. 79–80

and his first warning of his assailant's approach is visual:

> at midnyt quhan ye mone did ryss
> it schew him littill lyt
> he saw betwein him and ye sey
> full fast cumand ane knyt ll. 81–84

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whereas Sir Cawline's wait, in no such vivid, eerie landscape, is ended when

> a lightsome bugle then heard he blow
> Over the bents soe browne — stanza 18

and his enemy approaches not at the furious pace of the Scottish hero's foe, for

> A ladye bright his brydle led
> That seemlye itt was to see — stanza 19

The balanced division of the ensuing battle, on horseback with spears and on foot with swords, is obscured in the English version, for the phrases repeated with minor but essential differences to mark the two phases of the fight in 'Sir Colling':

> this alreche knyt[t] was stif and stuir
> and stiflie culd he ryd — ll. 96–7

and

> yis alreche knyt[t] vas stif and stur
> and stiflie culd he stand, — ll. 102–3

while retained at the start of the second stage of the fight in the English poem, have been weakened at the start of the fight to

> The king was bold and abode — stanza 22.

As in 'Sir Colling', Sir Cawline takes away the elritch sword and 'ringes Fiue', though the poem does not say where he had found these five rings, nor does it include the shrewd comment in 'Sir Colling' about the three rings won by the hero of that poem

> and ilkane of yai gold ringis
> yairin was on stain
> yai war worthe ane erldome of land
> In his contrie at hame — ll. 130–4.

Nor is there any mention in 'Sir Cawline' of the impressive quantities of blood flowing from the hand severed by Sir Colling.

The structural differences between the Scottish and English poems at the start of the second adventure have already been discussed. The challenge is broadly similar in both, though in the English version the king appeals for aid to his knights of the Round Table, which assembly has not been transported to the Argyll of the Scottish poem. The English challenger has also acquired two more heads than his Scottish counterpart and, to add to his villainy, is a 'hend soldan' (stanzas 36, 37). The entire passage describing Sir Colling riding forth after the three-headed thief, one of the finest parts of the Scottish poem, is omitted in 'Sir Cawline', as is the dramatic plea of the king's daughter that, should Sir Colling be slain, rather than sacrifice her to the villain

> ye burne me heith vpone ȝone hill
> and ding me in poulder small — ll. 183–4

The next three stanzas are devoted in 'Sir Cawline' to discussion of the reward promised the hero by the king, while Sir Colling's good fortune is tersely described:

> at ye kirk duir of lyme and stain
> wadit him and ye gay ladie. ll. 207–9

The structural differences in the treatment of the third adventure in the Scottish and English poems have been considered above but there are still three minor differences of detail. In 'Sir Colling', the distraught lady is first comforted by her father and then by her husband and the reiteration of the phrases describing this accentuates her shock of surprise on seeing the latter alive when she and her father had thought him dead. In 'Sir Cawline' we have instead the excessive repetition of the hero's soothing words:

> 'O peace, my lady!' sayes Sir Cawline,
> I have bought thy love ffull deere;
> O peace, my lady!' sayes Sir Cawline,
> 'Peace, lady, ffor I am heere!' stanza 45,

used to pad out a stanza to the required length without adding anything to the poem. It is at this juncture in the English version that Sir Cawline finally weds his lady and she bears him fifteen sons, thus providing a neat ending to the poem. In the Scottish version, however, Sir Colling and his lady have been married since before the third adventure, and so this version of the poem ends rather abruptly with the death of the lady after having borne one child more than her English counterpart. That this is indeed the end of the Scottish poem is not certain for this copy of the poem is followed by the tantalising note by the copyist 'This is ye end of ye maist pairt of sir collyne ye knyt'.

Broadly, the Scottish version of the poem is more tightly and logically structured, its detail is more telling and more consistent, and it makes less use of direct speech than the English version. 'Sir Colling' reserves direct speech for moments of considerable dramatic intensity, as in the plea of the allreche knight's lady to her love's assailant and in the three-headed knight's challenge to the king and court, to say nothing of Sir Colling's complaint to the lady from his sickbed. More important than these differences, however, is the absence from the English poem of all the consciously artistic effects which make the Scottish poem a fine piece of literature. Most of these lost passages rely for their effect on the reiteration of balanced phrases, a simple technique but used with great skill and sensitivity. Such a procedure is to be seen in Sir Colling's determined acceptance of the task set him by the king's daughter:

> yair my hand said sir collyne
> I sall valk at yt thorne
> outher ane vad to bring away
> or ellis my lyf to be forlorn

Yair my hand said sir collyne
I sall valk at yat plain
ouyair ane vad to bring away
or ellis newer to cum againe. ll. 64–71

It is seen also in the two phases of Sir Colling's fight with the first knight; and in the dialogue between this knight's lady and Sir Colling:

bot for ye luif yat yow luifis best
his vondit bodie gif me
Bot for ye luif yat I luif best
his vondit bodie I gif ye
bot his ryt hand and nobill brand
be god sall ga w^t^ me. ll. 120–25

It is seen again in the despairing cry of the king's daughter when Sir Colling accepts the challenge of the three-headed giant; and in the lines describing the two opponents riding out to battle:

ye steid yat sir collyne raid on
he wes bery broun
and all yat saw sir colling
geff him yair bennisoun
ye steid yat ye fowle theiffe red on
and he was rewin blak
and all yat saw ye foule theif
bad sorrow mi^t^ him tak. ll. 190–98

And it is also seen in the twofold comforting of Sir Colling's lady after his apparent death in his third adventure. All these passages show a feeling for structure and balance, and an ability to evoke an atmosphere and exploit its dramatic potential—which indicate the work of a true artist in the creation of the poem.

It remains to make a brief mention of the relationship of 'Sir Colling' to the two other versions of the ballad noted by Child but discounted for serious study by him as 'simple rifacimenti of the ballad in Percy's Reliques' (Child 1898: 56). These are the 'Harris version' which was passed on by a Mrs Harris in Perthshire (who learnt it in about 1790) to her daughter who wrote it down from her memory in 1859, and the version printed by Buchan in his *Ballads of the North of Scotland*. Both versions have departed radically from the seventeenth-century 'Sir Cawline' and the sixteenth-century 'Sir Colling', but both share certain features—either of phrase or of incident with the Scottish poem which are not to be found in the poem in the Percy Folio Manuscript. Thus the lines in 'Sir Colling':

ye king sat at his dyne
he luikit amang his kny^t^tis all
he missitt sir colling

he sayis q^r is sir colling my kny^t
I see him nocht w^t my ei
yan bispak ane eldrane kny^t . . . ll. 27–32

are followed quite closely in the opening stanzas of the Harris version:

The king luikit owre his castle wa,
To his nobles ane an a';
Says, Whare it is him Sir Colin,
I dinna see him amang you a'?
Up it spak an eldern knicht . . . stanzas 1–2

and allowing for the distortion of 'leech' to the nonsensical 'match' and the intrusion of the name Janet, the Harris stanzas 3 and 4:

Win up, win up, my dochter, Janet,
I wat ye are a match most fine
Tak the baken bread and wine sae reid
And to Sir Colin ye maun gieng
Up she rase, that fair Janet
An I wat weel she was na sweer stanzas 3–4

is far closer to 'Sir Colling''s

he sayis get wp my dochtar deir
yow art ane leiche full fyne
tak baikin breid and vyne sa reid
and beir to sir colyne
w^t yat ye ladie was no^t sveir ll. 36–40

than is the version found in 'Sir Cawline':

Ffeitch yee downe my daughter deere,
Shee is a leeche ffull ffine;
I, and take you doe and the baken bread,
And drinke he on the wine soe red,
And looke no daynti is ffor him to deare,
For ffull loth I wold him tine.
This ladye is gone to his chamber . . . stanzas 8–9

After these opening stanzas the Harris version diverges progressively more from 'Sir Colling', but it is precisely the opening lines that one would expect to be most faithfully remembered in a poem passed on by word of mouth. It seems likely then that this nineteenth-century Perthshire poem is a true descendant of the same stock as the sixteenth-century 'Sir Colling' rather than, as Child thinks, a badly distorted version of the Percy Folio Manuscript poem.

As for Buchan's 'King Malcolm and Sir Colvin' though the words have become so stereotyped that one can trace no echoes of 'Sir Colling' there, there are some common features which are absent from 'Sir Cawline'. In 'Sir Colling', the 'eldrane

kny[t] who answers the king's question about the absence of Sir Colling 'was off sir collings kin', while in 'Sir Cawline' he is simply 'a Curteous knight'. Stanza 3 of Buchan's poem says, however,

> But out it speaks another knight,
> Ane o Sir Colvin's kin.

The task set Sir Colling by the king's daughter in 'Sir Colling' is to go to the haunted hill:

> Yairon standis ane thorn
> and ye wald valk ane vinter nicht
> and baldlie blaw your horn . . . ll. 57–9

No mention is made in 'Sir Cawline' of the blowing of a horn by the hero, but in Buchan's ballad the lady says

> O ye'll gang there and walk a' night,
> And boldly blaw your horn stanza 9.

In Buchan's poem, as in 'Sir Colling', the hero waits in a thunderstorm and his adversary is first seen, not heard as is the case in 'Sir Cawline':

> At midnight mark the meen upstarts
> The knight walkd up and down,
> While loudest cracks o thunder roard
> Out ower the bent sae brown.
> Then by the twinkling of an ee
> He spied an armed knight stanzas 11–12.

Buchan's poem also shares with 'Sir Colling' the plea of the wounded knight's lady for her love's body, and although it is differently worded, the element of dialogue between the lady and the hero is retained:

> 'An asking,' said the lady gay,
> 'An asking ye'll grant me;'
> 'Ask on, ask on,' said Sir Colvin,
> What may your asking be?'
> "Ye'll gie me hame my wounded knight stanzas 20–21.

Buchan's poem consists only of this single adventure, but it ends with a flourish on the marriage of Sir Colvin and the king's daughter after the hero has triumphantly brought home the 'bluidy hand' with its precious rings whose value is stressed, as in 'Sir Colling':

> The rings that were on these fingers
> Were worth five hundred pound stanza 26.

It seems probable therefore, that the version of the poem collected by Buchan, though obviously influenced stylistically and linguistically by broadsheet ballads,

owes its ultimate inspiration to the same source as 'Sir Colling'. In conclusion, not only is 'ane taill of sir colling ye kny[t]' an earlier and much finer poem than 'Sir Cawline'—which shows marked deterioration in every point on which it has diverged from the earlier poem—but it is from 'Sir Colling' and not from 'Sir Cawline' that the popular ballad versions in Scotland have descended.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I should like to offer my grateful thanks to Dr E. B. Lyle for her help; and also to Miss Margaret Sanderson for help with transcription and to Mr Michael Kelly for information relating to the Douglases of Borg.

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Problems of Notating Pibroch: A Study of 'Maol Donn'

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It is about 170 years since pipers first attempted to set down on paper the music of pibrochs,[1] and all who have tried readily admit the difficulty of the task. Early attempts were of two kinds. First, there were those made by musicians such as Patrick MacDonald, minister of Kilmore (MacDonald 1784); Alexander Campbell, editor of Albyn's Anthology (1816); and Elizabeth Jane Ross, later Baroness D'Oyley (who was brought up in the house of MacLeod of Raasay and whose manuscripts of 'Original Highland Airs collected at Rasay in 1812' is now in the library of the School of Scottish Studies). Each transcribed a small number of pibrochs in a form that would enable them to be played on the piano, flute or violin; accordingly they did little more than suggest impressionistically the complicated cuttings and graces that the pipers played. Their efforts are valuable today in so far as they are among the very earliest attempts to write down pibrochs, and though they are of little value as performance scores for pipers they at least give some clues to the rhythm, phrasing and structure of the melodies as they were performed in those days.

The other early type of transcription is the detailed one, often made by pipers themselves for other pipers to use, in which every note is recorded as it presumably was played. The earliest of this type is known as the 'Highland Society of London's MS' which contains 44 pibrochs, at least 12 of which were notated for the Society by piper John MacGregor from the aged Angus MacArthur probably during the last years of the eighteenth century. Donald MacDonald's MS (*c.* 1812) and Peter Reid's (1826) are other examples of this kind.[2]

All these transcribers must have found the process 'tedious and exceedingly troublesome' (Campbell 1816: 90), yet strangely enough the earlier transcribers were less apologetic about their efforts than those who followed. It could be that they were ignorant of the problems involved: however, it is equally possible that pibroch as it was played then presented fewer problems of rhythm and phrasing than it does today and was more easily understood. A century later at least one Gael complained:

> Sir,—Can you, or any of the numerous readers of the Oban Times, inform me how it is that 'Piobaireachd' is the only species of the music of the Gael that has neither time, tune, melody or rhythm in it? Did the composers intend to puzzle and annoy, or is it the

performers who vie with each other in prolonging unconnected, meaningless sounds? I have recently listened to a champion playing, what he called, the "Massacre of Glencoe", but really no one could make head or tail of it, and am at a loss to understand how an intelligent being could call it a musical performance.

I am, etc.

CELT.

Edinburgh, 8 August 1893.

When quoting this letter in the *Oban Times* in his preface to *Ceol Mor* (1900) Major General Thomason admitted that this kind of criticism was not altogether new. It is a criticism which one can still hear today—even from native Gaelic pipers of considerable skill and musical ability.

In several modern publications one finds the method of notation qualified in terms like these:

> It makes no pretence to be scientifically accurate, or even intelligible to the non-piper. Call it pipers' jargon and the writer will not complain.
>
> (Campbell 1953: 17)

while later still MacNeill comments:

> It may well be that the more incorrectly a piobaireachd is written the better it is for piobaireachd playing because the learner is forced to seek assistance from a piper who has been taught in the traditional manner. . . .
>
> I have tried to balance convenience with possibility and have written the tunes as nearly as I can to the way that I play them . . . but I have not entirely abandoned 'pipers' jargon.'
>
> (MacNeill 1968: 31)

Here we have the essence of the problem. The traditional manner of learning pibrochs was through the medium of *canntaireachd*,[3] the pupil learning his music from the chanting of his master and by patterning it on a chanter. The last 170 years saw this type of oral instruction gradually replaced as increasing use was made of the various published collections of pibroch. The teachers who work in the traditional manner today are few—and even they usually have a book with them which they use as an *aide-memoire*. Pibroch-playing today would seem to depend to a large extent on the success of the efforts of those who have notated pibroch music and of course on the ability of performers to reinterpret the notation. This paper attempts to highlight the problems that beset transcribers by comparing eight different renderings on paper of a part of one pibroch ground[4] and then to assess the practical effects of the success or failure of these efforts on present day performances of the same pibroch.

The first problem for any would-be transcriber is one of perception, and arises from the particular acoustics of bagpipes. How does he perceive the phrase structure of a melody played on an instrument that produces an unbroken stream of sound when played and so cannot mark the ends of phrases with short silences? In other parts of

Europe this problem is sometimes overcome by using the lowest note of the chanter as a resting note whose sound is absorbed into the rich harmonic spectrum of the drones so that one gets the aural impression of a break in the chanter melody. The playing of the Sardinian *Launeddas* is an example of this kind of solution, the Launeddas player taking great care to tune this lowest note with the aid of wax in order to reduce the size of the hole so that the note agrees exactly with a strong harmonic of the drone (Bentzon 1969: 23–24).

Another problem in communicating and understanding the rhythm of pipe melodies is that there is no significant variation in the relative loudness of melody notes and so the player finds it impossible to give any dynamic accent to notes that should be rhythmically prominent.[5] This is to some extent solved by the use of different grace-notes. 'Some gracenotes are stronger to the mind of the piper than others, so he is able to introduce light and shade to his accents by the use of, for example, G gracenotes for strong beats, E or D gracenotes for medium and no gracenote for weak' (MacNeill 1968: 23). Not all piping schools choose to teach this, however, and although such a solution sounds good the system does not appear to be consistently used in the pibroch repertoire. Rhythmical prominence is in any case achieved in more than one way; often a note which is higher or longer than surrounding notes is perceived as the accented one.[6] These then are two acoustical reasons why listeners might misinterpret both the rhythm and phrase structure of a pibroch melody.

In spite of this anyone who has heard a good piper playing for dancing must have marvelled at the way he makes little of these two problems, for there can be hardly anything more rhythmically vital than a well played jig or reel. The trouble with pibrochs however is that, these days at least, they are usually played at an exceedingly slow tempo, despite evidence in earlier treatises—Joseph MacDonald's especially—that the tempo of Marches was quicker than that of Laments and that Gatherings 'are the most animating of Pipe composition . . . full of life and Fire' (MS [*c.* 1762]: 22). It is a basic fact that as one slows down the tempo of music so one hinders the perception of its pulse.

It could be argued that over the centuries this music has evolved in a way that makes little use of the basic musical element of metrical rhythm and that pibroch grounds have a timeless and quasi-rhapsodic nature where only three musical elements are employed; namely, relative duration of a non-metric kind, melodic tension between successive notes and, lastly, harmonic tension between melody notes and drone notes. Some modern performances give this impression. There is a popular tradition that the clan piper rose in status at the expense of the clarsach player during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and perhaps a clue to the structure of pibroch melodies can be found by tracing a connection between the repertory of the pipes and that of the clarsach. In Bunting's 'Ancient Music of Ireland'[7] there is a list of technical terms for the different styles of ornamentation used by Irish harpers which includes some that compare closely with Scots Gaelic piping terms. However, the few extant Scottish clarsach melodies clearly

belong to that class of regular-stressed four or eight phrase stanzaic songs known as *Amhran*. William Matheson (1970 : 149–74) discusses a number of such tunes in his recent study of Roderick Morison (Ruairi Dall), MacLeod of Dunvegan's blind harper who lived in the second half of the seventeenth century. While he allows that the households of chieftains 'was the kind of milieu in which such musical borrowing could readily take place', he points more to the absorption of harp music into the repertory of the fiddle than into that of the pipe. Only one of Ruairi Dall's songs can be linked to a pibroch with any certainty.[8]

There is abundant evidence elsewhere, however, to suggest that most pibroch melodies consist of well balanced phrases which have an underlying metrical structure—albeit a flexible one—that assigns prominence to certain notes of each phrase. Joseph MacDonald (1762 : 17–19) went to some length to explain what he understood by 'Time' in pibroch music and others since then have also done so. Furthermore, pipers have traditionally measured off their pibroch melodies by counting on their fingers and, when free to do so—that is when singing rather than playing the melodies—they will sometimes beat time or sway in time with what they conceive to be the underlying accents. It is a fundamental fact of human psychology that the mind normally attempts to group sound strands into culturally meaningful temporal patterns and is emotionally disturbed if such patterns as are initially established are not maintained.[9]

Only two of the transcriptions which follow later (Ex. 1) avoid giving any idea of rhythm and metre. One of these is in any case based on a modern performance. Ideally the transcriber should be intimately acquainted with each pibroch he transcribes; if not, he should endeavour to get his piping informant to sing or whistle the melodies also—for this will often make the rhythmic accentuation clear. A practice chanter does not make a good substitute for the pipes for two reasons. Firstly, the piper may change his way of playing the pibroch ground if no drones are being sounded. Secondly, many players tend to blow their chanters until their breath runs out and then recharge their lungs regardless of phrase endings, while others have learned the art shared by the Sardinian Launeddas players—they can produce a continuous stream of sound, even while drawing air into their lungs, by using their distended cheeks as a wind reservoir. In either case one gets little clue as to where phrase endings lie!

These problems of understanding the rhythmic basis and phrase structure of pipe melodies are further compounded by the particular nature of Gaelic music which, from the point of view of time and metre, is not the mathematically organised scheme of stressed and unstressed note values which one associates with both European 'art' music and other types of piping (marches, strathspeys and reels, *etc.*). Good native singers sing Gaelic songs with a flexibility of pulse and a delicate appreciation of the time and stress values of related syllables. The time values of the notes between the stressed notes vary continually. In most cases, however, transcribers have been content to adopt the notational system belonging to European 'art' music, one which developed out of a need to notate dance rhythms and vocal homophony of medieval courts.

Few early collections of pipe music appeared without the usual academic instructions on 'Time' together with one bar illustrations of 4/4, 3/4, 2/4 and 6/8 metre, and the pipe melodies that followed were unfailingly moulded into one or other of these metrical schema whether they fitted well or not.

The use of *canntaireachd* as a traditional means of oral instruction has already been discussed. It has also been transcribed as a syllabic notation and the Nether Lorn MS (*c.* 1791), sometimes known as 'Colin Campbell's Canntaireachd,' is the classic example of the pipers' practice of using the notated syllables as a mnemonic. The main drawback of canntaireachd on paper, however, is that it gives the reader no clue to the rhythm and time values of the syllables. We cannot rule out the possibility that some of the pibroch transcriptions made during the last century were made in two stages. First the canntaireachd syllables were noted down as chanted by the informant and only later were they converted to staff notation, possibly by another person who had not heard the original informant singing. It is reported that Angus MacKay took down a large number of pibrochs from the canntaireachd singing of his father John (Campbell 1953: 9); but whether or not he did it in two such stages we do not know. In 1910 the late Pipe Major William MacLean set down on the music staff the twenty pibrochs published in canntaireachd notation some eighty years earlier by Captain Neil MacLeod of Gesto,[10] while more recently the Piobaireachd Society has thought it fit to transcribe and publish some previously unknown pibrochs from the Nether Lorn MS.[11] Both authorities presumably invented time values for the canntaireachd syllables based on their study of the canntaireachd notation of other known pibrochs. This process is not without many pitfalls and can only be a valid exercise if one assumes that pibroch grounds are built from a very limited number of conventional melodo-rhythmic formulae. Whether they are or not will need to be discussed elsewhere.

If all along there had been no real break in piping traditions and if players had used pibroch transcriptions as an *aide memoire*—the way that notated canntaireachd could be used—then the effects of misleading transcriptions would perhaps have been negligible. Many writers, among them Manson, Dalyell and Grant (see Bibliography), suggest however that Culloden and the events following the rebellion gave a serious setback to the Gaelic piping tradition. Some pipers were reported killed during the rebellion (including one of the famous MacCrimmons), another was afterwards convicted of high treason for carrying what was regarded as an instrument of war (Mitchell 1900: 664), while the general mood of depression that seems to have persisted throughout the Highlands for a generation was hardly conducive to such music making. We know that the MacCrimmon school of piping closed down some time around 1772 when Donald Ruadh MacCrimmon left Dunvegan, after quarrelling with his patron MacLeod. Although Pennant was entertained with piping when he visited the home of MacArthur, hereditary piper to Lord MacDonald of the Isles, during his tour of the Hebrides in 1774, he writes afterwards of the MacArthur 'college' as a thing that once existed 'in feudal times' (Pennant 1776: 347). J. P. Grant summed it up thus:

> Outside Scottish regiments and a few favoured individuals, the pipe and the playing of it were for a whole generation after the rising of 1745–6 made illegal, and without doubt much of this traditional music must have died out during that period.
>
> (Grant 1925: 55)

This might be overstating the situation—but certainly the Edinburgh aristocracy and officers of the British Army, towards the end of the period of the Disarming Act which was repealed in 1782, found it fit to encourage piping by forming a Highland Society and holding piping competitions. Many of the Lowland gentry began engaging pipers to serve them in the way in which pipers had once served Highland lairds. The newly formed Highland Society also began to offer prizes to those who succeeded in setting down pibrochs 'scientifically' on the music staff. Did it do this because of a feeling that a great tradition needed to be rescued before it was too late, or was it to try and give an aura of respectability to what had sometimes been described as the music of untutored savages? One wonders what the music sounded like at those early competitions. Angus MacKay's account of them (Mackay: 1838) shows that they were dominated by the MacGregors—the patriarch of that family of pipers was piper to Campbell of Glenlyon; the MacNabs, piper to MacNab; and the MacArthurs of the former MacArthur 'college' in Skye. John MacArthur had left his native island and was at that time a grocer in Edinburgh where he was widely known as 'professor' MacArthur. Surely at least those families knew what their music was and must have learned it in the traditional manner with no notation to help—or mislead—them. On the other hand the judges seemed often to know very little about pibroch and its traditions. This situation seems to have persisted on and off into the present century, and several pibroch players are reported to have played in one way to please themselves and in another very different and, to them, 'corrupt' way to please the judges.

From this time on the British Army stepped up its recruitment of Scottish pipers to the regiments: it is hard to say what effect this must have had on a form of music that originally belonged to the Gael and which, some will say, was based on the rhythms of Gaelic vocal music. Certainly the playing of marches, strathspeys and reels later became fashionable for competition purposes and many pipers maintain that this has had an adverse effect on the performance of pibroch. One can only hazard the wildest guess as to how far during the nineteenth century pibroch was taught in the traditional manner and how far teachers relied on published collections.

Both Angus MacPherson and the late Pipe Major William MacLean have recorded for the School of Scottish Studies details of the thorough oral tuition they received from Angus's celebrated father Malcolm (Calum Pìobaire) and many contemporary pipers say that they learned their music through personal instruction from older pipers. Yet even Calum Pìobaire is said to have had Angus MacKay's book always at his elbow when teaching. We know too that at the beginning of this century the Piobaireachd Society fostered the tradition by sending accredited teachers to various parts of the Highlands and Islands to give short courses to small groups of pupils and many of the

present pibroch players owe their knowledge of the repertoire to these efforts. We also know that although there was personal tuition by means of *canntaireachd*, students were taught to read staff notation as well and that considerable weight was placed on such reading ability. The term 'ear piper' came to signify contempt for those pipers who did not read music notation and it is still used in this way today. Presumably the Society taught musical literacy to enable pipers to learn new pibrochs as well as to help them remember those they had been taught personally. Today many pipers learn the notes of a pibroch from a page and go along to a teacher later 'to have the expression added' or as a Uist piper put it—'to learn the song'. This presumably means that the pupil must learn to disregard some of the printed note values in favour of those suggested by his teacher. Clearly, considerable reliance is placed on the printed page today and especially on the publications of the Piobaireachd Society since nearly all of the earlier ones are now out of print. An analysis of the kind that follows may therefore be of use to pibroch devotees and to others interested in the tradition and it may cause pipers to give more critical regard to the publications they use.

Part of the opening of the ground of *Maol Donn*—popularly known as 'MacCrimmon's Sweetheart'—provides a useful illustration of the problem discussed so far. Eight different settings made during the last 130 years are presented below for comparison. The section quoted is a self-contained one which is immediately repeated in the ground. All the graces are included and the melody notes are numbered along the top for ease of reference. Non-pipers should note that in the pipe scale the notes C and F are approximately a semitone sharp and that pipe music is traditionally written without any key signature. (See Ex. I, page 48.)

The following points are worth noting:

1 Except for Reid (who gives a different gracing for note 3) and W. Ross (note 3 obviously a misprint) the settings all agree closely in pitch. This is probably due more to the fact that the earlier settings were often used as a basis for the later settings[12] than to the careful and exacting nature of the teaching of pibrochs.

2 The main differences lie in the area of rhythmic and temporal organisation. In the six settings that employ bar lines three different time signatures are used and the placing of bar lines varies considerably. It is impossible to tell how far the arrangers used bar lines purely as a rough and ready means of dividing off the melody into more or less equal lengths or how far they regarded them—as they should do—as an indication of the position of metrically accented notes. If the bar lines do indicate that an accented note follows them then each of notes 6, 7, 8 and 9 are shown as accented by one or other of the transcribers. Of the notes 7, 8 and 9 the E (9) is favoured in three settings, the A (8) in two and the B (7) in one.

3 Reid and R. Ross refrained from using any metric indications at all. Whether or not they were unsure of the structure of this particular pibroch cannot be said since

EXAMPLE I

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Peter Reid's MS (c. 1826)

Angus MacKay's MS vol. 1 (1826)

William Ross's MS (1869)

Glen (1880–99)

Thomason (1900)

G. F. Ross (1929)

P. S. 6(1936) & *Kilberry Book* (1935)

R. Ross[13] (1959) vol. 3

Ross notated all his pibrochs in similar manner—even those where the structure and metre are quite unambiguous—and Reid tended to do the same.

4 Some of the barring differences have probably occurred because both MacKay and W. Ross incorporated the introductory E (note 1), usually described by pipers as a 'cadence E', into the bar structure. This procedure can and does create more serious problems in other pibrochs than in *Maol Donn.*

5 Apart from these first two notes only note 8 differs considerably in the value allotted to it by the different transcribers. This may well be because some—with perhaps good reason—considered it to be the last note of a first phrase and therefore a note that can be dwelt on a little longer before the performer moves on. One certainly gets this impression from a number of modern performances.

Though only the opening of this pibroch has been quoted the differences analysed persist throughout the whole ground. The musical reader will appreciate them best by singing each setting while beating time according to the time signature quoted. It could be argued that these differences are of minor importance and reflect nothing more than the fact that various styles of playing have existed during the last 200 years—often attributed to the different 'schools' of instruction that flourished until the second half of the eighteenth century. But a difference in 'expression' or in gracing (usually cited as the major difference between the so-called MacArthur and MacCrimmon 'schools') is of less import than what we have here—a total lack of agreement as to the phrase structure and metre of the melodies. The archives of the School of Scottish Studies contain abundant examples of different renderings of the same Gaelic tunes. Texts, pitch, rhythm differ considerably in these variants but the melodic skeleton—the phrase structure—is nearly always preserved and clearly discernible; and, except for those written in syllabic verse, a regular musical metre, though a flexible one, underlies that structure.

Do these fundamental discrepancies exist because the early transcribers often lacked a real command over musical notation, or are they evidence of a greater collapse of the real *Ceòl Mór* tradition than is generally thought? If pipers have always known their music intimately and have taught in the traditional way—by chanting and patterning—surely the structure of pibroch melodies would not have become as open to doubt as is exemplified by these settings.

If, as one suspects, the answer lies in a combination of both factors then the complaints of 'Celt' and others who are perplexed by modern performances are understandable. Furthermore, there would seem to be little point in attempting to produce yet another transcription which would have to be based on twentieth-century performances, even though the measuring tools for objective and accurate transcription are now available. There is, however, at least one good reason for the exercise. The bases for analyses of pibroch structure have always been the use of the 'bar', and pibrochs since Thomason's time have been labelled as 664 or 4444 structures according to the

number of bars in each section of the ground. All of this is rendered suspect if one concludes that the barring may frequently have been wrongly deduced: in any case it would seem more sensible to attempt an analysis based on phrase structure rather than on arbitrary 'bars'. Ex. 2 (opposite) is a transcription of the whole of the ground of *Maol Donn* made from the recorded performance of a well known and highly respected piper.[14] The results were compared with the playing of three other informants to check for idiosyncratic variations.[15] Apart from the notes 2 and 8 discussed earlier with reference to Ex. 1 (all four performances varied considerably at these points) the differences were too small to be worth indicating. The notes have not been linked up to suggest any groupings but have been arranged to indicate the similarity of motifs and phrases as perceived by the first performer as well as by the transcriber and two other musicians.[16] Graces and cuttings have been omitted. For completeness one further source of information is added—the *canntaireachd* vocables as they appear in the Nether Lorn MS. Set out below the appropriate notes in each stave they expose certain discrepancies which were not mentioned in the Piobaireachd Society's source analysis (P.S. 1938, 7: 206), but which we shall not discuss here.

On studying the transcription, the simple and logical ternary structure of the whole becomes clear. The central section contains a development of the two opening phrases and the whole could be described (using terms borrowed from European 'classical' music) as follows:

Exposition A nicely proportioned musical sentence of A B A B A C structure with clear points of repose (the last notes of phrases B and C). Phrase C is closely related to phrase B and could be regarded as a modification of it. All three phrases have a very close rhythmical relationship which gives a strongly monothematic feeling to the whole. Note however the asymmetric relationship between phrase A and the other phrases.

Development Framed between phrases AB and AC is a development of the rhythmic motif (♩. 𝅘𝅥𝅯 ♪) which unifies the exposition. Only the presence of crotchet rather than quaver 'A's prevents the onward drive of this rhythm right up to the end of this section.

Recapitulation A return to the exposition minus its repeated sub-section.

Each of the three parts is signalled by the use of a '*Cadence E*' which clearly should not be regarded as an integral part of the melodic structure. The inclusion of this *E*, when the opening line is repeated, could be considered unnecessary and it is significant that Reid omits it at this point and shows a G grace note instead. A few pipers maintain even today that the *E* '*cadence*' is a purely optional feature of pibroch playing and can be omitted if desired. Notice that the Nether Lorn *canntaireachd* vocables which have been added do not show these *E*'s.

This overall tripartite structure is confirmed by most authorities and the ground has been labelled by General Thomason as a 'regular three line pibroch' which he

EXAMPLE 2

"Cadence E"

A B

Hin- dro - o ho-ve - o hin - de - o ho-dro

A C

hio-dro - o ho-ve - o hin-d.e-o ho-darodo

"Cadence E"

A B

hin-dro - o ho-ve - o hin - de - o ho-dro

A

hio-dro - o ho-ve - o hin-

-do - o ho - e - ho hio

A C

dro - o ho - ve - o hin - de - o ho-darro-do

"Cadence E"

A B

hin-dro - o ho - ve - o hin - de - o ho-dro

A C

hio - dro - o ho - ve - o he - che - o ho - darodo

denoted by the numbers 6 6 4—being the number of bars in his transcription. The Nether Lorn *canntaireachd* will be seen to consist of 32 words set out in the manuscript in three parts, which correspond exactly with the structure above (12+12+8). The other striking feature is the extremely economic use of the basic material.

While this transcription clearly illustrates the general structural features it is equally obvious that the note values, as they stand, fit none of the time schemes used in earlier settings.

Repeated listening uncovered no regular pulse nor any discernibly regular accents apart from a brief period towards the end of the middle section when the ♩. 𝅘𝅥𝅯 ♪ rhythm becomes temporarily established (lines 5 and 6). If pibroch grounds do not have a metrical basis then to examine this performance any further is unprofitable and the difficulties facing the earlier transcribers are readily accountable. Presumably players can interpret the notation as they were taught, or as they choose, once they have learned the pibroch. But, as mentioned before, all the settings in Example 1 except the first and last use a time signature, and imply that there is a metre for the ground. Indeed one has only to shorten the note A at the end of each Phrase A in Example 2 to establish the ♩. 𝅘𝅥𝅯 ♪ motif quite firmly and to give the whole ground a regular pulse which only slows up each time Phrase C is played (*i.e.* to mark the ends of sections).

However, the two most recent settings in Example 1 indicate a long A (crotchet) at the end of Phrase A (*i.e.* note 8, Ex. 1). R. Ross's notation, as was said earlier, is based on the recorded playing of the late Calum MacPherson of the MacPherson school of pipers, which can be traced back to Angus MacKay's teaching and ultimately to the MacCrimmons. The other setting, that of the Piobaireachd Society, purports to represent the playing of J. MacDougall Gillies and the Cameron school of piping—which is also traceable back to the teaching of Angus MacKay. This would seem to give each setting the stamp of authority, different as they are, but for one more piece of evidence in the recorded performance of this ground on an old 78 r.p.m. disc by the celebrated John MacDonald of Inverness (1866–1953). He derived the bulk of his tuition from the doyen of the MacPherson family, Calum Pìobaire, as well as from the Camerons and was for many years an official instructor for the Piobaireachd Society. In his renderings there is no dwelling on the A in question and there is clearly a slow pulse throughout. The performance is more like that of Thomason's setting than any other, and it poses several questions relevant to our discussion. Does his playing reflect the teaching he himself received, or is it the product of a mature musician who is prepared to depart considerably from the teaching of his tutors even to the extent of changing the musical metre of the pibroch ground? If his rendering is indeed typical of the teaching he received then we must presume the Piobaireachd Society's setting to be inaccurate, and, if this is the case, we must ponder on the extent to which this setting has affected the performance of today's pipers, even those who claim to have been taught in the traditions of both the MacPhersons and the Camerons.

I can see no clear answer to any of these problems—I discuss them because they represent the difficulties that faced transcribers of yesterday and still face the non-piper musician of today who wishes to understand and enjoy pibroch music. There is another avenue of investigation that may help, though it is one which pipers are unlikely to approve of for it relies on evidence provided by present-day Gaelic singers in the Hebrides. Field studies suggest that there is no present-day pibroch playing in the islands that does not stem from the teaching of visiting instructors sent by the Piobaireachd Society earlier this century. Is there any apparent reason to suppose that the singing of islanders can tell us any more about the ancient instrumental art of *Ceòl Mór* than pipers themselves?

Pibroch Songs

In the archives of the School of Scottish Studies recordings there are more than 75 different songs bearing close similarity to pipe melodies—many of them known pibrochs. Six different recordings are related to *Maol Donn* both melodically and textually. While we do not know how far pibrochs are derived from vocal motifs there is ample evidence to suggest that poets and singers liked to compose lines that could be sung to tunes based on pibroch melodies and even, as one piper said recently, 'make a four line *Amhran* out of a three line pibroch'. In either case it is possible that the text and rendering of related songs will give a clue to the musical performance of pibroch. For whether the song was inspired by the pipe melody or the pipe melody was based on the song it is likely that the rhythm patterns of the one will correspond to some extent to those of the other. There is too a considerable quantity of doggerel, probably composed by the pipers themselves, which helps them to recall the opening of a pibroch.

Gaelic song is still a living, uninterrupted oral tradition and songs which are hundreds of years old can still be recorded in the Gaelic speaking areas of Scotland. They will of course have been subjected to that constant process of modification, refinement and 'corruption' that is the hallmark of oral tradition. Notes may have been altered, texts forgotten, new ones grafted on, but the fundamental musical patterns of phrasing and rhythm are least likely to have changed. In this case one is justified in using evidence found in one tradition that is living, unbroken and purely oral to help evaluate another which has been subjected to the kind of debilitating pressures described earlier and which has relied for more than a century to an unknown extent on what may well be misleading transcriptions.

None of the informants whose versions are quoted below could say much about the historical background of their songs, and the origins of the pibroch are even more obscure.[17] However, in 'Ceol Mor Legends'—a manuscript volume of notes compiled by General Thomason, which he obviously intended to have printed as a companion to *Ceol Mor*—there is a picturesque account which appears to have been supplied by a

John Johnson of Coll. He was at that time piper to MacLean of Coll and trained in the tradition of the Rankin School of pipers mentioned in A. MacKay's published collection (MacKay 1838: 'Account of the Hereditary Pipers', p. 7).

> This is a tune composed by Clan Ranald's piper—of the day—to a cow lost in a bog by a widow in Benbecula, South Uist. The cow was a noted one and greatly admired by the widow, as her only one apparently. It got lost in the common moss one day, and ultimately the whole neighbourhood turned out to look for it, likely in compassion for the owner, the piper among the rest; but its finding defied them, after their best efforts, nor was the skeleton of it found till over a year afterwards, by a mere accident.
>
> The whole circumstance therefore afforded the piper a good theme to begin, which he did as if the widow herself was the author, thus:—
>
> 'Gad iumdrain a tha mi, si mo ghradh a mhaol dounn,
> Gad iarridh feadh fhraobhan, 's gad shlaodach a poul.'
>
> This tune was also a great favourite with the old piper, though composed for a trifling matter, owing to its own merits and its plaintive air throughout . . .

The extract is not quoted in order to suggest that this is the origin of the pibroch *Maol Donn.* Pibrochs were not usually composed for lost cattle but to provide ceremonial music for the Gaelic aristocracy in the form of Salutes and Laments or to foster clan spirit with Gatherings and Marches. Johnson's account helps to explain the textual content of the songs that follow, and lends weight to an old tradition one is constantly coming across: namely, that pipers often had words in mind when they composed their opening pibroch themes.

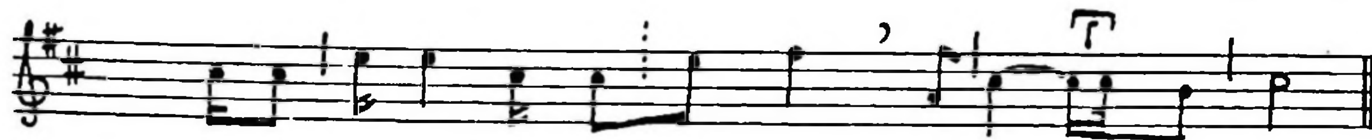
In example 3, extracts from four variants give an idea of the process of continuous modification that folk songs undergo in a living oral tradition. The first three extracts come from the middle of a song which refers to cattle rustling. Semi-bar lines indicate stressed notes and all the variants have been transposed so that they can easily be compared with each other and with the pipe melody.

In the first two the use of a dotted bar line suggests doubt in the mind of the transcriber as to whether the first or the second syllable of the word *t'fhaotainn* is regarded as the stressed one. In normal speech it would be the first. Mrs Munro's Skye variant—which is no longer pentatonic—suggests a connection with the 'thumb' variation rather than the ground—for in thumb variations a 'high A' replaces certain notes of the ground—in this case, the note F each time. The late Alasdair Boyd—who was himself a piper—gives a version which he heard and possibly once played. But he was doubtful of the accuracy with which he had recalled it.

