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A Visual Memory*

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Elsewhere in this volume my colleague Dr Alan Bruford discusses aspects of the remarkable verbal memory of the late Duncan MacDonald, South Uist. Donald Alasdair Johnson,[1] also of South Uist, and probably the finest storyteller living in this country today**, also displays—in some of his stories at least—a considerable talent for reproducing certain passages almost verbatim each time he tells these particular stories.[2] The interview printed below, however, deals rather with his truly dramatic visual memory.

I had long been convinced that a number of factors, in various permutations, were probably represented in the way in which good storytellers remembered and told their stories—among these being:

1 Conceptual or structural memory—as exemplified by their ability to remember plots.[3]
2 Verbal memory.
3 Visual imagery.[4]

However, I had not, in fact, tested these theories on a practising storyteller till I happened to try them out rather diffidently on Mr Johnson in April 1973. He had just finished telling me his splendid version of the hero-tale *An Tuaraisgeul Mòr.*[5] The ensuing interview, recorded without a pause and continuing to the end of the tape, is set out below. It is no exaggeration to say that the results went far beyond my wildest expectations.

It is a matter for regret that, in so far as I am aware, this approach was not tried with some of the other great Gaelic storytellers of recent memory such as Duncan Mac-Donald, Angus MacLellan and others.[6] Mr Johnson, now aged 86, is probably in a class of his own among surviving storytellers. I do suggest, however, that, wherever possible, fieldworkers should try similar lines of questioning with their best informants.[7]

I am indebted to my wife Agnes MacDonald, one-time texts transcriber at the School of Scottish Studies and the Gaelic Section of the Linguistic Survey of Scotland, who produced the first draft of the transcript that follows.

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* This paper was written as a contribution to an unpublished collection of papers by former pupils and colleagues presented to Professor K. H. Jackson in June 1976 to mark his completion of 25 years as Professor of Celtic at the University of Edinburgh (1950–75).
** The School of Scottish Studies records with regret that Donald Alasdair Johnson died in May this year.

A

Hesitations, slight stumbles and unfinished sentences are indicated . . . Minor interjections—such as *uh-uh*—are indicated. . Apart from the latter, what follows is a complete and unabridged transcript of the interview (SA1973/42A2. Translation pp. 13–24).

DAM O, *well,* math ga-rìreabh, a Dhòmhnaill Alasdair. O, *well,* tha i math.
DAJ Sin agad mar a chuala mis' i.
DAM Agus 's math a b'fhiach i bhith 'ga h-èisdeachd.
DAJ O 'se naidheachd . . . 'se sgeulachd mhath a bh'innte.
DAM . . Sgeulachd mhath ga-rìreabh.
DAJ 'Sè.
DAM . . Saoil de cho tric 's a chuala sibh fhéin i, aig ur n-athair, an té bha sen?
DAJ O Dhia 's ioma turus sin—ach bu shuarach na h-ùineachan a bha i . . . a bha i . . . a chuala mi i 'nuair a thog mi i.
DAM 'Nuair a thog sibh i.
DAJ 'Nuair a thog mi i. Bu shuarach. Bu shuarach.
DAM Agus an fheadhainn a bhiodh a staigh air chéilidh, robh toil aca dhen a' stòiridh a bha sen? Am bu toil leotha bhith 'ga cluinnteil?
DAJ O Dhia b'eadh 's gum biodh iad a' tighinn a dh'aon ghnothuch air a son.
DAM Bhitheadh?
DAJ Bhitheadh.
DAM 'S can nan tigeadh feadhainn . . .
DAJ Na seann . . . Na seann fheadhainn a bh'ann a shiod-ach —na *class* a bha sinach.
DAM Seadh.
DAJ Bhitheadh, a ghràidhein agus . . . Bhitheadh agus an fheadhainn òga bh'ann an uair ud mar a . . . mar a bha mi fhìn 's iad sin.
DAM Bha dìreach. Bha.
DAJ A chlann a bha timchioll a sin, nam biodh iad ann.
DAM Dìreach. Ach bha feadhainn ann a b'fhearr cuimhne na chéile, feumaidh, 'nuair a bha . . .
DAJ O bha. Bha.
DAM Feadhainn mar a bha sibh fhein . . .
DAJ Bha. Fios agad, bha feadhainn dhiubh a bha *interest* unnta na b'fhearr.
DAM Bha.
DAJ Bha.
DAM Ach a réir a cholais bha chuile duine dhen an fheadhainn òga a bha sen, bha iad a' gabhail *interest*: dh'fheumadh iad fuireach sàmhach 's dh'fheumadh iad éisdeachd 's bha iad a' . . .
DAJ O, dh'fheumadh, dh'fheumadh.
DAM Bha iad ag éisdeachd ris a' ghnothuch.

DAJ O, bhiodh iad ag éisdeachd, fhios agad, ach cha robh i 'dol sìos ac', fhios agad.

DAM A, dìreach. Dìreach.

DAJ Cha robh i 'dol 'san inntinn ac' idir, fhios agad. Cha robh iad ach ag éisdeachd rithe mar a bha esan 'ga gabhail dhaibh.

DAM Seadh. Ach cumaidh an dala duine cuimhn' air rud . . .

DAJ Ach cumaidh duine—'n dàrna duine . . . 's tha e 'cumail beachd air gu dé mar a bha i 's a chuile sìon.

DAM Tha. Tha.

DAJ Cumaidh. Sin mar a bha iad.

DAM Neist . . .

DAJ O ghràidhein, cha robh . . . Cha robh . . . Cha robh brag ri dheanamh thall na bhos.

DAM Cha robh?

DAJ O cha robh.

DAM Dìreach a bhith sàmhach. Agus, a neist, 'nuair a bha sìbhse 'cluinnteil stòiridh mar sen, robh sibh—'nur n-inntinn fhéin—robh sibh mar gum biodh sibh a' faicinn dealbh air a'ghnothuch air neò . . .?

DAJ Bha. Bha mi dìreach mar gu faicinn mar a bha 'rud a' dol air aghaidh.

DAM Bha. Bha.

DAJ Mar gum bithinn 'ga tarruinn air a bhall' ann a shin-ach, direach, mar a bha 'rud a' dol air aghaidh.

DAM Bha. 'S bha sibh 'ga faicinn 'na . . . 'na h-ìomhaighean . . .?

DAJ Bha. 'Sè. Bha. Bha, mi direach mar gum biodh . . . direach mar gum bithinn direach 'ga faicinn a' dol mar sin air aghaidh air a bhalla mar sin—mar gum biodh, direach, bha mi 'pigtiureadh a ghnothuich air a' . . . air a' rud.[8]

DAM Seadh. Agus fhathast 'nuair a bhios sibh 'ga h-innse 'n dràsda fhein 'm bi sibh 'ga faicinn 'na dealbh mar sen?

