

# *The Matching of Andrew Blaikie's Ballad Tunes with their Texts*

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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.<sup>1</sup> 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,<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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 Crawford 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).<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> These ten are:

	<i>Bronson</i>
5 <i>Lord Bengwill</i> (Child No. 5 <i>Gil Brenton</i> )	2
6 <i>Babe Norice</i> (Child No. 83 <i>Child Maurice C</i> )	4
7 <i>Sir Hew or The Jews Daughter</i> (Child No. 155)	56
8 <i>Earl Richard</i> (Child No. 68 <i>Young Hunting</i> )	6
10 <i>Ochiltree Walls</i> (Child No. 217 <i>The Broom of Cowdenknows D</i> )	9
12 <i>The Three Ravens</i> (Child No. 26)	2
17 <i>Amang the Blue Flowers and Yellow</i> (Child No. 25 <i>Willie's Lyke-Wake</i> )	3
18 <i>Young Johnston</i> (Child No. 88)	2
23 <i>Lady Jean</i> (Child No. 52 <i>The King's Dochter Lady Jean A</i> )	1
29 <i>Ricadoo</i> (Child No. 281 <i>The Keach i the Creel</i> )	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 Crawford'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.<sup>6</sup> 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.

		<i>Bronson</i>
	2 <i>The Flower of Northumberland</i> (Child No. 9 D)	6
	3 <i>The Whummil Bore</i> (Child No. 27 sole text)	sole tune
M B	4 <i>Lord Derwentwater</i> (Child No. 208 A)	1
M B	14 <i>Susie Cleland</i> (Child No. 65 <i>Lady Maisry</i> I)	2
M B	19 <i>Sweet William</i> (Child No. 254 <i>Lord William</i> A)	sole tune
M B	27 <i>Earl Marshall</i> (Child No. 156 <i>Queen Eleanor's Confession</i> F)	sole tune
M	30 <i>The Bonnie Mermaid</i> (Child No. 289 <i>The Mermaid</i> E)	34
	33 <i>Kempy Kane</i> (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 xxxii). 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:

1. 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 Crawford's *Auld Ballads 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 sac / -, 3 I think nae / Nae kind o; (18) 2 Were / Was, at / of; (23) 2 fine / -, 3 at her brow 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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