The example that follows was provided by Mrs Kate MacDonald of Garryheillie, South Uist. It is a simple and lovely rendering which, as in all her performances, expresses with great subtlety the delicate interrelationship of language rhythm and melody in Gaelic song, while highlighting the resulting problems of setting sounds on

EXAMPLE 3

Donald Macpherson — Log 201 (1949)



Cha bu shea-l[ə]-bhach leam t'fhaotainn, mo ghaol mo Mhaol Donn:

Kate Douglas — Log 1649 (1949)

Cha bu shea-l[ə]-bhach dhomh t'fhaotainn, mo ghaol mo Mhaol Donn:

Kirsty Munro — SA 1958/43

Thig an tòir oirnn fhìn, 's air mo làimh ni thu lor-[ə]g:

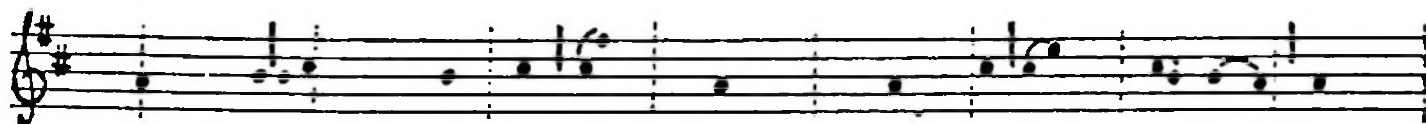
Alasdair Boyd — SA 1970/2

'S mi gad ruith feadh an aon-aich, b'e mo ghaol thu Mhaol Donn:

EXAMPLE 4 *Maol Donn*

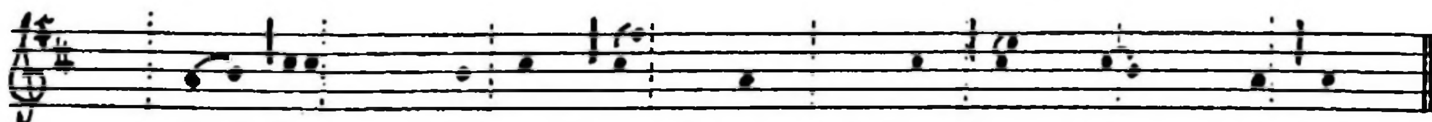
Mrs. K. MacDonald — SA 1970/309/7

Cha bu sheal[ə]-bhach t'fhaotainn, 'se mo ghaol am Maol Donn;
dhomh



Cha bu sheal[ə]-bhach t'fhao-tainn 'se mo ghaol am Maol Donn.
dhomh

Cha bu sheal[ə]bhach t'fhao-tainn, 'se mo ghaol am Maol Donn;
dhomh



Gad iar-raigh 'sgad fhao-tainn 's dha shlao-dadh a toll.

paper. The fact that the first phrase is more like the pibroch ground than any of the other quoted versions merely underlines the fact that for generations members of her family have been famous Uist pipers. It was transcribed with the aid of a time signal and the notes are arranged spatially according to their duration ($1\frac{1}{2}$ cms. = 1 second).

Here the metre of the poetry corresponds perfectly with the musical metre, and as a result the word *t'fhaotainn* presents no problems. As with the earlier examples and, in fact, all songs that are not sung for dancing, the accents do not follow in rigidly timed succession. The singer takes time between phrases without destroying the gently onward flow of the melody. The duration values of the unstressed notes vary continuously, and do not fall into any of the simple time patterns used for European 'art' songs: neither 3/4 nor any other time signature will do it justice.

To return to the pibroch ground, the melodic relationship between it and the song is obvious and, what is more important, the notes which take verbal accents in the song correspond to notes in the pibroch which, because of length and pitch, can be considered the prominent or accented ones. This similarity should suggest to pipers a logical pattern of metrical accents. Of all the eight settings quoted that of Thomason appears to be the most logical. He alone suggested that the pipe melody begins with an anacrusis just as the song does. Pipers could well revert to his setting if they have access to it—for it is unfortunately out of print—providing that they take their cue from the renderings of traditional singers and do not make the pulse a rigid one.[18] Taking into account Thomason's setting, John MacDonald's performance and the song structures, the writer considers there is a musical metre to this ground, one which centres on the stress patterns implied in Thomason's 6/8 setting and which the piper should strive to explicate without of course playing in strict 6/8 time. Support for Thomason's setting will be found in the melodic skeleton of the variations that succeed the ground and thumb variation. There the theme notes in every setting are identical and correspond exactly with the 'stressed' notes of Thomason's ground.

The modern performances quoted in Example 2 may all be criticised to the extent that neither Thomason's pulse pattern, nor any other, underlies the music. Too often the '*Cadence E*' is prolonged in a way that brings the flow to a halt—possibly not in the mind of the performer but at least as far as listeners are concerned. Similarly, the presence of the long A (note 8), which was discussed at length, tends to disrupt the melodic flow unnecessarily.

There is an obvious danger that the melody played in strict time might bore the listener because of the extreme economy of melodic material. The song has an ABAB′ structure the first line of which contains all the basic material of the pibroch. Economy in this case involves repetition and the 'ground' demands careful shaping by the player if interest is to be maintained, and it may well be that his desire to sustain interest tends to lead to rhythmic distortion. Constant reiteration of simple motifs need not be

interpreted as a sign of the anonymous composers' paucity of invention. Repetition possibly had an important function in pibroch music especially in those martial pibrochs that can be identified as Gatherings (*Cruinneachadh*). They often consist of easily identified clan signals which, it is presumed, were continually sounded while marshalling men and encouraging them on the battlefields. In view of the repetitive content of pibrochs it must be no accident that many of the associated songs now survive as lullabies and dandling songs. It is only when one sits solemnly indoors at piping competitions and similar occasions to listen to this music, perhaps performed imperfectly and certainly divorced from its original setting, that repetition might sound wearisome.

This paper has attempted to illustrate some of the problems of transmitting pipe music both as it once was and as it is performed in this age. Implied in the argument is a criticism of present day performance and understanding of pibroch music as well as a criticism of some of the more recent publications of the repertoire. It seems likely that the devotees of pibroch will continue to perform this music—albeit in different social settings from the original one. Most of them believe that through their performances they are preserving an authentic musical tradition. Their audiences have not always been convinced by their efforts and, judging by the lively and occasionally acrimonious arguments that dominated the correspondence columns of the *Oban Times* and other publications at various periods during the last 70 years, neither have some pipers. This study of *Maol Donn* suggests that it still may not be too late for a useful reassessment of our knowledge and understanding of this art.

NOTES

1 The word 'pibroch' is an anglicised form of the Gaelic *piobaireachd* which literally means 'piping'. However today it identifies that part of the repertoire of the Highland pipe known as '*Ceòl Mór*'—great music as distinct from *Ceòl Beag*, the small or light music for dances and military marches.

2 See the preface of the Piobaireachd Society's Vol. 1 of *Piobaireachd* (1925) for a fuller list of other MS sources.

3 *Canntaireachd* literally means 'singing'; the teacher sings the pibroch to his pupils but uses instead of words a system of non-lexical vocables that communicate the pitch of melody notes as well as the types of graces and cuttings to be used.

4 The ground (Gaelic *an t-urlar*) of a pibroch is its basic theme, on which a series of mainly conventional variations are built.

5 I use the terms 'rhythm', 'accent', according to the useful definitions of Meyer (1956 : 103): 'The perception of rhythm involves a mental grouping of one or more unaccented beats in relation to an accented beat' and 'Rhythm is accented when it is marked for consciousness in some way'.

6 *Maol Donn* (Ex. 1) gives a clear example of this. The ungraced note 6(F) is heard as the rhythmically prominent note in spite of the fact that the C preceding it is given a G gracenote.

7 *Cf.* Bunting (1840: 24–8) for a list of Irish harp terms.

8 Matheson's discussion of the relationship of *Cumha Craobh nan Teud* (The Lament for the Harp Tree)

to Morison's poem '*Feill nan Crann*' (*op. cit.* pp. 154–6) also centres on the same problems of accentuation as this present paper. Like *Maol Donn*, '*Cumha Craobh nan Teud*' can also be found transcribed in a number of different settings. G. F. Ross's setting (1929:8) is much closer to the accentuation needed if the pibroch melody is to fit Morison's poem than the version Matheson quotes from *The Kilberry Book of Ceol Mor*.

9 *Cf.* Meyer, *op. cit.* Ch. 3, for a discussion of the Gestalt theory of 'spontaneous organisation of simple shapes' and its musical implications within different cultures.

10 Pipe-Major MacLean's MS based on Neil MacLeod's *Collection of Piobaireachd or Pipe Tunes as verbally taught by the McCrummen pipers in the Isle of Skye* (Edinburgh 1828) is now in the library of the School of Scottish Studies.

11 See P.S. 8: preface.

12 Most of the editors give details of their sources and most of these can be traced back to the work or teachings of Angus MacKay. Thomason however quotes W. Ross as one of his sources.

13 R. Ross employs a three line stave rather than the conventional five, but to facilitate comparisons I have taken the liberty of re-writing it on five lines.

14 Captain John MacLellan, Director of the Army School of Piping, Tape SA/1967/32. Note values were determined with the aid of a superimposed time signal giving pulses every 1/10th second and the whole played back at slow speeds during transcription.

15 The late Pipe-Major William MacLean, Tape SA 1953/4, the late Calum MacPherson, Tape SA/1959/34 and Mr Calum Johnston, Tape SA/1967/69.

16 Miss Morag MacLeod and Mrs Ailie Munro—both colleagues in the musicological section of the School of Scottish Studies.

17 *Cf.* P.S., 7: 206 for a discussion of the various titles given to this pibroch in the different sources.

18 Often one hears from Gaels the statement, 'You have to have Gaelic to be able to play pibroch music well', when perhaps they really mean that one should have intimate knowledge of the language rhythms and performance styles of the traditional Gaelic singers—which of course implies a deep knowledge of Gaelic language and culture.

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The Currach in Scotland

with Notes on the Floating of Timber

ALEXANDER FENTON

This modest craft (probably the simplest of a range including larger, rowing and sailing boats designed for the open seas) once played a vital role in the life of these islands, and provides a link between the boat-building traditions of prehistoric Europe and some recent survivals in the northern circumpolar regions. *Ed.*

The kind of boat to which the name currach was generally applied in Scotland appears to have died out in the course of the eighteenth century. Even on the River Spey, where it was once probably more common than on any other Scottish river, by 1775 the currach had already become a rarity (Shaw 1775:164), and by the 1790s only one was known to survive in the parish of Cromdale (Grant 1794:134). It is therefore remarkable that a single example of the currach still remains in the country. Now preserved at Elgin, in the Museum of the Elgin Society, this was mentioned in 1912 as the last currach to be used in Scotland (Wallace [1915]:364), having been presented some years previously by a Mr Grant, Mains of Advie, Moray, who had found it under the rafters of his farm buildings in central Strathspey. Neither its history nor the exact dates of its finding and donation seem to be recorded.

This Strathspey currach has been described previously by James Hornell in his pioneer study of the coracles and curraghs of Britain and Ireland (Hornell 1938: section 2, 297–302; 1946:129–30) but only, it would seem, on the basis of a photograph (plate I) and details supplied to him in 1935 by W. E. Watson, then honorary curator of the Elgin Museum. In November 1970, however, when conservation treatment was given to the currach by John A. Brown, chief technician in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, an opportunity was taken to subject it to detailed technical examination. As a result of these investigations, the earlier description must now be somewhat modified. In the following notes, this Spey currach is first described technically, and then placed in its historical and functional setting.

Description

The Gunwale W. E. Watson, and following him Hornell, said that the gunwale was 'made up of several lengths of round sticks forming a bundle of three from ½ inch to an 1 inch diameter lapped and tied at the various places where a join occurs, some of the ties being from 7 to 9 inches apart, and secured by several turns of cord made

of horse hair' (Watson 1935: letter, 30 October). In fact, the gunwale is formed of a single pliant rod whose maximum diameter is 2¼ inches, with tapered ends overlapped over a distance of 47 inches across the chord of the arc. An additional rod about 24 inches long (also measured across the chord of the arc), is bound to the centre of the overlap by three lashings of slender withy, and a further two withy-lashings grip the ends of the gunwale rod, making a total of five lashings (Fig. 1). The lashings are

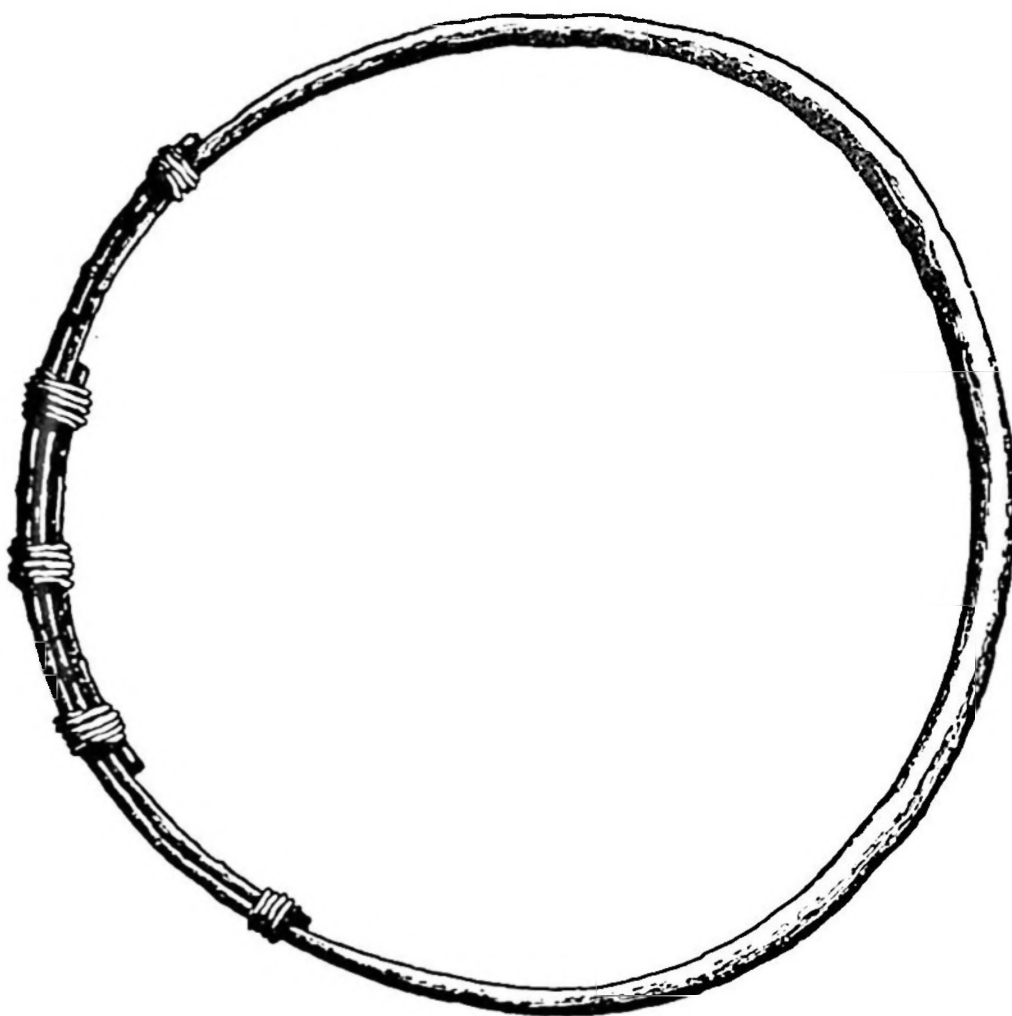

FIG. 1 The gunwale, made of a single rod whose overlapped ends are strengthened by an extra length of rod. The bindings are of withy. (Drawn by John A. Brown, 1971)

formed by winding the withy round four or five times and tucking in the loose ends (Fig. 2). Watson did not mention these withy lashings, but Hornell must have spotted them from the photograph, for he observed that 'at every place where the end of one stick is overlapped, a slender withy is twisted round several times and made fast', adding that some of these ties were 'further secured by a few turns of horse-hair cord' (Hornell 1938: Section 2, 300; and Plate I, Fig. 2). The completed gunwale as it now stands forms a rough circle measuring 54 inches across from the middle lashing, and 57 inches the other way across.

PLATE I The last surviving Scottish Currach. A photograph taken (by B. Wilken, Elgin) for James Hornell in 1935, showing the Currach (max. diam. 57 in.) and paddle (3 ft. 9 in.) found at Mains of Advie in Strathspey, preserved in Elgin Museum. (By courtesy of Miss E. I. Rhynas, Hon. Curator of the Museum.)

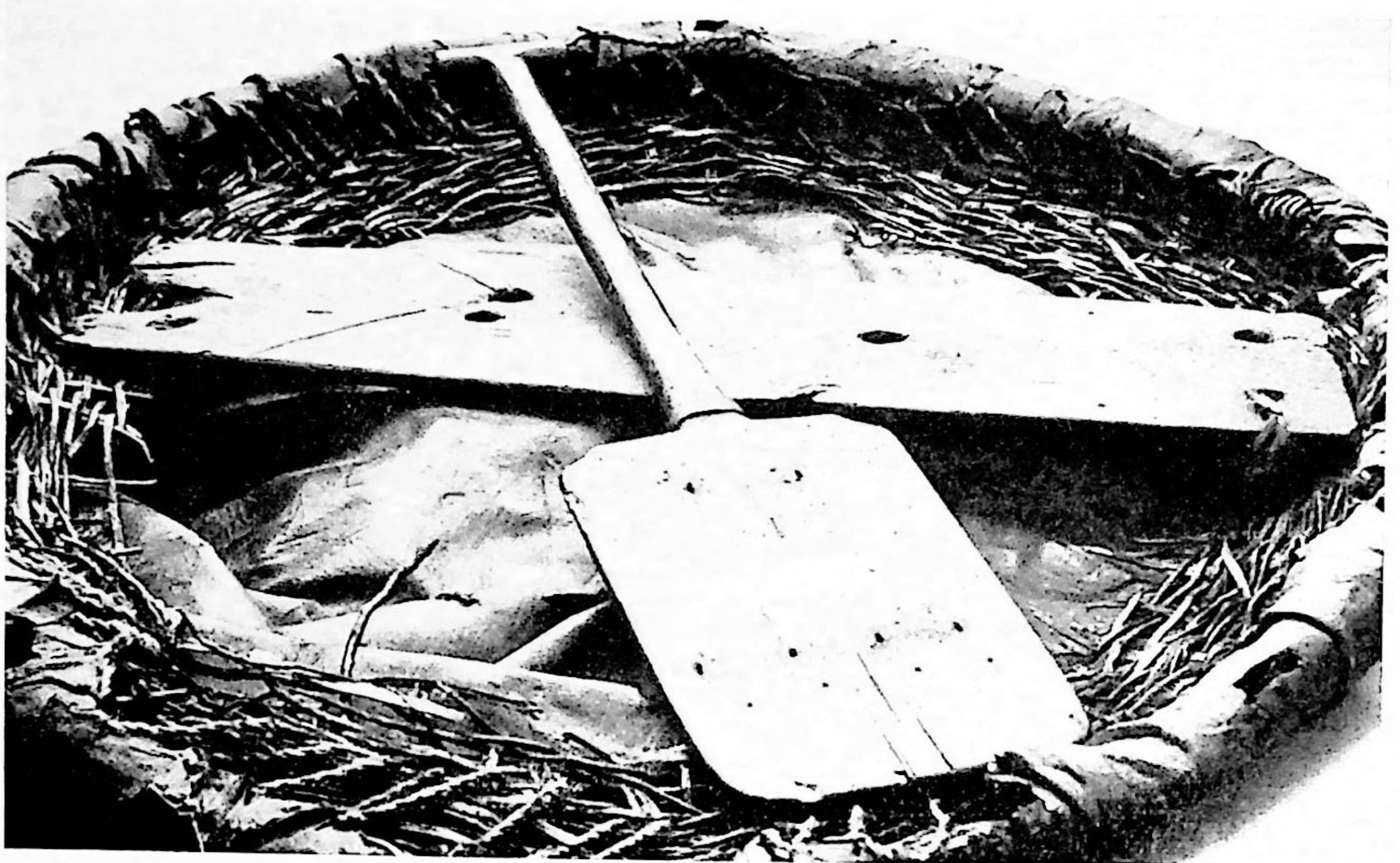

PLATE IIa The Strathspey Currach: detail showing the paddle and seat.

PLATE IIb The Strathspey Currach: detail showing woven frame of rods, and horse-hair ties for the hide. Note slit in hide (on rim), sewn up with leather thongs. (Photographs: A Fenton, National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, Nov. 1970.)

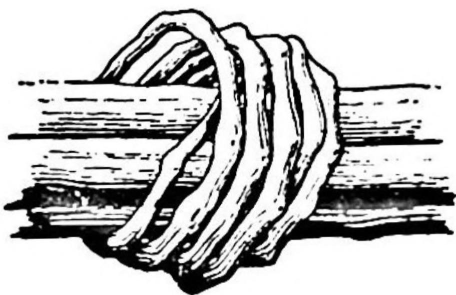

FIG. 2 Detail of withy lashings on the gunwale. (Drawn by John A. Brown, 1971)

Attachment of the Hide to the Gunwale The stout, one-piece hide that forms the body of the currach is fastened to the gunwale by loops of light-coloured, two-stranded ropes of horse-hair: this is strong and tough, without a tendency to shrink or stretch. It is clear that, in constructing the currach, the wicker frame was lashed to the gunwale before the hide went on, by means of the horse-hair bindings referred to by both Watson and Hornell. There is no more integral link than this between the framework and the wooden part of the gunwale. The hide was stretched over the frame and its edges turned over the gunwale in a series of folds, to make it lie properly. The turned-over edges were pierced at intervals, and through the openings was passed the lacing of horse-hair rope. The lacing did not go round the gunwale but was kept entirely to the inside of the currach, where it was passed in a series of long loops down and behind each doubled warp of the wicker frame (Fig. 3). Since the upper edge of the frame rests

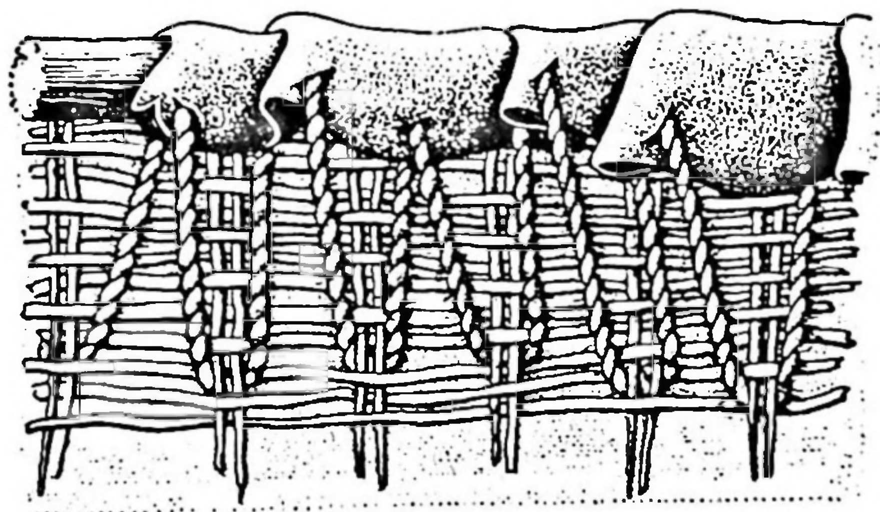

FIG. 3 The horse hair lacing looped under the warp. (Drawn by John A. Brown, 1971)

against the outside of the gunwale, this method of lacing then held hide, gunwale and frame in firm union.

At one point on the gunwale there is the remaining part of a loop of twisted withy rope (Fig. 4). Perhaps this formed part of the binding by which the seat was secured; though it may have been part of a guiding rope if, as seems likely, this currach was formerly used in connection with the floating of timber down the River Spey.

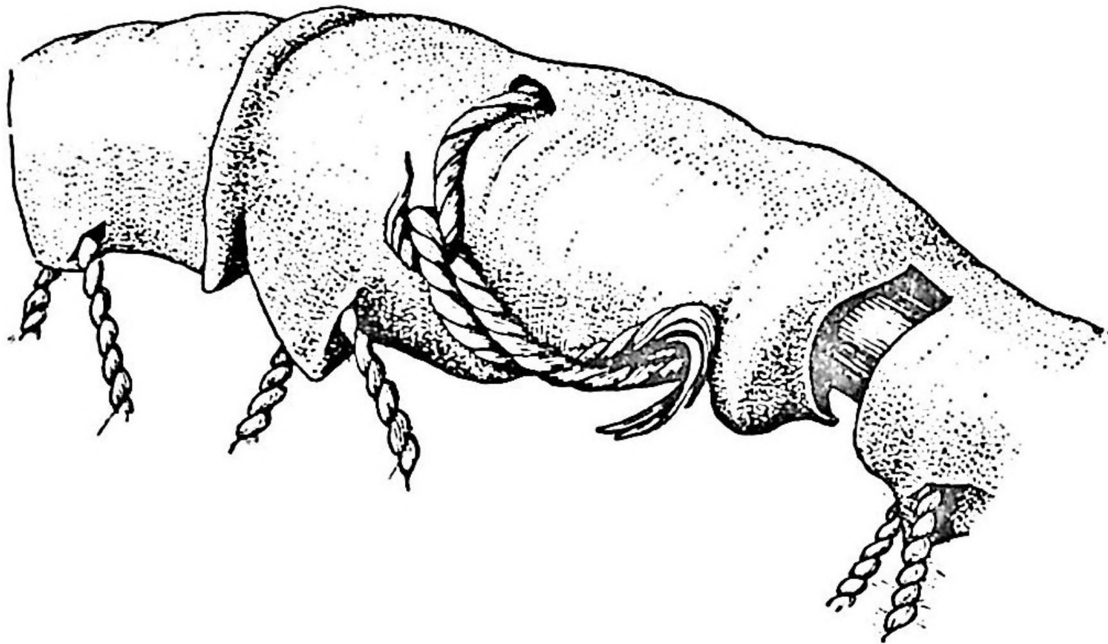

FIG. 4 The twisted withy rope on the gunwale. (Drawn by John A. Brown, 1971)

The Wicker Frame Unfortunately the lower part of the wicker frame is missing and there is no direct means of ascertaining fully its original appearance. Hornell pointed out that instead of being composed of two series of widely separated laths or pliant rods interlaced at right angles (like all his other British or Irish examples), the frame here is of true wicker basketwork; the main ribs—the warp—are arranged in numerous, closely set pairs which radiated from and must have crossed what was the centre of the bottom, outwards to the gunwale periphery. On this many-rayed star the weft is woven in tightly-packed concentric rings, as in a wicket basket. It is notable that the paired warp-units are made from slender withies of twig thickness (about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in diameter), similar to those forming the weft. The latter have been split before use, and generally those of the warp are also in a split condition. They appear to be of willow, and still retain the bark (Hornell 1936: Section 2, 300).

The warps, set at an average distance of 8 to 9 inches apart, number about sixty. Because of the slimness of the warps, even when doubled as they are here, it is likely that to give the framework the necessary bearing strength, the weft was intertwined with the warp right to the bottom, and not just for a few inches below the gunwale as happens in the eastern Irish (Boyne) type of currach (Hornell 1938: Section 4, 154).

However, it is difficult to accept Hornell's suggestion that all the warp withies crossed at the bottom, for the result would have been a lumpy and unworkmanlike bundle at this point. Thus, either the basketwork frame did not extend all the way to the bottom, or (more likely) a good number of the warps must have tapered off before reaching the bottom. To judge by the lie of the warps it is scarcely likely that they were arranged in two series of parallels at right angles to each other, in the manner of the recent Boyne currach (Plate III), which, in making the body, had the ends of the warp rods thrust into the ground in an oval of the appropriate size, and then the basketwork weft was woven round them. The resemblance between this basketwork weft and that of the Spey currach is probably accidental, however, since it seems certain that the whole body of the latter must originally have been filled in. The intertwining of the weft is carried out alternately over and under the warp, in the usual basketry fashion (Fig. 5), and the weft withies occasionally also pass between the two parts of a warp.

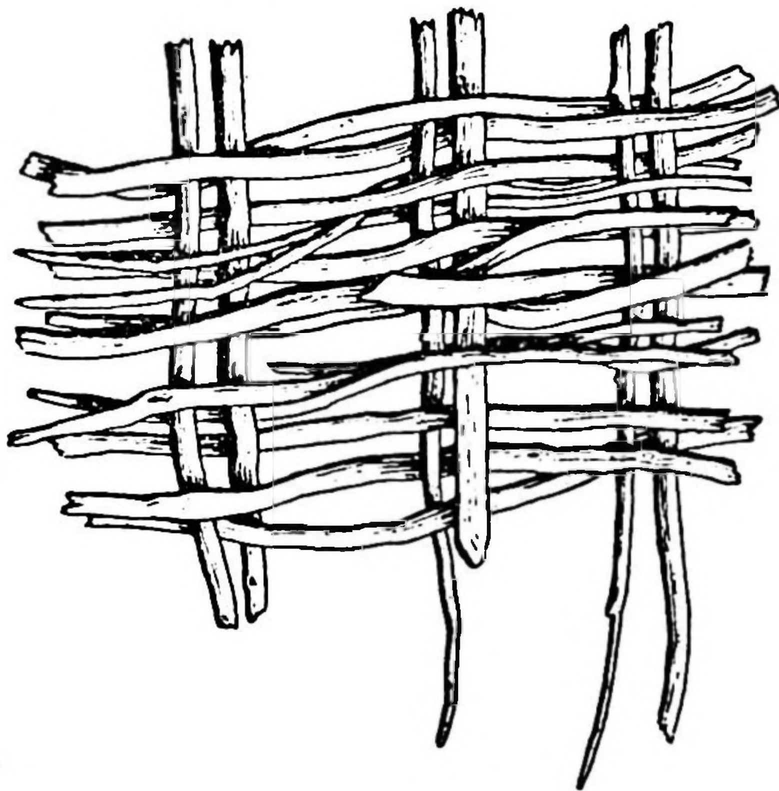

FIG. 5 The double warp, and the weft, all of wicker. (Drawn by John A. Brown, 1971)

The Hide The hide is in one piece, though its original rounded form has been compressed and wrinkled beyond easy restoration. As a result it is impossible to determine the original depth. While still in use, presumably, several small tears or cuts have been sewn together by means of leather thongs, and the bottom contains a small patch sewn on by thongs. Longer slits along the outer edges and top of the gunwale have been sewn in such a way that the open lips lie inwards. The originally hair-covered surface of the hide was kept to the inside. (See Plate IIb.)

The Seat The wooden seat is 3 feet 9 inches long, 11 inches wide and just over $\frac{3}{4}$ inch

thick. Its edges are rounded through wear. There are two holes at each end—one end being broken—and a loop of horse-hair rope remains in one of the holes (Plate IIa). The seat must have been lashed on to the currach framework, though at what point is uncertain. There are also three holes in the centre of the seat, grouped two and one. Possibly these contained a carrying band for overland transport on the human back. Conceivably, one end of the band passed through the single hole, with the knot undermost. The other end could then go down through one of the paired holes and back up through the other, giving a possibility of ready adjustment to the size of the loop.

The Paddle The wooden paddle resembles a spade with a large flat, wooden blade, a T-handle and a slightly flattened shaft. The overall length is 3 feet 9 inches, and the blade measures 17 inches long by 11 inches wide (Plate IIa). The whole is cut out of one piece of wood, of the same overall dimensions as the seat. There is a metal loop of unexplained use round the base of the shaft, and traces of other metal strips on the blade, presumably added to resist splitting of the wood. This paddle is unusual because of its great breadth, suggesting that it was more adapted to a scooping than figure-of-eight motion.

The Currach and its Function

The type of sea-going, 'boat-shaped', currach for rowing or sailing referred to in the early literature (*cf.* Plummer and Earle 1899, 2: 103–5; Marcus 1953: 105–14), used for trading, sea-transport and ferrying, does not fall to be considered here. For the round (or oval), Spey-type currach with which this note is solely concerned, documentary evidence begins to appear in the fifteenth century and runs on till the end of the eighteenth century. The primary functions of these rounded currachs was fishing for salmon, ferrying, and (for a limited period) the floating of timber down the River Spey.

There is little to suggest any common use of currachs after the mid-eighteenth century, and even the occasional sporadic survival had been consigned to the barn rafters, it seems, by about 1800. The floating of logs on the Spey probably led to a longer-continuing use of currachs there than anywhere else in Scotland. It also seems—though the limited range of sources does not provide enough data for a firm judgment—as if the use of the currach on the Spey may always have been more common there than on most other rivers in Scotland. An early record, of the year 1487, explicitly relates to a grant of net-fishing rights near the mouth of this river: 'piscationem unius rethis [= net] in aqua de Speya, vocati *le Currachnet* de Garmoutht' (Paul 1882: 362).

A number of entries in the Rental of Dunkeld diocese show that currach fishing was taking place on the River Tay in the early sixteenth century. In 1507 is recorded the purchase for 8s. 2d. of two 'currokis,' also described as *duorum caraborum*, one of the hides received from the diocesan steward and handed over to Malcolm and Finlay Fischeour 'to be made'. In 1508–9, James Butter got an 8s. hide for a currach, and

another ox-hide of the same value in 1510. Also in 1510 a hide for a 'currok' was bought for 10s. 4d., and another was barked and fitted for 2s. In 1511, two currachs were purchased for William Fischer at 20s. 9d., and another for James Butter at 8s. An ox-hide to finish a currach was bought for 10s. in 1512 (*per empcionem vnius pellis boum pro confectione lie corrok, x*[s]). In 1558, a 'courrok' cost 20s. (Hannay 1915:66, 93, 110, 117, 124, 133, 355; see also *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue, s.v.*) Another record of currach-fishing, apparently in Glendochart, dated 1594, relates to the loan to a neighbour by a MacNab (in Innishewan) of a 'currok and other graith [= gear] . . . to slay the reid fische' (Breadalbane: fo. 59). From the contexts of these references it can be seen that fishing was carried on in the lochs and rivers by estate fishermen using currachs and hempen nets, as well as with hooks and lines.

A fuller account of the appearance and use of contemporary currachs was given by Hector Boece in 1527, though with no precise geographical location beyond the fact that he was speaking of Highland Scotland:

> How may thair be ane greter ingine than to make ane bait [= boat] of ane bull hid, bound with na thing bot wandis. This bait is callit ane currok; with the quhilk thay fische salmond, and sum time passis ouir [= over] gret rivers thairwith; and, quhen thay have done thair fisching, thay beir it to ony place, on thair bak, quhare thay pleis (Brown 1893:101).

Here are assembled the characteristic features of the currach used on inland waters: the structure of hide and wands, and the method of transport on the back, along with its common functions of fishing and ferrying. Further sources for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries emphasise the currach's use in fishing, though this may be due merely to the fact that the references come from texts concerned with fishing rights. In 1542 Patrick Bishop of Moray granted a charter to Duncan, a son of the chief of Grant, to fish with nets, 'wachsperis [*i.e.* a form of leister-spear] and currokis' on the water of Spey, presumably at his estate of Easter Elchies (Fraser 1883, 3:371). In February 1569, Alexander Clark wrote an informative letter to the Countess of Moray,

> to know your plesour and will of your fishing of the twa part cobyll of Spey . . . I have thought it best that James Anderson be dischergit, quha was ane of the fischerres and of quhom your Ladyschip wos plenteous, and that David Mawer and this my servand namyt James Wilson have the charge . . . attour it will pleis your Ladyschip writ and command your said chamerlen to mak the sett of your currokis, [*i.e.* the letting of currach-fishing rights] for now is the tym of yeir, and that he tak gud caution of them, and to poynd for that quhilk restit over his last yeir, [*i.e.* for rent arrears] and siclik may pleis you writ to my Lord Huntle desyring his Lordschip to command all his tenentes of the Engye [= Enzie barony] and otheris his Lordschips landis, that thai mak na impedyment to your Ladyschipis currokis, and that na pokerrs [=poke-net fishers] nor speir men [= leister-fishers] cum in your wateris, quhilk wilbe ane great ais for your ladyschipis currokmen . . . (Historical MSS. 1877:650/1).

There continued to be problems with Huntly, for in 1586 there was an action between the Countess (now married to the Earl of Argyll) and the Earl of Huntly, because the Earl and his fishers had prevented the Countess's fishers

> to use the fischeing of ane twa pairt coble and tuelff corukis of salmound fischeing upoun the Watter of Spay... bot als than onputt his coblis and currochis upoun the saidis fischeingis, and swa, as is allegeit, molestit hir thairin (Masson 1881:86).

In 1617 reference was made to '*lie cobill-fishing* super dicta aqua [the Spey], una cum *lie cobill, curroche et speir-fishingis* super eadem ...' (Thomson 1892:634/2). In 1684 the Marquis of Huntly got the right to use cruives (*i.e.* fixed salmon-traps) on the Spey, within certain bounds where he formerly had a general right of fishing, and where the Earl of Fife's predecessors had a right of currach-fishing (Ogilvie 1778:54).

Whilst these sources show that currachs were used in conjunction with nets for fishing salmon in lochs and rivers, alongside or as a complement to cobles, and that currachmen appear to have been estate employees rather than fishers on their own account, nevertheless information about the form and construction of the craft is not found in legal records; and while drawings of coble-fishing scenes appear in Slezer's *Theatrum Scotiae* of 1693, he has no view of the Spey, and in no case does a currach appear in his engraved views.

The use of coracles, the Welsh equivalent of the Scottish currach, in commercial salmon-fishing at the present day, together with the netting methods employed there, have, however, lately been described (Jenkins 1971:38–42).

Currach-fishing went on in Scotland into the eighteenth century, and various estates remained jealous of their salmon-fishing rights. In August 1705, for example, John Grant Makalaster in Burnsyd and others in Cromdale were fined £50 'for abusing of the laird of Grant's currock fishing upon Spey by ther blaseing of the water [= using burning torches] in the summer time taking of salmon' (Cramond 1897:19). As late as 1778, it was found by the Court of Session that 'the Earl of Fife's right of fishing with currochs only, was no bar to the crown's granting to the Duke of Gordon a right of cruive-fishing within the bounds', and the Earl of Fife was anxious to ensure that an opening would be left in the cruive dyke to permit the passage of his currachs.[1] At the same time it was stated that 'an inferior heritor having only a right of curroch-fishing may have this right extended by the crown to a coble or general fishing' (Ogilvie 1778:55–6). Lord Fife's plea for keeping a passage open was not accepted, however, and by 1781 it could be said that formerly a passage had been left at one side of the cruive to allow 'the currochs or small boats used by the Highlanders to pass' (Morison 1805, 29:12820).

As a rule the Scottish currachs held one occupant, but a writer (who knew them only as inland vessels), commented in the early eighteenth-century that the currachs 'made use of as yet in some places in *Scotland*' could conveniently hold only two men at once (Innes 1729:2. 660). The Rev Dr John Bethune, born in Kintail in 1746, wrote

a letter on 22 May 1798 in which he stated that the currach was formerly in widespread use in the Highlands as a ferryboat on rivers and small creeks.

> It was constructed of a round form and of a Sort of Wicker-work, for the greater Buoyancy, and covered outwardly with green Hides. Two or three passengers, according to its Size, entered into it, and paddled forward as they cou'd . . . In the West Highlands of Ross-shire, where I was born, the *Courich* was very commonly used, and I have known some People who had seen it, tho' it had been disused before my Time. In my Day [*c.* 1760] it had given place to a sort of *Canoe* called *Ammir, i.e. Trough.* This was nothing more than the hollowed Trunk of a great Tree; and even this, I believe, is now laid aside. I have been Passenger crossing a River in the *Ammir* tho' I did not much covet the Situation. It was also employed in fishing the Rivers, and in it I have seen the fearless and dextrous Highlander, from his ticklish footing, flinging the Spear out of his hands to a considerable distance, and arresting the Salmon which was darting along with great Swiftness! The man standing in the *Ammir* holds the Oar by the middle; and with it, paddling on each Side, alternately; proceeds with Surprising velocity (Joass 1881:179–80).

This question of the use of a dug-out canoe, or *ammir* (Gaelic *amar* = trough), is a matter for separate investigation, though it seems scarcely credible that the dug-out canoe should have been introduced to replace the currach in Wester Ross about the year 1700. There is some evidence for the use of dug-out canoes for ferry-boats in Moidart as late as the mid-eighteenth century (MacDonald 1889:195) and it may be that, of these two kinds of primeval vessel, the currach disappeared a little earlier than the dug-out in the West Highlands, or at least in some parts of the region. The mere bulk of the dug-out would enhance its chances of survival in a period of change.

The remaining evidence for the use of the currach as a ferry-boat is slight and indirect, apart from documents already quoted.

Turning to Gaelic oral tradition there was a prophesy, attributed to the sixteenth-century seer known as 'Coinneach Odhar', which foretold misfortune for the MacLeod of Skye, reaching a climax when the fairy flag of the clan was taken out of its iron chest: 'then the glory of the MacLeod family should depart—a great part of the estate should be sold to others, so that a small "curragh", or boat, would carry all gentlemen of the name of Macleod across Loch Dunvegan in Skye' (Macleod 1876, 1:334; Mackenzie 1878:48). This, according to the currach capacities so far noted, would amount to no more than two or three men.

Another oral source purports to describe how Allan Macrory, fourth chief of Clanranald of Moidart, seized the Mackintosh chief in his island castle in Loch Moy in eastern Inverness-shire. The event, if historical, would have occurred about the end of the fifteenth century. Clanranald 'had carried with him several boats made of hides, and easily transported, these he launched under night and stormed the castle' (Anon. 1819:83).

Finally, there is the tale of the Two Brothers, relating to the Ross of Mull:

> At the time of this incident, the few families there had no boats, but one day they saw an object approaching them from the mainland, and as it drew near, they compared it to a horse with a tree standing on its back, but as it neared the shore it proved to be a boat covered with hides, with one man on it, with some drink with him and a quantity of hazel nuts for food. On account of his wicker-boat being covered with hides they called him 'The cowhide man . . .' He had come from Ardencaple in the district of Lorn . . . A year later another boat came, making shore at Loch Spelve, which also had one man in it and he was named 'The one in the skin coverings'. He was the brother of the one who had previously arrived (MacLean 1923, 1:140).

Though of uncertain chronology, the story at least seems to establish for the Argyll area the wicker frame, the hide covering, and the one-man crew.

Apart from such sources,[2] there is little positive evidence from the western or northern Highlands, though enough exists to suggest that before the mid-eighteenth century the currach was relatively common there, especially as a ferry boat.

The currach is also frequently mentioned in Gaelic songs (Carmichael 1928, 2:265), and familiarity with the word currach in the west is further suggested by its occurrence in place-names, though these may refer rather to the boat-shaped, rowing currach. For example, it is said that when Columba landed in Iona, he buried the currach in which he arrived above the beach, to remove any temptation to use it for returning to Ireland: the place of burial is still called Port a Churaich ('the harbour of the currach'), and there is a long, boat-shaped ridge there, called An Curach. Carmichael also mentions a small, grassless island on the east side of Barra named An Curachan ('the little currach').