DAJ O tha cuideachd. Tha

DAM Tha fhathast?

DAJ Feumaidh tu . . . Feumaidh tu bhith 'ga faicinn 'na dealbh romhad air neò cha bhi beachd agad orra.

DAM Seadh. Seadh.

DAJ Chi thu . . . Tha thu . . . Tha thu mar gum biodh an dealbh romhad ann a sheo-ach, 's chan eil thu ach a'leantail a' rud mar a tha e . . Tha.

DAM 'S cha mhór nach eil sibh 'ga fhaicinn 'na dhealbh air a bhall' air ur beulaibh?

DAJ Cha mhór nach eil. Cha mhór. Cha mhór . . . Chithinn-sa nam bithinn a' coimhead air a bhall' ann a shin-ach, chithinn direach mar a bha iad—mar a bha iad a' tighinn—na daoine—'s mar a bha a' rud ud 's a' rud ud eile.

DAM . . 'S a faiceadh sibh dé 'n t-aodach a bh'orra na dé . . . Robh sibh a' faicinn dathan is rudan mar sen?

DAJ *Well*, cha . . . cha . . . cha . . . Chan fhaiceadh[9]. . Chithinn . . . chithinn

dìreach mar . . . far . . . 'nuair a chaidh esan chon a' choire, bha mi dìreach mar
gum bithinn a' faicinn a choir' ann a shin dìreach—meirgeach.

DAM Seadh.

DAJ Ma m'choinneamh.

DAM Seadh.

DAJ Bha mi 'faicinn an tom-luachrach (? - -)[10] a thog esan e.

DAM Seadh dìreach. Seadh.

DAJ Bha.

DAM 'S an fhàlaire dhonn, bha sibh 'ga faicinn?

DAJ 'S an fhàlaire dhonn, bha i ann a shin. Bha i ma m'choinneamh.

DAM Bha dìreach.

DAJ Bha. Bha mi 'ga faicinn a' leum seachad air a' . . . air a gheat' aig an duine.

DAM Bha dìreach. Bha.

DAJ Bha.

DAM Neist 'nuair a tha sibh a' faicinn geata mar sen 'ne geat' iaruinn . . . 'ne geata
mór iaruinn tha sibh a' faicinn na geata fiodha na dé bha sibh a' faicinn?

DAJ Geat' iaruinn.

DAM Geat' iaruinn.

DAJ 'Sè.

DAM De gheat' àrd, an e?

DAJ Seadh. Geat' àrd.

DAM Sheadh. Ai, Ai. 'S chitheadh sibh an caisteal 's chitheadh sibh na
ridirean . . .?

DAJ Chithinn direach tuairmeachd nan taighean a bh'ann, 's na . . . seòrsa
taighean. Chitheadh. Bhithinn a' pigtiureadh gur ann mar seo-ach a bha . . .

DAM Bha, dìreach. Bha. 'Se rud math tha sen a neist.

DAJ 'Sè.

DAM 'Neist 'nuair a bha sibh a' faicinn na ridirean a bha sen, ciamar a bha sibh 'ga
faicinn-san?

DAJ Cha robh ach dìreach 'ga faicinn 'nan daoine cumanta, dìreach, ach gu faiceadh tu
iad, gu robh iad dreaisde seach càch.

DAM Seadh. Seadh. 'S bhiodh aodach orra . . .?

DAJ 'S bhiodh an aodach orra. Bhitheadh. Chitheadh tu 'n t-aodach orra.

DAM Seach càch, gu-tà? Bhiodh aodach àraid orra?

DAJ Bhitheadh. Bha aodach àraid orra: striobaichean is rudan dhen t-seòrsa sin . .
Bhitheadh.

DAM Agus Ridire na Sgéithe Gile 's Ridire na Sgéithe Uaine . . .?

DAJ Bha. Bha sin-ach, bha iad mar gum biodh e ac' air an gualainn ann a sheo-ach,
air . . . air *tab*[11] . . an dath.

DAM O, 'sè dìreach: air a' ghuailinn ann a shen?

DAJ Seadh.

DAM Seadh. Mar gum biodh sgrìob dhen dath, direach?

DAJ Seadh. Mar gum biodh sgrìob dhen dath ann . . . geal, na uaine, na dearg.

DAM . . Seadh gu dearbha. O *well*, tha sen math.

DAJ Bhitheadh.

DAM Tha sen math. Agus 'nuair a bha . . . 'nuair a bha 'n ceann a' tighinn a nuas uige-san ma dheireadh . . .?

DAJ Bha. Bha mi dìreach 'ga fhaicinn a' tighinn, direach, a' tighinn anns an iarmailt ann a shin mar gum biodh e 'tighinn . . . mar gum bithinn direach air a' chnoc ann a shin a' gabhail alla ris.

DAM . . Neist an Tuaraisgeul Og agus an Tuaraisgeul Mór, robh sibh 'ga faicinn 'nan daoine móra, móra nas mutha na'n cumantas na ciamar . . .?

DAJ *Well*, bha mi 'faicinn an Tuaraisgeil Mhóir . . .

DAM Seadh.

DAJ 'Na dhuine . . . sgràthail gnòthalach . . . mar sin-ach . . . gur e brùid uamhasach a bh'ann . . ach cha robh sìon . . . cha robh mi 'faicinn an Tuaraisgeil Og ach car 's gun moran tacs' ann ach . . . ach àird. Bha s . . . Caol, àrd.

DAM Sheadh.

DAJ Ach cha robh e fuathasach garbh idir.

DAM Seadh.

DAJ Ach bha mi 'ga fhaicinn-san garbh.

DAM Bha dìreach. 'S na cràgan a bha seo . . .

DAJ Seadh. Bha.

DAM Cràgan móra . . . 'N ann colach ri làmh duine bha sibh 'ga faicinn a neist . . .?

DAJ 'Sann. 'Sann. Bha mi, direach . . . Saoilidh mi gu robh mi 'faicinn an dòrn a dh'fhàg an cù, dìreach—a thug e as—gu robh mi 'ga fhaicinn ann a shin.

DAM Seadh. Seadh. O *well* tha seo . . . Tha seo math. Tha seo math. Agus, à, 's fhad o bha mise 'deanamh a mach . . . 'S fhad o bha mi 'smaoineachadh . . . gura dòcha gur ann mar seo a bha duine 'cumail cuimhn' air a ghnothuch—gu robh e 'ga fhaicinn, direach . . .

DAJ 'Sann a tha e 'ga fhaicinn.

DAM Mar gu faiceadh tu *film* air . . .?

DAJ Dìreach mar gum biodh *film*.

DAM 'Sè . .

DAJ Dìreach, tha . . . Mar gum biodh *film* a' dol seachad mar sin-ach ort, mar sin.

DAM Seadh. Agus a neist abair nam biodh sibh a' sealltainn ris a' bhall' ann a shen, 'sann mar gum bitheadh on a' lamh chlì go na laimhe deiseadh a tha 'n gnothuch a' dol, an ann?

DAJ 'Sann.

DAM *Left* go *right*?

DAJ 'Sann. 'Sann. A' dol . . . deiseal.

DAM Seadh. Seadh, seadh . .

DAJ 'Sann.

DAM O *well*, tha sen math.

DAJ Chan fhaic . . . Chan fhaic thu uair 'sam bith . . . uair 'sam bith a' dol mar siod e.

DAM 'Dol an taobh eile. Chan fhaic, dìreach. Chan fhaic, dìreach.

DAJ Mar siod. Ach chi thu . . . Chi thu 'tighinn mar seo e.

DAM Chi thu na dealbhan a' tighinn mar seo?

DAJ Chi. Chi thu 'n dealbh a' tighinn ma chuairt mar seo deiseal.

DAM Seadh. Seadh.

DAJ Mar tha ghrian a' dol.

DAM Neist, 'nuair a tha 'n cù . . . 'Nuair a bha 'n duine 'na chù, robh sibh 'ga fhaicinn 'na chù a' deanamh a chuile sìon dhe seo, air neo robh sibh uaireannan 'ga fhaicinn 'na dhuine?

DAJ O, cha robh mi 'ga fhaicinn 'na dhuin' idir ach 'na chù.

DAM Ach 'na chù.

DAJ 'Na chù.

DAM Fad na h-ùine?

DAJ Cha robh . . . Chan fhaicinn ach 'na chù e . . Chan fhaiceadh.

DAM O *well*, tha sen . . . Tha seo math ga-rìreabh, math ga-rìreabh.

DAJ Chan fhaiceadh . . Chan fhaicinn ann ach 'na chù e 's bha mi 'ga . . . Chithinn . . . Bha mi 'ga fhaicinn as an tulmasan a bh'ann a sheo-ach, as a' sgallaidh, bha mi 'ga fhaicinn 'na chù 'na shuidh' ann.

DAM 'Na shuidhe?

DAJ Sheadh.

DAM Seadh.

DAJ Bha.

DAM Seadh, mas do thòisich e air comhartaich idir?

DAJ Seadh man do thòisich e air comhartaich ris an t-soitheach—man do nochd a' soitheach 's gun do thòisich e air comhartaich. Bha na coin eile 'dol air gach taobh dhe sìos dhan mhuir.

DAM Bha.

DAJ Leis a' sgallaidh.

DAM 'S 'ne coin mhóra bhiodh ann?

DAJ 'Sè coin mhóra bh'ann.

DAM Seadh. Seadh.

DAJ 'Sè.

DAM O *well*, tha fhios a neist, 's ann direach mar sen a bha daoine—'n dala duine . . . Neist 's dòcha daoin' eile bha 'cluinnteil seo nach fhaigheadh iad ìomhaighean cho math air na . . .?

DAJ Chan fhaigheadh, fhios agad. Chan fhaigheadh. Cha robh iad a' . . . beachdnachadh air na rudan a bha seo-ach idir, fhios agad.

DAM Cha robh dìreach.

DAJ 'Sann bhuaithe sin a bha iad nach toireadh iad leoth' i 's nach . . . nach cumadh iad cuimhn' orra . . ach aon uair 's gu bheil thusa 'tòiseachadh orra, 's i 'san inntinn agad, tha thu 'faicinn a' rud romhad ann a shin.

DAM 'Sann a tha thu . . . Cha mhòr nach biodh tu . . . mar gum biodh tu 'ga leughadh far a' bhalla?

DAJ Mar gum biodh tu 'ga leughadh far a' bhalla . . Mar gum biodh i 'tighinn ort.

DAM Seadh.

DAJ Brith gu . . . cò sgeulachd a th'ann, chan eil e go deifear, ach 'nuair a tha thu 'tòiseachadh as an toiseach aice tha 'nuairsin an corr soilleir romhad, mar gum biodh tu 'ga fhaicinn air a' bhall' ann a shin-ach—dè mar a tha chuile sìon a' dol.

DAM Tha, dìreach. Tha, dìreach.

DAJ Tha.

DAM Agus 'sann mar a tha sibh ag innse na stòiridh, 'sann tha i sìor thighinn ugaibh, mar sen?

DAJ 'Sann. Sìor thighinn ugad. Sìor thighinn ugad. 'Sann.

DAM Mar gum biodh tu . . . mar gum biodh, dìreach, i sìor nochdadh?

DAJ I sìor nochdadh riut—i sìor chumail riut. Mar a tha thusa 'dol air aghaidh . . . tha 'n gnothuch a' tighinn ort.

DAM . . . Mar sen nam biodh agaibh ris a' stòiridh a dheanamh uamhasach goirid—nam biodh agaibh ri *summary*, mar gum bitheadh, a thoir seachad, cha bhiodh e cho furasda 's dòch' idir?

DAJ *Well*, cha bhitheadh e cho furasd' idir ach direach (? nas lugha, doch', gun)[12] gearradh tu dheth buileach i.[13]

DAM Ach tha e nas fhasa stòiridh inns' air fad na tha e . . .?

DAJ Tha e nas fhasa stòiridh innse air a f. . . o cheann, chionn tha i romhad ann a shiod go ceann, fad an t-siubhail. Chan eil thu ach a' dol . . . Chan eil thu ach 'ga leantail.

DAM Agus tha 'n dala dealbh, mar gum bitheadh, a' leantail na dealbh eile?

DAJ Tha . . . 'leantail na dealbh eile. Tha. Tha. Chuile sìon a' tighinn a staigh 'na àite fhéin.

DAM Seadh. Seadh. Seadh. O *well*, tha sen math.

DAJ Tha.

DAM Math ga-rìreabh.

DAJ O chan eil mi 'smaoineachadh mar a biodh beachd aig duine mar siod-ach orra gun cumadh e cuimhn' orra uileag cho math idir.

DAM O, mar a bi . . . Tha mise 'smaoindeachadh gur e seo a tha . . . tha 'stéidheachadh na stòiridh ann a . . . ann an inntinn duine . . .