Currachs and the Spey Timber-Trade

By the opening of the eighteenth century a different use for the currach, though apparently not very long-lived, had made its appearance in the records. This was in helping to guide logs or sawn deals that were being floated down the Spey and its main tributaries. Commercial exploitation of the pine-forests of Strathspey and Rothiemurchus was already attempted early in the previous century (Murray 1883:57) and the currachers' part in transporting timber to the Spey estuary—some twenty or thirty miles—is explicitly mentioned in a letter the Earl of Findlater received from Castle Grant in 1701:

> . . . since [the chief of] Grant was not vritn to anent woode libertie, I cam allongs to inquere annent the samen at young Grant, to whom his father hath givn the disposeing of the woods; and he sayes that he will have three pounds Scotis mōey [= money] for ech tree, and this is besyds the pay͗t for cutting, leadeing to the vater, and the currachers pains for transporting them to the bote off Bog [= a ford on the Spey, at Gordon Castle], so yt I judge or the great trees be there they will stand your Lo. [= Lordship] four poundis Scotis the peice (Grant 1912:329–330).

PLATE III An Irish river-curragh in construction, near Oldbridge on the Boyne, about 1930. The framework, of hazel, is made by placing the warp rods in the ground and bending them to cross the others at right angles. A wicker gunwale is then woven into place. (Photograph by courtesy of Dr A. T. Lucas, Director, National Museum of Ireland.)

PLATE IV 'Glenmore South of the Saw Mill', 1786. Detail of engraving after an original drawing by Rev. Charles Cordiner, minister of Banff, from *Remarkable Ruins, and Romantic Prospects of North Britain*, 1788.

We do not know how much earlier than this currachs were used in floating timber on the Spey. If the traditional evidence which follows could be taken at its face value, the association of currach-men with the timber-trade could hardly be earlier than the early eighteenth-century; but, in fact, Alastair Mor na Curach was probably concerned in the great expansion of the trade around the year 1730, and therefore not of the first generation of such 'curracher '. The story goes that

> two families of Grant, named Mor (big) and Odhar (pale or of yellow complexion), who lived at Tulchan, on the Spey, were the first who ventured on this perilous voyage. The first raft consisted of eight trees, fastened together by a hair rope. One or two men went into the Curach to guide the raft, others from the shore, with ropes fastened to the tail end of the raft, acted as a rudder. On the second trip a dozen trees were brought down. The Curach was always carried back from the mouth of the Spey on the back of a stalwart Highlander, who had obtained the name of Alister Mor na Curach. This worthy occupied the farm of Dalcroy, on the Spey, and lived to the age of 106 years. ('Glenmore' 1859:41–6)

It was said in the mid nineteenth-century, that Alastair Mor's currach was till then in the possession of his great-great-grandson, William Grant of Dalchroy ('Glenmore' 1859: 44).[3]

Only a small load could be floated behind a currach, up to ten or twelve dozen deal planks, bound together with a rope. One man sat on the wooden seat in the currach, a paddle in his hand, and the guide-rope attached to the float had a running loop which passed round the knee of the currachman. If the load jammed against an obstruction, he had only to loose the knot to free the currach, and so prevent it from sinking in the current. He could then paddle back upstream to free the timber, and so get on his way again. The rope may not always have been looped round the paddler's knee, for according to one account, 'in floating timber, a rope is fixed to the float, and the rower holds it in one hand, and with the other manages the paddle; he keeps the float in deep water, and brings it to shore when he will; in returning home, he carries the machine [*i.e.* the currach] on his shoulders, or on a horse' (Shaw 1775:164–5).

This also shows that one-armed paddling was possible, perhaps in the manner described by Hornell, referring to downstream paddling on the River Teifi: one hand gripped the shaft of the paddle a little below its middle, palm inwards; the upper part of the shaft lay along the forearm, the top end pressing against the outer side of the upper arm. 'Thus disposed the arm has good control of the paddle and can work it in the figure-of-eight tractor stroke with the minimum of exertion' (Hornell 1938: Section 1, 26; Plate I, Fig. 1).

The Spey currach in the late eighteenth-century, was 'made of a hide, in the shape, and about the size of a small brewing-kettle [*i.e.* cauldron], broader above than below, with ribs or hoops of wood in the inside, and a cross-stick for the man to sit on'. The currachs were so light that the men carried them home from Speymouth on their backs. One still survived in the parish of Cromdale in 1794. (Grant 1794:134).

Although the example now in the Elgin Museum is round, apparently like most of the currachs described in Scottish documentary sources, the careful Lachlan Shaw gives a rather different account of the Spey currach:

> in shape oval, near three feet broad, and four long; a small keel runs from the head to the stern; a few ribbs are placed across the keel, and a ring of pliable wood around the lip of it. The whole machine is covered with the rough hide of an Ox or a Horse; the seat is in the middle, it carries but one person, or if a second goes into it to be wafted over a river, he stands behind the rower, leaning on his shoulders. (Shaw 1775:164).

Shaw's statement seems precise enough but, while there are parallels to this oblong shape in the river coracles of Wales and England, nevertheless keels are non-existent, even in the Irish 'boat'-shaped curraghs. Hornell therefore considered that this was an error; but Shaw, a native of the region, was writing at a time when currachs were still not yet obsolete, and his statement must be respected. Probably he was using the term 'keel' in a loose manner for an internal spar that ran length-wise (*i.e.* keelson), as a means of giving support to the side ribs of the currach.

An intensification in the use of currachs for floating timber evidently took place after 1728, when the Grant chief sold to the London-based York Buildings Company, for £7,000 sterling, 60,000 trees 'of the best and choicest of the fir woods besouth the river Spey . . . lying in the united parishes of Abernethy and Kincairn [= Kincardine], with power to them to cut, sell, and transport, and to their own use and behoof apply the said trees at their own charge and risque within seventeen years' (Forsyth 1895–9: 187). Having the woods was one thing, but getting the trees out was another. Edmund Burt, who was travelling in the area at the period of the sale, had no illusions. As far as he was concerned, no trees 'will pay for felling, and removing over Rocks, Bogs, Precipices and Conveyance by rocky Rivers, except such as are near the Sea-Coast, and hardly those; as I believe the *York-Buildings Company* will find in the Conclusion' (Burt 1759, 2:7). However, the Company pressed on with its activities, and having obtained the use of existing sawmills on the River Nethy, went on to build more. In its early days, the Company used eighteen currachs in floating small rafts of sawn deal, but progress was slow. However, the poet Aaron Hill, who was working for the Company, evolved a method of constructing a large raft, 'consisting of two or three branders [= crossbars] of spars in the bottom joined end to end, with iron or other loups, and a rope through them, and conducted by two men, one at each end, who have each a seat and oar, with which they help the raft in the proper direction.' The rafts could carry from £10 to £20 worth of timber, and the average cost per raft per journey was £1.10/- (Grant 1794:134). These larger rafts, however, were impeded in their journey by certain rocks, but Hill again showed his ingenuity by 'making immense fires on the rocks when the stream was low, and then throwing water on the heated surface. The stone was thus calcined or fractured, and rendered easy of removal' (Forsyth 1895–9:189). Just as the fixed salmon-cruives had inhibited the passing of

currachs, so also did they affect the rafts. In 1782 this had led to a legal contest between the laird of Grant and the Duke of Gordon. It was held that the superior heritors of the Spey, in which the Duke had a right of cruive-fishing, had equally a right of floating rafts of timber down the river, and that the cruive-dyke built across the river should not be allowed to obstruct the exercise of the right to float timber. Previous dykes had been of loose stones that could give way when a raft came against them, but now 'a solid and permanent massive wall was erected, reaching from bank to bank.' According to an interlocutor pronounced by the whole Lords, both rights were valid, and floating was allowed freely from 26 August to 15 May. Between the last day of March and 15 May, however, at least 4 hours' notice of floating had to be given to the tacksman of the Duke's cruive-fishing, or their manager personally, between sunrise and sunset, so that arrangements could be made to open the cruives to let the floats pass. According to a further interlocutor, floating was required to be carried on only between sunrise and sunset, and floats had to pass through the cruives seriatim, at a suitable place pointed out by the Duke's fishers (Paton 1851, 2:582).

The change from the currach to the fabricated log-raft with its guides aboard was no doubt partly due to reasons of safety, but more to economics, especially after some rock clearance had taken place. On the Spey the change-over to rafts appears to have been complete within a few years after the Company started to exploit the forest in 1728.

On other Scottish rivers rafting was also carried on, though nowhere else, it seems, are currachs mentioned in this context. In the seventeenth century timber-floating occurred in many parts of the Highlands (Stevens and Carlisle 1959:116–72 *passim*; Smout 1960:3–13.). A report of 1726 referring to Creich and other woods in Sutherland mentions the floating of logs to the sea, and another of 1752 tells of quantities of illegally-felled timber from Glenmoriston being floated down Loch Ness. Logs were also floated on the River Dee from the estates of Dalmore, Inverey, and Braemore, and there was a convenient sawmill at the Linn of Dee (Anderson 1967, I:473). On the River Tay, there is a record of a rock having been blown up at the Linn on the Stobhall side in 1785, to facilitate the upstream swimming of fish and the downstream floating of timber from the Highland forests (Hunter 1883:354–5), and in the same year the fir wood of Glenmore in the Spey valley was bought from the Duke of Gordon by an English company from Hull, who made roads in order to get it to the river, 'where it admits of rafts.' It was used for the masts of ships as well as for planks (Newte 1791:162). In Inverness-shire, trees cut in the parish of Kilmorack were felled, cut into logs 10 to 12 feet long, and carried by horses to the Rivers Glass, Camrich, and Beauly, where they were floated for 30 or 40 miles to the Aigas saw-mill, which had been operating since 1765. Here they were sawn in the mill, which consisted of three sheds, in all about 126 feet long. Seven saws were driven by four water wheels, about 4 feet deep by 2 feet 8 inches broad. The wheels, turned by water from a dam, could turn at 80 to 90 revolutions a minute, and a saw in good order could slice a 10 or 12 foot log in 4 minutes.

The cut planks and deals had to be carried about 3 miles by land to get past a waterfall, before they were finally floated in rafts down the Beauly for storage in a woodyard at Lovat, in Kirkhill parish, till shipped in vessels of 50–90 tons burden to Leith or London (Fraser 1794:523–4; Grant and Leslie 1798:230).

For some inland forests, like the Black Wood of Rannoch, the problems of timber extraction were considerable. A Company that bought part of this wood in the early nineteenth century had to indulge in quite extensive engineering:

> Canals were formed along the brow of the hill, with lochs or basins at fixed intervals on each level, into which the timber was floated for collection. About one mile from the loch, a long sluice was constructed, down which the heavy trees were slipped one by one, a man being perched upon a tree to signal by a loud whistle when the log was launched. The trees sometimes came down this great incline with such force that they broke into splinters on the passage, many went into the loch with such tremendous precipitation that they stuck as fast as stakes in deep water, while the sheer weight of not a few caused them to sink to the bottom, never to rise again. The trees which found their way in safety into the loch, were bound into rafts, to undergo a dangerous passage down the Tummel and the Tay. Even some of the rafts which reached the Firth of Tay in safety, floated away to the German Ocean and were lost, some of them being found stranded on the shores of Holland (Hunter 1883:413).

In the end, the Company was forced to abandon the task.

Floating, therefore, was not uncommon on suitable rivers, and no doubt other examples could be cited, but the Spey was the river on which it was carried on most intensively, and indeed the only river where currachs are so far known to have played a part in this. Aaron Hill's rafts for moving timber from the Grant's woods of Abernethy have already been described. A lot of timber was also floated from the Duke of Gordon's fir-woods of Glenmore after 1786. They were well situated for water transport down a tributary to the Spey. It was reported that:

> The quantity of spars, deals, logs, masts and ship-timber, which they send to Garmouth or Speymouth yearly, is immense, and every stage of the process of manufactory, brings money to the country; generally once a year, they send down Spey a loose float, as they call it, of about 12,000 pieces of timber, of various kinds; whence they send it to England, or sell it round the coast. For some years, they have sent great numbers of small masts or yards to England to the King's yards, and other places, and have built about 20 vessels of various burdens at Garmouth or Speymouth, all of Glenmore fir. . . . The fir-woods of this country exceed all the natural fir-woods in Scotland put together, without comparison. Sir James Grant's woods of Abernethy, of many miles circumference; next, the Duke of Gordon's, in Glenmore; then Mr. Grant of Rothiemurchus's, who is supposed to have more trees than either of them; then the Duke's again; after that, the Laird of McIntosh's in Glenfishy, all in a line, of about 20 miles in length, on the south side of Spey . . . Besides, Sir James Grant has another wood, of an excellent quality, . . . on the river Dulnan (Grant 1794:135–6).

According to another source, loose floats could number up to 20,000 logs and spars, and were accompanied by 50 to 80 men, who went along the riversides with long poles, pushing the timber off when it stuck. They got 1s. 2d. a day, besides whisky (Grant and Leslie 1798:99). The rafts themselves, however, were for sawn timber, and might consist of 50–60 spars bound together, on which deals and other sawn timber were laid. The men who took them down to Garmouth then returned, carrying on their shoulders the ropes and iron hooks used in making the rafts (Robertson 1794, quoted in Anderson 1967, 1:475). The logs in question, measuring 10–20 feet in length by 12–18 inches in diameter, cost 1s. the solid foot; spar wood of the same length, about 7 inches in diameter, 7d. the solid foot; planks 10 inches broad and 12 feet long, cost 3s. the piece if 3 inches thick, and 2s. if 2 inches; deals 1½ inches thick by 8 broad and 12 feet long, cost 1s. each (Grant and Leslie 1798:100). The kind of wood-built saw-mill in which the planks were cut was drawn in Glenmore in 1786 (Plate 4).

The floaters' life and work was vividly described by Elizabeth Grant of Rothiemurchus as she remembered it in 1813, and though what she says applies to rafts, it must be equally valid for the days when currachs were in use. In the remoter glens, dams were made at the lower ends of lakes, and sluice-gates fitted so that a sufficient supply of water could be depended on when logs were to be sent down. On the day of the run, some of the woodmen rolled logs into the water by means of levers, others shoved them off with long poles into the current, and

> they were then taken in charge by the most picturesque group of all, the youngest and most active, each supplied with a *clip*, a very long pole, thin and flexible at one end, generally a young tall tree; a sharp hook was fixed to the bending point, and with this, skipping from rock to stump, over brooks and through briers, this agile band followed the log-laden current, ready to pounce on any stray lumbering victim that was in any manner checked in its progress.

Some streams took the wood straight to the Spey. Others passed first through a loch and, in that case, light rafts of logs had to be made, and paddled or speared across by a man standing on each. The rafts were then dismantled, and the logs either held for the sawmill, or sent on as individual units to the Spey, where the Spey floaters took charge of them. These men mostly came from near Ballindalloch, a certain number of families specialising in the job:

> They came up in the season, at the first hint of a *spate* . . . A large bothy was built for them at the mouth of the Druie in a fashion that suited themselves; a fire on a stone hearth in the middle of the floor, a hole in the very centre of the roof just over it where some of the smoke got out, heather spread on the ground, no window, and there, after their hard day's work, they lay down for the night, in their wet clothes—for they had been perhaps hours in the river—each man's feet to the fire, each man's plaid round his chest, a circle of wearied bodies half stupefied by whisky, enveloped in a cloud of steam and sleeping soundly till morning.

They made the large log rafts for a log run themselves.

> Work started with a morning dram, handed round by a lad with a small cask on his back, and a horn cup in his hand that held a gill; another gill apiece was distributed when work was done. At noon, a dram was part of the meal of bannock and cheese that the men carried with them.

Once the logs from the glens reached the Spey, they were

> seized on by the Ballindalloch men, bored at each end by an auger, two deep holes made into which iron plugs were hammered, the plugs having eyes through which well-twisted wattles were passed, thus binding any given number together. When a raft of proper size was thus formed it lay by the bank of the river awaiting its covering; this was produced from the logs left at the saw-mills, generally in the water in a pool formed to hold them. As they were required by the workmen, they were brought close by means of the clip, and then by the help of levers rolled up an inclined plane and on to the platform under the saw; two hooks attached to cables kept the log in its place, the sluice was then opened, down poured the water, the great wheel turned, the platform moved slowly on with the log, the saw frame worked up and down, every cut slicing the log deeper till the whole length fell off. The four outsides were cut off first; they were called 'backs', and very few of them went down to Garmouth; they were mostly used at home for country purposes, such as fencing, out-offices, roofing, or firing; out-houses were even made of them. The squared logs were then cut up regularly into deals and carted off to the rafts where they were laid as a sort of flooring. Two rude gears for the oars completed the appointments of a Spey float. The men had a wet berth of it, the water shipping in, or, more properly, over, at every lurch; yet they liked the life, and it paid them well. (Grant 1960:152–4, 160–1).

There were occasionally lighter moments in the hard life of the floater, if an oral tale may be believed. The story relates that his chief, the laird of Grant, was

> in company of English friends, admiring the shipping on the Thames, when one of the Englishmen said to the laird—'I suppose you have nothing like that on your puny Spey.' Grant's Highland pride was roused, and he retorted—'I have a subject on the Spey who, in a boat of bullock's hide, would outstrip any of your craft.' The Englishman smiled, and a money bet was made on the spot. The Laird of Grant undertook to have his man and the boat on the Thames on a certain day. The young man who volunteered [an eighteen year old youth from Tulchan—one of the 'Mors' or 'Odhars'] took his currach to London, and in the presence of a great crowd of spectators, the Strathspey man soon outpaced his rivals in his light craft. The stake was paid to the Laird of Grant, and a bonnet full of gold coins was given to the boatman, who said he had no use for them, and handed them to his Chief to give to Lady Grant for pin-money ('Glenmore' 1859:41–6).

Illogically, perhaps, in the light of this victory, Wallace goes on to say that the currach was disused after people were able to make better boats (Wallace [1915]:365).

Terminology

The term '*currach*' is used throughout this paper, in spite of the fact that Hornell restricts that word to the boat-shaped, rowing currachs of Ireland, and reserves 'coracle' (which derives from a Welsh variant in *-l*) for the small, round or oval craft of Wales, England, and Scotland. In no single original Scottish source does the word coracle appear, and it seems preferable, therefore, to use the native term in this regional study. The Scots Gaelic form, *curach*, is glossed by Dwelly (1948: *s.v.*) as a 'boat made of wicker, and covered with skins or hides . . . once much in use in the Western Isles . . .' In Scotland the same word seems formerly to have been used for the sea-going (rowing) curragh, as well as for the small inland (or estuarine) craft described above. Incidentally, the diagram which Dwelly gives of a circular currach with a wooden seat and broad, spade-shaped paddle, so much resembles the currach from Mains of Advie that it is impossible to avoid thinking that they are one and the same. Dwelly makes no comment on this point beyond the comprehensive one that 'the whole of the illustrations, with one or two exceptions, have been specially drawn for the work.' His dictionary first appeared between 1901 and 1911, that is, just about the time of the 'discovery' of the Advie currach.

The only other recorded Scots Gaelic term used in relation to a currach is *crannaghal*, 'the framework', now restricted in sense in Uist to 'a frail boat' (Dwelly *s.v. Curach*). It is unparalleled in the Irish terms for a currach and its parts, listed by Hornell (1938, Section 5:37–8). The Welsh terms are listed by Jackson (1933:312–13).

Conclusion

The Strathspey currach preserved in the Elgin Museum, the last of its kind in Scotland, is thus a lone survivor representing an ancient tradition. Just as the men of Ironbridge on the Severn used a coracle in the shape of a shallow, oval bowl where great manoeuvreability was required, for example when catching rabbits marooned during floods (Hornell 1938, Section 2:270–1), so the similar shape of the only surviving Scottish currach may be due to a comparable need in relation to the floating of timber. In view of Shaw's description of a more elongated form, it is reasonable to speculate on the possibility of there having been a different shape of currach used for salmon-fishing with nets in rather earlier times, equivalent to the blunt-ended coracles of the Welsh and English rivers. In either case, however, the one-hide size, allowing a maximum diameter or length of between four and five feet, appears to have been standard for inland waters. As yet we have virtually no information about sea-going currachs in Scotland.

The currach is a relic of a form of water transport that has a long history in Scotland, as well as in other parts of these islands and beyond, to which the epithet primitive

might well be applied. It is, therefore, remarkable that its last burst of life on the Spey, to which the currach had by then perhaps become largely restricted, was caused by the semi-industrial activities of a London company in the years following 1728.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Grateful thanks are due to Miss E. I. Rhynas, Honorary Curator of the Elgin Museum, for her ready help and hospitality during the recording and conservation of the currach, and to herself and Dr A. T. Lucas, Director of the National Museum of Ireland, for supplying old photographs of the Spey and Boyne currachs respectively. I am also grateful to Mr and Mrs Megaw for documentary and other help.

NOTES

1 Mr Ian Grant (Scottish Record Office) has kindly supplied the following particulars concerning the geographical location of the currach-fishing rights referred to:

The Duke of Gordon's cruives lay, as shown on a plan (SRO RHP 287) surveyed in October 1760 by Peter May, in one of the interminable salmon-fishing disputes concerning the Spey about the Rock of Ordiequish (Ordnance Survey, 6 inch, revised 1955, Elgin, Sheet 29), in that part of the River described by May as the 'Currach coble'. This is shown as running from Ballhagarty's Gavin, lying a short distance above Culfoldie down to the Kirk of Speymouth. From the Gavin down to the Burn of Ailly (now Red Burn), the west bank of the Spey was then owned by Sir Robert Gordon of Gordonstoun, and the east bank by the Duke of Gordon. From the Burn downwards most of the west bank was owned by Lord Fife, though the Duke held a stretch opposite Gordon Castle.

Mr Grant has also drawn our attention to an early reference, of 1539, to the floating yearly of 8 score of Rothiemurchus 'fyr sparris sufficient to be gestis [= joists]', or at least as many as the owner's predecessors used to deliver 'upon the water syde of Spey beneth the kyrk of Rothymurchous ... quhair thai may be eiselye cassin in the said water of Spey in flott or utherwayis as salbe thocht speidfull' (Innes 1837: 420).

2 'Traditional' sources, though sometimes invaluable, have many pitfalls for this type of study. Hornell quoted from MacGregor (1933: 34–5) a tale of a Clanranald chief who, on hearing his death foretold, had a cowhide currach made to bear him away for ever from his stronghold in Benbecula. Hornell (1938: sec. 2, 298–9) mistakenly assigned the tale to 1745, and thought this was evidence for the 'use of hide-covered coracles in the Hebrides [in] the middle of the eighteenth century'. The use of hide currachs there down to that period, and even later, is indeed a possibility; but, as Mr Angus John MacDonald has pointed out to us, the confused version of the tale given by MacGregor evidently derives from a Gaelic text first printed in 1875 by the great collector Alexander Carmichael, and later reprinted with a translation, along with another inferior English version ('Sithiche' 1912:348 and 350). Carmichael's text reveals that the tale refers to medieval times; and Clanranald's boat merely figures as a '*coit*', with no indication of its construction. This ambiguous term formerly signified a dug-out canoe, at least in Ireland down to the seventeenth century, where it was the normal boat for inland transport. The killing of the cow, mentioned in the other version, surely implies neither the covering of a currach, nor a propitiatory sacrifice (as suggested by the 1912 commentator), but the provisioning of the chief's boat (his 'galley' is referred to) before his long voyage.—Ed.

3 Though on opposite banks of the Spey, Dalchroy and Mains of Advie are within a mile of each other, and were within the (combined) parish of Cromdale (Shaw 1775: 34), where one currach is said

to have survived in 1794 (Grant 1794: 194). As Alastair Mor's currach is stated to have been extant in the middle of last century, and that from Advie was described in 1912 as the last of the Spey currachs, there seems a possibility that it is, in fact, Alastair Mor's vessel that is the subject of this article.—Ed.

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Book Reviews

Twelve Modern Scottish Poets, edited by Charles King. University of London, 1971. Pp. 205. £1.25 (school edn. 90p).

This well produced volume is primarily intended for use in schools and as such proves well designed for its market. The output of the twelve poets concerned—Edwin Muir, Hugh MacDiarmid, William Soutar, George Bruce, Robert Garioch, Norman MacCaig, Sydney Goodsir Smith, Tom Scott, Edwin Morgan, Alexander Scott, George Mackay Brown and Ian Crichton Smith—is represented in reasonable depth, allowing the student to come away with something more than the usual frustratingly brief communication of anthologies. The editor, who worked in close association with most of the poets concerned, has obviously been governed in his choice to some extent by the suitability of poems for a youthful audience and by their likely adaptability as teaching vehicles. Given these limitations, it seems to me that he has done a good job in this direction and that the schoolrooms of Scotland may become livelier and more interesting places after the introduction of his anthology.

If there must be criticism, then I confess a regret that Mr King and his committee did not feel able to represent—even by one poet—the work of the younger makars. It may be that they judged their band of twelve to have reached a poetic maturity not yet attained by Robin Fulton, D. M. Black and others. Against this, one might suggest that the inclusion of one of this group could have obviated the impression that our modern makars are alive, thanks, but middle-aged (the youngest represented poet is 43), and instead transmitted the sense of continuity so necessary to a thriving poetic tradition. Equally, it seems to me that in some cases the young scholars would find themselves more naturally in sympathy with poets closer to their own generation. Whether some dominies would share this viewpoint is another matter, but then they have already been put in an embarrassing situation by Mr King's selection of 'Garioch's Repone till George Buchanan'!

Secondly, although Mr King's brief introductions to each poet are masterpieces in the art of quickly establishing bearings for the student, I was less happy about the notes. If the principle governing these is indeed difficulty, as indicated on page 13, one wonders why, say, MacDiarmid's 'The kind of poetry I want' with all the complex problems of literary theory it raises, is passed over in silence, while Edwin Morgan's self-explanatory 'Aberdeen Train' is re-explained. Moreover, does it really help an understanding of Alexander Scott's 'Doun wi' dirt' to give us a list of the scatological works of the authors referred to or to compare the plight of Edwin Morgan's man in

the coffee bar to that of a mountaineer on Everest? The first is surely an instance of critically overweighing a slight piece, the second a case of re-stating the obvious through a less striking imagistic association.

But mostly these are quibbles of the sort any critic bringing his own viewpoint to a varied collection of verse can raise easily and without universal force. Perhaps too the editor might fairly counter that his experience of what is and is not required by way of explication for the schoolroom is far greater than that of your reviewer. The fact remains that we now have a reliable means of introducing the upper forms at school to the lyricism of Soutar, the sheer brilliance of MacDiarmid, the wry Scottish humour of Garioch, the striking imagery of MacCaig and that unique brand of erudition and compassion, which is Edwin Morgan. Our debt—and, one hopes, theirs—to Mr King is great.

R. D. S. JACK

Gaelic by Roderick MacKinnon. Teach Yourself Books, London 1971. Pp. 324. 55p.

The lack of an up-to-date book for assistance in learning Gaelic has been a source of frustration to learners and teachers for many years. There seems to be a dearth of people with the requisite combination of ability, time and inclination to produce such a book. At last, Mr Roderick MacKinnon, a schoolmaster in Perth who learned the Gaelic of Skye as his first language, has taken on this onerous responsibility.

The purpose of *Teach Yourself Gaelic* is to help students 'to acquire a reasonably competent knowledge' of the language. Mr MacKinnon claims that 'a course of some thirty to forty lessons will enable the average student to tackle successfully the learners' "O" Grade examination' in the Scottish Certificate of Education. The lessons should be seen in that context. The success or failure of the method adopted will be proved by the individual student. In the introduction, the author warns that the language has its own peculiar difficulties. Even so, some of the individual lessons are perhaps too comprehensive, covering a great deal of new ground and vocabulary without enough practice in usage. A student confining himself to this method of learning needs a good retentive memory and must be prepared to work very diligently.

The introduction to Lesson I contains a list of phonetic devices which are used throughout the book. These might not satisfy a phonetician, but they are adequate for the purposes of the book, although I feel that one or two descriptions are not quite accurate. For example 'b' and 'g' are given as sounding in Gaelic the same as in English. This is incorrect. The description of 'the back l' as similar to that in *hall* or *wool* is misleading. The use of [ə], which is 'an indeterminate sound as in the second syllables of *absent*, *infant*', in the second syllables of the words *aran*, *sporan* is also misleading, for in these instances the sound is not indeterminate.

The first two lessons deal with the simple sentence, introducing pronouns, prepositions, nouns and adjectives, and giving plenty of sentences for translation from English into Gaelic and Gaelic into English. The layout of the lessons continues on similar lines. The book deals with the various difficulties in a different order from that of previous Gaelic grammar books, and breaks with conventional practice by introducing passages of conversation and exercises in which blanks are to be filled in. Grammatical features are shown, not with lists of declensions and conjugations, but with examples. The sentences used are credible—not of the 'A hen is not a fish' variety—and fairly up-to-date. *A bheil*?, which is colloquially used for the question form of the substantive verb, is given instead of the conventional *Am bheil*? and English words which fit into the orthography are realistically introduced—for example, *gas*, *peansail*.

At the end of the book the student will find a useful glossary running to forty-four pages, passages for reading and synopses of the regular, irregular and defective verb as well as paradigms of prepositional pronouns. Here also the learners' 'O' grade examination paper for 1970 is reproduced. Even considering that the type of examination for which the author is catering may be a restricting factor, there is room for improvement in this book. Long lists of sentences, for example, could be replaced by passages for interpretation. But such a production—in a practical, tidy format—is a matter for celebration after so many lean years, and Mr MacKinnon deserves our admiration and congratulation.

MORAG MACLEOD

A Compleat Theory of the Scots Highland Bagpipe by Joseph MacDonald, with a new introduction by Seumas MacNeill. Republished by S. R. Publishers, Wakefield. Pp. 36. £2.

This book is in fact a reprint of the 1927 reprint of the original 1803 edition published for Joseph's brother, Patrick Macdonald.

The original MS (now in the library of the University of Edinburgh) is undoubtedly an extremely important document. It contains, as the title page states, 'All the Shakes, Introductions, Graces, Cuttings which are peculiar to this instrument. . . . With all the Terms of Art in which this instrument was originally taught by its first Masters and Composers in the Islands of Sky and Mull. Also a full Account of the Time, Style, Taste and Composition of true Pipe Music . . .' *etc.* With the aid of diagrams and musical examples Joseph MacDonald explains in meticulous detail the technique and art of the Gaelic pipers of the eighteenth century. He also records, for the first time ever in Staff Notation, parts of the grounds of a number of Pibrochs, twelve of which are readily identifiable. He then goes on to deal with the playing of pipe reels and jigs for dancing, commenting briefly in passing on the essential differences between pipe tunes and those for the fiddle.

It is a sad fact, however, that the 1803 publication and both subsequent Reprints represent a gross corruption of the original text. There are errors or omissions in 70 of the 86 musical illustrations. In at least two cases (pp. 20–21 and p. 32) whole blocks of music type have been misplaced by the printers thus making Joseph MacDonald's accompanying explanations read like nonsense. Wrong notes are everywhere in abundance and sometimes whole bars have been omitted. Some strange spelling mistakes add to the confusion (*e.g.* Iuludh instead of Tuludh—the name of an important type of Pibroch variation frequently called Taorluath these days). In places the original text has been altered considerably and on page 27 there appear four paragraphs, discussing among other things the differing popularity of two-drone and three-drone pipes, which were never in the original MS.

Matters are not improved by the inclusion of a page of corrections (p. 35) in the Reprints. They are misleading because they cover only a few of the many mistakes appearing among the first 19 pages of a 36-page book. Furthermore the corrections are often of little value because of their vagueness. For instance, one correction to a fingering chart reads: 'Various holes should appear between the various relative notes rather than as they are shown.' Those who would like to learn more of the background to the original MS and the 1803 and 1927 books are advised to read Mairi A. MacDonald's article 'The Joseph MacDonald Theory' in the *Scots Magazine* of December 1953 (New Series, vol. lx, no. 3.) where she suggests that there once existed a faulty copy of the Manuscript and that this copy was used by the printers.

One welcomes Reprints of source material, especially something as important as an eighteenth-century piping treatise, for, as Seumas MacNeill puts it in his stimulating foreword to the new edition, 'Literature on the subject is distressingly scarce'. But this particular Reprint is of little use to anyone as it stands, and it is difficult to say what the publishers could have done to make it more useful without modifying drastically the original publication, in which case it would no longer be a straightforward reprint. They could have printed a comprehensive list of *errata* which would have necessarily run to many pages and entailed the preparation of fresh diagrams and music blocks, but the result would have been most inconvenient to use. They could have reprinted, but substituted the hopelessly corrupt diagrams and music with facsimiles from the original manuscript—for they are carefully penned and contain only a few obvious errors. The least the reader could have expected would have been a word of warning, whether in the Foreword or elsewhere. The fact that not even this has been done is surely inexcusable. As it is, no-one can use this book for serious study without first consulting the original MS or a photocopy and making his own numerous corrections. It would then be a debatable matter whether or not the Reprint were as easy to read as Joseph's original.

PETER COOKE

The Industrial Archaeology of Galloway by J. Donnachie. David & Charles, Newton Abbot 1971. Pp. 271. £3.50.

Galloway is a reasonably well-defined region of Scotland, bordering on Cumberland at one end, and at the other well placed for sea-links with Ireland, England, and Western Scotland. But in spite of much coming and going both ways, in spite of the military road built in 1765 as part of a through route to Portpatrick and thence to Ireland, in spite of the movement of men and cattle along the drove roads, the area has retained its individuality without, however, remaining static.

On the face of it, it appears surprising that Mr Donnachie should have chosen such an area of pastoral and dairying emphases for a first regional study of Scottish industrial archaeology. The logic becomes apparent, however, when it is remembered that water power is readily available and that this was what drove the machines in the early days of the industrial revolution. At the same time, the income from the cattle trade gave the landowners and entrepreneurs a financial basis on which they could build. Mr Donnachie's book tells the story of the success and failure or modification of these efforts, and shows how they can be illustrated by a careful study of the surviving three-dimensional evidence and its documentary background. To some extent, the early 'rural-industrial' phase based on water power became fossilised in Galloway, since it did not have the natural resources for participation in the big-scale technological developments of the nineteenth century. A study like this, therefore, has a special value for the pointers it can give to the history of the earlier industrial period, now largely obscured in most other places. It exemplifies the value of in-depth regional research for general historical purposes.

It appears throughout that there was a close integration between industry and agriculture. The growing of grain, which in the first half of the nineteenth century became an important export, led to the multiplication of water driven meal mills to about 140 by 1850. Of these, only a handful survives. There were also a few tower type wind-mills, and in the more isolated areas numbers of corn-drying kilns appeared on the farms. By the end of the eighteenth century, William Gladstone of Castle Douglas had already built over 200 farm mills.

Breweries and distilleries were also widespread, though only one remains at Bladnock near Wigtown. Their numbers were partly due to the grain growing emphases and they further stimulated the growth of increased acreages of barley.

Tanning and leatherworking, already well established in the seventeenth century, were logical extensions of the emphasis on cattle. By 1825, there were twenty-five tanneries, nine of which were concentrated on Dumfries. By the 1870s only four remained in operation, and now the skinworks at Langholm is the last survivor of this old tradition.

The timber reserves of Galloway were an important source for the supply of charcoal, much of it used up for the Cumberland and North Lancashire iron furnaces. The

woods tied up with the tanning industry by providing oak bark for processing the hides, and the clog-maker's craft, still carried on in Dumfries, also represents a link between wood and leather, with an outlet for the clogs in the brewing industry. Estate planting brought a second phase of activity to the forests of Galloway, marked after 1800 by the rapid spread of water-powered sawmills, of which one is still working at Drumburn. A lot of the wood was made into bobbins for the textile trade. Forestry is now a key industry in the south-west.

The processing of textiles was probably responsible for the biggest-scale industrial developments, requiring the greatest infusions of capital. Galloway wool had a good reputation, and supported a number of small-scale production units with water-driven waulk mills, but most of the spinning, carding and weaving remained as cottage industries as in the eighteenth century. Indeed, hand-loom weaving lasted here till the second half of the nineteenth century. Wool mills attracted the attention of the improving lairds, 'who saw in them a means of diversifying their interests from the agrarian sector, and of establishing a settled population in planned villages on their estates' (p. 74). Amongst the products were the widely famed Crawick carpets, made from the coarse wool of moorland sheep; hosiery, originating as a domestic craft; and tweed.

In this field, mechanisation came relatively late, matching the development of the cotton mills (partly financed by Yorkshire business men in the cattle trade) which exemplify an industrial revolution without steam. The linen industry also moved from the status of a domestic activity to that of a country craft but not much more. In every respect, Galloway appears as an area whose natural resources were exploited in the water-powered phase of the industrial revolution, and had enough indigenous strength to keep going in this way for some considerable time after technological developments had shifted the centres of production.

Quarrying also played an important role, stimulated first by the dyke-building enclosure period and the erection of improved farms and steadings. The nineteenth-century village of Dalbeattie owes its existence mainly to the Craignair granite, thousands of tons of which were transported by sea to build, for example, the Liverpool docks. Railway developments gave a further impetus to this industry.

Coalmining was largely confined to the Sanquhar and Canonbie districts of Dumfriesshire. It was also stimulated by the building of railways, and one village, Rowanburn, owes its existence to coal. As frequently exemplified in this book for Galloway, a study of the villages of Scotland that originated or were expanded in the late eighteenth to the nineteenth century would provide an excellent index to the country's social and economic history.

Associated with the coal measures was the quarrying and burning of lime as a fertiliser, and in particular the Closeburn limeworks had national importance, for it was the source of field lime for many parts of Scotland. The large numbers of small lime kilns in the Rhins and Lochryan districts is clear evidence of the local farmers'

desire to make full use of this important source of improvement, for grazing as much as for crops.

Small brick and tile-works were also numerous—it was, in fact, in south-west Scotland that handmade horse-shoe draining tiles first began to be made in the 1820s—and metal ores were mined, chiefly lead (Wanlockhead and Leadhills), zinc, copper, and iron, the latter perhaps in part the source of the metal that was turned into spades and shovels by the spade-making firm of James Rigg & Sons, Sanquhar, established there in 1772 (a small-scale industry not mentioned by Mr Donnachie).

All this information is seen by the writer in its relationship to transport and communications by land and sea, to which he devotes a final chapter. Here, and throughout, there are adequate distribution maps, making the book easily usable by travellers in Galloway who wish to use his 43-page inventory of sites. Numerous manuscript sources are also cited and should certainly be used for further detailed study. The reference system in the book, it may be noted, is a little awkward, since the reader has to turn from the text to the Notes and References section, and from there to the Bibliography.

Mr Donnachie has taken his subject a good step forward, by taking a limited area, and by seeing what it had to say for itself. The interpretation of documentary data is integrated with the study of three-dimensional remains to provide a worthwhile contribution to historical studies in general.

ALEXANDER FENTON

Illustrated Handbook of Vernacular Architecture by R. W. Brunskill. Faber and Faber, London 1970. Pp. 230. £2.50.

Vernacular architecture as a subject of study has probably been carried further forward on a systematic basis at the Manchester University School of Architecture than at any other equivalent institute in Britain. The present volume derives from over twenty years' experience of recording and research that has attempted to harness not only the activities of a relatively small number of trained staff and students, but also 'members of archaeological societies and extra-mural classes who had no architectural training but considerable enthusiasm'. In its straightforward, logical layout, in its step-by-step progression through the subject, in its clarity of exposition, it will undoubtedly serve to stimulate and guide beginners into a deeper understanding of vernacular architecture, as well as helping in the interpretation of relevant documentary sources. Although the book deals primarily with England, its method of approach could nevertheless be readily applied in Scotland, with minor modifications to suit local conditions, especially since Dr Brunskill realises clearly that at the vernacular level, social and economic history, farming in the country and commerce in the towns, is as much part of a building as the architecture itself. It is, indeed, this element that permits

'vernacular' to be defined, and by setting together function, size, and period, Dr Brunskill has evolved the useful concept of a 'vernacular threshold' which diminishes rapidly the further back one goes in time, since relatively few vernacular buildings are of any great age. If this concept were applied to rural Scotland, one would find the vernacular threshold not so much tapering off gradually as coming to an abrupt halt in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, when there began in most areas an almost total renewal of farm buildings. At the same time, the 'vernacular zone' between the 'vernacular' and 'polite' thresholds will almost certainly turn out to form a much broader band than in England.

Dr Brunskill has arranged his book in an orderly, architectural fashion which makes it a pleasure to handle and easy to use. The essential data, carefully selected, appears on one page, usually with an appropriate photograph, and on the opposite page there are captioned diagrams that amount to an illustrated dictionary of vernacular architecture. The sequence covers wall construction and materials (stone, brick, earth and clay, timber, wattle), roofing with its forms of inner framing and outer covering (thatch, flags, slate, tiles), plans and sections, general architectural details such as windows and doors, farm buildings with their layout and functional needs, including accommodation for livestock (but an important topic, accommodation for farm workers, is not dealt with), urban and minor industrial buildings in towns and villages, and a section on English influence in the vernacular architecture in North America. There is also a series of maps showing the distribution in England of different walling and roofing materials in relation to the underlying geology, and the fact that such maps can now be constructed is ample testimony to the range of the recording activities already completed by Dr Brunskill's School. Like all such distribution maps, they must be treated as provisional in as far as they simply reflect the state of knowledge at the time of publication, and in their generalised form cannot reflect variations or limitations in the abilities and objectives of the original recorders, but they have real value if used with caution.

Though consummating many years of work, this is still a pioneering work, for vernacular architecture has not yet received the academic attention that it deserves, especially in countries such as Scotland where the vast bulk of the indigenous architecture falls within the vernacular heading. It cannot be stressed too often or too strongly that our buildings are the longest surviving three-dimensional indexes to the history of the country that exist at the present day. They require study and interpretation as much as, and indeed along with, historical documents. This is a task that must not be delayed, for as Dr. Brunskill rightly says, they 'make up a large but swiftly diminishing part of our present environment, they must be studied now, by this generation, or never'.

ALEXANDER FENTON

Books and Records Received

(Some of these may be reviewed later in *Scottish Studies*)

BOOKS

Directory of Former Scottish Commonties edited by Ian H. Adams, Scottish Record Society New Series 2, Edinburgh 1971. Pp. 281

Tradition & Folklore, A Welsh View by Iorwerth C. Peate, Faber & Faber, London 1972. Pp. 147. £3.50.

In Search of Scottish Ancestry by Gerald Hamilton-Edwards, Phillimore, Chichester. Pp. 233. £2.75.

Enclosures and Open Fields. A Bibliography by J. G. Brewer, The British Agricultural History Society 1972. Pp. 32. 50p.