DAJ 'Sè. 'Sè.

DAM Bhith 'ga faicinn.

DAJ 'Sè. 'Sè. Tha thu 'ga faicinn. Tha thu 'ga faicinn ma d' choinneamh.

DAM Tha.

DAJ 'Se sin tha mi 'g ràdha. Mar a biodh i 'stéidheachadh as an inntinn agad mar sin-ach, chan eil mi 'smaoineachadh gun deargadh tu air a cumail. . .

DAM Seadh. Seadh.

DAJ Air chuimhne cheart.

DAM Seadh. Chan eil sibh ach mar gum biodh sibh, cha mhór, 'ga leughadh . . .?

DAJ Chan eil sìon ach mar gum biodh . . . 'Nuair a thòisicheas mis' air a' stòiridh . . . chan eil mi ach mar gum bithinn 'ga leughadh far a bhall' ann a shin.

DAM A well . . .

DAJ Tha i 'tighinn beag air bheag ugam ann a sin-ach—ise sìor thighinn ugam mar a tha i 'dol—mar tha còir aice.

DAM Tha dìreach. Tha dìreach . . . Agus a neist 'nuair a bhios sibh libh fhéin am bi uaireannan na stòireannan sen a' dol thromh ur n-inntinn mar sen?

DAJ Bithidh. Bidh mis' uaireannan a bheir mi treiseagan air feadhainn aca mar siodach 's mi leam fhìn aig an tein' ann a sheo.

DAM Sheadh. 'S bidh sibh a' faighinn toileachas as a sen?

DAJ Ach a Dhia bithidh. 'S esan a Dhia bhitheas sin . . . 'S esan a Dhia bhitheas . .

DAM O 'se deagh . . . 'Se deagh chur seachad ùine th'ann cuideachd.

DAJ O ghràidhein, 'sè : 'sè—do dhuine tha . . . nòisein aige dhiùbh.

DAM 'Sè, nach e seo an gnothuch.

DAJ 'Sè.

DAM 'S tha e 'cumail na h-inntinn beothail.

DAJ Tha e 'cumail na h-inntinn agad cho beothail.

DAM Tha dìreach.

DAJ Tha, seach a bhith wander-adh 's a' smaointinn air rudan neònach eile.

DAM Seadh. Seadh.

DAJ Tha, gu dearbha, 's esan a th'ann a shin.

DAM Neist cha bhi sibh fhéin uaireannan, mar gum bitheadh, a' feuchainn ri . . . Cha robh sibh riamh . . . Cha chòrdadh e ribh, mar gum bitheadh, stòireannan as ùr a dheanamh suas sibh fhéin, an còrdadh?

DAJ A Dhia cha chòrdadh . . Cha chòrdadh.

DAM Fhios agaibh mar a bhios daoine 'deanamh leabhraichean . . .

DAJ Seadh leabhraichean . . .

DAM Na . . . Na . . . Cha chòrdadh e ribh ach dìreach mar a chuala sibh?

DAJ Cha chòrdadh ach mar a chuala mi.

DAM Mar a chuala sibh. 'Sè dìreach.

DAJ Cha chòrdadh. Cha chòrdadh. Cha chòrdadh gu dearbha.

DAM O well, tha sen math—math ga-rìreabh. Chuile duine . . . chuile duin' tha math, that sibh a' smaoineachadh . . .?

DAJ Seadh, a chuile duin' tha math air sgeulachdan 's a tha cuimhn' aig' orra ceart

DAM Tha sibh a' deanamh a mach gur h-ann . . .?

DAJ Tha mi smaoineachadh gur h-ann mar siod a tha . . . a tha iad—a leithid—nach eil . . . nach eil rathad aca bhith air a chaochladh co-dhiùbh.

DAM . . Cha chuala sibh duine 'sam bith eile riamh a' bruidhinn air a seo—gu faiceadh iad a' stòiridh?

DAJ O cha chuala . . Cha chuala gu dearbha. Cha chuala.

DAM Ach tha mi deimhine . . . Tha mi deimhine gur h-ann mar sen tha 'n gnothuch.

DAJ Ach 'sann mar siod a tha e . . Bha sealladh agam-s' air a sgeulachd a ghabh mi dhut ann a shin—bha sealladh agam romham orra fad an t-siubhail, direach mar a bha i.

DAM Bha.

DAJ Mar gum bithinn 'ga faicinn ann a shin.

DAM Ach 'nuair a thòisich sibh, bha seorsa . . . bha seorsa sealladh agaibh air a stòiridh uileag, a robh?

DAJ Well . . . cha . . . Cha . . .

DAM Na robh agaibh ach sealladh orra . . .

DAJ Cha robh agam ach sealladh mar a bha mi 'dol air aghaidh.

DAM Sheadh. Sheadh. Sheadh.

DAJ Cha robh sealladh agam air a' cheann a b'fhaid air falbh idir dhi.

DAM Seadh.

DAJ Cha robh.

DAM Go ruigeadh sibh na b'fhaisg air . . .?

DAJ Gos a ruiginn an t-àite bha seo . .

DAM O well, tha sen math.

DAJ Cha robh sealladh air aghaidh ach direach mar a bha thu fhéin a' dol air aghaidh 's bha 'sealladh a' . . . cumail ort mar gum biodh e direach a' tighinn ugad mar sin.

DAM Bha direach. Bha direach.

DAJ Bha.

DAM A well, tha sen math. Tha mi toilichte gun d'fhuair mi siod sìos.

DAJ 'S ged a dh'fhàgainn-sa pìos dhi as ma dheaghaidh, math-dh'fhaoidte gur h-ann a chuireadh i ceàrr mi airson pìos eile.

DAM Seadh, tha mi faicinn.

DAJ O nach robh sealladh dòigheil agam orra . . 's o nach do lean mi 'sealladh aice-se fad an t-siubhail.

DAM Agus . . . 's dòcha gur e rudeigin a thachradh, a thogadh ur n-inntinn . . . Can na . . . Can nan gluaiseadh an cù—nan toireadh e boc as—na leigthid sen . . 's dòch' . . . 's dòch' gun togodh sen ur n-inntinn tiotan far . . .?

DAJ Thogadh far a' rud. Thogadh. Thogadh.

DAM Seadh.

DAJ 'S esan a dheanadh sin.

DAM Agus cha bhiodh e buileach cho furasda dhuibh an uairsen . . .?

DAJ Cha bhitheadh.

DAM A cur an altaibh a chéile as a dheaghaidh sen?

DAJ Cha bhitheadh; a cur a staigh còmhladh a rithist mar a bhà i, idir.

DAM Cha bhitheadh.

DAJ 'Sann bhuaithe sin-ach a bha iad, fhios agad, bha iad airson a bhith . . . a' fear nach maireann, m'athair . . . 'sann, airson gum biodh a chuile sìon socair.[14]

DAM 'Sann.

DAJ Bhiodh iad a' cur na h-inntinn aige far dheth . . . dheth fara' rud idir—fara' rud a bha e 'g obair air.

DAM 'Sè.

DAJ Cha robh chridhe brag thall na bhos na sìon.

DAM Cha robh. Bha sen a' cur an duine . . .?

DAJ Bha sin a cur an duine . . . Math-dh'fhaoidte gu sealladh e mar sin, gu de 'm brag a bh'ann, 's bha 'n inntinn aige far a' rud a bha e 'g obair air.

DAM Bha dìreach. Bha. Bha.

DAJ Bha. Sin mar a bha e.

DAM Glé mhath. 'S tha sibh a' cumail na h-iomhaighean aig a chuile stòiridh—tha iad air an cumail air leth direach . . .?

DAJ O tha iad air an cumail air leth direach . . .

DAM Mar gum b'e *film* as ùr a bha 'sa chuile gin?

DAJ Direach . . . 'Sè direach mar gum b'e te as ùr a tha 'sa chuile gin dhiubh. 'Sè. 'Sè. O tha. Tha. Tha. Tha i sin a' tighinn ast . . . ugad mar tha 'n corr, direac: tha i 'tighinn 'nad' shealladh mar a tha thu 'dol air aghaidh leatha. Tha i 'tighinn . . . Gu de tha 'tighinn as a dheaghaidh sin 's mar sin: tha e 'tighinn . . fad an t-siubhail.

DAM Tha. Agus a neist ged a chluinneadh sibh duin' eile ag innse seorsa dhen aon naidheachd—dhen aon stòiridh—cha deanadh sen deifear 'sam bith air a' stòiridh agaibh fhéin? 'Se stòiridh agaibh fhéin a chumadh sìbh-se . . .?

DAJ O 'se stòiridh agam fhìn a chumadh mise. 'Sè. 'Sè.

DAM 'Sè.

DAJ Ged a bhithinn-sa cearr innte, 'se mar a dh'ionnsaich mi . . .

DAM 'Sann mar a dh'ionn . . .

DAJ Mar a dh'ionnsaich mi.

DAM Shen agaibh e. Shen agaibh e.

DAJ Chumainn-sa mar a dh'ionnsaich mi i.

DAM Mar a dh'ionnsaich sibh i. 'Sann. 'Sann. 'N dealbh a fhuair sibh o thùs, mar gum bitheadh?

DAJ Seadh. Seadh. Seadh dìreach. An dealbh a fhuair mise—a' sealladh a fhuair mis' orr' on toiseach direach 'sì . . . 'sè . . . siod e.

DAM 'Sè. O tha sen math. Tha sen math.

DAJ Sin mar a dheanainn e. Ged a bhithinn ag ràdha rium fhìn gu robh mi cearr ann . . . 'se siod mar a dh'ionnsaich mis' e 's 'se siod sealladh a dh'fheumainn-sa chumail.[15]

DAM 'Sè. Agus 'se sen a tha sibh a' toir seachad an còmhnaidh . . a' sealladh . . .?

DAJ 'Sè. 'Sè.

DAM O *well*, tha siod math ga-rìreabh.

DAJ Sin agad a nis, ma-thà.[16]

DAM *Well*, 's math is fhiach siod dram beag.

DAJ O Dhia, Dhia teann 's do dhram. Thu fhéin 's do dhram.

DAM Cà 'n do chuir sibh . . .? Tha i ann a sheo.

DAJ Na cuir innt' ach drudhag bheag a niste.

DAM O *well* . . .

DAJ A, Dia, Dia 'gad' shàbhaladh.

DAM Chan eil i ach beag co-dhiùbh . . .

DAJ O, 'n dà Dhia as a' Chathair tha gu h-àrd, chan eil t'éil' air an dreasair urad rithe. 'Si gin is mutha th'ann.

DAM Dé tha sibh ach a' dol dha leabaidh co-dhiùbh a dh'aithghearr, tha mi cinn-deach?

DAJ O tha gu dearbha.

DAM Cha mhisde . . . Cha mhisde duine . . .

DAJ Bhithinn-s' innte roimhe seo mar a bitheadh gun tàna tu.

DAM Och, tha mi 'creid . . . Bhitheadh gu dearbha, Dhòmhnaill Alasdair.

DAJ O bhithinn-sa 'dol innte aig deich, na beagan an deidh a deich *steady*.

DAM . . Thà chuile h-oidhche, bheil?

DAJ Chuile h-oidhche . . Chan eil duine 'tighinn . . . duine 'tighinn air chéilidh co-dhiùbh 's . . . Tha 'n céilidh fhéin air sgur.

DAM O tha 'n céilidh air sgur buileach.

DAJ O tha gu dearbha, 'n céilidh air sgur as a chuile h-àite . . 'N dà 'se rud laghach a bha 'sa chéilidh.

DAM O 'se sen a bh'ann.

DAJ Agus . . . cur seachad ùine 's nach fhairicheadh tu 'n oidhche 'dol seachad.

DAM 'Sè cuideachd.

DAJ 'Nuair a thigeadh dithis na thriùir ann a shin air chéilidh 's bhiodh naidheachdan thall 's naidheachdan a bhos 's bhiodh siod ann 's bhiodh seo ann agus cha bhiodh an oidhche mionaid a' dol seachad seach 'nuair tha duine 'na shuidhe leis fhéin, gun duine 'bruidhinn ris na sìon mar a bruidhinn thu ris a' chù.

DAM Ai. Ach tha na . . . *Well* tha na . . . tha na sgeulachdan agaibh gu-tà airson a bhith beachdnachadh orra . . .

DAJ O tha. O bidh mi uaireannan a' beachdnachadh air a sin. Bidh mi 'gan gabhail fo m'shuim fhìn, direach, 'na m'inntinn.

DAM Seadh.

DAJ Uaireannan. Bithidh. *Well,* slàinthe mhath, ma-tha!

DAM Slàinte mhath, a Dhòmhnuill Alasdair . . .

'S tha mi cinndeach gum bi sibh a' cuimhneachadh air na seann lathaichean cuideachd, mar a bha gnothuichean 's . . .?

DAJ O Dhia bithidh. 'S mise Dhia bhitheas sin. 'S mise Dhia bhitheas sin, a ghràidhein.