The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland: National Monuments Record of Scotland Report 1966–71 Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Edinburgh 1972. Pp. 14 + 15 photographs. 30p.

Oxford Paperback English Texts: Sir Walter Scott, Selected Poems edited by Thomas Crawford. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, London 1972. Pp. 302. £1.30.

Hrolf Gautreksson translated by Herman Pálsson and Paul Edwards (The New Saga Library). Southside, Edinburgh 1972. Pp. 150. 95p.

GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

Sir Walter Scott Bi-centenary Exhibition, Parliament House, Edinburgh 1971: Readings from Scott (by Ian Gilmour and Meta Forrest) and *Theme for a Bi-centenary* (by Martin Ellis, organ). Published by the Trustees for the Scott Bi-centenary Exhibition, Edinburgh 1971. (Mono SE 1971).

Isla St. Clair sings traditional Scots Songs Tangent Records. Edinburgh 1972 (TGA 112 Stereo).

Corrigendum

Vol. 15, p. 133, Fig. 2: numbers 6, 23, 12 and 17 should have been drawn 2 cm higher (vertically), in the segment bounded by circles 8, 31 and 40.

Anthony Jackson

Scottish Studies

Volume 16 : 1972

part two

Engraved for Wilson's Companion to the Ball Room.

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Scottish Studies

The Journal of the School of Scottish Studies
University of Edinburgh

16

PART TWO

1972

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UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
ABERDEEN

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The History of the Scottish Reel as a Dance-Form

I

J. F. and T. M. FLETT

In the early years of this century, and for as far back in living memory as we can go, the term 'Reel' meant one of the four main types of social dance in use in Scotland, *i.e.* Reels, Country Dances, Square Dances (Quadrilles, Lancers, *etc.*), and Circle Dances (Waltz, Polka, *etc.*). Today the distinctions between Reels and Country Dances have become blurred, and the name Reel is often applied to any Country Dance set to a common time tune in quick tempo.[1] However, to older people Reels and Country Dances were clearly differentiated, both in their structure and in their style of performance.

A true Reel consists of setting steps danced on the spot, alternated with a travelling figure—the setting steps can be as varied as the dancers please, while the travelling figure is usually the same throughout the dance. In many Reels there is also a change in musical rhythm in the course of the dance, an unusual feature in social dances.

A typical example of a true Reel is the Scotch Reel, now more commonly known as the Foursome Reel, which is performed by two couples.[2] In this dance the setting steps are performed with the dancers in a line of four, and the travelling figure, which is known as a 'reel of four', has the pattern of a figure 8 with a third loop added (Fig. 1(a)). This particular Reel also displays the change in rhythm, for it is usually begun to a strathspey, and in the course of the dance the music changes to a reel.

The patterns of the travelling figures of some of the other Reels mentioned later in this article are shown in Fig. 1(b)–(d).

In addition to the true Reels, the general class of Reels also includes a few dances, not constructed in the manner of the true Reels, but performed in the same style as them; the best known of these dances is the modern Eightsome Reel, which was composed about 1870.[3]

The traditional style of performance of Reels was vigorous, and distinctive features were the use of arms, either raised or placed akimbo, and the snapping of finger and thumb; in Scotland these were regarded as part of the dance, even by professional dancing-masters.

In contrast, in Country Dances and Square Dances the dancers held their arms loosely by their sides (ladies held their skirts if they wished) and there was no snapping of

fingers. Another feature of Reel dancing was the 'heuching' by the men (and sometimes ladies), though this was frowned on by the dancing-masters.

In our book *Traditional Dancing in Scotland*, we have given descriptions of the Reels that survived in Scotland within living memory, together with details of steps and style of performance. In that work, which we refer to as TDS, we confined ourselves primarily to a record of what could be gleaned from oral tradition, and we gave historical references only where we wished to establish the antiquity of the customs and usages which we recorded from our informants. In this paper our object is to complement this traditional account with a study of the history of Reels as a form of dance, and to put forward some theories concerning their origins. To some extent this note is a sequel to an earlier article, 'The Scottish Country Dance; its origins and development', published in two parts of volume II of *Scottish Studies*, which we refer to as SCD I, II.

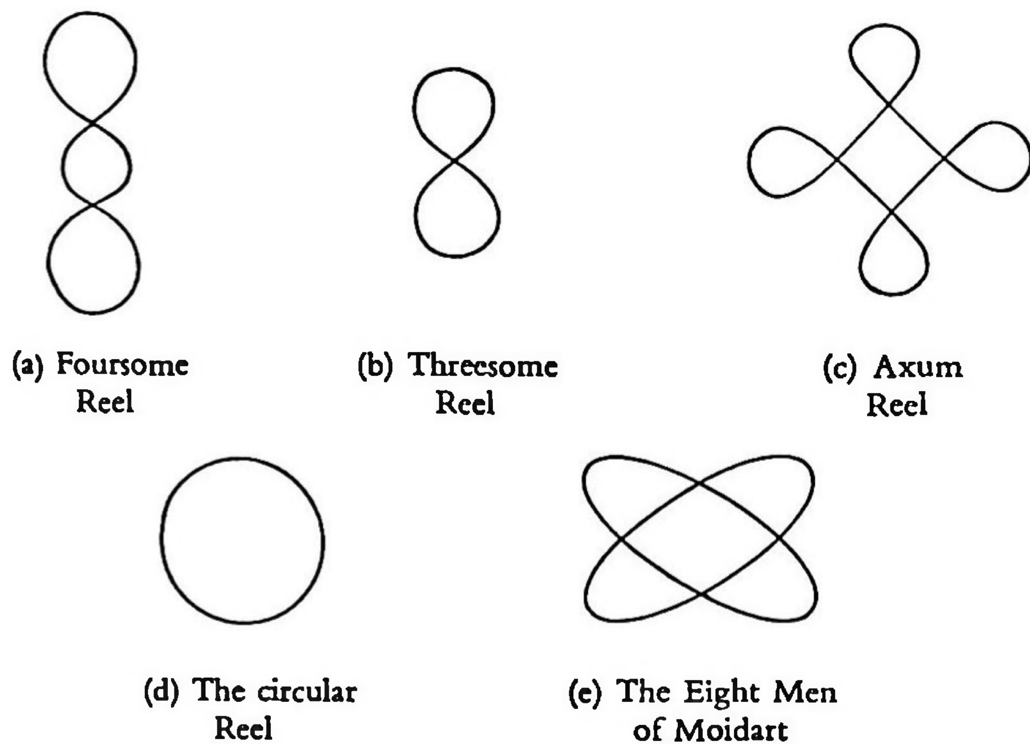

FIG. I

The study of Reels divides naturally into two periods, from 1525 to 1600, and from 1600 to the present day. In the first part of the second period, up to about 1820, almost all the known references to Reels are concerned with the Threesome and Foursome Reels, and other Reels, although they undoubtedly existed, are hardly mentioned. Fortunately, even for this period up to 1820 we are able to supplement our literary research with information drawn from oral tradition.

In this first part of the paper, we are concerned primarily with literary sources of information, and we introduce only such traditional information, mainly concerning the West Highland circular Reel and its allied forms, as is necessary for our purposes. In a second part, we will deal with the remaining Scottish Reels, including the Reel

of Tulloch, various double forms of the Threesome and Foursome Reels, and the Reels of Orkney and Shetland, and there our reliance on traditional information will be much greater.

Early References: 1525–1600

The earliest reference to 'reeling' as a form of dancing occurs in Gavin Douglas's translation of Virgil, *c.* 1525 (Douglas 1839:895):

> And gan do dowbill brangillys and gambatis,
> Dansys and rowndis traysing mony gatis
> Athir throu other *reland*, on thar gys;
> Thai fut it so that lang war to devys
> Thar hasty fair, thar revellyng and deray,
> Thar morysis and syk ryot, quhil neir day.

'Reilling' is also mentioned in the poem 'Peblis to the play', allegedly written by James I (1394–1437),

> All the wenchis of the west
> war vp or the cok crew
> ffor reilling yair micht na man rest
> ffor garray and for glew,

but the earliest extant version of this poem is in the Maitland Folio MS, compiled *c.* 1580 (Craigie 1919:176).

The word 'brangillys' used by Gavin Douglas is presumably the same as the word 'branles', and this is the name of a type of choral dance, in which the dancers linked hands in line or ring formation. A large number of such dances, including a 'Branle d'Escosse', are described by the French priest Thoinot Arbeau in his *Orchesographie* (Arbeau 1588), and seven tunes for the Branle d'Escosse can be found in Jean d'Estrée's *Premier Livre de Danseries* (Paris, 1559). The meaning of 'gambatis' is less clear, but the word is obviously derived from the French *gambade*, to leap or caper. In any case, Douglas makes a clear contrast between those who performed 'dowbill brangillys and gambatis, Dansys and rowndis traysing mony gatis' and those dancers who reeled 'athir throu other'. However, it should be noted that Douglas does not tell us that there were dances called Reels at that time, but only that there was a dance movement which was sufficiently described by the word 'reeling'.

It is not until about 1583 that we find the word Reel (or rather reill) definitely used to mean a dance, and this occurs in an obscure line in Montgomerie's *Flyting with Polwart* (Stevenson 1910:168):

> Bot rameist ran reid-wood, and raveld [in] ye reill[s].

The only other reference to a Reel in the sixteenth century occurs in the trial of the North Berwick witches in 1591, as reported in *Newes from Scotland* (Ritson 1794):

> Agnes Tompson being brought before the king's [James VI] and his councell . . . confessed that vpon the night of All hollon euen last she was accompanied . . . with a great many other witches, to the number of two hundreth; and that they all together went to sea, each one in a riddle or ciue . . . with flaggons of wine, making merrie and drinking by the way in the same riddles or ciues, to the kirke of North Barrick in Lowthian; and that after they had landed, tooke handes on the lande and daunced this reill or short daunce, singing all with one voice,
>
> Commer goe ye befor, commer goe ye,
> Gif ye will not goe before, commer let me.
>
> At which time she confessed that this Geilles Duncan [a servant girl] did goe before them playing this reill or daunce vpon a small trumpe, called a Jewes trump, vntill they entered into the kerk of North Barrick. These confessions made the king in a wonderfull admiration, and sent for the saide Geilles Duncane, who vpon the like trump did play the saide daunce before the kinges maiestie.

The same incident is described in Pitcairn's *Criminal Trials* (Pitcairn 1833:239, 245), but although Geilles Duncan is reported there to have 'led ye ring' playing 'on ane trump', the word 'reill' is not mentioned in Pitcairn's account.

We note that the witches 'reill' was a 'short daunce', and the word 'short' may again have indicated a contrast with the long line dance of Branle type. But the witches 'tooke handes', which seems to conflict with Montgomerie's dancers who 'raveld' in their Reels.

The period 1600–1820: The Threesome and Foursome Reels

We have remarked (in SCD I) that the seventeenth century saw little social dancing in Scotland, particularly in those parts that came most strongly under the influence of the Presbyterian Church.[4] There are very few references during this century to any form of social dancing in Scotland, and we know of only one such reference which mentions a Reel. This occurs in a manuscript Cantus, 'not older than 1670 or 1680', which now appears to be lost, quoted by Dauney in his *Ancient Melodies of Scotland* (Dauney 1838:55):

> The reill, the reill of Aves
> The joliest reill that ever wes.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, a more tolerant attitude towards dancing began to develop in Scotland as a whole, and this is the period that saw the introduction of the English Country Dance and the Minuet to Scottish Society. Dances called Reels now reappear, presumably having been preserved in the remoter parts of the country; it is also possible that they were preserved in less remote spots as dances to be performed behind closed shutters when the Church elders were elsewhere.[5]

The first signs of the rapid rise in popularity of Reels appear in the music collections of the early eighteenth century. Approximately contemporary with the revival of

dancing about 1700, and obviously related to it, is the appearance of dance music set for the fiddle and the pipes in Scottish manuscript collections. This may be taken to be evidence of the acceptance of these essentially folk instruments in polite society, for the ability to write down music presupposes a fair level of education. Tunes called reels appear immediately in such collections as a fully developed musical form, and this is exactly what we might expect from the prior history of Reels as dances.[6]

For example, George Skene's Music Book of 1717, a collection of fiddle and pipe tunes (Adv. MS. 5.2.21), contains two tunes labelled simply 'Reill' (or 'Reel'), two 'New Reills', 'A Reell Jannie', 'Mr David Skene's Reell', and 'Mr Campbell's Reell'.[7] Again, the Duke of Perth's manuscript, compiled by David Young in 1737 for the Duke of Perth, contains, in addition to the four dozen Country Dances referred to in SCD I and II, a second part consisting of '*A collection of the Best Highland Reels*'. This second part contains 45 reel tunes, and is the earliest source for a number of well-known tunes, including the Reel of Tulloch (unfortunately it does not include a description of the figures of the Highland Reel). An even more extensive collection of reels is to be found in the two extant volumes of the McFarlan Manuscripts (N.L.S. MS 2084–5), written by David Young 'for the use of Walter McFarlan OF THAT ILK', the first volume in 1740, the second *c.* 1743. There are also a number of reels with Country Dance figures set to them in the Young Manuscript of 1740 (SCD I: 4), and also in the various volumes of the Walshs' *Caledonian Country Dances* published in London from 1733 onwards (SCD I: 8; II: 144).

Rather surprisingly, strathspeys are absent from the early Scottish manuscript and printed collections of music. There are slight traces of the distinctive strathspey characteristics in the McFarlan Manuscript, and also possibly in a tune entitled 'Strath sprays Rant' in Book III of the Walshs' *Caledonian Country Dances* (*c.* 1740), but the earliest tunes known to us that are unmistakably strathspeys are two tunes each entitled 'A new Strathspey Reel' (and marked 'slow') in Part 3 of Oswald's *Caledonian Pocket Companion*, *c.* 1751. There is also a note 'a Strathspey Reel(e)' against two of the Country Dances in the Menzies Manuscript of 1749 (SCD I: 5), namely 'The Montgomrie's Rant' and 'Conteraller's Rant', but this manuscript does not give the music for the dances. John Bremner's *Collection of Scots Reels*, of which the first twelve parts were published in Edinburgh between 1757 and 1761, contains over ten tunes labelled as 'Strathspeys', but even at this date Bremner thought it necessary to add an *N.B.* to the first such tune (The Fir Tree, in Part 5, 1758) stating that 'The Strathspey Reels are play'd much slower than the others'.

Popular tradition current in the north-east of Scotland about 1785 named the Browns of Kincardine-on-Spey, and after them the Cummings of Castle Grant, as the first composers of strathspeys (Newte 1791:163), and there seems no reason to doubt this tradition. Certainly the absence of strathspeys from the early manuscripts indicates that they evolved at some time after 1700, for had they been a fully developed musical form by 1700, they would have appeared in the manuscripts at the same time as reels.

We should mention also the conclusions reached in SCD II (pp. 141–2) that, before about 1740, tunes in Common time for Country Dances were played at a tempo of about 28–32 bars per minute, *i.e.* less than half that of present-day Country Dances in quick tempo. These conclusions tend to confirm that at this period the distinction between reels and strathspeys had not yet emerged.

The fact that the early strathspeys are referred to as 'Strathspey Reels' indicates that they were played for the dancing of Reels, and there is confirmation of this in the titles of some of the later music collections, for example Angus Cumming's *A Collection of Strathspeys or old Highland Reels*, published in Edinburgh in 1780, and Alexander McGlashan's *A Collection of Reels, consisting chiefly of Strathspeys, Athole Reels, etc.*, published in Edinburgh in 1786. However, it should be mentioned that there was also another dance that was performed to strathspeys, namely the Strathspey Minuet. This repeatedly intrudes into our story, and we return to it in an Appendix.

The term 'Athole Reel' used above was simply a new name for the old fast reels, to distinguish them from 'Strathspey Reels'. In 1798, the poet and song-collector Alexander Campbell makes the following comment on their distribution (Campbell 1798):

> The reel seems prevalent in the Braes of Athol, and over the west part of Perthshire, and is pretty universal throughout Argyleshire. The strathspey seems peculiar to the great tract of country through which the river Spey runs. Through the North-Highlands, and western Isles, a species of melody, partaking somewhat of the reel, and strathspey, seems more relished by the natives, to which they dance, in a manner peculiar to these parts of the Hebrides. The Athol reel is lively, and animating in a high degree. The strathspey is much slower, better accented, ... The movements to the former are spirited, yet less graceful.

We note for future reference the sentence concerning the North-Highlands and western Isles.

Although the manuscript and printed collections of Scottish music provide plentiful evidence of the popularity of Reels in the eighteenth century, they tell us little of the nature of these Reels, and for this we have to turn to the literature of the period.

In the glossary to Ruddiman's edition of Douglas's Virgil, printed in Edinburgh in 1710 (Ruddiman 1710), we find the term *Reel* defined as 'a *dance*, as *a threesom Reel*, where three dance together'. Ruddiman also defines the terms *Ring Dances* and *Rounds*, and these definitions are of interest since they describe two types of dances that Ruddiman considered were *not* Reels. To Ruddiman, Ring Dances were 'a kind of dance of many together in a ring or circle taking one another by the hands, and quitting them again at certain turns of the Tune (or Spring, as Scot. we call it,) and sometimes the piper is put in the center'. On the other hand, Rounds were '*merry* Dances in which the body makes a great deal of motion, and often turns *round*. The country Swains and Damsels call them S. *Roundels*'.

Although Ruddiman's definition of the term Reel leaves open the possibility that

at that time there were Reels for more or fewer than three people, until 1775 those references which mention the number of dancers refer to three people only.[8]

The first such occurrence is in Allan Ramsay's second Canto to 'Christ's Kirk on the Green', written in 1716 (Ramsay 1800):

> Furth started neist a pensy blade,
> . . .
> They said that he was Falkland bred,
> And danced by the book;
> . . .
> When a' cry'd out he did sae weel,
> He Meg and Bess did call up;
> The lasses babb'd about the reel,
> Gar'd a' their hurdies wallop,
> And swat like pownies when they speel
> Up braes, or when they gallop,
> But a thrawn knublock hit his heel,
> And wives had him to haul up,
> Haff fell'd that day.

Another such incident is recorded in the autobiography of Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk (Burton 1910). In 1741 Carlyle was at Lucky Vint's, a celebrated tavern in Edinburgh, with Lord Lovat and Erskine of Grange. The latter had provided a piper

> to entertain Lovat after dinner; but though he was reckoned the best piper in the country, Lovat despised him, and said he was only fit to play reels to Grange's oyster-women. He [Lovat] grew frisky at last, however, and upon Kate Vint, the landlady's daughter, coming into the room, he insisted on her staying to dance with him. . . . Lovat was at this time seventy-five, and Grange not much younger; yet the wine and the young woman emboldened them to dance a reel, till Kate, observing Lovat's legs as thick as posts, fell a-laughing, and ran off. She missed her second course of kisses, as was then the fashion of the country, though she had endured the first. This was a scene not easily forgotten.

The 1745 Rising brought many Lowland and English people into contact with the Highlanders for the first time, and might be thought to have given rise to several descriptions of Reels, but unfortunately this is not so. The Highlanders certainly danced; indeed James Gib, who served Prince Charles as 'Master-Houshold and provisor for the Prince's own Table' told Robert Forbes that 'the Highlanders were the most surprising men he had ever seen. For after making very long marches, and coming to their quarters, they would have got up to the dancing as nimbly as if they had not been marching at all, whenever they heard the pipes begin to play; which made him frequently say, "I believe the devil is in their legs"' (Forbes 1895: II. 171). It is highly probable that the dances performed on such occasions were Reels, but the only confirmation of this is from Lord George Murray, who recorded that on crossing the Esk

'the pipes began to play so soon as they pass'd, and the men all danced reels, which in a moment dry'd them' (Murray 1908:126).[9]

Robert Forbes also records that when Prince Charles arrived at the house of Lude on 2 September 1745, 'he was very cheerful and took his share in several dances, such as minuets, Highland reels (the first reel the Prince called for was "This is not mine ain house", *etc*), and a Strathspey minuet' (Forbes 1895: I. 208). This is the earliest reference to the Strathspey minuet, and indeed is the earliest reference to the term 'strathspey' in connection with dancing or music.[10]

It is interesting to note that although Reels were danced from the highest to the lowest strata of society, from the Prince, the Duke of Perth, and Lord Lovat, to Grange's oyster-women, the dances performed at the Edinburgh Assemblies from their inception in 1723 up to as late as 1753 seem to have consisted only of Country Dances and Minuets (Flett 1967).

The next reference to Reels is given by Giovanni Gallini (Sir John Gallini), a London dancing-master, in his *Treatise on the art of dancing* (London 1765):

> It is to the Highlanders of North-Britain, that I am told we are indebted for a dance in the comic vein, called the *Scotch Reel*, executed generally, and, I believe always in *trio*, or by three. When well danced, it has a very pleasing effect, and indeed nothing can be imagined more lively and brilliant than the steps in many of the Scotch dances. There is a great variety of very natural and pleasing ones.

This description of the Reel as 'a dance in the comic vein' sounds as though Gallini may only have seen it as a 'character' dance, performed as an interlude on the London stage. Although there was at this time a 'Scotch dancing assembly' in London (Alexander Carlyle mentions that in 1769 it 'met in the King's Arms Tavern, in Cheapside' (Burton 1910:524)), it is probable that Gallini, as a prominent dancing-master, would not have visited it.

Gallini is the first writer to use the name 'Scotch Reel'. Later this name appears to have been applied to both the Threesome and Foursome Reels, and it was then retained by the Foursome Reel as the Threesome Reel died out.

Yet another reference to a Reel for three occurs in Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* (Boswell 1936:323). At Inchkenneth, on 18 October 1773, 'I [Boswell] proposed a reel, so Miss Sibby and Coll and I danced, while Miss MacLean played' [on a harpischord]. Earlier, on 10th September, Boswell took part in another Reel on the top of Duncaan in Raasay, where 'we danced a reel, to which he [Malcolm, son of Raasay] and Donald Macqueen sang' (*op. cit.*: 137). This reel on Duncaan, which was described simply as a 'Highland Dance' in the printed version of the tour issued by Boswell (Boswell 1785), was the subject of the cartoon reproduced in Plate I; this was issued in 1786, and is one of the earliest known pictures of a Reel.[11]

There is substantial evidence that the eighteenth century Threesome Reel consisted of setting steps danced on the spot, alternated with the travelling figure known today

PLATE V Boswell's Reel on Duncaan. This cartoon is one of the earliest known pictures of a Reel.

as a 'reel of three', in the pattern of a figure 8 (Fig. 1(b)). This evidence, which is set out in detail in SCD II (pages 132–7), is to be found in the early Scottish manuscript collections of Country Dances, where the term 'reel of three' is used as the name of one of the Country Dance figures. We remark here only that, although no description of a 'reel of three' figure is known before 1811 (see p. 105), the meaning of the term 'reel of three' as used in the Scottish manuscripts can be positively identified, for the 'reel of three' of the manuscripts can be shown to be the same as the English Country Dance figure 'hey', of which a clear description was given in 1752.[12]

The first explicit mention of a Reel for four people (as well as a further mention of a Reel for three) occurs in the letters of Major Topham, an English soldier stationed in Edinburgh in 1774–5 (Topham 1776). Although Topham's description of Reel dancing has often been quoted, it conveys so vividly the Scots' attitude to Reels that it will bear repetition:

> The general Dance here is a Reel, which requires that particular sort of step to dance properly, of which none but people of the country can have any idea. . . . The perseverance which the Scotch Ladies discover in these Reels is not less surprising, than their attachment to them in preference to all others. They will sit totally unmoved at the most sprightly airs of an English Country Dance; but the moment one of these tunes is played, . . . up they start, animated with new life, and you would imagine they had received an electrical shock, or been bit by a tarantula. . . . The young people in England . . . only consider Dancing as an agreeable means of bringing them together. . . . But the Scotch admire the Reel for its own merit alone, and may truly be said to dance for the sake of Dancing. I have often sat a very wearied spectator of one of these Dances, in which not one graceful movement is seen, the same invariably, if continued for hours. . . . A Scotchman comes into an Assembly-room as he would into a field of exercise, dances till he is literally tired, possibly without ever looking at his partner, or almost knowing who he dances with. In most countries the men have a partiality for dancing with a woman; but here I have frequently seen four gentlemen perform one of these Reels seemingly with the same pleasure and perseverance as they would have done, had they the most sprightly girl for a partner. . . .
>
> The Ladies, however, to do them justice, dance much better than the men. But I once had the honour of being witness to a reel in the Highlands, where the party consisted of three maiden ladies, the youngest of whom was above fifty, which was conducted with gestures so uncouth, and a vivacity so hideous, that you would have thought they were acting some midnight ceremonies, or enchanting the moon.

And again:

> Besides minuets and Country Dances, they in general dance reels in separate parts of the room. . . . Their great agility, vivacity, and variety of hornpipe steps[13] render it to them a most entertaining dance; but to a stranger the sameness of the figure makes it trifling and insipid, though you are employed during the whole time of its operation, which is indeed the reason why it is so peculiarly adapted to the Scotch who are little acquainted with the attitude of standing still.

The references here to the 'sameness of the figure' and the variety of steps are highly suggestive of the alternate setting and reeling of the true Reels, and the other comments are to be expected of a spectator who had the misfortune never to have danced a Reel himself.

Topham is not the only writer to comment on the vigour with which Reels were danced. For instance, the Frenchman de LaTocnaye recorded that in Elgin in 1793

> j'aperçus une danse, cela me donna envie de connaitre quels étaient les reels écossais, . . . j'en avais bien vu, mais c'était parmi des gens riches dans un bal. Ici c'était la simple nature, je fus surpris de la vivacité des pas; ils n'étaient pas élégans, mes ces bonnes gens semblaient avoir bien du plaisir; ils se tournaient et se retournaient faisaient des sauts, poussaient des cris de joie; il y avait particulièrement quelques montagnards dont la joie excessive dérangeait souvent le philibeg, mais personne n'y prenait garde—L'usage fait tout (de LaTocnaye 1801),

There are also contemporary references to the raised arms and the finger-snapping, for example, in Alexander Ross's *The Fortunate Shepherdess* (Ross 1768):

> When dinner's o'er, the dancing neist began,
> An throw an' throw they lap, they flang, they ran;
> The cuintray dances an' the cuintray reels,
> Wi' strecked arms yeed round, an' nimble heels.

Again, in 'Pate's and Maggie's Courtship' in David Herd's *Scottish Songs* (Herd 1776):

> They danced as well as they dow'd,
> Wi' a crack o' their thumbs and a kappie.

And yet again, in a description of a kirn at Harviestoun in 1813 that deserves to be reproduced in full (Wake 1909):

> At Harviestoun the kirn always took place in a very large building, a sort of barn loft, at one end of which was one of the many agricultural machines in which the laird delighted, and which for the evening was covered over with napery, and thus was transformed into a splendid buffet, on which there was a profusion of everything that was most esteemed in the way of refreshment by the class of guests for whom it was prepared. Whisky toddy, punch, cold and steaming hot, and mountains of shortbread cake, were the most favoured among the good things provided for the occasion, and innumerable were the visits made to the buffet by the panting couples, who for a brief space broke away from the dance at the upper end. Fast and faster still, each foot kept that wonderful time, of which none who have not witnessed real Scottish dancing can form the faintest idea . . . every limb answers to the marvellous music of the Scottish reel and Highland strathspey. Feet stamping, fingers snapping, eyes as it were on fire, heads thrown back, while shouts mark the crisis of the dance,—it must have been seen to be imagined.

Finally, we cannot forbear from quoting Felix MacDonough's exquisite male who finds a 'set of ultras' in Edinburgh, among whom

> one is not obliged to look all flurried with their d-d reels, whereby, (from ill-judged complaisance) I once broke my stay-lace, and which make a man's hair all out of order, and render the active performer not a *aspiring*, but a *perspiring* hero . . . we dance nothing but waltzes and quadrilles . . . (MacDonough 1824:179).

After 1775, when a Reel for four is first mentioned, there are several references to Reels that seem to imply that the only Reels in current use were Threesome and Foursome Reels. For example, there are the well-known lines

> There's threesome reels, there's foursome reels,
> There's hornpipes and strathspeys, man,

in Burns 'The De'il's awa' wi' th' Exciseman', which appears in the fourth volume of *The Scots Musical Museum* in 1792 (Johnson 1839). The 'strathspeys' here may well have been the Strathspey Minuet, as may also have been the 'Twasome' in the following lines written by the Duke of Gordon to the tune 'Cauld Kail in Aberdeen' (*op. cit.* vol. 2):

> In Cotillons the French excel,
> John Bull, in Countra-dances;
> The Spaniards dance Fandangos well,
> Mynheer an All'amande prances;
> In Foursome Reels the Scots delight,
> The Threesome maist dance wondrous light,
> But Twasome ding a' out o' sight,
> Danc'd to the Reel of Bogie.

Another interesting reference, which we return to in the Appendix, occurs in Robert Riddell's *Collection of Scotch Galwegian and Border Tunes* (Edinburgh, 1794) in a note on the tune 'Symon Brodie':

> Tunes of this measure were in use formerly to be danced by two persons. Generally a Man and a Woman—on the west-border, these dances were called Cumberland's, In the Midland Counties they were Called Jigs, and in the Highland and Northern Shires, Strathspeys: and when danced by two men, armed with sword, and Target, they were called the Sword dance—of late years Reels, danced by three, or Four persons, have supplanted, the more ancient dances above mentioned.

In this context we should mention also Francis Peacock's *Sketches relative to the history and theory but more especially to the practice and art of dancing*, published in Aberdeen in 1805 (Peacock 1805). The fifth of these sketches consists of: 'Observations on the Scotch Reel, with a description of the Fundamental steps made use of in that Dance and their appropriate Gaelic Names', and contains the earliest (though unfortunately rather imprecise) description of Reel steps. The value of these 'Observations' is considerably enhanced by the fact that Peacock was an old man when he wrote them. He taught dancing in Aberdeen from 1747 until his death in 1807 at the age of 84,

so that his observations presumably refer to the period about 1750–1800. Moreover, as he remarks, his position in Aberdeen gave him a knowledge of the different styles of dancing used throughout the Highlands:

> Our Colleges draw hither, every year, a number of students from the Western Isles, as well as from the Highlands, and the greater part of them excel in [Reels] . . .; some of them, indeed, in so superior a degree that I, myself, have thought them worthy of imitation.

Concerning the Scotch Reel itself, Peacock remarks that

> The fondness the Highlanders have for this quartett or trio (for it is either the one or the other) is unbounded; and so is their ambition to excell in it. This pleasing propensity one would think, was born with them, . . . I have seen children of theirs, at five or six years of age, attempt, nay even execute, some of the steps so well as almost to surpass belief.

On the music for the dance he comments that strathspeys are 'in many parts of the Highlands, preferred to the common reel'. On the other hand, the reel, 'by reason of its being the most lively of the two, is more generally made choice of in the dance'.

Among his Reel steps, Peacock gives a 'Forward step', which 'is the common step for the *promenade*, or figure of the Reel', and he tells us that this figure (which is unfortunately not described) occupies the first 8 bars of the measure (*i.e.* the first half of the tune played twice). The setting steps similarly occupy the second 8 bars of the measure.[14]

Not until 1804 do we find a reference that allows the possibility of Reels for more than four dancers. This occurs in one of the notes to Alexander Campbell's long poem *The Grampians Desolate* (Campbell 1804), in which the dances of the Highlanders are classified as (i) 'Dances of one performer', (ii) 'Dances of two, or twa-some dances, as they are called by the lowlanders', (iii) 'Dances of three or more . . . are reels and Strathspeys . . .', (iv) 'Dances of character or dramatic cast'.[15] In the poem itself (*op. cit.* p. 128), Campbell seems to imply that the musician may change the tempo in the course of a Reel by switching without pause from a strathspey to a reel. Earlier references do not preclude such a change of tempo in the course of the dance, but the passages from Peacock's *Sketches* already quoted seem to imply that Reels were usually performed either entirely to reels or entirely to strathspeys, and it is likely that this was the normal usage for most of the second half of the eighteenth century. On the other hand, the use of a combination of strathspeys and reels, and indeed other types of tune, seems to have been firmly established by about 1820, for in *The Companion to the Reticule* (Edinburgh, *c.* 1820)

> each page consists of a Reel, Strathspey, and a Jig, upon the same key; so that by playing each of them three or four times over alternately, the dancing, by undergoing so many changes in the time, is kept up with the utmost spirit throughout a whole Reel, which may be performed by three, four, six, eight, or twelve ladies and gentlemen, agreeable to the number or taste of the party.

This, incidentally, is almost the last reference to a Threesome Reel.

The earliest precise descriptions of true Reels in either manuscript or printed works are dated between 1808 and 1818, and these are discussed in the next section. Slightly earlier than this, however, we have descriptions of dances called Reels that do not possess the 'alternate reeling and setting' structure of the true Reels. The first of these occur in a manuscript collection of dances taught at Blantyre Farm in 1805 by a dancing master, Mr William Seymour, from Kilbride (a copy of the manuscript is in the Atholl Collection in the Sandeman Public Library, Perth). Most of the dances described in this manuscript are Country Dances but it also includes a version of the Bumpkin (Flett 1965) and three Eightsome Reels.

These three Eightsome Reels are in longways form, and consist of sequences of Contry Dance figures, but there is no progression of the couples down the set as in a Country Dance. For example, the instructions for the first Eightsome Reel in the manuscript are: 'Gentlemen all come up—follow after head gentleman. Ladies do same after head lady. right and left full round to places, change sides with right hand, change again with left, Allaman all,[16] change sides, chace, change sides, back again, right and left, hands all round' (it is likely that this sequence of figures was performed as a complete dance in itself, without any repetition, but the manuscript gives no instructions on this point). It is not clear why these dances should be called Reels, for they have none of the characteristic features of the true Reels. It is possible that they were performed in the same vigorous style as the true Reels, but it is also likely that the name 'Reel' was used simply to distinguish their non-progressive character from the progressive longways Country Dances.

Another such non-progressive longways Reel of Eight is described in a manuscript of 1818 (N.L.S. MS 3860; see the next section), and this manuscript also contains a Reel of Eight in square formation, involving simple figures from the Quadrilles. This latter dance persisted for the next 50 years or more, and was then embodied in the modern Eightsome Reel to form the opening and closing sequences of that dance (see Flett 1966–7: part III). Other dances called Reels, but again lacking the characteristic Reel structure, are described in a manuscript collection of dances compiled by a Frederick Hill in Aberdeenshire in 1841. However, here the dances are at least performed to a combination of strathspeys and reels.

In addition to these dances, there were a number of dances in use in Scotland in the nineteenth century which combined the increased variety of figure of the preceding dances with the characteristic 8-bar setting periods and the vigorous style of performance of the true Reels. A number of very fine dances of this type, some of which have been published in pamphlet form (MacNab 1947–62), were collected in Canada from the descendants of emigrants from Scotland by the late Mary Isdale MacNab of Vancouver. Several others, collected from oral tradition in Scotland, can be found in Professor H. A. Thurston's *Scotland's Dances* (Thurston 1954: Appendix B), and also in TDS, pages 164, 175 and 197.

All these dances are of considerable interest in themselves, but they add little to our

knowledge of the development of the Reel as a form of dance, and we therefore leave them aside, and confine our attention only to those dances that exhibit the 'alternate reeling and setting' structure of the true Reels.

Detailed descriptions of the Threesome and Foursome Reels: 1811–1914

The first detailed descriptions of true Reels occur in Thomas Wilson's *An Analysis of Country Dancing*. Thomas Wilson was a London dancing-master who practised from about 1800 to at least 1852, and was the author of a number of books on dancing, all published in London. He composed well over six hundred Country Dances, and it is through some of these that he is best known today. Most of the Country Dances that he composed were published in two of his own books, entitled *Treasures of Terpsichore* (1809) and *Companion to the Ballroom* (1816), but he also composed the figures of the Country Dances in three collections, each entitled *Le Sylphe*, published by Button and Whittaker in 1813, 1814, and 1815. To some extent his Country Dances were not typical of his time. The history of the Country Dance in England shows a long decline throughout the eighteenth century, ending in utter triviality by about 1820, and Wilson, in his books on Country Dancing, was attempting to inject fresh ideas into the Country Dance with the aim of restoring it to its former popularity. However, the decline had gone too far, and his attempts failed. None of Wilson's Country Dances survived in either England or Scotland within living memory, but a substantial number of them, particularly those set to Scottish tunes, have been reconstructed from his original descriptions by the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society and published in their books.

In the section on etiquette in his *Companion to the Ballroom* Wilson makes an interesting comment on the style of performance of Reels:

> Snapping the fingers in Country Dancing and Reels, and the sudden howl or yell too frequently practised (introduced in some Scotch parties as partly national with them),[17] ought particularly to be avoided, as partaking too much of the customs of barbarous nations; the character and effect by such means given to the dance, being adapted only to the stage, and by no means suited to the Ballroom.

In view of his comment about 'barbarous nations', it is amusing that Wilson's own compositions should have been so completely forgotten in England, and yet are so enthusiastically danced in present-day Scotland.

The frontispiece to the *Companion to the Ballroom*, which shows a ballroom in which a Reel, a Country Dance and a Waltz are being performed simultaneously, is reproduced in Plate II.

The first edition of Wilson's *An Analysis of Country Dancing*, which was published in 1808, is a small handbook containing diagrams showing the various figures used in Country Dances. It includes also descriptions of some 'New Reels' composed by

PLATE VI Frontispiece to Thomas Wilson's *Companion to the Ballroom* (1816), showing a Reel, a Country Dance and a Waltz.

Wilson, and also that of 'the common Reel of five', which was added 'to render the work more complete'. The second edition of the *Analysis*, published in 1811, is a much larger book, which contains not only diagrams of Country Dance figures (including many of Wilson's own ideas), but also elaborate rules which enable the reader to compose Country Dances for himself, together with hints on technique and etiquette. The section on Reels is extended, and it now includes descriptions of a 'Reel of Three' and a 'Reel of Four'. A recension of the *Analysis* entitled *The Complete System of English Country Dancing* appeared in 1821, and in this Wilson prefaced the descriptions of the Reels of Three and Four with the following introduction:

> *The Old Scotch Threesome and Foursome Reels.* These reels have for a number of years been a very favorite, and most generally approved species of dancing, not only with the English, but also with the Irish and Scotch, and particularly with the latter, from whom they derive their origin. They have, likewise, been introduced into most of the foreign Courts of Europe, and are universally practised in all our extensive Colonies, and so marked in their favoritism, that not only among the amusements afforded at all Balls, these reels are invariably introduced, but Assemblies are very frequently held for the purpose of dancing them only . . .

Before describing Wilson's versions of the Threesome and Foursome Reels we mention two further sources, almost contemporary with Wilson, which contain a little detailed information about Reels.

One of these is Barclay Dun's *Translation of nine of the most fashionable Quadrilles . . .*, published in Edinburgh in 1818,[18] which gives an incomplete description of the Foursome Reel, here called 'the Scotch Reel'.

The second is a manuscript entitled *Contre-Danses à Paris* 1818 in the National Library of Scotland (N.L.S. MS 3860). The title of this manuscript is misleading, for the author was evidently an expert on dancing in Scotland, and the manuscript, which is written in English, is concerned primarily with Scottish practice. It is in the form of a small bound notebook, and contains descriptions of steps and figures used in Reels, Country Dances, and Quadrilles, together with the descriptions of a few Country Dances. The numbering of the pages is not consecutive, suggesting that the manuscript may consist of extracts from some larger manuscript or printed work, but no such larger work is known either in this country or in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. The manuscript was bought some years ago in a Paris bookshop by a London book-dealer, and nothing is known of its origin. It is possible that it was written by a Scottish dancing-master while studying in Paris under one of the leading French masters.

The descriptions of the Foursome Reel given in these various sources are best discussed with reference to the version of the dance that was most widely used within living memory. In this version, the setting steps are performed with the dancers in a line of four, with the ladies at the ends facing inwards and the men back to back in the centre. The dancers begin the 'reel of four' (Fig. 1(a)) by passing the person facing

them with the right shoulder, so that the end loops are described clockwise; each lady dances the complete figure and returns to her own place, while the men exchange places by omitting the last half of the centre loop. To begin the dance, the dancers stand in a line of four, facing partners, with the men in the centre, and the dance commences with the 'reel of four', followed by setting, then the 'reel of four' again, and so on, each man setting first to the opposite lady, then to his partner, and so alternately. There is also an alternative starting position for the dance, with partners side-by-side facing the opposite couple, each man having his partner on his right. Whichever starting position is used, the setting is always performed with the dancers in line.

The version of the Foursome Reel described by Wilson in his *Analysis* of 1811 differs from this traditional version in several ways. In Wilson's version the dance begins with the dancers in a line of four, with the *men* at the ends and the ladies back to back in the centre. Further, the dancers begin the 'reel of four' by passing with the *left* shoulder (so that the end loops are described anti-clockwise), and *all* the dancers return to their original places, where they set to partners. In *The Complete System* of 1821 Wilson adds a footnote to say the dancers 'may, with equal propriety', begin the 'reel of four' with the right shoulder.[19]

Barclay Dun's description gives only the starting positions (in line) and the initial movements of the dancers in the 'reel of four', and, as far as it goes, it agrees exactly with the traditional version, *i.e.* the men are in the centre, and the reel is 'right-shoulder'.

The manuscript *Contre-Danses à Paris* gives only the pattern of the 'reel of four', and, as in Wilson's first version, the dancers begin by passing with left shoulders. The manuscript does not give the position of the men and ladies, but it does mention that the men set alternately to the ladies, so that there is some change of position with each 'reel of four'.

The manuscript mentions also an alternative travelling figure in which the dancers follow each other round in an elongated circle, and it adds the comment 'that the practice of going quite round [in the circle] is not nearly so elegant [as the "reel of four"] but it was introduced from England two or three years ago under the name of "fashionable", most probably because in England this reel was never properly understood or valued'. We return to this circle figure in the next section.

None of these sources mentions the alternative side-by-side starting position of the traditional version.

The Threesome Reel (or Reel of Three), like the Foursome Reel, consists of alternate reeling and setting, and here the reeling figure is the well-known 'reel of three', in the pattern of a figure 8 (Fig. 1(b)). In the *Analysis* of 1811 Wilson states that the dance can be performed by either a man and two ladies or a lady and two men, and that the dancers start in a line of three with the odd person in the middle facing one of the others. The reeling figure is begun by the two dancers who are initially facing each other passing with the left shoulders, and all three return to their own places. In *The Complete System* Wilson adds that in each setting period the centre person sets for half

the time to one partner, then sets for the remaining time to the other, and then turns back to the first partner to begin the reeling figure. He also mentions another version in which each dancer comes into the centre in turn.

The manuscript *Contre-Danses à Paris* gives both the versions of the Threesome Reel described by Wilson, and it also specifies that in the version where the dancers change position this is achieved by the centre person and one partner repeating half a loop of the 'reel of three'. However, it does not state the direction of the 'reel of three'.

Following the books of Wilson and Dun and the Paris manuscripts, we have a long series of small pocket ballroom guides and other books published by Scottish dancing-masters,[20] of which the earliest containing information about Reels is *Lowe's Ball-Conductor and Assembly Guide*, published by J., R., J., and J. S. Lowe, four members of a family of dancing-teachers. This work ran through several editions, and the only surviving copies known to us are a copy of the third edition, *c.* 1830, in the National Library of Scotland, and an incomplete copy of a later edition, *c.* 1860, in our possession. The first author, Joseph Lowe, taught in Edinburgh in the winter and in Inverness in the summer, and *circa* 1840 was the leading member of his profession in Scotland. At the time of the third edition, the other three authors covered between them the towns of Glasgow, Perth, Dundee, Montrose, Brechin, Arbroath, and Elgin, as well as parts of Fife!

The *Ball-Conductor* contains descriptions of Reels of Four, Five, and Six. In the Foursome Reel the Lowes place the ladies at the ends, as in the traditional version, but they do not state the direction of the 'reel of four'. They are also the first to mention the alternative side-by-side starting position.

The Foursome Reel is described in every Scottish ballroom guide subsequent to 1830, and in every case the description agrees with that of the traditional version. On the other hand, the Threesome Reel is described only by J. G. Atkinson in his *Scottish National Dances* (Atkinson 1900), and his description agrees with that of the first version described by Wilson. We ourselves have never met anyone in Scotland who has actually danced the Threesome Reel as a social dance, though one of our informants remembered having seen it performed several times in his youth, at Tomnahurich Bridge near Inverness, about the year 1895. In view of its omission from the Lowes' *Ball-Conductor*, it seems probable that it began to drop out of use about 1820. There is also confirmation of this in the manuscript records of the piping and dancing competitions organised by the Highland Society of Edinburgh, for, from at least 1816 onwards the only Reels performed at the competitions were for four dancers (Flett 1956*b*).

The West Highland circular Reel and its allied forms

In order to complete our history of the Threesome and Foursome Reels, it is necessary to take into account another group of Reels, of which the most widely known was the West Highland circular Reel. This circular Reel is a dance for two couples, its travelling

figure being a simple circle in which the dancers follow each other round in a clockwise direction, without joining hands.

To begin, the dancers stand beside their partners, each lady on her partner's right, facing the other couple. The ladies start by passing across in front of their partners, and the men join in the circle behind them. They all finish in a line of four, and set to partners. The circle figure and setting are now repeated as often as desired, all the setting being performed in line as before.

There is good evidence that this dance was once the principal Reel in the Western Highlands and the Western Isles, and that in these areas the ordinary Foursome Reel with its 'reel of four' was introduced only comparatively recently. This evidence is provided partly by our own researches in Scotland (Flett 1953–4; TDS: 156–9), and partly by the researches of Dr Frank Rhodes in Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia (published in the appendix to TDS).

We have ourselves recorded the circular Reel in the mainland districts of Moidart, Morar, and Arisaig, and the islands of Barra, South Uist, Benbecula, Eigg, and Skye. In South Uist, Benbecula, Eigg, and the Torrin district of Skye, the circular Reel was in general use up to about 1885 or even later, and at that time the Foursome Reel with its 'reel of four' was not danced at all there. In the other places mentioned, Moidart, Morar, Arisaig, and Barra, the circular Reel was understood to have been the 'original' Reel for four danced there, but the actual date when it began to be replaced by the Foursome Reel was outside living memory.

This information, which was gathered in 1953–6, enables us to speak with absolute certainty only for the period from about 1860 onwards. However, the information gathered by Dr Rhodes in Cape Breton Island provides evidence covering a much earlier period.

The western part of Cape Breton Island was largely settled *c.* 1800–1820 by emigrants from the Western Isles and the West Highlands, and also from more central regions of the Highlands such as Lochaber (the eastern part of the island was settled earlier by emigrants from all parts of Britain). Among the descendants of these Scottish settlers, the only social dances of Scottish origin found by Dr Rhodes were 'four-handed Reels', together with traces of 'eight-handed Reels' and a few of the old Gaelic dance games.

The 'four-handed Reel' existed in a variety of forms, and most of these had close affinities with the form of circular Reel described above, *i.e.* they consisted of setting steps danced on the spot alternated with a circling figure, the setting steps being performed with the dancers either in a line or in a square formation. The most primitive version found by Dr Rhodes was in square formation, with the women on their partner's left, facing the opposite couple, and the dancers simply alternately circled clockwise (one behind the other) and set to their partners, without changing their relative positions. Other versions more closely resembled the circular Reel described above.

Up to 1939 the Foursome Reel with its 'reel of four' was known only to those people on Cape Breton Island who had travelled outside the island, and Dr Rhodes could find no indication that it was ever danced among the descendants of the old Scottish settlers. From this evidence, together with that from Scotland itself, we may reasonably infer that the Foursome Reel was absent from the West Highlands and the Western Isles at the time, *c.* 1800–20, when the emigrants left for Cape Breton Island, and indeed right up to about 1870, and that the circular Reel was then in general use in those parts of Scotland. It is possibly this use of the circular Reel to which Alexander Campbell was referring when he wrote in 1798 in the passage quoted earlier that the people of the North Highlands and the Western Isles 'dance, in a manner peculiar to those parts of the Hebrides' (Campbell 1798).

We have already mentioned in the preceding section that the circle figure is given in the manuscript *Contre-Danses à Paris 1818* as an alternative to the 'reel of four' in the Foursome Reel, with the comment that the circle figure was introduced from England. Since the circle figure was then quite widely used in parts of Scotland, this comment seems unlikely, to say the least. The circle is also given as an alternative to the 'reel of four' by Atkinson in his *Scottish National Dances* (Atkinson 1900), but apart from these two occurrences it is not mentioned in the literature.

The existence of the circular Reel in Nova Scotia and the absence there of the Foursome Reel were first brought to light by Mr Angus MacDonald, the late premier of Nova Scotia, in a letter to Professor Thurston (Thurston 1954). On the basis of this letter Professor Thurston inferred that the circular Reel was the predecessor of the Foursome Reel in Scotland, but the evidence from oral tradition concerning the distribution of the two dances in Scotland itself was not then available.

We should add that the circular Reel, both in Scotland and in Nova Scotia, was performed to a combination of reel and strathspey tunes. However, in Nova Scotia the tempo for reels was about 52 bars per minute (*i.e.* slower than the traditional Scottish tempo), while that for strathspeys was about 44–48 bars per minute (*i.e.* faster than the traditional Scottish tempo of 40–42 bars per minute).

A number of other Reels have been recorded in the West Highlands and the Western Isles which have obvious affinities with the circular Reel. Two of these are Ruidhleadh nan Coileach Dubha (The Reel of the Blackcocks) and Cath nan Coileach (The Combat of the Cocks), which were performed in Barra up to about 1885. Ruidhleadh nan Coileach Dubha is essentially a version of the circular Reel containing an element of mime occasioned by the words of the dance-song with the same title[21]; it differs from the circular Reel principally in that the four dancers join hands in a ring for the circling figure.

Cath nan Coileach is also a dance for two couples, who stand in the form of a cross, opposite to their partners, with whom they join crossed hands. The hand-holds are retained throughout the dance, which consists of alternate setting and circling. It is performed to a 6/8 jig, and alternate repetitions of the complete sequence of setting

and circling are danced at tempos of about 60–64 bars per minute (*i.e.* normal quick tempo) and about 75–80 bars per minute (*i.e.* as fast as the piper can play!).

The titles of both these dances are mentioned by Alexander Carmichael in his *Carmina Gadelica* (Carmichael 1900:208–9), but he gives no description of them. Both were recorded by us in 1953, and precise descriptions can be found in Flett 1953–4 and in TDS, chapter 6.

We should add that another dance called Ruidhleadh nan Coileach Dubha was collected by Dr Rhodes both in South Uist and Cape Breton Island. This too is danced by two couples, but it involves alternate swinging and a crossing figure (TDS: 172, 278–9).

Another dance which is obviously derived from the circular Reel is The Eight Men of Moidart, which belonged to the district of Glenuig in Moidart. This fine dance is a 'double' version of the circular Reel, in which two circular Reels are performed simultaneously in a 'St Andrew's cross' formation, the two circles being flattened and interlaced (Fig. 1(e)). It was first recorded by Dr Rhodes and one of the authors in 1956, and a detailed description is given in TDS, chapter 6.

The only other Reel which has affinities with the circular Reel is Ruidhleadh Mòr (The Big Reel), which is essentially a version of the circular Reel for as many dancers as please. It was performed up to about 1895 in the Torrin district of Skye, where one of our informants had seen it danced at a wedding (Flett 1953–4; TDS: 159). On that occasion the twenty or so people present formed one big ring round the room. When the music began—the dance was performed to reels throughout—the dancers moved round clockwise in a circle, one behind the other (without joining hands), then stopped and danced ordinary Reel setting steps, then danced round in the circle again, and so on.

It should be noted that the most primitive version of the Cape Breton 'four-handed Reel' recorded by Dr Rhodes has precisely the same form as this dance.

It is interesting to observe that, although the traditional evidence proves that the circular Reel was the principal Reel in use in the West Highlands and the Western Isles from at least 1800 to about 1870, the existence of this dance cannot be deduced from any literary references, either in a printed work or in a manuscript, before about 1950. All we have are the references in the Paris Manuscript and in Atkinson's book to the circle figure as an alternative to the reel of four, and these give no indication that the figures belonged to different dances, while the Paris Manuscript adds the misleading information that the circle figure came from England.[22] Moreover, the only reference before 1950 to the four allied dances described above is Carmichael's mention of the names of Cath nan Coileach and Ruidhleadh nan Coileach Dubha in 1900, and this reference does not allow us to assert even that these dances were Reels. *Thus a widely distributed type of dance can exist for 150 years and yet leave so little trace in the contemporary literature that its existence would not even be suspected by a dance-historian who relied on literary evidence alone.*

The circular Reel, particularly in the primitive form discovered by Dr Rhodes in

Cape Breton Island, and in its 'big' form Ruidhleadh Mòr, is an unsophisticated dance which could be of very great antiquity. Moreover, many parts of the West Highlands and the Western Isles retained their Catholic faith throughout the Reformation period, so that social dancing would have taken place there in an unbroken tradition dating back to mediaeval times, and the circular Reel could be part of this tradition.

It is possible that the big Reel, Ruidhleadh Mòr, is actually the progenitor of the circular Reel, for it would obviously have been well suited to the old 'black houses' of the West Highlands and the Western Isles, with the fire in the middle of the floor—the dancers could simply have circled the fire. It is also possible that Ruidhleadh Mòr is itself in turn descended from some mediaeval ring dance, in which the ring of linked hands was broken while the dancers performed steps on the spot. In this connection, it is of interest to note that John Leyden, writing in 1801, records that, although the Ring Dance, which 'was formerly a favourite in the south of Scotland, . . . has now gone into desuetude', it 'is still retained among the Scottish Highlanders, who frequently dance the Ring in the open fields, when they visit the south of Scotland as reapers, during the Autumnal months' (Leyden 1801).

We should mention also that we have recorded a dance on Eigg, An Dannsa Mòr (The Big Dance), which may be a survival of a ring dance of the type of the mediaeval carole. In this dance, which was performed by men only, to a particular song, the dancers form a ring round the room. The verses are sung by two of the dancers who come inside the ring to do so, each singing alternate lines, while the other dancers stand still. These two men then jump back into the ring, and all the dancers join in the chorus as they dance round with linked hands (Flett 1953–4).

The origins of the Threesome and Foursome Reels

We have seen in the preceding sections that a Threesome Reel was the earliest form of Reel to be recorded when social dancing again became generally possible in Scotland at the end of the seventeenth century. Explicit references to Reels for four occur only much later, the earliest being that of Topham in 1776, but we can infer from Peacock's mention of the Scotch Reel as a 'quartett or trio' that Reels for four were almost certainly known in 1747, when Peacock first began teaching. Although there remains a disparity of nearly 40 years between this last date and the earliest reference to a Threesome Reel (in 1710), it would be rash to conclude that the Foursome Reel was unknown at the beginning of the eighteenth century, for the example of the circular Reel shows that a dance may exist for far longer than 40 years and yet leave no trace in the contemporary literature.

The eighteenth century Threesome Reel almost certainly possessed the characteristic Reel structure, its travelling figure being the 'reel of three', in the pattern of a figure 8. We cannot be so certain that the travelling figure in the early Foursome Reel was the

'reel of four', but it is extremely likely that this was so, and that the Foursome Reel of Topham, Burns, the Duke of Gordon and Riddell was more or less the Foursome Reel as known today. Further, if our theories concerning the antiquity of the circular Reel are correct, we may also infer that the Threesome and Foursome Reels are primarily dances of the Eastern Highlands and the Lowlands.

It is obvious from these remarks that the origins of the Threesome Reel, and possibly also those of the Foursome Reel, must be sought in the period before 1700, but for this period the Scottish evidence is fragmentary. However, a possible clue may be found in the fact that the 'reel of three' figure of the Threesome Reel is the same as the English figure 'hey' (for three).

The English figure 'hey' is derived from one or more dances known by the name *Hey* or *Hay*. The earliest occurrences given by the Oxford English Dictionary (OED for short) are in the works of John Skelton (1529): 'Enforce me nothing to write but hay the gy of thre', and 'To dauns the hay and run the ray'. Further references to 'hay the gy', with spellings varying from 'Hey de Gie' to 'hey-day guise' (Hey de Guise?) continue up to 1638 (see Cunningham 1962), though it is not certain that all these refer to the same dance, and only the passage from Skelton quoted above specifies the number of dancers.

In addition to these references to 'hay the gy', there are also numerous further references to dances simply called Heys (Heyes, Hays), continuing to an even later date than those to 'hay the gy' (see, *e.g.* note 12). It is not clear whether the earliest uses of the term Hey refer to a type of dance rather than to a single specific dance, but certainly by about 1590 the word Hey was used, both in England and France, to mean a general type of dance or dance figure in which the dancers wound in and out among each other (for instance, Sir John Davies in his poem Orchestra (1596; see Cunningham 1962) speaks of 'winding Heyes'; *cf.* also Butler (1609; quoted in OED), 'playing in and out as if they were dancing the Hey', and Arbeau, *Orchesographie* (Arbeau 1588, fo. 90 r°), 'Les danceurs . . . s'entrelacent & font la haye les uns parmy les aultres'). This usage is still strongly evident some fifty years later in the earliest extant collections of English Country Dances (Playford's *The English Dancing Master*, London 1651, and the British Museum Sloan Ms 3858, *c.* 1645), and there the figures called Heys include heys for three and four in a line, a 'double hey' for six, a hey for four in a square, and, in a long line, 'the single Hey all handing as you pass till you come to your own places'. Most of these figures disappeared in the next 50 years as the longways progressive Country Dances slowly superseded the earlier forms (SCD I: 7), and by about 1730 the only surviving hey in English Country Dancing was the hey for three.

It is of particular interest that Sir William Davenant in one of his plays (1656; quoted in OED) refers to an 'Irish hey', for in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the word Irish could mean 'belonging to the Scottish Highlands or the Gaelic inhabitants of them'.[23]

The word hey is derived from the French *haie* or *haye*, a hedge, with derivative

meanings of a row of shrubs or stakes forming a hedge, thence a row or line of people (particularly troops), and thence a dance.

The number three in the earliest reference to the 'hay the gy' is suggestive of the three dancers in the Threesome Reel, and it is possible that about the year 1500 a dance, involving a figure similar to the 'reel of three' or 'hey for three', was imported from France to both Scotland and England, and that this dance was the original source from which both the Threesome Reel in Scotland and the Hey in England descended. A possible candidate here is the 'haye d'Alemaigne' mentioned in 1538 in the works of the French poet Marot[24] (Mayer 1964:107), for this, under the title 'alman haye', is one of the dances listed in *The Complaynt of Scotland* (Murray 1872–3:66).

It is obvious that any dance which was imported from the Continent would be more likely to be a court dance than a folk dance, and this accords with the nature of the Threesome Reel and the 'hay the gy of thre', for the uneven matching of the sexes in these two dances is suggestive of the artificial atmosphere of a Court, where 'one saw . . . between two ladies fair a knight unblemished dance'. The word 'reeling' might well have been applied in Scotland to the figure of such a dance,[25] and in time this could have led to the name Reel being applied to the dance as a whole.

If the Threesome Reel were a development during the sixteenth century from such an importation, then it is likely that the Foursome Reel also developed at about the same time, for we might expect the development of these dances in Scotland to parallel that of the Hey in England. The subsequent disappearance in Scotland of forms involving more than three or four dancers could well have been caused by the religious prohibitions on social dancing during the seventeenth century, for only compact forms such as the Threesome and Foursome Reels would have been suitable for performance in secret behind closed doors and shutters.

This theory, that the Threesome and Foursome Reels were derived from some importation from Europe, would also explain the restriction of the Threesome and Foursome Reels to the Lowlands and the Eastern Highlands, for any such imported dance would certainly have arrived first in the Lowlands, and would then have spread slowly into the more accessible parts of the Highlands as it was adapted to the native idiom.

Appendix

The Strathspey Minuet and the Jig

A short account of the history of the Strathspey Minuet has been given (in Flett 1956*b*), and here we amplify only one or two points.

The Strathspey Minuet is first mentioned on the occasion when Prince Charles visited Lude House in 1745 (see above). That it was a dance for two is clear from a reference to it in 1756 when two Scots danced it at a ballroom run by a Scotsman in Spa in Belgium: 'There was a family of Jews there . . . [who] were the keenest dancers

and the worst at it ever was.... Lady Hellen and Lord Garless danced a strathspey minuet; whenever the Jews saw that they fell to it, they lap, they flaghtered so like hens with their feet tied together, that you might have bound the whole company with a straw' (Calderwood 1756).

The Strathspey Minuet is almost certainly the same as the 'Straspae' which was seen by Topham in the Edinburgh ballrooms in 1774–5. This was again a dance for two people, 'a kind of quick minuet.... We in England are said to *walk* a minuet: this is gallopping a minuet... every idea of grace seems inverted and the whole is a burlesque: Nothing of the minuet is preserved except the figure; the steps and time most resemble a hornpipe' (Topham 1776).

Riddell, in his note on the tune Symon Brodie quoted above, says that the Strathspey, as a dance for two persons, belonged to the 'Highland and Northern Shires', and refers to the Jig as being the counterpart of the Strathspey 'in the Midland Counties'. The Jig is also mentioned by John MacDonald, a coachman, who performed it *circa* 1778 at a ball given by a gentleman's servant to his friends in London. MacDonald first danced a minuet with his partner. Then

> when we had danced the minuet, I asked the favour of the lady to dance a jig; she answered she would. She buttoned up the skirts of her gown, and I called for Lady Kitty Carstair's Reel. We both danced together in the form of the minuet, though quick. When we were done, the company called *encore, encore* (MacDonald 1790).

Riddell comments that in 1794 these dances were becoming obsolete, and nothing more is heard of the Jig after that date. However, the Strathspey was resurrected for a brief period by the organising Committee of the Edinburgh piping and dancing competitions. In 1812 the Committee resolved 'that Robert Gunn, Alexander MacLellan and two others dance a Strathspey Reel at the Competition if they can be learned to do so against next year'. The 'Strathspey Reel' here may be a copyist's mistake for 'Strathspey', or may have been a genuine misunderstanding on the part of the Committee. In any case, whatever the intention of the Committee, the dance which Robert Gunn and his fellows brought to the competitions in 1813 in response to this resolution was the twasome Strathspey. This dance was almost certainly the same as the Strathspey Minuet, and it was performed regularly at the competitions until 1832. At the next competition, in 1835, there was one competitor who wished to perform it, but no one could be found to partner him, and there appears to have been no fresh move to preserve the dance (Flett 1956*b*).

At this period the Strathspey was presumably almost an exhibition piece, and at the Peer's Ball on the occasion of the visit of George IV to Edinburgh in 1822 'a lady and a gentleman in a Highland dress danced a strathspey with much taste, which the King so much admired, that he clapped his hands in token of approbation' (Mudie 1822). However, not even royal approbation was enough to restore the dance to popularity, and it does not seem to have survived in the ballroom after this date.

NOTES

1 The confusion also extends to tunes, and the name 'reel' is nowadays often wrongly applied to other quick common time tunes such as Scotch measures. Properly, a reel (we use the small 'r' in contrast to the capital 'R' for Reels as dances) is a very smoothly flowing tune—good examples are 'The High Road to Linton' and 'Mrs Macleod of Raasay'. The essential musical rhythm of a reel is a quaver rhythm, and the four beats in each bar are almost evenly accented. A Scotch measure is a much more 'bouncy' tune than a reel, typical examples being 'Corn Rigs' and 'Flowers of Edinburgh'; it has a crotchet rhythm, with two main beats, and two weaker beats, in each bar.

2 This and other Reels were often performed with only men or only women taking part. However, since we are writing here of social dances, we assume in our descriptions of dances that they are being performed by both sexes together.

3 For an account of the development of the modern Eightsome Reel see Flett 1966–7: part III.

4 There is one point in SCD I where we may not have been sufficiently explicit. Our remarks there concerning the religious disapproval of dancing during the seventeenth century refer to *social* dancing by *adults*. There are a number of references from this period in old family papers concerning payment of fees for dancing lessons for children, which indicate that children were encouraged to dance, as a healthy form (indeed possibly the only form) of exercise. On the other hand, social dancing by adults, in which members of the opposite sex danced together, was 'promiscuous dancing', and, as such, came under the condemnation of the Church. We do not know of any explicit references to social dancing in seventeenth century Scotland where the dancing did not evoke censure by the Church, though there are perhaps two implicit references. These occur in the Journals of Sir John Lauder, Lord Fountainhall (Lauder 1900), and refer to payments to musicians at the weddings of two of Sir John's servants, in 1670 and 1673: it is a fair assumption that the presence of musicians implies dancing.

5 A vivid account of a situation of this type in Lewis in the nineteenth century is given by Alexander Carmichael in his *Carmina Gadelica* (Carmichael 1900: xxv).

6 The account of the history of reels and strathspeys that follows is an amplification of what we have written in Flett 1956*b*.

7 As far as we know, the first occurrence of a tune labelled 'reel' is in Henry Playford's *A Collection of Original Scotch-Tunes* (London, 1700). The tune in question is 'The comers [cummers] of Largo, A reell', and is in 9/8 time!

In George Skene's Music Book, 'A Reell Jannie' is in 12/8 time, but all the other tunes from this manuscript listed here are in common time.

8 Between 1700 and 1775 there are some fourteen references to Reels as dances. We quote all those of value, omitting only those of the 'lambkins dance reels on the green' type.

9 A very similar account is given in Mounsey 1846.

10 A writer in *Notes and Queries* in 1861 put forward the theory that the term 'strathspey', referring to a dance (and so presumably to a tune as well), was a popular corruption of the word 'stravetspy', said to be the name of a dance mentioned in the works of Zachary Boyd, *c.* 1610. However, as remarked in Flett 1955, the writer's 'stravetspy' is probably a misreading of 'strive to essay', and is certainly not the name of a dance.

11 We are indebted to Dr. J. L. Campbell of Canna for telling us of the existence of this cartoon.

12 The first precise description of the 'hey' occurs in Nicholas Duke's *A concise and easy method of learning the figuring of country dancing* (London, 1752), and is given by means of a diagram. However, there is a much earlier description implicit in a passage in the play *The Rehearsal* by George Villiers, Second Duke of Buckingham, published in 1672. In this passage, a playwright explains how he would attempt to represent on the stage an eclipse of the sun followed on the same day (!) by an eclipse of the moon:

'But, Sir, you have heard, I suppose, that your Eclipse of the Moon, is nothing else, but an interposition of the Earth, between the Sun and Moon: as likewise your Eclipse of the Sun is caus'd by an interlocation of the Moon, betwixt the Earth and Sun? . . . Well, Sir; what do I, but make the Earth, Sun, and Moon, come out upon the Stage, and dance the Hey. . . . And, of necessity, by the very nature of this Dance, the Earth must be sometimes between the Sun and the Moon, and the Moon between the Earth and Sun; and there you have both your Eclipses. That is new, I gad, ha?' (Arber 1869).

13 The reference here to steps as 'hornpipe steps' does not necessarily imply any particular style of performance, since at this period the term 'hornpipe' seemed to apply to any solo step or dance.

14 Peacock's descriptions of steps are too long to be reproduced here. Some information about them can be found in TDS, chapter 5.

15 For further information about the solo and dramatic dances mentioned by Campbell see Flett 1956*a*.

16 It should be noted that the Allemand (Allaman) was originally a non-progressive figure. The progressive figure of this name used in present-day Scottish Country Dancing seems to be a modern invention.

17 In the original this parenthesis is a footnote.

18 Barclay Dun was a dancing-master who practised in Edinburgh from about 1800 to at least 1838.

19 We recorded a version of the Foursome Reel in Roxburghshire and Berwickshire in which the strathspey portion was exactly as in Wilson's last description (TDS: 147). The starting-position with the men at the ends also survives in two Four-handed Reels recorded in Dorset and Devon by the English Folk Dance and Song Society.

20 A list of these ballroom guides, many of which are now very rare, can be found in the bibliography in TDS.

21 On the subject of such miming, see Flett 1956*a*.

22 The circle figure is also used as one of the movements in the earliest recorded version of the Reel of Tulloch, in 1844 (see part II of this article), but again there is nothing to indicate the existence of the circular Reel as a separate dance.

23 For example, Skelton in 1529 speaks of Scottish Highlanders as 'Irish keterings', while Spottiswood in 1655 (quoted in OED) says 'We oft finde the Scots called Irishes, like as we yet term commonly our Highlandmen, in regard they speak the Irish language'.

24 The words occur in *Le Temple de Cupido*, in an edition of Marot's works published in 1538:

'Les hayes d'Alemaigne frisques;
Passepiedz, Bransles, Tourdions'.

The poem was written *c.* 1515, but in a version published at about that date the two lines above appear differently, *viz*:

'Branles gays alemandes frisques
Basses dances et Tordions'

(Mayer 1964: 107). The OED refers to the former version as '15th century French'.

Huguet's *Dictionnaire de la Langue Francaise du Seizième Siècle* mentions also a reference to a 'haye de Bretaigne' [Brittany] in Marot's works. We are indebted to Professor Mayer for the information that the reference actually occurs in an anonymous poem *Epitre du Biau fys de Pazy*, first published in 1549:

'Pour dansez haye de Bretaigne
Et les passepié d'Allemaigne'.

25 The use of the word *reel* to mean to waver, to stagger, and to sway unsteadily from side to side, goes back to about 1400 (OED).

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The Removal of Runrig in Roxburghshire and Berwickshire 1680–1766

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Despite a growing interest in the changes which took place in Scottish agriculture during the eighteenth century, studies of the removal of runrig remain scarce. Indeed, although M. Gray has published a study of the abolition of runrig in the Highlands,[1] no comparable study is available for any major lowland area.[2] The purpose of this paper will be to help reduce this deficiency by examining the removal of runrig in Roxburghshire and Berwickshire, an area which, along with the Lothians, is often regarded as one which pioneered change during the eighteenth century.

However, before taking up the problem of its removal, an important general point must first be made about runrig in Roxburghshire and Berwickshire. Briefly, runrig in this area appears to have consisted of two distinguishable types. By far the most important and most widespread was that involving the intermixture of land belonging to different tenants. This type, which is here called tenant runrig, was of course the type which commonly existed in other parts of Scotland. In addition, there also existed in Roxburghshire and Berwickshire examples of runrig involving the intermixture of land belonging to different heritors, that is landholders who held their land on an hereditary basis. For the sake of convenience, this type has been called proprietary runrig though it should be noted that some examples consisted of land belonging to different feuars as well as proprietors, feuars being in a strict sense tenants who held their land on a 999 year lease in return for a fixed rent.[3] A more detailed statement of the nature and character of both these types can be found elsewhere (Dodgshon, forthcoming). For the present argument, suffice it to say that their distinction is a necessary one because of the contrasting method by which each was removed. For this reason, it is proposed to discuss their removal separately beginning first with tenant runrig.

Although representing the most widespread form of runrig in Roxburghshire and Berwickshire, manuscript evidence for tenant runrig tends to be scarce. As in other parts of Scotland, much of this scarcity can be accounted for by the fact that, prior to the general spread of leases in the mid-eighteenth century, the majority of Scottish tenants had no legally established position on the land. In consequence, both the nature of their tenure and their actual holding tended to receive or to generate a minimum of documentation. However, as regards the availability of evidence for the removal of runrig, a more important factor was that, except for the weakly developed kindly

tenant system,[4] and, in a sense, the feuing system, the Scots tenant never acquired the right to the hereditary tenure of a farm similar to that enjoyed by some of his English counterparts under the copyhold system. His removal at the end of his lease or at any other time if he was only a tenant-at-will—and therefore the removal of runrig—was entirely at the discretion of the landowner or his factor and involved no legal process. Although this provides an adequate explanation for the absence of legal division proceedings, to some extent it still leaves part of the basic problem unanswered for it fails to explain away the lack of evidence for alternative forms of runrig removal in Lowland areas like Roxburghshire and Berwickshire. This is really a vital point because whilst it is generally accepted that the removal of runrig did not involve legal division proceedings, nevertheless, the idea that it was removed by some form of division or estate re-organisation seems firmly embedded in modern thinking.[5] The problem still remains therefore of why evidence is lacking for even this type of change since, though a purely internal estate affair, it would surely be surprising if so fundamental an alteration in the pattern of landholding failed to find some mention in contemporary estate material.

In answer to this problem, it is suggested here that part of the reason for the dearth of evidence relating to the removal of runrig lies in the method by which it took place. The evidence for Roxburghshire and Berwickshire, in fact, suggest that the bulk of runrig was removed by a reduction in the number of tenants per farm rather than by a division of each tenant's share into a separate and distinct holding. As a result, the entire process, with only a few exceptions, tended to form a part of the normal procedure for the re-letting or re-leasing of farms. The evidence for this conclusion can be summarised as follows. First, taking a negative view, the only evidence for the removal of runrig by division consists of references to the division of runrig on the Gavin (O.S.A. XV: 579) and Foulden (O.S.A. XI: 116) Estates, both in Berwickshire, together with the comment by R. Kerr that during 'the period of general division and inclosure of Berwickshire, already mentioned to have taken place between 1750 and 1760, a complete revolution was effected in the distribution of farming land and farming population' (Kerr 1809: 189–90). As well as having no support in the other General Views on the region, Kerr's reference to division finds little support in contemporary estate material. Certainly, there is ample evidence for enclosure and changes in farm layout at this point, but little to suggest that it was connected with the removal of runrig. In fact, quite apart from providing evidence for the division of runrig, contemporary estate material contains evidence which can be interpreted as evidence against the existence of divisions. Briefly, because of the system of letting, with each tenant holding a share or proportion of a particular farm, it is likely that, had a division of each tenant's share taken place, it would have resulted in the creation of a large number of new or separate farm units, a development which would surely have been evident from available rentals. However, rentals for the area show no major change in the number of farms during this period.[6]

In contrast to this lack of evidence for the division of runrig, a substantial body of evidence can be put forward in support of its removal by a reduction in the number of tenants per farm. The most readily available source of evidence for tenant numbers is that of rentals. In view of the absence of any extensive or developed system of sub-letting in Roxburghshire and Berwickshire,[7] rentals for this area can be accepted as providing a fairly reliable indication of tenant numbers. As Table I shows (p. 124), those examined have provided a sufficient number of examples of tenant reduction to suggest that it was an important method of runrig removal.

Further support for this interpretation of runrig removal is provided by other types of evidence. Leases, for example, frequently contain explicit evidence of tenant reduction through their habit of stating the previous tenants of the farm. This is shown by a lease of 1740 which set to an Alex. Hog the 'east part of nether Roxburgh presently possessed by the said Alexr. Hog James & Rich. Hewits James Lees and Jas. Hewit younger' (RP Registered Tack Mr Charles Binning To Alex. Hog 1740). A more gradual reduction in tenant numbers can be seen taking place through the leases available for the farm of Nether Ancrum in northern Roxburghshire. After being set in 1741 to John Rutherfurd, George Tinline, Robert Storrie, Andrew Rutherfurd, James Buckham and James Bell, each a sixth part, the farm was re-set in 1744 to only four tenants. In 1754, their numbers fell still further when the farm was leased to only two tenants, Robert Stenhouse and James Thomson, the final changeover to single tenancy being completed in the 1760s.[8]

A further illustration of a gradual reduction in tenant numbers is provided by the experience of Linhope, one of the many farms in upper Teviotdale belonging to the Buccleuch Estate. A note contained in a day-book relating to the farm gives details of how one of its tenants, a Walter Grieve, gradually acquired control of the entire farm over the period from 1729 to 1753. Briefly, Grieve began farming in 1729 when, at the age of nineteen, he acquired a sixth share of Linhope. In 1737, he took over a further sixth from Thomas Shiel followed, in 1738, by another sixth from John Curle. The final and, as regards the removal of runrig, the most important step took place in 1753 when Grieve acquired the remaining half share of the farm from John Eliot of Borthwickbrae (GP Grieve Day Books).

An interesting, if unusual, example of tenant reduction is provided by a document concerning the farm of Newtoun of Cavertoun in the extreme north of Roxburghshire. The document, dated 1753, consists of a signed statement by three of the farm's tenants declaring that whereas the 'Commissioner to His Grace Robert Duke of Roxburgh, Did upon the ninth day of May last, Grant unto us, and James Herd tenant of Cavertoun, a Tack of His Graces Ten Lands of Cessfourd and a Sixth part of the Newtoun of Cavertoun, and of other land therein particularly mentioned, And also did of the same date, Grant unto me the said James Herd, a Tack of the Mains of Cavertoun and another Sixth part of the said Newtoun of Cavertoun, ... for the space of twenty years, ... And whereas it has been Judged convenient for all concerned,

TABLE I

Examples of Tenant Reduction

								Source
	1710	*1714*	*1718*	*1722*	*1766*	*1792*		
1 Grimslaw	8	8	7	6	5	1		BP
	1710	*1714*	*1718*	*1722*	*1766*	*1792*		
2 Eckford	9	7	8	8	3	1		BP
	1710	*1714*	*1718*	*1722*	*1766*	*1792*		
3 Mosstower	3	2	2	1	1	1		BP
	1710	*1714*	*1718*	*1722*	*1766*	*1792*		
4 Langton	3	3	3	3	1	1		BP
	1708	*1716*	*1766*					
5 Stitchellhill	2	2	1					BP
	1708	*1716*	*1766*					
6 Sundhope	3	3	1					BP
	1708	*1720*	*1766*					
7 Whelmes	5	4	1					BP
	1708	*1720*	*1766*					
8 Westerweens	2	3	1					BP
	1708	*1720*	*1766*					
9 Sladehill	2	1	1					BP
	1705	*1725*	*1740*	*1750*	*1755*	*1765*		
10 Clintmains	2	1	3	2	2	1		PP
	1725	*1740*	*1750*	*1755*	*1765*			
11 Boghall	1	2	1	2	1			PP
	1705	*1725*	*1740*	*1750*	*1755*	*1765*		
12 Boutchercoat	2	1	1	1	1	1		PP
	1700	*1701*	*1710*	*1744*				
13 Hopton	4	3	3	1				RP
	1700	*1710*	*1731*	*1741*	*1743*	*1757*	*1758*	
14 Windywalls	4	4	3	3	2	2	1	RP
	1695	*1700*	*1746*	*1752*	*1768*			
15 Sprouston Mains	4	4	4	4	1			RP
	1693	*1726*	*1751*	*1757*				
16 Cliftonburngrange	2	1	1	1				RP
	pre-1747	*post-1747*						
17 Kelsocleugh	2	1						RP
	1689	*1699*	*1707*	*1743*	*1746*	*1749*		
18 Falabank	2	2	2	2	1	1		HDP
	1689	*1699*	*1707*	*1740*	*1749*			
19 Tounhead	3	3	2	2	1			HDP
	1689	*1699*	*1707*	*1743*	*1746*			
20 Redheugh	2	1	1	1	1			HDP

not to Divide the said farm of Newtoun of Cavertoun into different possessions, But to sett the same all into one hand, And that we for that purpose are most ready and willing to Grant Renounciation . . .' (RP Renounciation William & Andr. Gibsons & James Heard of the Newtoun of Cavertoun Aug. 1755). The farm was, in fact, eventually leased to a Ninian Jeffrey, the lease making the point that the farm was 'presently possessed by William & Andrew Gibson John & William Kerr John Arras James Herd & George Fairbairn . . .' (RP Regr. Tack the Duke of Roxburgh's Commissioner to Ninian Jeffrey 1756).

Once the problem is construed in terms of tenant reduction, with its associated increase in farm size per tenant, then a great deal more evidence is also forthcoming from published sources. The Old Statistical Account, in particular, so silent on the question of division, provides numerous references when the problem is seen as one of tenant reduction. For example, the writer for the Parish of Jedburgh reported that 'there were instances in this, and in neighbouring parishes of individuals renting and farming lands formerly possessed by six, eight or even ten tenants' (O.S.A. I: 8) whilst, with reference to the nearby Parish of Hownam, it was said that 50–100 years ago (or *circa* 1700–1750), the land was parcelled out into four times the number of farms and that 'as late as the year 1750, five tenants, with large famillies occupied a farm now rented by one tenant' (O.S.A. I: 51–2). A similar point was made by the reporter for the Parish of Fogo in his comment that 'there are instances in this, and neighbouring parishes, of one person possessing three, four, or six, very considerable farms, every one of which was formerly considered as sufficiently large for one person to occupy' (O.S.A. XX: 274), whilst, with regard to the Parish of Earlston, it was simply said that 'farms are much larger than formerly. What used to serve 12 or 13 farmers is now occupied by 4 . . .' (O.S.A. IV: 250). Expressing the change in equally direct terms, the reports for the Parishes of Makerston (O.S.A. III: 263), Oxnam (O.S.A. XI: 321), Linton (O.S.A. III: 121), and Cranshaws (O.S.A. V: 436) each stated that the number of tenants or farmers had fallen from 24 to 9, 22 to 3, 27 to 2 and 16 to 3 respectively since before 1750. Other reports such as those for the Parishes of Cockburnspath,[9] Sprouston,[10] Maxton,[11] Nenthorn,[12] Roxburgh,[13] Oldhamstocks,[14] Bunckle and Preston,[15] Smailholm[16] and Southdean[17] add further support to this pattern of tenant reduction and increasing farm size, one or two also linking it to rural depopulation.

Whilst lacking the detailed field evidence which might have been associated with division proceedings, the removal of tenant runrig largely by tenant reduction does at least mean that a rough assessment of its overall pattern of removal can be made by using evidence derived from rentals. These are available for a number of estates scattered throughout the region though, surprisingly for such a basic estate record, only in a limited number of cases was it possible to locate a sequence of rentals covering even a part of the period from the late seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century. Altogether, those examined provided a list of tenant numbers at some point during this period for over 250 farms, a summary of which can be seen in Table II (p. 126). Although

further work needs to be done on establishing more long run sequences of tenant numbers before any firm conclusions can be reached on the exact phasing of tenant reduction, nevertheless, the evidence summarised in Table II enables two very broad conclusions to be put forward. The most important is that many farms were already in the hands of single tenants by the opening decades of the eighteenth century. In fact, out of all those for which pre-1730 evidence is available, only 48 per cent had multiple tenants at some point. Even if one includes those farms for which the evidence

TABLE II

Summary of Tenant Numbers 1680–1766

Estates	*Farms with evidence available 1680–1730*	*Farms with evidence for multiple tenants 1680–1730*	*Farms with evidence available 1730–1766*	*Farms with evidence for multiple tenants 1730–1766*
Buccleugh	121	54	98	21
Roxburgh	31	21	26	13
Scott of Harden	19	5	27	7
Hall of Donglass	14	7	35	9
Minto	3	0	4	0
Biel	4	4	6	3
Misc.	6	5	10	3
Total	198	96	206	56
% of Total	100	48	100	27

Source: BP GD 224 Rentals Nos. 276, 277/1, 279 and 281/31 (*N.B.* The only Buccleugh rental found for the period 1730–66 was that for 1766. The use of this rental on its own probably gives an underestimate of the number of multiple tenant farms during the overall period 1730–66); RP Miscellaneous rentals, leases and accts. 1681–1760; PP Rentals 1705–6, 1725–6, 1739–40 and 1765–6; HDP: S.R.O., GD 206 Portfolio 5 Rentals 1658–98, 1699–1706 and 1717–60; and Reading University Library, 1/2 Nos. 23 and 36; MP Box 17 No. 112; BLP GD 6 No. 1704 Rentals 1696–1702 and 1738–40.

is ambiguous or unclear,[18] the total number increases to only 52 per cent. Somewhat surprisingly, a high proportion of farms with single tenants before 1730 consisted of upland farms such as those in upper Teviotdale and Ettrick belonging to the Buccleuch Estate. The second broad conclusion which can be put forward, though one which is not entirely conveyed by the summary of evidence contained in Table II, is that differences existed both between and within estates. For example, except for a small group of farms which seemed to swing back and forth between multiple and single tenancy right up to the 1760s, the majority of farms on the Scott of Harden Estate in southern Berwickshire were in the hands of single tenants by the opening decade of the eighteenth century (PP Rentals 1705–6, 1725–6, 1750–1, 1755–6). In contrast, a relatively high proportion of farms on the Roxburgh Estate in northern and central

Roxburghshire still carried multiple tenants as late as the 1750s when their numbers were reduced as old leases fell in (RP Rentals 1680–1, 1700–1, and miscellaneous leases 1740–70). A similar persistence of multiple tenancy was evident on the lowland arable farms of the Buccleuch Estate. Those in the Parish of Eckford, for instance, still had multiple tenants in the 1760s. However, as mentioned earlier, many of the upland farms on the Buccleuch Estate appeared in the hands of single tenants by the time of the 1708 rental for the estate.[19]

In trying to understand why there should be such differences within as well as between estates, it has to be realised that the removal of runrig by tenant reduction invariably meant an increase in farm size per tenant. In fact, in many instances, farm size per tenant must have doubled, trebled, or even quadrupled overnight as tenant numbers were reduced. Clearly, these increases were substantial and must have had some effect on the rate at which tenant reduction took place, advancing or retarding it depending on the particular circumstances of each farm.[20] If this was the case, then the pattern of tenant reduction, with its inconsistencies and even reversals, might best be seen as reflecting not only the differences between estates in their policy towards runrig, but also the increase in farm size which followed tenant reduction.