DAM Agus a neist bidh chuile duine dhe na seann daoine 'ràdha rium gur e saoghal nas toilichte bh'ann.

DAJ O Dhia 'sè. 'Se sin a bh'ann saoghal toilichte 'n toiseach.

DAM Seadh.

DAJ Ri m'cheud chuimhne.

DAM Seadh.

DAJ O ghràidhein 'sè. Bha na daoine cho nàdurra ri chéile 's bha chuile duine cho coibhneil ri chéile.

DAM Bha dìreach.

DAJ Bhiodh iad a' . . . Seall fhéin mar a bha 'n céilidh a bha sin fhéin. Bhiodh iad a' dol air chéilidh air a chéile 's: theid mis' air chéilidh or'sa nochd 's thig thusa 'n ath-oidhch' 's mar sin. Chan eil sin an diugh idir ann.

DAM Chan eil. Chan eil.

DAJ *Well* 'se nis car de ghràin a th'ac' air a chéile . . . 'air nach eil iad mar sin. Feumaidh gura h-è.

DAM 'Sè. Chan eil iad as an aon dàimh ri chéile co-dhiùbh.

DAJ Chan eil. 'Se sin tha mi 'g ràdha . . nach eil.

DAM Chan eil.

DAJ 'Siad nach eil . . Agus tha iad an diugh, tha . . . Na faigheadh tusa sìon, tha iad an diugh cho farmadach, 's an uair ud cha robh ach: "A Dhia . . ." 's cha bhiodh ann ach: "A Dhia nach tu bha *lucky*" . . "Dhia . . . Dhia, mo bheannachd ort, nach tu bha *lucky.*"

DAM Agus 'sann a bhiodh daoine toilichte gun d'fhuair thu . . .

DAJ 'Se sin tha mi 'g ràdha—'nuair ud. 'Se sin a chanadh na daoine riut . . ach an diugh 'sann a tha farmad riut ma . . . ma gheibh thu . . .

DAM 'Sann, ma-thà.

DAJ Sìon 'sam bith seach . . . seach a . . . seach duin' eile.

DAM Seach duin' eile. 'Sè dìreach.

DAJ Farmad riut an diugh air a shon.

DAM . . Agus am beagan a bh'ac' o chionn fada, roinneadh iad a miosg . . .

DAJ Roinneadh iad eatorr' e: ga nach biodh ann ach a' bhreacag arain, gheibheadh tu 'n ceathramh dhi.

DAM Gheibheadh. Gheibheadh dìreach.

DAJ Roinneadh . . 'S cha robh iad ach a' falbh . . . Nan toireadh tu 'n diugh . . . Reachadh iad . . . Reachadh iad a dh'iarraidh ìosad *tea* air an duin' ud 's

thigeadh an duin' ud a màireach math-dh'fhaoidte—losad *tea*'s . . . na losad siùcair, na rud air choireigin orra . . . 'nuairsin . . Chan eil sin ann an diugh. Chan eil. Nan deanadh tu sin an diugh chan eil fhios gu dé . . .

DAM Ach sen mar a tha còir aig daoine bhith gu-tà.

DAJ 'Sann mar sin a bha còir aca bhith, a Dhomhnuill Eairdsidh . . Agus an diugh cuideachd 'sann a bha còir aca bhith.

DAM 'Sann cuideachd. Ach tha gnothuch an airgid air gnothuichean a mhilleadh an diugh.

DAJ Gnothuch an airgid. Tha, agus cha b'fheairrd' a' saoghal an *television* a bha sin.

DAM Cha b'fheairrde cuideachd. Cha b'fheairrde.

DAJ Rinn i call mór, mór air an t-saoghal agus air na daoine.

DAM Tha. B'fhearr le daoine bhith 'coimhead an *television* seach a bhith 'coimhead a chéile.

DAJ B'fhearr . . Agus seall thusa na tha i air deanamh a *chrimes*.

DAM Tha cuideachd.

DAJ Rudan a tha iad a' faicinn air an *television* a tha sin-ach.

DAM Tha cuideachd. Chan fheairrd' iad dad e.

DAJ Chan fheairrde.

DAM Chan fheairrde.

DAJ Tha 'n *television* math gu leòr nan gabhadh à-san 'na dòigh fhéin i.

DAM 'Sè. 'Sè, sen an gnothuch ach . . .

DAJ Ach chan eil iad sin . . .

(End of interview. Tape runs out)

Translation

DAM Oh well, that was great, Donald Alasdair. Oh well, it is good.

DAJ That's how I heard it.

DAM And it really was well worth listening to.

DAJ Oh, it was a story . . . it was a fine tale.

DAM . . A great tale.

DAJ Yes.

DAM . . How often do you think you yourself heard it from your father, that one.

DAJ Oh God many a time that—but it wasn't all that many times that it . . . that it . . . that I heard it when I picked it up.

DAM When you picked it up.

DAJ When I picked it up. Not all that many. Not all that many.

DAM And the people who were in ceilidhing, did they like that story? Were they fond of hearing it?

DAJ Oh God yes, when they used to come specially for it.

DAM They did?

DAJ They did.

DAM And, say, if some came . . .

DAJ These old . . . These old ones there—that class of people.

DAM Yes.

DAJ Yes, my dear fellow and . . . Yes and even the young folk at that time like . . . like myself and the others there.

DAM Yes indeed. Yes.

DAJ The children who lived round about, if they happened to be there.

DAM Yes indeed. But there must have been some with better memories than others when . . .?

DAJ Oh yes. Yes.

DAM People like yourself . . .

DAJ Yes. You know there were some of them who took a keener interest than others.

DAM Yes.

DAJ Yes.

DAM But on the face of it, every one of these young people, they were all taking an interest: they had to keep quiet and they had to listen, and they were . . .

DAJ Oh they had to, yes.

DAM They were listening to the whole thing.

DAJ Oh, they were listening, you know, but it didn't sink in with them, you know.

DAM Ah, quite. Quite.

DAJ It didn't get into their mind at all, you know. They just listened to it as he told it to them.

DAM Yes. But one person will remember things . . .

DAJ A person—one person will . . . and he takes stock of how it goes on and everything.

DAM Yes. Yes.

DAJ Yes. That's how they were.

DAM Now . . .

DAJ Oh, my lad, there wasn't . . . There wasn't . . . There wasn't a sound to be made anywhere.

DAM No?

DAJ Oh, no.

DAM They just had to keep quiet. And now, yourself, when you were listening to a story like that, were you—in your own mind—were you, as it were, seeing a picture of the thing, or . . .?