Turning to the removal of proprietary runrig, the position differs considerably. This is because, whilst the bulk of tenant runrig was probably removed by a reduction in the number of tenants per farm, proprietary runrig farms or touns were removed by a division of each heritor's share into a separate and distinct holding.[21] These divisions were mostly carried out under the authority of the 1695 Act anent Lands Lying Runrig and took the form of division proceedings in the local Sheriff or Regality Court. Although gaps exist in the record, the availability of division proceedings obviously enables the entire process of proprietary runrig removal to be examined in some depth. Altogether, two broad aspects of the problem will be considered: first, the general nature and operation of the 1695 Act as shown by the evidence for Roxburghshire and Berwickshire and, secondly, the pattern of proprietary runrig removal in the area.

With regard to its nature and operation, the first point that needs to be made about the 1695 Act is that it was directed solely at those examples of runrig which involved the intermixture of land belonging to different heritors, or what is here called proprietary runrig. In its own words:

> Taking into their Consideration the great Disadvantage arising to the whole Subjects from Lands lying runrig and that the same is highly prejudicial to the Policy and Improvement of the Nation, by planting and inclosing, conform to the several Lawes and acts of Parliament of befor made theranent For Remeid wherof His Majesty with the Advice and Consent of the said Estates Statutes and Ordains that wherever Lands of different Heretors ly runrig, it shall be leisum to either party to apply to the Shirriffs, Stewarts, and Lords of Regality or Justices of the Peace of the Several Shires where the Lands ly; to the effect that these Lands may be divided according to their respective interests, (A.P.S. IX: 421).

Thus the Act makes the general point that all runrig is disadvantageous but confines itself as a piece of legislation to land lying runrig between different heritors.[22] If anything, the misunderstanding which has tended to surround its meaning in the past has probably stemmed more from the lack of known examples of proprietary runrig than from any ambiguity in its phrasing.

As a piece of legislation, the purpose of the Act was straightforward. It allowed, for the first time, a division of runrig to be brought about by one or more of the heritors involved. Previously, a division had been possible but only with the consent of all the heritors concerned. That such a division could and did take place before 1695 is evidenced by the divisions of Gunsgreen[23] and the lands of Falla/Swynside,[24] which were divided in 1693 and 1694 respectively. Perhaps even more revealing of the precise nature of the 1695 Act, however, is the fact that, in the case of most divisions, the heritors were grouped into those defending against the division and those pressing for it under the authority of the Act. The only exceptions were the divisions of Ashtrees (1738)[25] and Ulston (1760),[26] both of which appear to have been divided following the mutual agreement of the heritors involved and without formal reference to the 1695 Act.

It has been said that it was to Scotland's advantage that the 1695 Act represented a general act of division, in contrast to England where each division or enclosure required a separate act. To some extent, this is true but it can be misleading for, whilst admittedly a general act in that it set up the law and procedure for divisions, it did not remove the burden of division proceedings but merely delegated responsibility for them to the local Sheriff or Regality Court where the often prolonged litigation must have involved a great deal of time and money. A good illustration of the difficulties which could beset a division is provided by the experience of Coldingham.[27] Begun in 1755, the division of Coldingham proceeded smoothly at first with the new holdings being allotted and the date of entry set for Autumn, 1757. However, problems arose when it became evident that some 'Lands had been much run out, during the Dependence of the Division by Scourge cropts and other mismanagement', thus giving rise to doubts about the fairness of the division. Similar complaints continued to be made long after the division had actually taken place. For example, at one point, it was reported that two heritors had entered their holdings

> which they had since greatly deteriorated by bad management Wedderburn in particular got a piece of grass land, Surrounded with a Strong Hedge, which had never been ploughed in the memory of man His first step was to make ffire wood of the Hedge and next to plough out the ground which he Sowed with white Corn (mostly wheat & oats) for Seven years Successively without fallowing and without Manure, by Such Management his returns could not fail to be lessened, and hearing Sir John Hall was to get the Better of the Heretors in the case of Robertson, he too bethought himself of raising an outcry of poverty and oppression, and in Conjunction with Paterson brought an advocation in the year one thousand Seven hundred and Sixty five, . . .

Drawn out by such problems, the division was not finally settled until 1772, 17 years after it had begun.

Apart from providing the authority and procedure by which one or more heritors could bring about a division, the only other positive directive of the 1695 Act was to make the point that it

> is alwayes hereby declared That the said Judges, in making the forsaid Division shall be, and are hereby restricted, so as special regaird may be had to the Mansion houses of the respective Heretors, and that their may be allowed and adjudged to them the respective parts of the Division, as shall be most Commodious to their respective Mansion houses and Policy and which shall be applicable to other adjacent Heretors (A.P.S. IX: 421).

Whether or not divisions could be equally fair to all heritors is perhaps open to question when, as in the case of Coldingham, as many as 37 heritors were involved. However, instances can be cited which suggest that some attempt was made to ensure an equitable layout of new holdings. For example, two of the proprietors of the runrig toun of Eildon were, during its division in 1749, stated as also being

> proprietors of parts of the lands of Newtoun and craved at the Division the 2 Husband Lands and ½ a husband land in Eildon belonging to them (whereof 1½ belong to Jn. Mills & 1 land to Cochrane) might be laid together undivided next the Newtoun march because they have their dwelling places in Newtoun & If the Division of the Lands of Newtoun take place they probably might gett their whole grounds in both Towns laid together (RSCP Decreet of Division of Newtoun of Eildon, 18th April 1749).

In response to their request, the remaining heritors raised no objections and the necessary adjustments were incorporated into the division.

An important negative aspect of the Act which deserves mention is that, unlike the English acts of enclosure, no provision was made for the boundary enclosure of new holdings. Because of this, and more so because in practice enclosure did not necessarily follow the removal or division of runrig, it is wrong to see the terms 'division' and 'enclosure' as complementary in Scotland. At best, the 1695 Act merely underlined runrig as a barrier to enclosure, or to quote its own words,

> seeing the great Disadvantage arising to the whole subjects from lands lying runrig and that the same is highly prejudicial to the Policy and Improvement of the Nation, by planting and inclosing . . . (A.P.S. IX: 421).

Such words were taken up during a number of divisions. At Coldingham, for instance it was maintained that the division would be

> for the Interest and advantage of all party's concerned, and Tend to the meliorating and Improving their severall property's That the lands belonging to the said severall party's should be Divided . . ., and Sett apart by them selves, That the Pursuer and the other heritors may have the benefit of planting, Incloseing and Improving the Same (HRP No. 2067 Decreet of Division of Runrig Lands of Coldingham, 1772).

Whilst, at Whitrig (1723), the intention to enclose and improve the land was considered so necessary for a division that the defenders argued that the division could not take place because the pursuer had no intention of enclosing or improving (BSCP Register of Decreets, 30th Oct. 1723).

One vital aspect of divisions on which the Act gave little guidance was the criteria by which new holdings were to be assessed. Briefly, the majority of proprietary runrig touns possessed a framework consisting of land denominational units such as husbandlands or merklands. The essential point about this framework is that it formed the basis of landholding in the toun with the property or holding of each heritor being expressed not in terms of its acreage but as so many husbandlands or merklands out of the total in the toun. From statements made during a number of divisions, it appears that each husbandland or merkland was originally regarded as being equal in extent and value.[28] However, although originally intended as equal in extent and value, it seems that subsequent differences in treatment and minor changes in the size of rigs may have destroyed this equality. The problem which arose during division proceedings was whether, in accordance with the intentions of the original charter grant upon which possession was founded, each husbandland or merkland should still be regarded as equal in extent and value in their division out of runrig or whether later acquired differences should be taken into account. The following extract from the division of Auchencraw (1713) helps set out the problem:

> ... and the defenders and ye predicessors haveing been in possession of the Lands purchased by theim from the pursuer about the space of Threty or fforty yeares and haveing Improven the sd Lands and laboured and fuilized the same sufficiently That the samen Lands which the said ffair and Renton have purchased is much better in quantity and qualitie than the pursuers Lands which he would have divyded (BSCP Register of Decreets, 24th Feb. 1715).

A similar plea was put forward at Whitrig where it was argued that one rig of the defenders equalled seven of those belonging to the pursuer and that differences in quality should therefore be taken into account (BSCP Register of Decreets, 30th Oct. 1723).

The reply to such complaints about differences in quantity or quality, and the view which seems to have been upheld during most divisions, was that

> its acknowledged that the differences in that respect cannot be considerable when lands ly runrige at least it ought not to be yrfor the equity of the law for divyding is apparent for if any proprietor at the tyme of divyding or sine syne by degrees have obtained a greater share than their Nighbours though their rights and securities be the same, by a new division the abuse is rectified. And therfor the act of parliament ordors divisions to be made without regard to that alledgience and conform thereto the Lands of Paxton and Horndeann now divyded according to the proprietors their sole rights and securities with out regard to the betterness in quantity or quality which was in those two cases cautiously pleded & Most Justly overruled by the Judge (BSCP Register of Decreets, 24th Feb. 1715).

To some extent, the rejection of any allowance for possible acquired differences in either quantity or quality between husbandlands or merklands did not ease the problems facing the courts. This is because if husbandlands or merklands were still held to be equal in both quantity and quality, then, as argued elsewhere,[29] it would be doubtful whether a division out of runrig would have been possible without considerable difficulty. To overcome this particular problem, many Judges seem to have compromised by concentrating solely on equal monetary value, thus effectively combining quantity and quality together. Briefly, the procedure followed during most divisions was for a survey to be made of all the land in the toun assessing both its quantity and quality and thereby establishing a total monetary value for the toun. Each heritor was then assigned a proportion of the total value of the toun according to his husbandland or merkland proportion. Thus, to give an example, each of the twenty husbandlands making up the Newtoun of Eildon was allotted, in its division of 1749, land equivalent to the value of £7 6s. 6d. (RSCP Decreet of Division of Newtoun of Eildon 18 Apr. 1749). Only in a small number of cases was full allowance given for

TABLE III

Proprietary Runrig Divisions

	Date of Division	*Source*		*Date of Division*	*Source*
Paxton	1706	HRP	Wairds of Melrose	1751	RSCP
Horndean	pre-1712	BSCP	Yetholm	1752	RSCP
Auchencraw	1713	BSCP	Lessuden	1752	RSCP
Westerhall	1714	BSCP	Southfield of Bowden	1752	RSCP
Outfield of Kelso	1719	RP	Eastfield of Bowden	1752	RSCP
Whitrig	1723	BSCP	Newstead	1752	RSCP
Smailholm	1730	PP	Bridgend	1752	RSCP
Gruel Dykes	1733	BSCP	Darnick	1752–3	RSCP
Earlston	1734	BSCP	Danielton	1756	RSCP
Bewlie	1735	RP	Whitsom Green	1759	BSCP
Nether Ancrum	1737	RP	West Reston	1760	BSCP
Ashtrees	1738	RSCP	Ulston	1760	RSCP
Nether Roxburgh	pre-1740	RP	Clifton	1760	RP
Chirnside	1740	O.S.A.	Ayton	*c.* 1760	Kerr 1809
Melrose (Annay, Rack)	1742	RSCP	Hutton	*c.* 1760	Kerr 1809
Morebattle	1748	BLP	Flemington	*c.* 1760	Kerr 1760
Eildon	1748–9	RSCP	East Grange	1761	RP
Newtoun of Eildon	1749	RSCP	Coldingham	1761	HRP
Gattonside	1750	RSCP	Eyemouth	1763	HRP
Hownam	1750	RP	Rewcastle	1770	RSCP
Birgham	1751	BSCP	Stockstruther	1780	RP
Kelso	1751	RP			

differences in quantity or quality or both and a detailed field survey compiled noting land ownership, quantity and quality.[30]

Because they involved legal proceedings, proprietary runrig divisions tended to be recorded in Sheriff Court records, estate papers and even published material. Altogether,

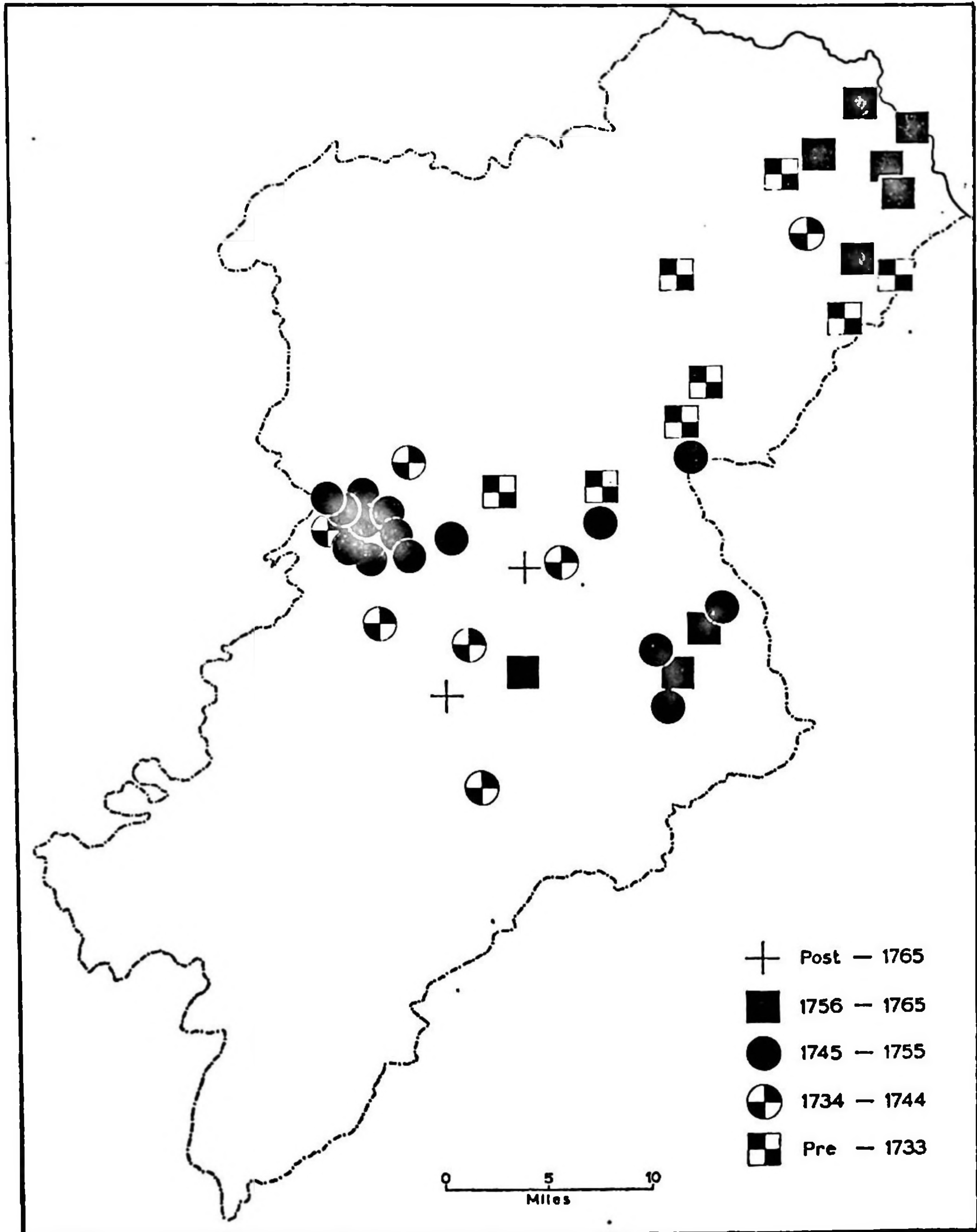

FIG. 1 Propietary Runrrig Divisions.

these sources combined have yielded evidence for a total of 43 divisions, a list of which can be seen in Table III (p. 131). In keeping with other types of change, the earliest divisions, or those taking place before 1734, were all situated on the low-lying ground of the Merse. This is partly shown by Fig. 1 which represents an attempt to group divisions on the basis of their date and location. The second group of divisions or those taking place between 1734 and 1745, although few in number, can be seen as the Roxburghshire counterpart to the first group since, with the exception of Chirnside, it comprised touns scattered over the lower ground of Roxburghshire such as Bewlie and Nether Ancrum. Especially evident from Fig. 1 is the almost simultaneous division of the large and complex touns of the Mid-Tweed Valley such as Newstead and Gattonside, virtually every one of which was divided within a few years of 1750. Also divided at this point were some of the upland touns of western Roxburghshire. The final group of divisions or those concentrated around 1760 consisted largely of the touns in northern Berwickshire such as Ayton and Eyemouth together with the remaining touns on the higher ground of western Roxburghshire such as East Grange. Taking an overall view of the chronology of divisions, it will be evident that although divisions took place throughout the eighteenth century, a high proportion of them were concentrated in the middle decades. This concentration in the middle decades is interesting in view of Kerr's comment that the 'general division' of Berwickshire took place during the years 1750–60 for it is clearly possible that he was influenced in his choice of words by the division of proprietary runrig touns, over 50 per cent of which were divided during the brief period from 1748 to 1762. Significantly, the only examples of division quoted by Kerr concerned proprietary runrig touns (Kerr 1809:74).

In conclusion, it can be seen that runrig in Roxburghshire and Berwickshire consisted of two distinguishable types called tenant runrig and proprietary runrig. As the discussion has tried to show, the distinction which can be drawn between these two types becomes especially necessary when considering the method by which each was removed. As regards tenant runrig, the evidence available suggests that, far from being removed by some sort of division, tenant runrig was largely removed by a reduction in the number of tenants per farm. Since little detailed work has been carried out in the Lowlands on tenant runrig removal, it is obviously possible that such a method of removal may have been important elsewhere. With regard to its chronology, tenant reduction appears to have been in progress throughout the period covered by the study. Indeed, in the writer's view, the starting point chosen for the study or 1680 was in the event not sufficient to include the earliest phases of tenant reduction. Altogether, however, any firm conclusions on the precise chronology of tenant reduction must await the collection of further data and the construction of more long-run series of tenant numbers stretching back to at least the mid-seventeenth century.

Owing to its restricted distribution in Scotland as a whole, the removal of proprietary runrig has perhaps no more than local or regional importance. However, its removal

by division does provide an opportunity for seeing the 1695 Act anent Lands Lying Runrig at work. Although divisions under this Act took place in the Merse from the early eighteenth century onwards, the main period seems to have been during the middle decades of the eighteenth century. Altogether though, the legal division of proprietary runrig following 1695 may have represented only part of the problem for, like tenant runrig, proprietary runrig removal may have had much deeper roots. The basis for this point is simply the fact that the examination of early charters suggests that proprietary runrig was, at one point, more widespread than it appeared in the eighteenth century. It follows, therefore, that some examples must have been removed before the eighteenth century. Some of these were probably divided since it was shown that, provided it was carried out with the consent of all heritors, a division was possible before 1695. Not a few examples, however, may have been removed by methods other than a division[31] though this is something upon which further work is needed.

NOTES

1 Gray 1952: 46–57. For a more recent study of the complex changes in landholding within which the removal of runrig might be set, see Storrie 1965: 138–61.

2 At present, the only discussion of runrig removal in the Lowlands available in print is that contained in general studies such as Handley 1963: 1–36; Third 1955: 83–93.

3 For a brief discussion of feuing, see Grant 1930: 265–286.

4 Kindly tenancy was a rather limited form of hereditary tenure which developed in parts of the Lowlands. Probably the best description of it is that given by Geddes 1951: 131–33.

5 See, for instance, Third 1957: 39; Symon 1959: 107 and 109; Smout 1969: 294–5.

6 This is best shown by the Buccleuch Estate. Examination of its rentals for 1708, 1716, 1766 and 1792 show relatively little change in the number of farms recorded whilst those changes which did occur were almost entirely due to farm amalgamation or the buying of new farms. Only in the case of the farms of Midtoun of Glenzier and Glenzierhead is there evidence sufficient to suggest an increase in farm units following a possible runrig division. According to the estate rental for 1792, the former was divided into a 'North Division', 'South Division' and 'East Division' and the latter into a 'North Division', 'South Division', 'East Division' and 'West Division'. See BP GD224, Rental of His Grace The Duke of Buccleuch's Estates for the Crop 1792.

7 Despite an examination of a wide range of manuscripts, only three references to sub-tenants were found. Nor is the widespread existence of sub-tenants evidenced by published sources as it tends to be in the Highlands. Lacking such evidence, one can only conclude that sub-tenants did not exist on a scale sufficient to make rentals unreliable as a source of tenant numbers.

8 RP Tacks of Nether Ancrum, Nos. 1–6, 1741, to John Rutherfurd, George Tinline, Robert Storrie, Andrew Rutherfurd, James Buchan and James Bell; Tacks Nos. 7–10, 1744, to James Bell, Robert Storrie, Andrew Rutherfurd and John Rutherfurd; Tack The Duke of Roxburgh's Commissioner to Robert Stenhouse & Jas. Thomson, 1754.

9 'Of late years, the number of inhabitants has undergone a second diminution, by the alteration which has been made in the distribution of land into large farms instead of small ones, one containing now what was formerly three or four . . .' (O.S.A. XIII: 226).

10 Talking of the fall in population between 1714 and 1750, the reporter for Sprouston noted that 'union of farms is perhaps the cause of this diminution' (O.S.A. I: 66).

11 'The parish is not so populous, as it was some years ago; owing in some measure, to several farms being possessed by one tenant' (O.S.A. III: 276.)

12 The population 'diminution being owing to the setting of large farms' (O.S.A. V: 337).

13 'monopoly of farms' (O.S.A. XIX: 137).

14 Referring to the decrease in population which began about 1720, the reporter for Oldhamstocks commented that 'this decrease is owing in some measure, to the county being thrown into larger farms than was formerly' (O.S.A. VII: 405).

15 'Since the practise of letting large farms, the parish has decreased considerably in point of number of people' (O.S.A. II: 158).

16 '. . . lands are let to one sixth the former number of tenants'—(O.S.A. III: 218).

17 'This decrease became rapid, from the junction of farms' (O.S.A. XXII: 68).

18 Where multiple tenants existed, rentals usually specify each tenant's share of the farm and/or its rent. In some cases, however, no such breakdown per tenant is given, each tenant seemingly being responsible for the management and rent of the entire farm and not just a proportion of it. If this was the case, then it suggests that such farms were possibly worked in common. Early commentators do in fact confirm that farms worked in common existed alongside runrig farms. See Handley 1963: 17. In view of the doubts therefore surrounding these farms, they have not been included in the figures for runrig given in Table II.

19 BP GD224, No. 276 Rental Book of Teviotdale 1708, No. 277/1 Liddesdale Rental 1708 and 1716, No. 279 Rental of Eckford Parish 1710–6 and 1718, and No. 281/31 Rental for Liddesdale, Ettrick and Parishes of Eckford, Hawick, Wilton, Roberton and Cavers 1766.

20 An important factor, and one that varied from farm to farm, was possibly the actual size of farm involved. Even when shared amongst four or more tenants, some lowland arable farms on the Roxburgh and Buccleuch Estates still had farm sizes per tenant of over 100 acres. Their reduction to single tenancy resulted in farm units of 400–500 acres or more. Similarly, the reduction of tenant numbers on upland farms sometimes left farm units of over 1,500 acres in the hands of a single tenant. Clearly, tenant reduction on such farms must have presented many more problems, as well as advantages, than on smaller farms.

21 As a qualification to this statement, it is possible that one or two examples of proprietary runrig were removed by methods other than a division. For further discussion, see page 134.

22 This point has also been made by other writers. See, in particular, Hamilton 1963: 57. For an interesting early comment on the Act which underlined its restricted application, see the criticism of Tyler 1807: II. 174–5 that as a 'remedy' for the 'evils' of runrig it 'was partial and imperfect; for it neither extended to the lands belonging to boroughs and corporations, nor had it any affect in correcting the established custom of run-ridge possessions among the tenants of the same estate'.

23 HRP No. 2061 Decreet of Division of the Lands of Gunsgreen . . . 1693.

24 RSCP Index to Processes of Division—Process of Division of lands of Swynside from lands of Falla dated 28 August 1694.

25 RSCP Submission betwixt His Grace the Duke of Douglas and The Lady Ashtrees & her husband 8 May, 1738.

26 RSCP Decreet Arbitral in the Division of Ulston, 1760.

27 All information abstracted from HRP No. 2067 Decreet of Division of Runrig Lands of Coldingham, 1772.

28 For example, during the division of the Southfield of Bowden, it was said that 'Each husbandland was reckoned of Equal Extent and value' (RSCP Decreet of Division of Southfield of Bowden 7 Jan. 1752). Likewise, during the Division of Ulston, one finds the statement that husbandlands were 'held to be of equal Extent and value' (RSCP Decreet Arbitral in the Division of Ulston, 1760).

29 Very briefly, the argument in support of this point is that if land was of variable quality, as it tended to be, then the only means of ensuring an equality of both quantity and quality between husbandlands and merklands is to give each heritor an equal share of each type of land, a form of division which would invariably result in some form of intermixture. For further discussion, see Dodgshon (forthcoming).

30 Examples include Eyemouth, Coldingham, Hownam and Stockstruther.

31 No trace, for example, can be found of the division of the toun of Nether Roxburgh though charters show its existence as late as the 1720s. However, a hint as to its fate is given by a charter of 1728 by which a certain Wm. Hogg resigned to the Duke of Roxburgh 'All & Haill these his three husband lands lying Runrig thro' the Overtoun and Nethertoun of Roxburghe' (RP Resignation Wm. Hogg to the Duke of Roxburghe 1728). A similar conclusion might be drawn from the early seventeenth century charter by which 'John Home surrenders the three husbandlands and the infield of another husband land, . . . in the hands of the said Sir George Home, as superior, to the end that the property might be consolidated with the superiority . . . dated at Polworth Place 5th August 1609' (H.M.C. 1902: 77.)

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RSCP Roxburghshire Sheriff Court Papers, Jedburgh.
BLP Biel Papers, Scottish Record Office.
BP Buccleuch Papers, Scottish Record Office.
GP Grieve Papers, Grieve Day Books 1729–1802, Transcript in the Wilton Lodge Museum, Hawick.
HDP Hall of Dunglass Papers. Rentals for 1658–98 and 1699–1706 (GD 206 Portfolio 5) are kept in the Scottish Record Office. The Rent Account Books for the Whitehall Estate 1749–53 (1/2 No. 36) and the Dunglass Estate 1742–9 (1/2 No. 23) are kept in the Reading University Library.
HRP Home-Robertson Papers, held by Hunter, Harvey, Webster and Will of York Place, Edinburgh.
MP Minto Papers, National Library of Scotland.
PP Polwarth Papers, Scottish Record Office.
RP Roxburgh Papers, Floors Castle, Kelso.

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Jeannie Robertson: The 'Other' Ballads

HERSCHEL GOWER & JAMES PORTER

Most collectors agree that the traditional folksinger will offer them more 'Other' ballads than those bearing a number assigned by Professor Child. Such is the case with Jeannie Robertson, whose non-Child ballads and songs far outnumber the Child group.* Frequently she will refer to a song as 'one of my big ballads', a category she reserves for any ballad which tells a serious or tragic story and which is sung in slow tempo and solemn style. Thus 'Lord Randal' and 'The Butcher Boy' are both 'big ballads'.

The following selection of ten non-Child ballads helps to characterise Jeannie's total repertoire and to call attention to the variety still to be found in Scottish folksong. All ten deserve to be called popular ballads in the most literal sense, no matter what their origins or aesthetic merits. Some are clearly from English broadsides of the nineteenth century ('The Butcher Boy' and 'The Handsome Cabin Boy') and have received a fair amount of scholarly attention as 'later' ballads. Like many of the Child ballads, the narratives in this group have become international in circulation and popularity. Some have been collected in England, Ireland, Nova Scotia, and Australia. One could compare, for example, Jeannie's version of 'The Bold Lieutenant' with the version sung by Jenny L. Combs of Berea, Kentucky (in Cecil Sharp, *English Folksongs from the Southern Appalachians* I, p. 396). One can confidently conclude that most of these songs are still very popular in many areas and are part of the folksong legacy of the nineteenth century to the twentieth.

The obviously Scottish and localised ballads which Jeannie sings have not yet received the scholarly attention they deserve. Although some were collected by Gavin Greig and discussed in a brief way in *Folksong of the North-East*, there is as yet no proper index or classification of the hundreds of Scottish ballads unknown to or rejected by Professor Child. That is, there is a great need in Scotland for works like Malcolm Laws's *Native American Balladry* and *American Balladry from British Broadsides*, in which the songs are grouped and numbered for easy, systematic reference.

Jeannie's North-East or localised ballads like 'The Laird o the Denty Doon-By' or 'Haud Your Tongue, dear Sally' or 'Davie Faa' obviously reflect the continuing vitality of the ballad tradition and fall upon the modern ear with a fresh, pronounced appeal. In most cases the textual deficiences tend to be compensated for by excellent tunes and Jeannie's extraordinary gifts as a singer.

The last example, 'The Hobo Song', was published in 1930 as 'Hobo Bill's Last Ride'

* For 'Jeannie Robertson: The Child Ballads' see *Scottish Studies* 14:35

and is representative of the 'outside' or 'impure' strain in the repertoires of many modern Scottish singers. Although when questioned, Jeannie replied that she learned the words and music from 'somebody who'd spent all their life in Scotland', this version hardly disguises its printed and phonographic origins. W. L. O'Neal was credited with words and music when the song was copyrighted in 1930 by Peer International Corporation in America. The late Jimmie Rodgers, American country singer, recorded the song and included it in *Jimmie Rodgers Album of Songs*, Southern Music Publishing Company, New York, 1943. (The Rodgers recording was made on 13 November 1929 and can be heard on the RCA Victor re-issue LPM–1640 as 'Hobo Bill's Last Ride'.)

Thus the group as a whole characterises those tastes and attitudes in the Scottish tradition that go beyond Child; it illustrates the ballad process of flowering on the one hand and decline on the other, and it shows the linguistic versatility of a major Scottish singer.

HERSCHEL GOWER

Notes on the Tunes

An examination of Jeannie Robertson's repertoire reveals one important fact: that is, the pentatonic or near-pentatonic nature of the great majority of the tunes. Often the basic, 'pure' pentatonic mode is affected by the addition of decorative, passing, or leaning notes introduced from the so-called 'gaps' in such a mode. Where these notes are isolated or infrequent, the general solidity of the pentatonic structure is barely disturbed (*e.g.* 'Lord Randal').

A typological question that arises in the classification of tunes must therefore be discussed at this point, and that is the influential character of ornamentation upon the mode. In some tunes ('Lord Randal', 'The Gypsy Laddie', 'Jimmy Drummond', 'The Banks o Red Roses') degrees are introduced as brief ornaments, and it is clear that interpretation of the mode cannot entirely disregard these, since they are *de facto* present.

There are alternative positions open to the musicologist: either, to view all notes that appear in the tune as integral to its final classification; or, to reject decorative notes whose fleeting appearance is of minor consequence in determining a tune's morphology. Bertrand Bronson has already encountered this problem on those occasions where there is dubiety about the essential function of passing notes in his abstracted versions of the tunes. He inserts, for example, 'pentatonic in feeling' after an authentic Ionian/Mixolydian classification (vol. II of 'The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads', p. 438), or again (vol. II, p. 420) after an Ionian tune of mixed range, 'but virtually I/M' (this latter a hexatonic example).

The former of these positions might be adopted by the scholar whose primary interest is the organic reality of the song in performance. The latter theoretical standpoint would perhaps represent the school which bases its method on broad comparative lines, where much of the material consists of tunes from printed collections or simple musical transcriptions.

A third position suggests itself, however: this is one which weighs such factors as relative function and frequency of occurrence in order to determine whether these pull the mode decisively toward the more amplified modal forms, *i.e.* if the framework is pentatonic, towards the hexa- or hepta-forms, and if hexatonic, towards the heptatonic. By means of this empirical method in the definition of mode, detailed transcriptions from actual performances can be assigned a classification that avoids the purism of the first theory and the involuntary accumulation of historical or mechanical error of the other.

Thus, Jeannie's versions of 'Lord Randal' or the lyric 'The Banks o Red Roses' would be classified as pentatonic rather than heptatonic or hexatonic, since the ornamentation is so brief and isolated as to be inessential to the overall shape of the tune. On the other hand, hexatonic classification of 'The Bonnie Hoose o Airlie' is correct even though the fourth degree appears only once, in the third strain of the tune. The critical point is that this fourth degree has a functional importance as an accented passing note and must be seen as integral to the tune's morphology. The same reasoning can be applied to the tune of the lyric 'He's a Bonnie, Blue-eyed Laddie' with its prominent fourth in an otherwise strongly pentatonic melody. The lyrics 'What a Voice' and 'The Overgate' (Ricky do-dum-day refrain) are examples of the seventh degree fulfilling a similar functional role. In 'Lord Randal', 'The Gypsy Laddie', 'Jimmy Drummond' and 'The Banks o Red Roses' the introduction of extra notes does not, however, establish a complete hexa- or heptatonic structure because they are functionally of minor consequence.

There are cases where modality, moreover, may be ambiguous throughout the song: 'The Laird o the Denty Doon-by', for instance, cannot be rigidly classified because of the ambivalent third degree of the mode in all the stanzas. The low-pitched Mixolydian/Dorian ambience of 'Up a Wide and Lonely Glen' raises a different kind of ambiguity in the matter of the tonic, particularly in the first and second lines: a close relationship exists between the upper seventh, the fifth, and the lower tonic F. 'When I saw my own Bonnie Lass' is another ballad with problematic modality; in cases where an inflected seventh occurs, the version that appears to dominate should indicate the preferred classification, though there exist tunes where the two sevenths are equally functional. Both possibilities should be indicated. Here the cadential use of the flat seventh effectively calls for Mixolydian rather than Ionian modality. Again, functional importance assumes a critical role.

'The Butcher Boy' shares many characteristics of both cadence and contour with 'When I saw my own Bonnie Lass'. Both tunes have a prominent fourth as a cadential pivot, with later comparable contour patterns in the plagal range. 'The Butcher Boy' is indisputably Ionian, a fact arguably associated with its broadside origins.

The text of 'The Hobo Song' in Jeannie's version suffers from occasional lapses of memory, these occurring when unfamiliar phrases (*e.g.* 'boxcar door') or quasi-literary lines ('. . . No warm lights flickered around him') have been imperfectly remembered;

she also exchanges the second quatrains of stanzas 2 and 3. The contour and cadence alteration of the original tune, though, in line 5 of stanzas 2, 3 and 4 is accurately registered, suggesting a more potent retention of tune than of text:

Stanza 2

Stanza 3

Stanza 4

JAMES PORTER

Tunes and Verses

O HAUD YOUR TONGUE, DEAR SALLY

Collector: Hamish Henderson SA 1954/72

(♩=108)

O hau- d y-our to- ngue[ə]* [ə] dea- r [ə] Sa- ll-y,

Or I gi- ng tae the toon;

I'll buy [ə] tae you a j- au- ntin- car, An

a br- aw wh-i- te m- us- l- in goo- n.

I'll buy [i] tae you a jaun- tin- car An

a br- aw wh-ite [ə] mu- s[ə]- lin goo- n,

An be- sides a l- it- tle w- ee l- a- p d-og

Tae f- ol- ly your jau- tin- car.

a I (infl. VII)

Scale

Form: ABCDCDAB'

* A sound which is sung, but does not form part of a word, is represented in these transcriptions by a phonetic symbol.

O, haud your tongue, dear Sally,
Or I ging tae the toon;
I'll buy tae you a jauntin-car,
An a braw white muslin goon.
I'll buy tae you a jauntin-car
An a braw white muslin goon,
An besides a little wee lap dog
Tae folly your jauntin-car.

May the deil go wi your lap dog
An your jauntin-car and aa;
For I wad raither hae a young man
Tae roll me fae the waa.
I wad raither hae a young man
Withoot a penny ava
Before I'd hae a auld man
To roll me fae the waa.

For your chanter's never in order,
Your pipes is never in tune.
I wisht the deevil had you
And a young one in your room.
I wisht the deevil had you
And a young one in your room
As I wad raither hae a young man
To roll me fae the waa.

But now my auld man's deid an gone
But left tae me a gey fee.
He left to me ten thousand pounds,
Besides my lands quite free.
He left to me ten thousand pounds
Besides my lands quite free
And besides a little wee lap dog
To follow my jauntin-car.

But now I've got a young man
Withoot a penny ava.
Now I've got a young man
Tae roll me fae the waa.
He broke my china cups and saucers,
He lay an broke them aa.
And he's killt my little wee lap dog
That follet my jauntin-car.

(JR 'I heard my mother singing it about thirty-six years ago.')*

* The comments which follow some of the songs are Jeannie Robertson's.

THE LAIRD O THE DENTY DOON-BY

Collector: Hamish Henderson SA 1952/33

(♩ = 88)

A la- ssie was mil- kin her fa- ther's kye

When a gen- tle-man on horse- b-ack he come ri- din by:

A gen- tle-man on hor- se- ba- ck he come ri- din by: He

was the l- ai- rd o the Den- ty Doon- by.

a D (or a M) (incl. III, VII)

Scale Form: ABCD

A lassie was milkin her father's kye
When a gentleman on horseback he come ridin by:
A gentleman on horseback he come ridin by:
He was the laird o the Denty Doon-by.

'O lassie, o lassie, what wad ye gie
If I were to lie aa nicht wi ye?'
'To lie ae nicht that'll never never be:
Suppose ye're laird o the Denty Doon-by.'

But he took her by the middle so sma.
He laid her doon whaur the grass grew lang.
It was a lang, lang time till he raised her up again:
Sayin, 'Ye're lady o'er the Denty Doon-by.'

It fell upon a day and a bonnie summer's day
To face the lassie's father some money had to pay:
To face the lassie's father some money had to pay:
To the laird o the Denty Doon-by.

'O good mornin, how dae ye do?
And hoo is your dochter Janety noo?
And hoo's your dochter Janety noo
Since I laid her in the Denty Doon-by?'

'O my wee Janet she's no very weel.
My dochter Janet she looks uncae pale.
My dochter Janet she cowks at her kail,'
Since I laid her in the Denty Doon-by.

But he took her by the lily-white hand;
He showed her roon his rooms, they were twenty-one.
He placed the keys intae her hands
Sayin, 'Ye're lady o'er the Denty Doon-by.'

'O,' says the auld man, 'what wull we dae?'
'O,' says the auld wife, 'we'll dance tae we dee.'
'O,' says the auld man, 'I think I'll dae that tee
Since she's made lady o'er the Denty Doon-by.'

A AULD MAN CAM COORTIN ME

Collector: Hamish Henderson SA 1952/43

(♪=138)

For a auld man cam coor- tin me: Hi- doo- a- da- ri- tie.
For a auld man cam coor- tin me: Hi- doo- a- day.
(♪=140-150) For a auld man cam coor- tin me: Hi- doo-a- da- ri- t- ie.
M- aids, when you're young ne- ver w- e- d a auld man.

m M/D
Scale Form: ABCD

For a auld man cam coortin me:
Hi-doo-a-daritie.
For a auld man cam coortin me:
Hi-doo-a-day.
For a auld man cam coortin me:
Hi-doo-a-daritie.
Maids, when you're young never wed a auld man.

For when we went to the church,
I left him in the lurch.
When we went to the church, me being young.
When we went to the church,
I left him in the lurch:
Maids, when you're young never wed a auld man.

When we went to wer tea,
He started teasing me.
When we went to wer tea, me being young.
When we went to wer tea
He started teasing me:
Maids, when you're young never wed a auld man.

When we went to wer bed,
He lay as he was dead.
When we went to wer bed, me being young.
When we went to wer bed,
He lay as he was dead:
Maids, when you're young never wed a auld man.

For he has no too-rool,
Or right fal-a-dooral, O.
He has no tooral, or right fa-la-day;
For he has no tooral
To fill up my dooral, O:
Maids, when you're young never wed a auld man.*

(JR 'I remember hearin a young man sing it when I was about twelve years of age. It was in—somewhere about the Deeside—I just can't remember very well.')

* For the 'courting song' tradition in America, with series similar to the above, see *The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore* III:4–40.

WHEN I SAW MY BONNIE LASS

Collector: Hamish Henderson SA 1954/88

For I sa- w my o- wn b- o- nn-ie l- a- ss to the ch-urch g- o,
Go- ld r- i- ng-s on her f- in ger- s, (w) white gl-ove- s on her h- an- ds;
Go- ld r- i- ng-s on her fin- ger- s, wh- i- te gl- o- ves on her han- ds,
She was aw- ay to get w- e- d to a- noth- er.

p M (infl. VII)

Scale Form: ABB'C

For I saw my own bonnie lass to the church go,
Gold rings on her fingers, white gloves on her hands;
Gold rings on her fingers, white gloves on her hands,
She was away to get wed to another.

I said my own bonnie lass wait a wee while
For you are false beguiled;
For you are false beguiled
But you're only my auld shoes when he's got you.

It was servin the glasses out of brandy and wine:
Here is health to the bonnie lass that should have been mine,
Here is health to the bonnie lass that should have been mine
But she's only my auld shoes when you've got her.

But the ladies and gents they inquired off of me:
How many blackberries grows roon a salt sea?
But I gave them one back with a tear in my e'e:
How many ships sail in a forest?