DAJ Yes. I was just as if I saw how the thing was going on.

DAM Yes. Yes.

DAJ Just as if I were drawing it on the wall there, how the thing was going on.

DAM Yes. And you were seeing it in . . . in images . . .?

DAJ Yes. That's it. Yes. Yes, I was just, as it were . . . just as if I were, just, seeing it going on like that on the wall like that—as it were, just, I was picturing the business about the . . . about the thing.[8]

DAM Yes. And even yet, when you're telling it even now, do you see it as a picture like that?

DAJ Oh yes I do, too. Yes.

DAM Even yet?

DAJ You've got to . . . You've got to see it as a picture in front of you or you can't remember it properly.

DAM Yes. Yes.

DAJ You can see . . . You . . . You're as if the picture were in front of you here and all you do is follow the thing as it is . . . Yes.

DAM And you're almost seeing it like a picture on the wall in front of you.

DAJ Yes, almost that. Yes, almost. Yes, almost . . . I could see, if I were looking at the wall there, I could see just how they were—how they came in—the people—and how this thing was and that and the other.

DAM . . And could you see how they were dressed, or what . . . Could you see colours and that sort of thing?

DAJ Well, n . . . n . . . n . . . I couldn't[9]. . I could see . . . I could see just, how . . . where . . . when he went up to the cauldron, I was just as if I were seeing the cauldron right there—rusty.

DAM Yes.

DAJ In front of me.

DAM Yes.

DAJ I could see the clump of rushes (? - -)[10] he pulled it up.

DAM Yes indeed. Yes.

DAJ Yes.

DAM And the bay mare—you could see her?

DAJ And the bay mare, she was there. She was in front of me.

DAM Yes indeed.

DAJ Yes, I could see her leaping over the . . . over the man's gate.

DAM Yes indeed. Yes.

DAJ Yes.

DAM Now, when you see a gate like that, is it an iron gate . . . is it a great iron gate you see or a wooden gate, or what did you see?

DAJ An iron gate.

DAM An iron gate.

DAJ Yes.

DAM And a high gate, is it?

DAJ Yes, a high gate.

DAM Yes. Well, well. And you could see the castle—and you could see the knights . . .?

DAJ I could just see the appearance of the houses that were there and the . . . the kind of houses. Yes. I'd be picturing that this is how it was . . .

DAM Yes indeed. Yes. That's a good thing now.

DAJ Yes.

DAM Now when you were seeing these knights, how did you see them?

DAJ I just saw them like ordinary people but that you could see them, that they were more finely dressed than the others.

DAM Yes, yes. They were dressed . . .?

DAJ They were dressed. Yes. You could see the clothes they had on.

DAM But compared with the rest? They'd have special clothes on?

DAJ Yes. They had special clothes on : stripes and things like that . . Yes.

DAM And the Knight of the White Shield and the Knight of the Green Shield . . .?

DAJ Yes. That was—they were as if they had it on their shoulder here, on . . . on a tab". . the colour.

DAM Oh, yes indeed : on the shoulder there?

DAJ Yes.

DAM Yes. Just like a strip of the colour?

DAJ Yes. Like a strip of the colour there . . . white, or green, or red.

DAM . . Yes indeed. Oh well, that's good.

DAJ Yes they did.

DAM That's good. And when . . . when the head was bearing down on him at the end . . .?

DAJ Yes. I could just see it coming, just coming in the sky there, as if it were coming . . . as if I were outside there watching it.

DAM . . Now the Tuairisgeul Og and the Tuairisgeul Mór, did you see them as great big men—bigger than the ordinary, or how . . .?

DAJ Well I saw the Tuairisgeul Mór . . .

DAM Yes?

DAJ As a man . . . terribly fearsome . . . like that . . . that he was a fearful brute . . but there was nothing . . . I could just see the Tuairisgeul Og rather as if there wasn't all that much to him but . . . but height. Yes . . . Slim and tall.

DAM Yes.

DAJ But he wasn't very powerfully built at all.

DAM Yes.

DAJ But I could see *him* powerfully built.

DAM Yes indeed. And these hands . . .

DAJ Yes. They were.

DAM Huge hands . . .? Was it like a man's hands you saw them now . . .?

DAJ Yes. Yes. I was just . . . I think I could see the hand that the dog left, just—that it tore off him—that I could see it there.

DAM Yes. Yes. Oh well, this is . . . this is good. This is good. And, oh, I've been

thinking for a long time now . . . that this might be the way a person kept something in his memory—that he could see it, just . . .

DAJ Yes, he sees it.

DAM As if you were watching a film of it . . .?

DAJ Just like a film

DAM Yes . .

DAJ Just so . . like a film passing in front of you there like that.

DAM Yes. And now, say, if you were looking at the wall there, it's from the left hand to the right hand as it were that the thing runs, is it?

DAJ Yes.

DAM Left to right?

DAJ Yes. Yes. Going . . . right-handed.

DAM Yes. Yes. Yes.

DAJ Yes.

DAM Oh well, that's good.

DAJ You don't see . . . You never see . . . never see it going that way.

DAM Going the other way? No, quite. No, quite.

DAJ That way. But you see . . . You see it coming this way.

DAM You see the picture coming this way.

DAJ Yes. You see the picture coming round this way, right-handed.

DAM Yes. Yes.

DAJ As the sun goes.

DAM Now, when the dog . . . when the man was in the form of a dog, did you see him doing all these things as a dog or did you sometimes see him as a man?

DAJ Oh, I never saw him as a man—but as a dog.

DAM But as a dog.

DAJ As a dog.

DAM All the time?

DAJ No . . I could just see him as a dog . . No.

DAM Oh well, that's . . . This is great, great.

DAJ No . . I could just see him there as a dog and I was . . . I could see . . . I was see-ing him in this little patch of vegetation on the cliff, I was seeing him as a dog sitting there.

DAM Sitting?

DAJ Yes.

DAM Yes.

DAJ He was.

DAM Yes, before he started barking at all?

DAJ Yes, before he started barking at the ship—before the ship appeared and he started barking. The other dogs were falling down on either side of him, into the sea.

DAM Yes.

DAJ Down the cliff.

B

DAM And would they be big dogs?

DAJ Yes, they were big dogs.

DAM Yes. Yes.

DAJ Yes.

DAM Oh well surely now, it must be just in that way that people—one man as against another . . . Now perhaps others who heard the story wouldn't get such clear images of the . . .?

DAJ No, they wouldn't, you know. They wouldn't. They weren't . . . taking stock of these things at all, you know.

DAM No. Quite so.