She has broken my hert and for ever left me;
She has broken my hert and for ever left me.
But it's not onc't or twice that she's lain now with me,
For she's there and she cannae deny it.

But I'll lay doon my heid and I'll tak a lang sleep;
Youse can cover me over by lilies so sweet.
Youse can cover me over by lilies so sweet,
For that's the only way I'll ever forget her.

THE BUTCHER BOY *or* THE WEXFORD GIRL

Collector: Hamish Henderson SA 1953/247

Scale Form: ABCD

My parents gave me good learning;
Good learning they gave unto me.
They sent me to a butcher shop
For a butcher boy to be.

It was there I met with a fair young maid
With dark and rolling eyes;
And I promised for to marry her
On the month of sweet July.

I went up to her mother's house
Between the hour of eight and nine,
And I asked her for to walk with me
Down by the foamin brine.

Down by the foamin brine we'll go,
Down by the foamin brine;
For that won' be a pleasant walk,
Down by the foamin brine.

But they walked it east and they walked it west,
And they walked it all alone,
Till he pulled a knife from out of his breast
And he stabbed her to the ground.

She fell upon her bended knee.
Help and mercy she did cry:
Roarin, 'Billy dear, don't murder me,
For I'm not prepared to die.'

But he took her by the lily-white hand
And he dragged her to the brim,
And with a mighty downwar' push
He pushed her body in.

But he went home till his own mother's house
Between the hour of twelve and one,
But little did his mother think
What her only son had done.

He asked her for a hankychief
To tie round his head;
And he asked her for a candlelight
To show him up to bed.

But no sleep, no rest, could this young man
get;
No rest he could not find;
For he thought he saw the flames of Hell
Approachin his bedside.

But the murder it was soon found out,
And the gallows was his doom,
For the murder of sweet Mary Anne
That lies where the roses bloom.*

(**JR** 'I learned it off an old friend, a woman, away about twenty-five or twenty-six years ago in Aberdeen.')

* In *Folk-Song of the North-East*, Number CXXXVII, Gavin Greig says of 'The Butcher Boy': 'The folk-singer is fond of Tragedy. Ballads of Murder and Execution, in particular, are pretty numerous, although it must be allowed that, as far as our North-Eastern minstrelsy is concerned, they are mainly importations. They have likely enough been introduced through broadsides. "The Butcher Boy" is well known in our part of the country, judging from the records which we have got of both words and tune.' (For a longer discussion see Laws, *American Balladry From British Broadsides*, p. 267, and Ch. IV, *passim*.)

DAVIE FAA

Collector: Hamish Henderson SA 1953/247

Scale

Form: ABCDCDAB
[ABCDABAB stanza 1; ABCDAB stanza 6]

There was a wealthy farmer
Lived in the North Countree.
He had a lovely daughter
Who was always frank and free.
An day be day an night be night
She was always in my ee.
So there was a jolly tinker lad
Come to this farm house:

'It is have you any pots or pans
Or caunle sticks to mend?
Or have you any lodgins
For me a single man?'
The fairmer he thocht it nae hairm
The tinker for to keep,
And the lassie she thocht it nae hairm
The tinker's bed to mak.

But the tinker folliet after her
And he did bar the door.
He catched her by the middle smaa,
An he laid her on the floor.
He catched her by the middle smaa
And up against the waa,
And it was there he teen the wills o her
Before she won awa.

The bonnie lassie blushed
An O but she thocht shame:
'It's since you've teen the wills o me
Come tell tae me your name.'
He whispered in the lassie's ear,
'They ca' me Davie Faa,
And you'll min' upon this happy nicht
Amongst the pease straw.'

Six weeks had passed and gone;
This maid grew white an pale.
Nine month an better brought
Her forth a bonnie son.
'An since the baby's born
I will ca' him Davie Faa,
And I'll min' upon the happy nicht
Amongst the pease straw.'

'For any man who weds my girl
For he'll get farms three.
For any man who weds my girl
For he'll get gol' quite free.
For although she's lost her maidenheid
O wheet the waur is she?'

(JR 'I heard my mother singin that away about thirty-five years ago.')

UP A WIDE AND LONELY GLEN

Collector: Hamish Henderson SA 1953/247

(♩=88)

For i- t's u- p a w- i- de a- nd a l- one- ly gl- en;
I- t was sh- a- de by m- a- ny a l- o- f- ty m- ou- n- t- ai- n(n);
It- bein o- n[ə] to the bu- s- y haun- ts of m- en,
It bein the fir- st day that I we- n- t out a hun- tin.

Scale a M/D Form: AA¹BC

For it's up a wide and a lonely glen;
It was shade[d] by many a lofty mountain;
It bein on to the busy haunts of men,
It bein the first day that I went out a-huntin.

For it's been to me a happy day,
The day I spied my rovin fancy.
She was herdin her yowes oot-ower the knowes,
And in amongst the curlin heather.

For her coat was white, her goon was green,
Her body it bein long an slender;
Wi her cast-doon looks and her weel faurt face
It has off [oft] times made my heart to wander.

For it's I've been to balls where they were busked, ay an braw,
And it's I've been so far as Balquhidder,
And the bonniest lassie that e'er I saw
She was kilted and bare-fitted amongst the heather.

Says I, 'My lass, will you come wi me
And sleep wi me in a bed o feathers?
I'll gie ye silks and scarlets that will mak ye shine
And leave aa your mares amongst the heather.'

She said, 'My lad, you're very fair.
I really think your offer's sporting,
For it's you bein the son of a high squire man
And me but a poor humble shepherd's dochter.'

But it's her I socht and it's her I got
And its her I really intend to marry.
Fare you well, fare you well, to your heathery hills—
Fare you well, fare you well, my song it's ended.

(JR 'It was my mother that I heard singin it. My mother was born in Ballater . . . at Gairnside . . . Her name was Maria Stewart.')

THE BOLD LIEUTENANT *or* THE DEN OF LIONS

Collector: Hamish Henderson SA 1952/33

(♩= 88)
At Carr- bri-dge Cas-tle [n] There l-i- ved a l- a- dy.
(♩= 92)
She ha- d t-en thou- s-an- d poun-ds a year,
[n] But sh-e could dre- ss a- s gay as a- ny
And few with her there could com- pare.

Scale p π' Form: ABAB'

At Carrbridge Castle there lived a lady,
She had ten thousand pounds a year,
But she could dress as gay as any
And few with her there could compare.

But she was courted by two lovers
And both of them were brothers bold.
They were both alike in rank and station
They were both alike and she loved the two.*
They were both alike in rank and station
But what could she, a poor lady do?

She ordered her carriage to get ready,
All early by the break of day,
And a horse and saddle she did prepare
As quickly as she rode away.

When she came to the den of lions,
She dropped her fan in the lions' den:
'For any man who wants to gain a lady,
They will bring me back my fan again.'†

'Tis up spoke the bold sea captain;
He was bound to the *Tiger* of the many wars:
'For it's I have ventured my life in danger
On the many warships,*
But I will not venture my life in danger
For to gain a lady fair.'

But it's up spoke the poor lieutenant
And a bravely-spoking young man was he:
'For it's I will enter the den of lions
And I'll bring you back your fan again.'‡

* The tune for lines 3 and 4 is the same as for lines 1 and 2. † Lapse of memory after this verse.
‡ See Laws, *American Balladry from British Broadsides*, pp. 237–8, for notes on other versions.

THE HANDSOME CABIN BOY

Collector: Hamish Henderson SA 1952/33

(♩=84)

It's of a pret- ty fair maid, to let youse un- der- stand;
She had a mind for ro- vin to some fo- reign land.
She dressed her- self in sail- ors' clothes and bol- dly did ap- pear,
En- ga- gin with a c- a- p-tain, giv- in se- rvice for a year.

Scale a I Form: ABCD

It's of a pretty fair maid, to let youse understand;
She had a mind for rovin to some foreign land.
She dressed herself in sailors' clothes and boldly did appear,
Engagin with a captain, givin service for a year.

For the wind it bein' in favour and they soon set off to sea.
For the lady to the captain said, my love I wish you joy*
That we have engaged such a handsome cabin boy.

For his cheeks appeared like roses, and his side-locks they did curl.
And often-times the sailors smiled, and said he lookit like a girl.
But by eatin cabin biscuits his colours did destroy
And the wyne [wyme] did swell o pretty Bill, our handsome cabin boy.

O doctor, dear doctor, for the cabin boy did cry.
The sailors swore with all their might that the cabin-boy would die.
But the doctor run with all his might, he was smilin at the fun,
For to think a sailor lad would have a dochter or a son.

But when the sailors heard the joke, they aa begun to stare:
For the child belongs to none of us, aa solemn they did swear.
But the lady and the captain, they have oft-times kissed and toy'd,
So we'll soon find out the secret of our handsome cabin boy.

For they aa took up a bumper and they drunk success to trade:
It's twice unto this cabin boy, she's neither man nor maid.
But if this war should rise again, our sailors to destroy
And we'll ship some able seamen, same's our handsome cabin boy.

Through the Bay of Biscay our gallant ship did plough,
And that night the sailors they kicked up a bloomin row.
They took their bundles from their hammocks and the rest they did destroy,
And it was all through the groanin of our handsome cabin boy.†

(JR 'That was my mother's too.')

* Line 2 is sung here to the normal line 3 tune.

† See G. Malcolm Laws, Jr, *American Balladry from British Broadsides*, pp. 19, 209, for notes on other versions, British and American.

THE HOBO SONG

Collector: Hamish Henderson | SA 1960/203

(♩=96)

Ri- ding on a East- bou- nd fr- eight tr- ain,

s- pee- ding through the nigh- t,

(♩=100)

Ho- bo Bi- ll, a r- ail- r- oa- d (b) bum,

[ə] Was fighting for hi- s l- i- fe.

[ə] The s- a- d n- ess of hi- s ey- es re- veal- ed

[n] The to- r- ture of his so- ul.

He r- ai- sed a w- eak an w- ea- ri- ed h- an- d

To br- ush a- w- ay the co- ld.

Bo- ho- ho, Bo- ho- ho, B- ill- ie.

Scale a I

Form: $ABA^{1}CA^{2}DA^{3}E$
[$ABA^{1}CA^{4}DA^{3}E$ stanzas 2, 3, 4]

Riding on a East-bound freight train,
Speeding through the night,
Hobo Bill, a railroad bum,
Was fighting for his life.
The sadness of his eyes revealed
The torture of his soul.
He raised a weak an wearied hand
To brush away the cold.

Refrain: Bo-ho-ho
Bo-ho-ho, Billie.

No wan li's flickerit roun' him,*
No blankets there to fold,
There was nothing but the howling wind
And the driving rain so cold
As the train sped through the darkness
An the raging storm outside.
No one knew that Hobo Bill
Was taking his last ride.

Refrain

Outside the rain was falling
On that lonely buskadoor†
But the little form of Hobo Bill
Lay still upon the floor.
When he heard that whistle blowing
In a dreamy kind of way
The hobo seemed contented
For he smiled there where he lay.

Refrain

It was early in the morning
When they raised the hobo's head.
The smile lingered on his face
But Hobo Bill was dead.
There was no mother's longing
To soothe his wearied soul,
For he was just a railroad bum
Who died out in the cold.

Refrain

(JR 'I learned it about thirty-seven or thirty-six years ago. I just heard it sung by several of the older ones and I liked it and learned it. It was just somebody 'd spent all their life in Scotland.')

* 'No warm lights flickered around him' (imperfectly remembered).
† 'box-car door'.

Major Weir: A Justified Sinner?

DAVID STEVENSON

The Legend

The legend of Major Thomas Weir was once one of the best known of Edinburgh traditions. In many nineteenth-century works on the burgh he appears as a great warlock, who was executed in 1670 for witchcraft. Popular stories of his magical powers, of his staff, of his fiery coach, of his sister's supernatural skill at spinning and of how his house was haunted long after his death, have often been recounted (*e.g.* Wilson 1878: II. 115–18; Chambers 1869: 42–9). Robert Louis Stevenson's father was one of generations of Edinburgh children introduced to the wicked major through tales told in the nursery (Stevenson 1954: 49).

Yet Major Weir was never convicted, and indeed was never even accused, of witchcraft. How then did the myth of the great wizard arise? The answer is simple: the crimes of which he was in fact convicted were long regarded as quite literally unmentionable. His sister was accused, though not convicted, of witchcraft, and her confessions implicated him so the crime somehow got transferred to him as a sort of euphemism for his real crimes. He was convicted of fornication, adultery, incest and bestiality, and his sister found guilty of incest. His supreme wickedness, especially since it was hidden under an outer cloak of godliness, made a great impression on his own and later generations, yet his true crimes were so great that they became bowdlerised into witchcraft: they were so wicked that it was assumed that they must result from some sort of pact with the devil and thus amount to witchcraft.

Some continued to be aware of his real crimes. Lord Hailes discovered what they had been, but the legend was well enough established for him to be surprised to find that Weir had not been accused of witchcraft (Black 1938: 76). Hugo Arnot in 1785 also knew that Weir was no warlock, but firmly concluded 'I decline publishing the particulars of this case', contenting himself with saying that Weir had been accused of 'having exceeded the common depravity of mankind'. But his knowledge of the truth did not prevent him from giving support to the legend by discussing Weir's case in the section of his book dealing with witchcraft (Arnot 1785: 359–60). Arnot's method of treating Weir, of beginning with vague hints of terrible crimes before hurrying on to dwell on popular superstitions concerning the case, has been one often followed since. Robert Louis Stevenson, for example, dismissed the crimes of which Weir was convicted as 'happily beyond the reach of our intention' (Stevenson 1954: 49), as if he considered such an evasion of the truth as positively virtuous. As late as 1913 William

Roughead lamented how difficult it was to deal with such a 'veritable monster': he therefore resolved to discuss the case 'gingerly' and with a 'nice discretion'. He only ventured to hint at incest through obscure literary allusions, and did not even hint at bestiality (Roughead 1913: 41–62).

Sir Walter Scott's imagination was greatly stirred by the tale of Major Weir. In 1798 he remarked 'if I were ever to become a writer of prose romances, I think I would choose him, if not for my hero, at least for an agent and leading one in my production'. His companion, William Erskine (later Lord Kinneddar), replied 'The Major was a disgusting fellow, however. I never could look at his history a second time. A most ungentlemanlike character'. This suggests that both knew the true nature of Weir's crimes, but Scott urged that it was unfair to judge him by what his enemies said of him: 'all this does not afford any sufficient reason why a poet or novelist should not introduce him as a highly intelligent, well-educated personage.' The major's own statements 'rely on it, have been suppressed' (Gillies 1837: 108–9). Presumably when Scott did become a writer of 'prose romances' he had second thoughts and decided that Weir was not really suitable material out of which to build a romantic hero.

Some, however, did believe that one romantic hero was based on Major Weir. Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe was interested in Weir and knew his real crimes. When Byron's *Manfred* appeared in 1817 with its hints at incest—probably in fact originating in Byron's relationship with his half sister—Sharpe jumped to the conclusion that the incest theme was derived from the Weir case. He wrote to Scott 'I have just finished *Manfred*, and written a doggerel Prologue for him.

> Most gentle Readers, 'twill appear
> Our Author fills this scene
> With what betided Major Weir
> And his frail sister Jean.
>
> He freely here his fault avows
> In bringing not before us,
> The Major's Cat, and Mares, and Cows
> Assembled in a Chorus.
>
> But by and bye he'll mend his Play,
> And then the World shall see
> That Incest only paves the way
> For Bestiality'

(Partington 1930: 186). A sick joke if ever there was one.

Scott and Sharpe both regarded Major Weir's house as one of the sights of Edinburgh—Sharpe tried to take Lady Stafford to see it but failed to find it (Fraser 1892: II. 321). But while Sharpe accepted Weir as a man guilty of incest and bestiality, and therefore makes no mention of him in his work on witchcraft in Scotland (Law 1818:

vii-cxiv), Scott preferred to ignore the truth and concentrate on the witchcraft legend. Thus Weir is discussed in his own book on witchcraft: the fact that there were allegations of incest is mentioned only in passing (Scott 1830:329–33). Scott apparently approved of his wife calling his walking stick 'Major Weir' since it was always getting lost and thus seemed 'like the staff of that famous wizard, to be capable of locomotion' (Scott 1891:346–7). Similarily it was elements from the witchcraft legend that Scott borrowed in 'Wandering Willie's Tale' in *Redgauntlet* (1824). Sir Robert Redgauntlet's devilish 'great ill-favoured jackenape' is called 'Major Weir, after the warlock that was burnt', a footnote explaining that Weir was a celebrated wizard executed 'for sorcery and other crimes'. When Redgauntlet frowns the wrinkles on his forehead take the shape of a horseshoe: this may be copied from Weir's sister Jean who had such a frown and claimed that her mother had it too, and that it was the sign of a witch. However, the horsehoe frown also appears in an account of the laird of Lag, the famous persecutor of covenanters in Weir's time on whom Scott modelled Redgauntlet (Parsons 1964: 179–83; Sharpe 1888:I. 4), a coincidence which suggests that there may have been some earlier connection between the Lag and Weir legends. Other details in the 'Tale' are taken from the Weir legend. The dying Redgauntlet's shouts of 'Hell, hell, hell, and its flames' recalls Weir's sudden terror at the word 'burn' shortly before his confession. Papers which hiss like squibs as they burn occur both in the 'Tale' and in descriptions of Weir's arrest.

Sources for Weir's Life

Accounts of Major Weir's life and death are contained in the records of his trial and in several accounts written by contemporaries which circulated after his death. Some of the details of his life given in such accounts can be checked in a variety of record sources.

The most reliable evidence for much of his life is that contained in the record of his trial (Justiciary Court Records), a version of which also contains a contemporary commentary (Scott-Moncrieff 1905:9–15).

The earliest published account of Weir's life appeared in George Hickes's *Ravillac Redivius* in 1678. Hickes was concerned mainly with discrediting the covenanters and in particular with denouncing John Mitchell, who had been executed in 1678 for attempting to murder the Archbishop of St. Andrews. Until his confessions Weir had been known as a staunch covenanter and godly man. He had known Mitchell, and the two had lodged in the same house in Edinburgh at one time. This provided Hickes with much useful ammunition for smearing the covenanting cause as a whole by its association with Weir. He relates Jean Weir's confessions of witchcraft but also emphasises the major's incest and bestiality (Hickes 1678:59–72. *Spirit of Fanaticism* 1710:47–58 is simply a paraphrase of Hickes).

By contrast, the account given in George Sinclair's *Satans Invisible World Discovered* in 1685 concentrates almost exclusively on the supernatural elements in the Weir

legend, retailing the rumours of magic and haunting which began to grow immediately after his execution. The account he prints is in the form of a letter to him written in 1684 (Sinclair 1871:225–41). It is worth noting that his brother John Sinclair (formerly minister of Ormiston) had been a friend of Weir and a fellow supporter of the covenants. It is therefore possible that George Sinclair got his information from his brother: against this are the facts that John would surely be more likely to try to hush up than to publicise the story, and that in 1684 John had other things on his mind, being accused and convicted of treason.

Other brief, contemporary, summaries of the Weir case occur in the works of Robert Law (Law 1818:22–3) and John Lamont (Lamont 1830:271–2). Finally, James Fraser, minister of Wardlaw, wrote an account of Major Weir. This contains many details not given elsewhere, but it is so inaccurate where it can be checked (for example, Fraser states that Weir never married, and gives his sister's name as Grizel) that no reliance can be placed on it (Fraser MS: ff. 156–158ᵛ).

The Lives and Deaths of Thomas and Jean Weir

Thomas Weir was born in about 1600. He was the son of a Clydesdale laird, Thomas Weir of Kirkton, who was descended from the Weirs of Stonebyres and the Lords Somerville. The family lived in the house of Wicketshaw on the Clyde. As well as his sister Jean, who was some years younger than he, the young Thomas had at least one other sister, Margaret. When Jean was about sixteen she and her brother were discovered by Margaret committing incest. She told their parents and Jean was sent away from Wicketshaw. Later, however, Thomas and Jean lived together, probably until Thomas's marriage. In February 1642 he married Isobel Mein, the widow of an Edinburgh merchant John Burdoun (Paton 1905:102, 729), and a few days later he was made a burgess and guild brother of Edinburgh without paying any fee, presumably because he had married the widow of a merchant (Wilson 1929:519).

Meanwhile the Weir family appears to have fallen on bad times. In 1636 the estate of Kirkton had been sold with the consent of the younger Thomas (Carluke 1874: 279–80; RMS: IX, no. 455, XI, no. 242). Perhaps in an attempt to recoup his fortunes Weir enlisted shortly after his marriage in the Scottish army being sent to Ireland to oppose the Catholic rebels. His rank is given as captain lieutenant (perhaps indicating that he was an acting-captain, or the senior lieutenant in his regiment). He did not stay in Ireland very long, for in May 1643 he was back in Edinburgh and donated 200 merks to a voluntary loan being raised to help pay the army in Ireland in which he was supposed to be serving (RPC: VIII. 88). In 1644 he appears as major of the earl of Lanark's regiment in the Scots army which had intervened in the English civil war on the side of parliament (Terry 1917: I. lxii; II. 307, 328). In December of the same year orders were given to pay him 600 merks for his expenses in carrying intelligence several times to and from Dumfries (MS Register of the Committee of Estates 1644–5: f. 142)—perhaps this

was at the time of Montrose's raid on the burgh the previous April. However, in 1647 he still had not been paid his 600 merks and also had arrears due to him for nineteen months' service in Ireland and twelve months with Lanark's regiment in England (APS: VI i. 715, ii. 723).

In October 1645 Weir was back in Edinburgh and was elected to command the guard which was being raised to watch and defend the burgh (Wood 1938:179). When the extreme 'kirk party' regime came to power late in 1648 Weir proved an ardent supporter of it: in March 1649 he was awarded £50 sterling by parliament for his zeal in guarding it (Wood 1938:184, 201; APS: VI, ii. 355). The following year he achieved some notoriety by his harsh and unsympathetic treatment of Montrose in the days before the latter's execution, and when later in the same year the kirk split into two factions Weir joined the extremists, the remonstrants (Hickes 1678:61, 68).

The next incident that we know of in Weir's life occurred in August 1651. While riding westward he was seen committing an act of bestiality and reported to a local minister, and soldiers were sent to apprehend him. But his reputation as a fanatical covenanter stood him in good stead: his denials were believed and the woman who had informed against him was, it is said, whipped through the streets of Lanark for slandering so godly a man (Hickes 1678:65, 67; Sinclair 1871:231). The dating of some of his other crimes which he revealed at his trial is not certain. He committed incest with his step-daughter, Margaret Burdoun, and, it is said, married her off to an Englishman when she became pregnant. For twenty-two years Weir also had an adulterous relationship with one of his servants, Bessie Wemyss. Though these are the only acts of adultery and bestiality by Weir that are specified, they apparently were not isolated occurrences. When his wife died (perhaps also in the 1650s) his sister Jean, who had been supporting herself by keeping a school at Dalkeith and by spinning, came to live with him in Edinburgh.

By the 1660s they were established in a house in the West Bow, an area where many disappointed covenanters, known sarcastically as 'the Bowhead Saints', lived, lamenting the abandonment of the covenants but mainly living peacefully enough to escape persecution. The Weirs were probably living 'in reduced circumstances', and in 1669 the burgh council rewarded his former services as captain of the burgh guard by authorising him to collect a duty on goods imported from England (Wood 1950:59). His old age now seemed provided for: he was about seventy, and there would seem to be little chance that at this late date his sins and perversions would be discovered.

Less than a year later, however, he began to show terror at the word 'burn', as if suddenly fearing hell fire. Shortly thereafter he broke down completely and insisted on confessing his crimes to his horrified friends. Not unnaturally they at first thought he had gone mad, a facile opinion shared by many later commentators. Eventually the provost, Lord Abbotshall, was told of his confessions. He too assumed that madness lay behind them, and sent physicians to examine Weir. But they reported that he was quite sane. Weir and his sister were therefore arrested, and on 9 April 1670 they were tried

before the justiciary court, with the lord advocate prosecuting (Hickes 1678:62–3; Sinclair 1871:226–9; Scott-Moncrieff 1905:15).

The charges against Major Weir were of fornication, adultery, incest and bestiality. Rather oddly, he refused to answer the indictment beyond saying that he thought himself guilty of the crimes described and that he could not deny them. This and his own former confessions made his conviction certain, especially as enough of his confessions were substantiated by witnesses to rule out the possibility that he was innocent but insane. The witnesses called against him included his sister Margaret (who had married the Edinburgh bookseller Alexander Weir), and two baillies, one former baillie and a merchant, who had heard his confessions. The evidence of John Sinclair, whom Weir had sent for and confessed to in prison, provided the only hint of the supernatural in the case. He asked Weir if he had ever seen the devil: Weir replied that he had not, but had felt his presence in the dark (Hickes:63–5; Scott-Moncrieff:10–13; Justiciary Court Records MS). One later source (Hickes:64) asserts that he also confessed to lying with the devil in the shape of a beautiful woman; but this is not mentioned in the records of the trial and is almost certainly a later invention, one of the many in the fast-growing legend.

The jury found Weir guilty of fornication and adultery by a majority, of the other charges unanimously. He was duly sentenced to death by burning. In prison both before and after sentence his attitude was one of utter despair (Hickes:68–71; Sinclair: 229–31, 241; Scott-Moncrieff:14; Justiciary Court Records MS). Though he is said to have asked John Sinclair to pray for him, he refused to pray himself or to let ministers (even ones of covenanting sympathies) pray in his cell, crying 'torment me not before the time' (Sinclair:230). He said he could not 'be the better for all the Prayers that Men or Angels could offer up to Heaven upon his account'; but for the terrors that tormented him, he would doubt the existence of God. 'Trouble me no more with your beseechings of me to Repent, for I know my sentence of damnation is already seal'd in Heaven; and I feel myself so hardened within that I could not even wish to be pardoned if such a wish could save me . . . I find nothing within me but blackness and darkness, Brimstone, and burning to the bottom of Hell' (Hickes:70–1). On 11 April Weir was executed. Too weak to walk, he was dragged on a sledge (the horse being led by the executioner) to the Gallowlee between Edinburgh and Leith. There he was strangled at the stake and burnt. He died still in his terrible despair, declaring that he had no hope of mercy (Scott-Moncrieff:14; Lauder 1900:232).

Jean Weir was tried at the same time as her brother, being accused of incest and sorcery. It was perhaps inevitable in the seventeenth century that an old woman accused of so serious a crime as incest should also be accused of witchcraft: in any case, she confessed to several points of witchcraft, some implicating her brother. Probably, looking back over her past life, intermittently wracked with guilt, she interpreted various events, and especially her brother's power over her, in supernatural terms. Indeed it is notable that the witchcraft she confessed to shows her more bewitched than

bewitching. Two points in the charges against her related to the period when she lived in Dalkeith: a mysterious stranger (later interpreted as having been the devil) had visited her, and she spun so much yarn that she must have had the devil's help. She admitted both these charges—though at one point she denied the second, claiming to be unusually good at spinning. Even allowing for how absurd so many charges of witchcraft appear in retrospect, these charges against Jean Weir seem extraordinarily weak (Hickes: 64–7; Sinclair: 234–8; Scott-Moncrieff: 11–14; Justiciary Court Records MS). Yet all her other confessions related to her brother rather than to herself. She had found the devil's mark on his shoulder. She said she knew that her brother had dealings with the devil and was jealous of them (was it perhaps she and not her brother who said he had lain with the devil?). The most specific magical event that she confessed was that in 1648 (Hickes: 66–7) or 1651 (Sinclair: 228, 236) she and her brother had driven with the devil in a fiery coach (which nobody else could see) drawn by six horses to Musselburgh (or Dalkeith), and that the devil had foretold the then imminent defeat of the Scots army at Preston (or Worcester). Both these times were ones of confusion, danger and intrigue, so possibly she refers to some real secret journey undertaken by the major which again she later saw in terms of bewitchment.

Finally comes the story of Major Weir's staff. Jean stated that the staff which he always carried was the source of all his magical powers. This staff soon became one of the main items in the Weir legend (Hickes: 66; Sinclair: 228, 236). In the circumstances it is tempting to see the magic staff which she said gave him power over her as a phallic symbol—but then with a little imagination it is possible to find phallic symbols practically anywhere. In spite of the importance given to these witchcraft stories in the early published accounts of the Weirs and in the later legend, they made little impression on the justiciary court: no attempt was made to secure a conviction of Jean on these charges. She was therefore found guilty of incest alone (Hickes: 66; Justiciary Court Records MS). Her attitude in prison was very different from her brother's. She claimed to be penitent, but those who visited her saw no sign of real, heartfelt contrition. She admitted that her sins deserved a worse death than she was condemned to but seemed little concerned about her fate beyond stating mysteriously that she was resolved to die with all possible shame. What she meant by this was seen on 12 April when she mounted the scaffold in the Grassmarket. After making a short speech abusing the crowd for not mourning the broken covenants she tried to throw off her clothes so as to die naked, but, after a sordid struggle, was prevented, pushed off the ladder and so hanged (Hickes: 66, 72; Sinclair: 239–40).

The Weirs and the Antinomian Heresy

What is one to make of the squalid lives and deaths of Thomas and Jean Weir? Are they not simply stories of perversion and hypocrisy, best either entirely forgotten or transformed into homely tales of sorcery and witchcraft? But to go behind the legend and discover their real crimes brings one nearer to the truth, and provides an interesting

example of crude reality transformed into folklore. Yet a bald relation of the facts of their lives still leaves many questions unanswered. How did the Weirs for so long combine lives of public godliness and private perversion, contradictions which must have imposed great strains on them? Was their godliness merely hypocrisy?—and if not how could they reconcile it with their actions? How are we to explain the major's sudden confession, and his sister's very different but equally remarkable behaviour thereafter? To dismiss them simply as evil or mad evades such questions.

There is one assumption which, if applied to both Thomas and Jean, seems to provide answers. This is the assumption that they believed themselves to be unable to do any wrong since they were among the elect, predestined to salvation.

Debate about such ideas was fairly common. The antinomian or 'against the law' heresy, that believers or (as in this case) the elect were not bound by moral law, dates back to early Christian times (Huehns 1951:11–54). Many dualistic Gnostic sects were tinged with it (*e.g.* Runciman 1955:22). The connection with gnosticism is worth noting in this context as George Hickes, having denounced John Mitchell and Major Weir, proceeds to call the Gnostics the archetype of the presbyterian extremists in Scotland (Hickes:74–6)—though without mentioning Weir directly or referring to antinomianism.

Controversy over antinomianism was active in the American colonies in the 1630s (Hall 1968) and in England especially in the 1640s and 1650s (Huehns 1951) in connection with disputes among Calvinists over problems raised by predestination, grace, and good works. Many were willing to argue that, though salvation or damnation were predestined and could not be influenced by an individual's good or bad behaviour on earth, yet the fact that a man did lead a moral life at least provided a strong presumption that he was one of the saved. Thus a puritan merchant could write 'though I believe that all my ways of holiness are of no use to me in point of justification. . . . They are good fruits and evidences of justification' (Keayne 1965:2). To others this seemed a dangerous belief, tending to undermine strict predestination by 'arguing some necessary connection between man's own works and his redemption by Christ', indicating that man could be saved by good works instead of predestined divine grace (Hall 1968: 6–7, 17). In reacting against this, in insisting that outward life and good works told one nothing about man's eternal destination, some strict Calvinists slipped into antinomianism. They claimed not only that obedience to moral law was no sign of salvation, but also that the saved need not obey moral law. The saved could do no evil.

For antinomians it was 'as impossible . . . to recognise the existence of evil in themselves as in God. For in truth they were part of the divine' (Huehns 1951:15). Saved by divine grace, all that they did must be godly. If a man was one of the elect chosen by a just God, then surely he could do no evil. For sin deserved punishment and he was not going to be punished. And for God not to punish him if he deserved it would be unjust. The extreme antinomian position could thus rest partly on the rather naive assumption that if you were not going to be punished for an action then it could not be wrong.

The great majority of antinomians, though asserting that they were free from moral law and had no obligation to obey it, nonetheless did obey it. They claimed that they were guided in how to act by divine grace acting within them, expressing itself in impulses: what they wanted to do was right and should be done. And in practice impulse often guided them into continuing to obey moral law, for their impulses were largely governed by habit, by inhibitions, by the conventions of their society—and above all by their religious beliefs, for their point was that they *need not* obey moral law, not that they *would not*. Indeed they claimed that they would obey it as or more carefully than other men (Huehns: 12–13). But in spite of such assertions by antinomians that they were as or more moral than other men, the dangers of their beliefs were obvious. If to act on any impulse that stirred them was right, they 'were left alone and defenceless in the world of their own instincts and desires. Given their premises, it was hard to escape the conclusion that every one of their whims was a divine impulse. For how could they dare to resist the will and the power of the spirit exerted in them?' (Huehns: 12–13, 17). Not only were they free to obey every impulse, they were obliged to do so.

The history of antinomian ideas in Scotland before the eighteenth century is obscure, to say the least, but news of the controversies in England must have circulated, and it would be very surprising if the orthodox teachings of the kirk on predestination had not led some to deduce antinomian ideas from them. Thus, as antinomian ideas were widely debated in early seventeenth century England and had a suitable soil in which to germinate in Scotland, the Weirs could easily have access to such ideas or develop them for themselves. If they were indeed antinomians, they were of a very different and much cruder variety than the earnest and moral puritans of the main antinomian tradition. For the Weirs, if they had such beliefs, carried them to the extreme of not only believing they had no need to obey moral law but of actually acting in accordance with this by following their own impulses regardless of any law or convention. The assumption that this was so would explain much in their lives. Their crimes would then not be crimes, for they could do no wrong. Their godliness and devotion to the covenants would not be hypocrisy if they were convinced that they had received divine grace and were justified in all they did. The fact that they kept their crimes secret and outwardly obeyed moral law would be merely a matter of expediency to guard themselves against the reprobate who did not understand the divine will so well as they did. It might be called hypocrisy, but again it could not be wrong: the very fact that they did it made it right. Thus the seemingly unbearable tension between their private and public lives may be reconciled. Robert Louis Stevenson was nearer the truth than he knew when he wrote of Major Weir being 'the outcome and fine flower of dark and vehement religion' (Stevenson 1954: 49).

If this interpretation is accepted, then it would appear that what happened in 1670 was that Thomas Weir lost his complete conviction of his own election, on which he had built his life of defiance of morality. He did not lose his belief in predestination:

more terribly, a complete conviction that he was of the elect seems to have changed to an equally strong belief that he was predestined to damnation. This would explain his dreadful despair. Previously no amount of what was conventionally regarded as evil-doing could have harmed him. Now no amount of virtue or repentance could save him. There was no use praying, for praying would now be an irrelevant mockery. Indeed, to him praying had always seemed pointless. Whether predestined to heaven or hell, the simple fact of predestination meant that prayer could not have any effect. He confessed that his previous skill in extemporary prayer, for which he had been famous, had been a sham. With divine grace working within him, he himself was semi-divine and had no need to pray.

The assumption that Weir was an antinomian who lost his conviction of his election does not of itself fully explain why he confessed. If predestined to damnation, confession could not help him—as he realised when he refused to repent or pray. Why then confess to capital crimes which would speed his inevitable departure to hell? It may be that he continued to hold the antinomian belief that the moral law, though not applicable to the elect, did bind the reprobate. As he now saw himself as one of the reprobate his crimes which he had previously regarded as no sin were now grave ones. Being thus bound by moral law he was obliged to confess his breaches of it, even if this could not save him from damnation. However, it is doubtful that the motives of this broken old man were so logical. With the sudden collapse of the belief on which he had based his life and the realisation of his guilt the impulse to seek relief through confession was irresistible.

Jean Weir's attitude was in some ways more complicated than her brother's. She made some show of repentance but on the whole seemed confident as to her future. Her confessions concerning witchcraft and the devil perhaps indicate that at times she had doubts: had she and her brother perhaps been inspired not by God but by the devil? Her determination to die with shame by pulling off her clothes also suggests guilt, but on the other hand she did this immediately after rebuking those present for not mourning the breaches of the covenants, which indicates that she retained her terrible conviction of her own superior godliness even in these circumstances. Perhaps the exhibitionist way in which she tried to 'shame' herself is best seen as a last gesture of defiance, showing that she still regarded herself as free from normal conventions and behaviour.

That the Weirs really were antinomians cannot be proved, but it does seem to be the only explanation that gives their lives some sort of sense and consistency, however horrible.

The Weirs and the Justified Sinner

We have seen that the story of Major Weir was well known in Scottish literary circles in the early nineteenth century. In 1824 James Hogg published his *Private Memoirs and*

Confessions of a Justified Sinner, about an antinomian who followed out the logic of his beliefs by sinning greatly. It seems virtually certain that Hogg knew of the Weir legend, and this leads to the question of whether he was at all influenced by the legend in creating his justified sinner. The most obvious and important objection to such an idea is that there is no evidence whatsoever that Hogg or anyone else interpreted Major Weir's life in antinomian terms. Moreover there are no specific incidents common to the Weir story and the *Justified Sinner*, only the general similarity that both concern extreme antinomians who hid their great sins under a cloak of godliness. There had been much controversy over antinomian ideas in Scotland early in the eighteenth century. Disputes over the 'Auchterarder creed' and the 'marrowmen' (both suspected of antinomian tendencies) had been among the leading religious issues in the country for several years, attracting much attention from the public and action from the general assembly (Ferguson 1968:106–7, 116–19; Simpson 1962:170–3).[1] It is probable that these controversies were the main sources of Hogg's theme, but the fascinating possibility remains that he was partly inspired by the lives of the Weirs. If he was, it is understandable that he should have written a completely new story around the central theme, for incest and bestiality were hardly fit subjects for a novelist.

To conclude, it seems likely that Thomas and Jean Weir believed themselves predestined to salvation and guiltless in all they did in their lives which seemed so incomprehensible to their contemporaries and to later writers. Their fate caught the popular imagination but their real crimes tended to be ignored either on the assumption that they were insane and that they confessed to crimes they had not committed, or that even if guilty these crimes were unmentionable. Hogg was to postulate in fiction the phenomenon of an exceedingly wicked 'justified sinner' arising in a context of extreme presbyterianism. In fact, whether he knew it or not, such individuals had probably actually existed in Scotland a century and a half before he wrote. Even if in this case truth may not have inspired fiction, it had at least forestalled it.

NOTE

1 Simpson (190–2) discusses the case of Nicol Muschet, executed in 1721 in Edinburgh for murdering his wife, as a case which may have provided one of Hogg's sources, perhaps taking the idea from Roughead (1917:38). But the parallel between the case and the justified sinner are not very close, for Muschet always seems to have felt guilt for his sins, even if this did not prevent him from committing them. Thus he was no antinomian. Admittedly he suggested that God might have prompted him to murder his wife, but he did not claim that this justified his act; it remained a great crime but God might have inspired him to do it for his own good, to bring punishment on him for his life of sin, to bring him to repentance. It was a sign of God's interest in him and his fate. He was confident of going to heaven through God's mercy (whether predestined or not) rather than through belief that his sins had not been sins because he was one of the elect. This is not antinomian, but the far more common case of an intensely self-centred individual who sees events and the fates of those about him as being messages and signs from God to him. Such an individual tends to see his fellow men as pawns, not as

individuals whose souls are of equal value to God as his own. This is one of the dangers of a religion which stresses the intense personal relationship between God and the individual.

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The Matching of Andrew Blaikie's Ballad Tunes with their Texts

E. B. LYLE

Although the nineteenth-century Scottish collectors may well have been as aware as we are to-day of the ballad as a sung entity, combining text and tune, many of them lacked the skill to note down the music, and so we have collections consisting of words only. By contrast, Andrew Blaikie had a primary interest in music and there are no complete texts included in the two collections of his tunes at present available. As a result of this dichotomy, we have texts for which no tunes were recorded and tunes without attached texts, and we also have a group of texts and tunes recorded separately by different collectors which are the complementary halves of ballads as performed by individual singers. In this note, I set out to survey what can be done in the way of matching Blaikie's tunes with their texts without going deeply into background that has yet to be studied in detail and without having the use of the traditional material collected by Blaikie which was mentioned by nineteenth-century writers (Chambers 1847:176–7; Rimbault 1875:518) but has since been lost sight of, if not lost altogether.

So little is generally known about Blaikie himself that it seems worth while to place his work in context by quoting the obituary notice in *The Paisley Advertiser* of 12 June 1841 (p. 4, col. 3) which is still the fullest account of his life. It has no reference to song-collecting, but it does indicate how very well qualified Blaikie was to make an authentic record of traditional music:

> In our obituary of to-day will be found the name of a gentleman, whose loss we are sure will inflict a pang in many bosoms of this community. We allude to Mr Andrew Blaikie, engraver.[1] A few more words than is usual in obituary notices, will, we are sure, not be considered out of place. Mr Blaikie was born in the county of Roxburgh, at the farm called Holydean,[2] in the occupation of his ancestors for the last century, and still occupied by a brother. He came to Paisley in 1801, and by dint of talents, zeal, taste, and attention, ultimately succeeded in establishing himself in a respectable business. In 1828 he was appointed a member of the Abbey Session, the duties of which he performed with prudence and affection. Three years before he was appointed to the office of Session Clerk, on which occasion he was strongly recommended by the late Sir Walter Scott. With that celebrated man Mr Blaikie was most intimate, and at his residence at Abbotsford was a frequent and welcome guest, when business or pleasure led him to the south. The taste necessary in his business was carried into all his operations, and was amply manifested in the very neat way he kept the

session records of the Abbey Parish. On one occasion, indeed, the thanks of the Presbytery of Paisley were tendered to him on this account. To accuracy as well as taste he gave the greatest attention, and with much labour got many of the omissions of bygone times rectified. In antiquarianism generally, Mr Blaikie took much delight, but in the branch of it which relates to music he was a deep enthusiast. On this point there was not, perhaps, a man in Scotland whose opinions were more highly valued. His advice was often sought, freely given, highly prized, and honourably acknowledged, by persons of various ranks, connected with the publication of ancient music. Mr Blaikie was a practical as well as a theoretic musician, and often assisted at our philharmonic concerts by performing on the bass violin. In his manners he was modest and retiring, in his friendship warm and steady, and it would be difficult to find a man so long in public life who so well escaped the creating of enemies. Mr Blaikie's health had evidently been declining for a year past, but it was not till about three weeks since that he was confined to bed. On the evening of the 7th he performed his last official duties in signing marriage lines, and next morning at four o'clock he calmly breathed his last. On Thursday his remains were removed for interment, to the place of his nativity, near Melrose.

Blaikie, as a collector of ballad-tunes, has been mainly associated with Motherwell and the *Minstrelsy: Ancient and Modern* for which he engraved the music, but the obituary notice demonstrates that he also had a connection with the editor of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, and it was to Scott that his only available tune manuscript (N.L.S. 1578) was presented in 1824. We know that Blaikie collected in the Borders (Montgomerie 1958:158) and it is possible that all the ballad airs in the 1824 manuscript came from this region. Some of the headings of the tunes certainly indicate a Border source, *e.g.* the title *Janet of Carterhaugh* (No. 76) may be taken to imply a Border variant of *Tam Lin* as it is only in Border texts of this ballad that the name 'Carterhaugh' is found.[3] One tune can even be precisely located, for the air of *Johnie Scot* which is Blaikie's No. 75 is stated in another manuscript to have been recorded at Innerleithen in Peeblesshire (Sharpe: 16). It seems quite likely that, when the network of contacts among collectors and singers at this period has been more fully explored, it may prove feasible to relate at least some of Blaikie's manuscript tunes to particular Border texts, but progress towards this end is much hampered by the fact that Blaikie did not include any of the singers' words in his manuscript.

The case is different in Blaikie's second collection, where a stanza of text accompanies all but one of the thirty-three tunes given in the appendix to the *Minstrelsy: Ancient and Modern*, and an introductory note states explicitly that stanza and tune are tied to each other (Motherwell 1827: appendix xv):

> The following tunes having been taken down from the singing of particular verses in the respective ballads to which they belong, and these verses having sometimes happened not to be the initial stanza of the ballad, it has been deemed advisable to print the precise verses from the singing of which the several tunes were so noted.

Four of the stanzas belong to composite texts in Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*:

1 *The Dæmon Lover* (Child No. 243), 16 *Clerk Saunders* (Child No. 69), 22 *Johnie o' Braidislee* (Child No. 114 *Johnie Cock*) and 25 *May Margaret* (Child No. 182 *The Laird o Logie*), and perhaps we may expect these four tunes to be of Border origin. In this connection, it is interesting to find that the same air of *Johnie o' Braidislee* (Bronson 1) is present also in the 1824 'Border' manuscript. Apart from these four exceptional cases, however, it may be presumed that the tunes in this publication of Motherwell's are likely to connect with material recorded by Motherwell and his associates in the Paisley area.

A number of ballad texts which appear to be linked to Blaikie's tunes occur in a collection, not known to Child, which was made for Motherwell by Andrew Crawfurd at Lochwinnoch in Renfrewshire. The principal singer represented in this collection is a Mrs William Storie, and Motherwell's account of expenses incurred in collecting for the *Minstrelsy* shows an outlay of seventeen shillings 'To expense of bringing Mrs. Storie to Paisley & getting her airs noted' (Motherwell, *Note-Book*: 157).[4] In ten cases, the first stanza of a ballad recorded from Mrs Storie matches a Blaikie stanza, if due allowance is made for the slight differences which are liable to occur between records made by two collectors of separate performances of a ballad by the same singer.[5] These ten are:

		Bronson
5	*Lord Bengwill* (Child No. 5 *Gil Brenton*)	2
6	*Babe Norice* (Child No. 83 *Child Maurice* C)	4
7	*Sir Hew or The Jews Daughter* (Child No. 155)	56
8	*Earl Richard* (Child No. 68 *Young Hunting*)	6
10	*Ochiltree Walls* (Child No. 217 *The Broom of Cowdenknows* D)	9
12	*The Three Ravens* (Child No. 26)	2
17	*Amang the Blue Flowers and Yellow* (Child No. 25 *Willie's Lyke-Wake*)	3
18	*Young Johnston* (Child No. 88)	2
23	*Lady Jean* (Child No. 52 *The King's Dochter Lady Jean* A)	1
29	*Ricadoo* (Child No. 281 *The Keach i the Creel*)	1

Three of these, *Babe Norice*, *Ochiltree Walls* and *Lady Jean*, were copied by Motherwell into his *Ballad Book* and so were available to Child, who matched the Blaikie stanza with the full text in each case. Professor Bronson, more cautiously, did not include Mrs Storie's variants of these three ballads, but in the light of the fresh evidence he has printed Mrs Storie's full text of *Ricadoo* in his final volume. All ten of these texts will be given with Blaikie's tunes in a forthcoming edition of *Andrew Crawfurd's Collection of Ballads and Songs.*

There are eight other cases in which I would be inclined to identify the Blaikie stanza with a stanza in a traditional text, allowing, as before, for the likelihood that there would sometimes be differences between recordings.[6] Child matched 2, 3, 14, 30 and 33 in this way and did not reject the others but merely omitted any mention of the Blaikie stanza.

		Bronson
	2 *The Flower of Northumberland* (Child No. 9 D)	6
	3 *The Whummil Bore* (Child No. 27 sole text)	sole tune
M B	4 *Lord Derwentwater* (Child No. 208 A)	1
M B	14 *Susie Cleland* (Child No. 65 *Lady Maisry* I)	2
M B	19 *Sweet William* (Child No. 254 *Lord William* A)	sole tune
M B	27 *Earl Marshall* (Child No. 156 *Queen Eleanor's Confession* F)	sole tune
M	30 *The Bonnie Mermaid* (Child No. 289 *The Mermaid* E)	34
	33 *Kempy Kane* (Child No. 33 C)	1

In the above list, the texts printed in the *Minstrelsy* are marked M and those matched by Bronson with Blaikie's tunes are marked B. It can be seen that the two groups coincide except for 30 *The Bonnie Mermaid* (see note 6) and that Bronson has admitted only variants that were printed in the *Minstrelsy*. There does not seem, though, to be any reason not to match the Blaikie tunes equally with texts which Motherwell left in manuscript, especially as the introductory note in the *Minstrelsy* states that 'some tunes are given to which no correspondent ballad will be found in this collection, while others refer to sets of a ballad different from those which it contains' (Motherwell 1827: appendix xv). *Kempy Kane* is a particularly good example of a tune that can be matched with a manuscript text. While Bronson prints only the Blaikie stanza, he does note that Child 'gives what may be the remainder of this version' as *Kempy Kay* C (Bronson 1959–72: I. 321). Actually, it seems quite clear that Blaikie's air is linked with Child's C text of this uncommon ballad, for, apart from the fact that the equivalent stanzas have almost identical wording, this variant has been given the heading 'Kempy Kay or Kempy Kane.—Tune' (Motherwell, *Ballad Book*: 193). I have omitted from the list above two ballads for which Bronson quotes the *Minstrelsy* texts, 13 *Hynde Horn* (Child No. 17) and 15 *Johnie Scot* (Child No. 99), since these are composite versions. It seems that Blaikie's tunes must have been ultimately derived from traditional singers who would not have sung the conflated texts printed by Motherwell, but it is not easy at present to determine which, if any, of the traditional variants known to Motherwell were associated with the airs.

I have also omitted two further Blaikie stanzas that were matched by Child. 20 *The Swan Swims Bonnie O* (Child No. 10 *The Twa Sisters*) is identified by Child with his P text, and there is a certain superficial resemblance for the refrains are almost identical. The narrative lines, however, include the quite different forms 'There cam a lover them to woo' (Blaikie) and 'The old was black and the young ane fair' (Child P) which relate them to different types of ballad opening, the first occurring, *e.g.* in Child I and J and the second in Child G as well as P. Stanza 26 *The Bonnie Banks o' Fordie* (Child No. 14 *Babylon*) is associated by Child with his A text, which is published in Motherwell's *Minstrelsy*, in spite of the fact that the introductory note to the Blaikie stanza says that it belongs to a 'different version' (Motherwell 1827: appendix xxii). Besides, the refrain of Child A is quite unlike that of the Blaikie stanza, and Bronson comments that Child A 'does not go so well' to the Blaikie tune as the other does (Bronson 1959–72:

I. 251). It seems clear that the stanzas of *The Twa Sisters* and *Babylon* cannot be attached to known full texts and should be treated as independent variants in the same way as three other isolated Blaikie stanzas which are individually lettered in Child's collection: 9 *Jamie Douglas* (Child No. 204 O), 21 *Little Mushiegrove* (Child No. 81 *Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard* M) and 32 *The False Knight* (Child No. 3 B).

A final group in the *Minstrelsy* appendix consists of three stanzas which belong to chapbook versions: 24 *May Collean* (Child No. 4 *Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight*), 28 *Mill o' Tifties Annie* (Child No. 233 *Andrew Lammie*) and 31 *Captain Glen* (not in Child, but given by Bronson as an appendix to Child No. 57 *Brown Robyn's Confession*). Stanzas like the Blaikie ones occur, for example, in the chapbooks LC 2898:28 (*cf.* Child No. 4 D), LC 2845:33 (*cf.* Child No. 233 A) and LC 2899:14. In these instances, it is possible to tell roughly what form the ballad took although we do not have a variant exactly as sung by a particular singer.

Even without taking these three approximate matches into account, it seems that eighteen of Blaikie's tunes can now be linked to ballad texts with a fair degree of probability, and I hope that the present brief discussion may perhaps help to pave the way for future researches that have the aim, which Professor Bronson expresses and has done so much to achieve, of uniting 'each tune with its individual text, wherever both have survived, so that each may be studied in the light of the other, as the product of influences mutually exerted' (Bronson 1959–72: I. xix).

NOTES

1 See Bushnell, p. 6, and an announcement about Blaikie's business at 7 Abbey Street inserted by his widow in the same issue of *The Paisley Advertiser* (p. 1, col. 3).

2 His date of birth was 21 April 1774 (Bowden Parish Register, PR 783/1).

3 Similarly, it is possible to say that the airs entitled *The King of Fairies* or *The Roses they smell sweetly* (Nos. 55 and 55a) were probably linked with Border texts of *The Cruel Brother* (Child No. 11) since this ballad, which often has a 'rose' refrain line, is called *The King of the Fairies* in the Border collection found in the Campbell MSS (Child L). In view of this identification, which springs to mind when the titles are seen in a Border context, Professor Bronson's attractive suggestion (Bronson 1959–72: III. 186) that the tunes might conceivably belong to *King Orfeo* (Child No. 19) must, I think, be abandoned, however regretfully.

4 I am grateful to the owner, Mrs Maxwell Macdonald, for allowing me to consult this manuscript.

5 The variations are as follows, the Blaikie readings being given first. Differences of the type: an / and, ye / you, daughter / dochter, have / hae, are not noted. Comparison is made with Motherwell's *Ballad Book* in the case of the three stanzas that occur there, 6, 10 and 23; otherwise with Crawfurd's *Auld Ballats and Sangs from Oral Sources.* (5) 2 and / – , 4 and / –; (6) 1 Babe / Bob, 2 He's / He is, 4 burning / shynand; (7) 1 midsimmer / summer, 2 weans / boys, 4 on little / only, 5 on little / only; (8) 1 a hunting / to the hunting, 3 – / hung; (10) —; (12) 5 – / as; (17) 1 sae / –, 3 I think nae / Nae kind o; (18) 2 Were / Was, at / of; (23) 2 fine / –, 3 at her braw bower / o the bow; (27) 4 fast / hard, C5 – / tun-un-nay ricadoo, C6 Tunaway / tun-un-nay, C7 doo / dee, C8 Tunaway / tun-un-nay.

6 The wording of the stanzas is identical in 4 and 27. Variations in the other cases between the Blaikie stanza (given first) and the stanza in Motherwell's *Ballad Book* are: (2) 2 – / and, 4 hie ye awa / go your

ways back; (3) 2 – / fa, 5 a tee too / tee a ta too a tee a ta; (14) 4 And she / Who; (19) 3 chamber / room; (30) 1 O / –, 2 glass / comb, kaim / glass, 3 Reek about, reek about, ye / Says cheer up your hearts my, 4 For ye're / You are; (33) 2 ayont / beyont. The differences are greater in (30) than in the others, but this variant has been given the heading "Tune" in a partly obliterated pencilled first copy (Motherwell, *Ballad Book*: 144) and it seems possible that the tune referred to is the *Minstrelsy* one.

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Book Reviews

Three Centuries of Scottish Posts by A. R. B. Haldane. Edinburgh University Press 1971. Pp. 336. £3.75.

In this book, Dr A. R. B. Haldane, well-known for his *Drove Roads of Scotland* and *New Ways Through the Glens*, opens up for us a new aspect of communications in Scotland. Postal services have not, superficially at any rate, the same romantic attraction as Highland drove roads, but they are a basic feature of modern civilisation and the story of their development in Scotland reveals considerable interest in the hands of so skilled a historian as Dr Haldane. Virtually nothing has been written on the subject before, so that the author has had to quarry his material from a variety of original sources. The most important of these are the Post Office's own archives. Dr. Haldane marshals an impressive amount of unpublished material with a discerning eye for what is important to his subject, and presents it in a lucid and very readable fashion.

The author traces the history of the postal services in Scotland from its beginnings in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to the introduction of the Penny Post in 1840. By this time the modern postal service had in effect been created, embracing the whole country in a regular and frequent national system of collections and deliveries. This national system had been anticipated, at a local level, by the private posts maintained by merchants and noblemen in earlier times, and by the public posts managed by the more important Scottish burghs in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Aberdeen was prominent in the development of the postal services. As early as 1595 the town employed an official messenger to carry its posts. He wore 'a livery of blue cloth with the city's arms emblazoned on the left sleeve'. This town post continued until the late seventeenth century, and, like the posts of other burghs, had regular links with its neighbours. Universities like St. Andrews also enjoyed the privilege of a post wearing their badge of office.

Such private and local posts survived long where the state made no provision, but in general they were absorbed by the growing national system in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The postal service as we know it originated in the system of stages for providing horses for royal messengers which the State maintained in the sixteenth century in England, and later extended to Edinburgh. It was not at first in any sense a public service but an arm of government, geared to the necessities and emergencies of the State. Even when, later in the seventeenth century, the earlier system of 'posts' gave way to the conveyance of letters and carried a growing volume of public mails, its original function was apparent. Royal messengers were given

priority. Careful watch was kept for traitorous correspondence and conspiracies. Letters were liable to examination and postmasters and riders were chosen with care (Cromwell debarred Scots in this capacity on the route from Edinburgh to Berwick). And into modern times the close identification of the mail service with the state has continued to influence events. The speed and urgency with which the mails have traditionally (till of late) been conveyed, originated no doubt in the haste required of the early couriers carrying royal despatches. And in recent times ferocious sentences, reminiscent of the age of Judge Jeffreys, have been visited on those who dared to rob the royal mails, compounding robbery with treason.

By the end of the seventeenth century a postal service had emerged, very different from the earlier posting stages designed purely for royal couriers. The main artery of this service continued to be from Edinburgh to London, with stages and changes of horses at Haddington, Cockburnspath and Berwick (the whole journey took a horse-rider four to five days), but now over a thousand letters a week were conveyed north and south. Edinburgh, moreover, had become the centre of a modest network of postal links, extending to the major Lowland towns and to Aberdeen in the north. Scotland had its Postmaster-General, who farmed the office, and a schedule of postal charges—two shillings Scots for distances up to fifty miles, three shillings for between fifty and a hundred miles, and four shillings for over a hundred miles.

Most of Scotland's postal expansion lay in the future and followed the Act of 1711, which transferred control from Edinburgh to London. But in this expansion there is a paradox, which Dr Haldane expounds. From the beginning the Post Office sought primarily to meet not the public's needs but the requirements of the Treasury for revenue. Its one great stimulus was profit. It operated, however, not as a business tycoon, sowing generously so as to reap abundantly. It advanced with cautious steps, venturing forward only when profits seemed assured. It showed no sign of intelligent anticipation of demand, nor aimed deliberately to encourage trade and industry. If Scotland's posts grew and proliferated in the eighteenth century, it was because the social and economic development had already created the conditions which would assure the Post Office of its revenue, and because individuals and public bodies maintained a constant pressure on the Post Office.

Most of this postal expansion occurred in the last half of the eighteenth century, when so much else was happening, not least a notable improvement in Scotland's system of roads and communications. By the seventeen eighties there existed some hundred and forty postal towns. Revenue had swollen from £1,194 in 1707 to £40,000 in 1783. Beginning in 1786, mail coaches, capable of an average of nine miles an hour, would convey mail between the principal centres, whilst horse-riders and foot-runners ensured a regular service in the more accessible rural areas of the mainland. In 1793 a direct postal link was established between Perth and Stirling, a significant step in lessening the centralisation of postal links in Edinburgh. By the end of the century Edinburgh and Glasgow enjoyed a penny post, delivering mail to addresses well beyond

the city boundaries. It remained, in the next forty or so years, to bring the more remote areas and the islands within the postal system, to regularise and speed deliveries and establish a more satisfactory basis for charging than by the number of sheets in a letter and the distance conveyed. The end-maps which reproduce contemporary illustrations, are illuminating in showing the extent of postal links in 1813 and 1838 respectively, and the modes of conveyance of mail.

Dr Haldane's treatment of this complex subject achieves a nice balance of analysis and description. We are kept aware of the general tides of events, but are free to explore the backwaters and creeks and to view the whirlpools. Much of the book's interest is due to such pleasant excursions. We learn of the varied transactions of the merchant, Colin Campbell of Inveresregan, who ran the Loch Etive Trading Company from 1733 to 1744 and dealt in anything from candy to coffins; of the smuggling of letters from Aberdeen to Edinburgh in packets of 'Findhorn haddocks'; of the remarkable career of Peter Williamson, who in 1774 established a penny post in Edinburgh and maintained it for twenty years from his coffee-house in Parliament House; of the protracted quarrels in Scotland between the Post Office and the turnpike trustees over the vexed question of tolls, and of the pay, duties and conditions of the Post Office's servants.

Features that were specifically Scottish emerge from this study. For longer than in the south the postal system remained centralised at one focal point, in this case Edinburgh, and the development of 'cross-posts' between quite major postal towns was long retarded. (Even after the direct link between Perth and Stirling was effected in 1793, mail from the north destined for the west continued to go via Edinburgh.) Again, a system of free postal deliveries, achieved in England fairly generally in the late eighteenth century, was not conceded in Scotland for several decades more. Postmasters were less often in Scotland recruited from among inn-keepers than in England, and their rate of failure in the eighteenth century seems to have been especially high. The mail coach experienced a fast development in Scotland, once the Turnpike roads began to be built, but subsequent to the loss of its exemption from tolls in 1813, every advance was carefully scrutinised. With a terrain so rugged as Scotland's, and a climate so harsh, the purely physical obstacles to the spread of postal services were greater than those met in England. There was inevitably more recourse to foot-runners and to packet boats. It would appear too, that heavy financial demands were made on land-owners in rural areas to act as guarantors for postmasters and underwrite the costs of new postal services and those whose returns were uncertain. The Post Office never took risks and never laid out a ha'penny without the certainty of a profit.

After 1711, when control over posts passed from Edinburgh to London, the postal destinies of the Northern Kingdom were in the hands of men not only physically but mentally remote. Their ignorance of Scottish conditions was often only equalled by their lack of sympathy with the Scots. Francis Freeling, Secretary to the Post Office from 1797 to 1836, whilst an excellent and conscientious public servant, resented

the slightest stirrings of independence in his Scottish officials. He wrote angrily in 1823, 'Perhaps there is not a single point of duty connected with that department which has not been infringed', and again, 'I trust we shall at last reform the irregularities in our system in Scotland'. If the Scots gained some share in the great expansion of postal services at this period, it was not without effort and agitation on their own part and on the part of the Scottish postal staff. The petitions from island lairds (reproduced in the appendix) witness the sort of pressure which the more vocal sections of the community kept up. Even so, the development of postal services in the north and west Highlands in the early nineteenth century would hardly have occurred had the government not been afraid of widespread emigration. Telford's roads, too, were an essential pre-condition of an efficient postal system in the Highlands.

The Post Office high command was served by a body of servants in Scotland who one cannot but feel were better than it deserved. Postmasters, like runners, were underpaid but subject more to financial risks than physical dangers, though the execution of the Kirkwall postmaster in 1796 for petty pilfering was a stern reminder of the standards expected by the Post Office of its servants. Riders and runners were exposed to exceptional risks and fatigues. As late as the 1820s the runner at Inveraray carried his heavy bag thrice weekly to Dalmally and back, most of the journey being at night, whilst his colleague further north, on his journey from Bonawe to Appin, regularly travelled the length of Glen Falach, described by the postal surveyor as 'the wildest Pass in the Highlands', following in the footsteps of his father and mother, who had preceded him in the job. Ponies might be the answer to rough tracks and a growing burden of mail, but there were districts where the humble jogger was at an advantage. The contractor of the mails from Arrochar to Inveraray went bankrupt in 1824 after the loss of all his horses, caused by the constant fatigues of traversing Glen Croe and The Rest and Be Thankful pass.

Much of the credit for the extension of the rural posts in the early decade of the nineteenth century must go to those energetic and admirable men, the postal surveyors, who combined a thorough knowledge of their districts with a sense of fairness and high moral courage. By daring to press strong and often unpalatable advice upon their superiors in London, they courted rebuke and risked being dismissed. Men such as Ronaldson, Reeves and Shearer have an honourable place in the history of the Scottish posts. In the London office Scotland tended to be viewed as an irritating thorn in the flesh, but Dr Haldane shows that 'the expenses of management of the Scottish Post Office, in marked contrast to the position in England, amounted to only about one quarter of the gross receipts'. In many ways, this sober and dispassionate survey of the history of the postal services in Scotland makes, in its total impact, a stronger case for political—or at least administrative—devolution than most books written from an avowedly nationalist position.

The maps, illustrations and appendices all add to the value of this study, which is undoubtedly a major contribution to the social and economic history of Scotland.

Edinburgh University Press is to be congratulated also on having produced, though after a somewhat tedious delay, a most handsome volume.

E. R. CREGEEN

Folk Music and Dances of Ireland by Breandán Breathnach. The Talbot Press, Dublin, 1971. Pp. 152. £1.50. Accompanying tape (5 in. twin track, 3¾ i.p.s.) or cassette available from publishers.

As a recent comprehensive introduction to a nation's traditional music, this book inevitably invites comparison with Francis Collinson's *Traditional and National Music of Scotland*. Each reflects the author's personality. Collinson diffidently threw open the footnotes as a forum in which colleagues were allowed to modify and even flatly contradict his conclusions. Breathnach, trained in the tougher school of Irish controversy, dispenses with footnotes and defers to nobody, apart from a general acknowledgement of 'knowledge gained in discussion with other practitioners'. Certainly his book was commissioned with the classroom rather than the coffee-table in view, and there is little room for qualification: but the mandarin nature of some of the definitions offered may reflect the author's long years drafting papers and regulations for the Irish Department of Agriculture—'Seven bars, each containing two triplets of quavers, and an eighth or concluding bar containing a triplet of quavers followed by a crotchet, is the usual form of the double jig.'

The initial definition of the book's subject excludes 'National Music' such as Moore's Melodies by insisting on the criterion of anonymous authorship. (Collinson included it because it was unavoidable, with so many dance-tunes ascribed to named composers such as Gow and Marshall. Breathnach would be the first to admit that versions of many of these same tunes are to be found in Ireland, but the ascriptions have been lost and the tunes changed by oral transmission so far that the present forms can reasonably be claimed as anonymous. Less consistent but also inevitable are the many references to songs with words by known Gaelic poets.) At the other end of the scale the book ignores the many modern singers and groups who choose to accompany Anglo-Irish songs, mostly adequately anonymous, with such untraditional or recently revived instruments as guitar, banjo-mandoline and *bodhrán*. Less reasonable than these exclusions is the slanting of the contents. Not one whole chapter out of ten is given to songs in the two languages of Ireland, and in the chapter on musical instruments over ten pages are devoted to the pipes and little more than one to the fiddle. Even without reading the jacket note anyone could deduce that the author is a piper himself and primarily interested in instrumental music. Naturally he writes best on what he knows best, but a book on the folk music of Ireland in general should really take its proportions from the subject, not from the author.

One more personal touch falls to be criticised. The paucity of the sources on the subject is such that the author has visibly relied in several cases on information previously published in a journal which he edits, *Ceol*. Thus the list of Scots and English tunes to which Irish songs have been written largely depends on a series by Proinnsias Ó Ceallaigh, 'The Tunes of the Munster Poets' (*Ceol*, vol. 1, nos. 1–4). One curious error borrowed from this may be corrected here. Ó Ceallaigh states that *The White Cockade* derives from a Scots tune called 'My Gallant Braw John Hielan' (*sic*). In fact Burns's song 'A Highland lad my love was born', in which the line 'My gallant braw John Highlandman' recurs in several verses (not the refrain), is *now* usually sung to *The White Cockade*, but when it first appeared in the posthumous 'cantata' *The Jolly Beggars* (published 1799) the tune specified by Burns was *O, an ye were Dead, Guidman*. The tune of *The White Cockade* first appears under that title, I am told by the Music Room of the National Library of Scotland, in Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*, vol. 3 (1790): but the words are older and probably the tune is too.

Despite these idiosyncracies the book is a better introduction to the subject as a whole than there has yet been, both for its accounts of present-day traditional performance and the assiduous combing of written sources for evidence of earlier practice. As far as Old Irish sources go there is little to quote but the traditional triad of *suantraige*, *gentraige* and *goltraige*, sleep-music, joy-music and sorrow-music, and a number of names of instruments which can rarely be precisely identified. (I doubt the bald statement—following Galpin?—that 'the Irish *timpán* was, in fact, a stringed instrument which was sounded with a bow'; I have seen nothing to show that it did not mean a plucked psaltery, as *tympanum* most often did in mediaeval Europe.) From the sixteenth century on, however, evidence is fairly plentiful. The chapters on Dances and The Dancing Master are particularly good and apparently largely original: they could well be expanded to a separate handbook as authoritative if not as exhaustive as the Fletts' work on Scottish dances. As it is there is no space to bring out, for instance, the difference between the sword dance described *c.* 1600 by Fynes Moryson and the modern *Rince an Chlaidhimh*. The first, 'with naked swords, which they make to meet in divers comely postures', is evidently the English Danelaw type with handheld swords finally interlaced in a 'knot'; the second, where . . . 'sticks, chalked lines, or even a bow laid across a fiddle replace the swords', must be like the Highland solo dance over crossed swords.

Those who know Scottish Gaelic music will be especially interested in the transcription of the only sung Fenian lay recorded by the Irish Folklore Commission. They will be disappointed to find that, presumably because of the 'pitiably corrupt' text, the music is a composite from several stanzas, 'from phrases as sung by informant but not in the order in which he sang them', that it does not fit the text given below from another source, and so can give no indication whether, as with some Scottish performers, the stress varies from verse to verse to fit the words of the syllabic lines. They may be surprised to hear that *porta béil* means lilting or diddling rather than the singing of meaningful words to dance tunes like Scottish Gaelic *puirt a beul*. Irish Gaelic songs to dance

tunes do exist, even if, like Scottish *puirt* in most cases today, they are not used for dancing to: some, such as *Connla* and *Cailleach an Airgid*, are quoted in the notes to the same author's *Ceol Rince na hÉireann*, and *Is trua gan peata 'n mhaoir agam* is given with words and an instrumental version of the tune in the present book. The words are quoted to illustrate the mediaeval *carole* verse form of a line three times repeated before the fourth line, and it is noted that 'the transcription on page 146' [No. 21—the title is unfortunately transposed with the next item] 'shows that the chorus preceded the verse, a not unusual feature in this type of song'. Both these features are well-known in Scottish Gaelic, the first in *puirt a beul* and pibroch songs, the second in almost all songs with a refrain.

The book contains interesting, though perhaps not exhaustive, descriptions of the usual ornaments in instrumental music, mentions the practice of holding stressed notes slightly longer than others, and outlines briefly some regional differences of style on the principal instruments (not, alas, in singing). There is little mention of tempo, also a matter governed partly by regional preference as well as changing fashions, and only the song transcriptions have metronome marks; but no doubt listening to recordings if not live music provides a better guide on this subject than any written description. The description of the modes might be disputed—the tune I know to *Cití na gCumann* is basically Lydian, a mode not mentioned at all—but it is probably more to the point to commend the stress laid on the distinction between the modal final 'on which the melody can be fittingly brought to a close—to the ear of the traditional player' and the last note of the tune. Collinson, while making the distinction, seemed prone to bring in some doubtful cases to illustrate the rarer modes.

The last two chapters—an account of early collectors from Bunting to O'Neill, and a conclusion in the form of an appeal for more Irish people to get to know their traditional music by ear, for better broadcasts and for the recording of the tradition while it is still alive—need no criticism. Some minor points elsewhere may be raised. The transcription of *Callino* (*Cailín ó Chois tSiúire mé*) from the Ballet lute book on page 20 is unduly pianistic: the reader should not be made to skip from one stave to another to find the tune. *Druimín Donn Dílis* (p. 24) for *Druimfhionn* is a simplification of spelling which even the *Caighdeán* would hardly allow. The Scottish National Dictionary associates *reel* not with O.E. *rulla*, to whirl (p. 38) but with *hrēol*, a reel for winding yarn, and as the term basically applies to the twisting 'figure eight' movement this seems reasonable. On page 60, the quotation on dancing jigs from 1674 is described as being 'before the birth of Carolan (1670)', and it is dangerous to assume that scarcely any Irish jigs were borrowed from the Scots since Scottish composers from an early date observed a convention of giving pseudo-Irish titles to the jigs they composed. The *Fairy Dance* (p. 63) was composed by Nathaniel, not Niel Gow. In the reference on page 65 to titles 'suggested by the rhythm of the last bar' of a tune, including *What the Devil ails You*, the author doubts whether these 'represent the endings of songs or refrains now forgotten'. But it may be worth noting that 'What the Devil ails ye?' is the

last line of the Scots mouth tune 'Bonnie lass come ower the burn' (see Jeannie Robertson's record *The Cuckoo's Nest*). On page 84 it seems to be implied that the violin 'emerged' in Ireland in the middle of the sixteenth century, which is very doubtful, and 'the fact that relatively few tunes descend to the fourth string' of the fiddle does not really show that 'the pipes had a dominating influence in the creation of this music', for much the same could be said of Scots reels, in whose creation the fiddle undoubtedly dominated. Space does not allow the enumeration of mere misprints, but attention may be drawn to the misplaced numbering on the tables of ornaments on page 100 and the delightful mutation of Giraldus's Topography (p. 71) to *Typographia Hiberniae*.

One may reasonably expect a degree of nationalism in a work of this sort, especially one designed to circulate chiefly within the Irish Republic. Readers who have not learned Irish will find no translations of the modern Irish song texts quoted (except on p. 54), still less of tune titles: many may fail to recognise the song they know as 'The Shan Van Vought' in the *Seanbhean Bhocht*. The only unjustified boast in the work is on page 127, when the Irish are urged to support their folk music because 'in its variety it is startling'. Anyone acquainted with, say, Romanian or indeed Scottish Gaelic music would laugh this out of court, taken in conjunction with such passages as page 15 where it is stated that nearly all song tunes are made up of four phrases, the most usual patterns for these being AABA and ABBA, and 'airs on other models, *e.g.*, AAAB, ABAB, ABCD are rare'. Elsewhere the author is readier than many of his compatriots would be to admit that 'when we compare our music to the related music of Gaelic Scotland. . . we are . . . singularly poor in labour songs', or that 'many of our great reels are undoubtedly Scottish'. He can surely be forgiven for getting carried away once, and we can admit that Irish musicians have a real genius for breathing life into relatively drab foursquare tunes by free variation and ornamentation.

This being so, every reader should try to get a copy of the accompanying tape. The items on it are transcribed as Appendix I to the book, but the transcriptions of the songs only give an approximation of the rhythms and cannot show the variations in each verse, while one would need to be an experienced traditional player of the instrument concerned to interpret the tunes. The tape is very well produced (considering its speed and the slight crosstalk inevitable in commercial copying) and forms a better introduction to Irish music than any single disc yet produced. Once again songs are under-represented—three of them take up little over a quarter of the tape—but the reader may be able to make up for this with the help of the discs recommended in Appendix II, to which one might add Hugh Shields's recent Leader record *Folk Ballads from Donegal and Derry* and one or two Gael-Linn E.P.s of Gaelic singers. The tape has two songs in Irish from the Connemara singer Seán 'ac Donncha, the lament *Úna Bhán* sung in a fine decorative style and a lighter convict's complaint, *Sé* Oakum *mo Phríosún*, and a fascinating *Lord Baker* (Child 53) from John Reilly, the remarkable Roscommon traveller discovered by Tom Munnelly not very long before his death in 1969. Two verses of this are transcribed in the book, but it is not made clear that the tune of the song varies

greatly from verse to verse only at the beginning: after roaming about in the first five verses, Reilly settles on the second version transcribed and keeps to it fairly closely for the remaining twelve. In any case it is a remarkable performance, and given that only one Anglo-Irish song could be included, it would be hard to find a more interesting one.

Twenty-seven dance-tunes, in fifteen selections, are given on the tape, illustrating the principal forms—single, double and slip jigs, reels, hornpipes and set dances—and the principal instruments—pipes, fiddle, flute, whistle, (button) accordion and concertina. Like the songs they are unaccompanied, and the two last-named instruments play few chords. The players are all from Dublin—alas that Sonny Brogan was not alive to be the accordionist!—but not all of them were born there, and there is the opportunity to compare two fiddle styles. The note on Nos. 4 and 5 should surely read that the lower two strings of the fiddle were tuned up to give the tuning a $e^{\prime}$ $a^{\prime}$ $e^{\prime\prime}$, as one would expect in Scotland, not 'D G $D_{\prime}$ $G_{\prime}$' as stated. Ideally one would, I suppose, have wanted an example of each type of tune played on each instrument, and illustrations of regional style on flute and pipes as well as fiddle, but within reason and the limits of one short tape this is as good as can be expected.

To sum up, the book is inadequate as a guide to Irish traditional singing but a pretty fair guide to dances and dance music. Unlike much earlier writing on the subject it eschews high-flown talk of 'ancient' tunes, and is based instead on the practice of good contemporary players and information from reliable early documents. There are still faults to be found, but like Collinson's work, this book by its mere existence provides a focus for criticism and constructive scholarship which was lacking before. And accompanied by the tape it should make an enjoyable introduction to Irish traditional music for those who know nothing of it.

ALAN BRUFORD

The Isle of Mull by P. A. Macnab. David & Charles, Newton Abbot 1970. Pp. 246+ illus. £2.50.

This book is one of the most recent of David & Charles 'Island Series' which covers the history and development of islands as far apart as Fiji and Orkney. Ostensibly, writing about an island is a much more simple task than tracing the development of a city or of, say, a mainland county, since the boundaries are clear-cut, and one can visualise an island as a single physical unit, having only tenuous links with neighbouring land-masses. Yet, the interplay of external influences on an island such as Mull can be extremely complex and subtle. The peopling of the island, its economic development, and its subsequent social decline all depended on factors which ultimately express themselves in terms of such basics as geology, physical location, climate, and so on.

The writer has presented this volume in a compact form, using short chapters on

practically every aspect of Mull life, from the structure of the island to such aspects as oral tradition, industry, the social services, and public transport. This gives one the feeling that this book is aimed at the Geography student. Indeed, its format is reminiscent of many Regional Geography text-books for undergraduates, and it would in fact be ideal for this purpose. Nevertheless, the book is intended for the general reader rather than the student, and it certainly comes into the category of books which one would read before setting out on a holiday in order to gain some idea of the nature of the place one is about to visit. Despite this, it is a book of much value. The author has obviously spent a good deal of time on the island, and he has been able to get across a certain amount of sympathy, both for the people and for their environment. This takes time and experience, and it is exactly what one requires for a work of this kind. He has therefore concentrated less on a bald account of statistics of population and industry (although they are included) and more on the human aspects of these. For the student of folk tradition, there are two short chapters dealing with this particular aspect of Mull life. 'The Island Culture' (chapter 9) and 'Myths, Folk-Lore and Customs' (chapter 12) might have been more suitably linked together, yet they are surprisingly separated by chapters on 'Farms and Forests' and 'Industries Past and Present'. Place-name elements form a useful appendix.

It is always extremely difficult to produce a balanced work of this kind. Mr Macnab's powers of description are particularly striking, sometimes poetic: 'Autumn brings the purple of the heather, blending with the rich hues of wide expanses of bracken. The eye is caught by the rich colorations of birch leaves against the silver of the trunks, backed by the autumn tones of woodlands and plantations' (p. 51). Certainly the format of a series of volumes, produced for the general reader, requires a certain uniformity, which restricts the writer to some extent. One gets the impression that in chapter 2, headed 'Climate, Plants and Animals', meteorological data are regarded by the publishers as necessary inclusions. Since these temperature and sunshine tables refer to Tiree rather than Mull, this would seem to be carrying the standardisation of volume formats a bit too far. Mull, of course, has no meteorological station.

As regards the writer's reproduction of Gaelic place-names, there are some mistakes in spelling, like 'Allt Airidh nan C*h*aisteal' (p. 15) and '*Tom-a* Mhuillin' (p. 194), but on the whole, the volume is free from inaccuracies as far as tradition and names are concerned.

To sum up, this book is a welcome addition to *The Island Series*. As the author states in his chapter on Bibliography (p. 235), most of the literature about Mull is descriptive and was published before the First World War, and there are scarcely any books available which attempt to interpret the changing social and economic conditions through which the island has passed. The bibliography is comprehensive, and the illustrations are relevant and of good quality. At £2.50, this book is certainly good value for money, and should enjoy much success.

IAN FRASER

An Atlas of Anglesey, edited by Melville Richards. Anglesey Community Council, Llangefni 1972. Pp. 160. £2.00.

We tend to think of an atlas as an attempt to illustrate the world, or a part thereof, on a fairly small scale. As an aid to the geographer, the atlas is invaluable. It acts as a reference, a standard work. It tends to be utilitarian, since only in recent years have atlases branched out to specialise in aspects of spacial representation formerly outwith their province. One thinks, in particular, of publications like the Readers' Digest Atlas of Great Britain (1966) and the Oxford Economic Atlas, which have made the public realise that there is much more to the work of the atlas-maker than the representation of land masses, oceans, rivers and cities.

The Atlas of Britain, though by no means unique, was specialised in that it represented a single country. The clarity with which one is able to see a trend or a distribution is one of the most valuable aspects of such a work. The Atlas of Anglesey takes this approach a good deal further down the scale, in that it deals with a very small area (approximately 250 square miles). It is an attempt to illustrate the history of this island community from the earliest times, in simple terms. The Atlas covers a wide variety of subjects. Relief, geology, soils and climate are basics which no atlas neglects, but the work includes chapters on early settlement, the development of religion, education, local government, industry, tourism, and even short chapters on Bardic Patronage, as well as the Angelsey Submissions of 1406. A short list of the more important place-names, giving reliable spellings and explanations, forms the concluding section. Thus, for such a modest volume, the variety of subject matter is very large.

There is nothing particularly revolutionary about the style of this work, nor can it be said to be in any way sophisticated. With one exception, the maps are simple monotone outlines, such as one might find in a Ph.D. thesis, yet this is sufficient to display the necessary information. One or two of the maps seem a little unnecessary in that the amount of data which they contain is so small as to render the use of the map less effective as a tool. This is the case with the map on page 44 in the chapter on 'The Norsemen'. A few of the photo illustrations, like that of the River Menai on page 13 seem intended to fill space rather than to be relevant to the text, but on the whole these are clear and of much value.

The Atlas of Anglesey is obviously directed at a wide public. This seems to be the case when we examine the text, which is simple and may be clearly understood by the layman. It should be particularly welcomed in schools, since for regional geography, local history, and other aspects of local studies, this is an invaluable study aid. Indeed it could form the basis of many other aspects of research at school level in a wide variety of subjects. It is in this context, then, that the Atlas is of interest to us in Scotland. It would obviously be a large and complex task to produce such a work for the whole country, but there is much that could be done on a smaller scale. This kind of Atlas format is highly suitable for a unit of county size. An island, however, is an entity in

itself, and as such lends itself very readily to mapping projects of this kind. An Atlas of Arran, Islay, Mull, Skye or Lewis would be an ideal means not only of presenting historical and geographical information, but of doing so at an elementary level, within a simple and unsophisticated format, yet at the same time using the resources of the most qualified scholars to achieve it.

There is currently a dearth of publications like this in Scotland, as well as south of the Border. The data is there, and the scholarship, but the emphasis these days tends to be on the costly, complex publication. This is a pity, since teachers of history, geography and local studies are crying out for books of this kind, easily assimilated by young people, and produced in an attractive lay-out. At the same time, such a volume should have a wide appeal outside the classroom both as a reference book and as a document of genuine historical and geographical interest. The Anglesey Community Council is to be congratulated on this attractive Atlas.* Let us hope that in the not too distant future we shall see similar publications appearing in Scotland.

IAN FRASER

*As this goes to press, we are told that the *Atlas Môn*, on similar lines, but covering the whole of Wales, is shortly to be released.

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The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads: With Their Texts, According to the Extant Records of Great Britain and America, vol. iv, by Bertrand Harris Bronson. Pp. 576. £20.

Scottish Studies in 1970-71

A Bibliography

ALAN BRUFORD

The arrangement of this bibliography is the same as that for 1969 (*Scottish Studies* 14:205–13) apart from some modifications of headings and the addition of a section for proverbs. For scope, exclusions and supplementary sources see the introductory note to the 1969 bibliography. For reasons of time and space some slighter or more specialised journals such as *Scotland's Magazine* and the *Piping Times* have had to be excluded this year. I am grateful to Mr Donald Macdonald, Corstorphine, for help in excerpting from *The Scots Magazine* and *Gairm*. It may be worth noting that part of the field of this bibliography is now covered by Section D, 'Ballads and Folk Literature' (now including Scottish Gaelic) of the *Annual Bibliography of Scottish Literature* published as a supplement to *The Bibliotheck*.

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Scottish Studies

The Journal of the School of Scottish Studies
University of Edinburgh

16

1972

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UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
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