DAJ It's because of that they were unable to grasp it and they couldn't remember it . . . but once you get started on it, and it's there in your mind, you can see the whole thing before you there.

DAM So what you're doing . . . You'd almost be . . . as if you were reading it off the wall?

DAJ As if you were reading it off the wall . . . as if it were coming at you.

DAM Yes.

DAJ Whatever . . . tale it is, it doesn't matter, but when you start at the beginning of it the rest of it is there then clearly before you, just as if you were seeing it on the wall there—how the whole thing goes.

DAM Yes, indeed. Yes, indeed.

DAJ Yes.

DAM And it's as you go on telling the story that it keeps on coming to you, then?

DAJ Yes. It keeps on coming—keeps on coming. Yes.

DAM As if you were . . . As if it were, just, keeping on appearing to you?

DAJ Keeping on appearing to you—keeping pace with you all the time. As you go on . . . the thing comes upon you.

DAM So if you had to cut the story very short—if you had to give a summary, as it were, it mightn't be so easy at all, maybe?

DAJ Well, it wouldn't be so easy at all but just (?unless perhaps you)[12] cut it off altogether.[13]

DAM But it's easier to tell a story right through than it is . . .?

DAJ Yes, it's easier to tell a story right through . . . from the beginning, because it's there in front of you to the end, all the way. All you have to do is follow it.

DAM And the one picture follows the other, as it were?

DAJ Yes . . . follows the other. Yes, yes, everything coming in in its proper place.

DAM Yes, yes, yes. Oh well that's good.

DAJ Yes.

DAM That's great.

DAJ Oh, I don't think, unless a person could visualise it in that way, that he could remember the whole of it so well at all.

DAM Oh, if it's not . . . I think this is what . . . what establishes the story . . . in a person's mind.

DAJ Yes. Yes.

DAM Seeing it.

DAJ Yes. Yes. You see it. You see it in front of you.

DAM Yes.

DAJ That's what I'm saying—unless it's established in your mind in that way, I don't think you'd be able to . . .

DAM Yes. Yes.

DAJ Remember it properly.

DAM Yes. You're just as if you were almost reading it . . .?

DAJ It's just as if . . . When I start to tell the story . . . I'm just as if I were reading it off the wall there.

DAM Ah well . . .

DAJ It comes little by little to me there—it keeps coming to me as it goes on—as it ought to.

DAM Yes, quite. Yes, quite . . . And now when you're alone do these stories sometimes go through your mind in that way?

DAJ Yes. There are times when I spend a while with some of them in that way when I'm here alone by the fire.

DAM Yes. And you get pleasure out of that?

DAJ Och, by God yes. Indeed I do, by God. Indeed I do, by God.

DAM Oh it's a good . . . It's a good way of passing the time too.

DAJ Oh yes, my dear fellow. Yes—for someone who . . . cares about them.

DAM Yes, that's just it.

DAJ Yes.

DAM And it keeps the mind alive.

DAJ It keeps your mind so lively.

DAM Yes, indeed.

DAJ Yes, rather than wandering and thinking about other odd things.

DAM Yes. Yes.

DAJ Yes. Yes, indeed. So it does.

DAM Now you yourself never, as it were, try to . . . You never have . . . You wouldn't like, as it were, to make up new stories yourself, would you?

DAJ Oh God no, I wouldn't like it . . . I wouldn't like it.

DAM You know, the way people make books . . .?

DAJ Yes, books . . .

DAM Or . . . Or . . . You wouldn't like it except just the way you heard it?

DAJ No, I wouldn't like to, but just the way I heard it.

DAM As you heard it. Yes, quite.

DAJ I wouldn't like to. I wouldn't like to. I wouldn't like to indeed.

DAM Oh well, that's good. That's great. Everyone . . . everyone who's good, you think . . .?

DAJ Yes, everyone who's good at tales and remembers them properly.

DAM You think that . . .?

DAJ I think that's the way that . . . that they—people like that—that they haven't . . . that they've got no other option anyway.

DAM . . . You've never heard anyone else talking about this—that they could see the story?

DAJ Oh no I haven't . . . No indeed I haven't. No, I haven't.

DAM But I'm certain . . . I'm certain that that's how it works.

DAJ But that's how it is. I could see the story I told you there—I could see it going before me all the way, just as it was.

DAM Yes.

DAJ Just as if I was seeing it there.

DAM But when you started, you had a kind . . . you had a kind of vision of the whole story, did you?

DAJ Well . . . no . . . no . . .

DAM Or did you just have a vision of it . . .?

DAJ I just had a vision of it as I went on.

DAM Yes. Yes. Yes.

DAJ I didn't have any vision of the far away end of it at all.

DAM Yes.

DAJ No.

DAM Till you got nearer to . . .?

DAJ Till I got to that place . . .

DAM Oh well, that's good.

DAJ There's was no vision ahead but just as you went ahead yourself, and the vision . . . kept pace with you just as if it were coming upon you, like that.

DAM Yes indeed. Yes indeed.

DAJ Yes.

DAM Ah well, that's good. I'm glad I got that down.

DAJ And if I were to go and leave a bit of it out, it might well put me wrong in another bit of it.

DAM Yes, I understand.

DAJ Because I didn't have a proper vision of it . . . and because I didn't follow the vision of it all the way.

DAM And . . . it might be something that would happen that would distract your mind . . . Say if . . . say if the dog moved—if it gave a jump—or the like of that . . . perhaps . . . perhaps it might distract your mind for a moment from . . .?

DAJ Yes, from the thing. It would. It would.

DAM Yes.

DAJ So it would indeed.

DAM And it wouldn't be quite as easy for you then . . .?

DAJ No it wouldn't.

DAM To fit it together properly afterwards?

DAJ No it wouldn't: to put it together at all again as it was.

DAM No.

DAJ It was because of that, you know, that they wanted to be . . . the one who is gone, my father . . . wanted everything to be quiet.[14]

DAM Yes.

DAJ They would put his mind off . . . off the thing altogether—off the thing he was at.

DAM Yes.

DAJ There wasn't to be a sound anywhere—or anything.

DAM No. That would put the person . . .?

DAJ That would put the person . . . Maybe he'd look like that to see what had made the noise, and then his mind was off the thing he was at.

DAM Yes, quite. Yes. Yes.

DAJ Yes. That's how he was.

DAM Fine. And you keep the images of every story—they're kept apart just . . .?

DAJ Oh, they're kept apart, yes . . .

DAM As if each one were a new film?

DAJ Yes, indeed. Just as if every one of them is a new one. Yes. Yes. Oh yes. Yes. Yes. That one comes in . . . to you just as the others do: it just comes into your vision as you go ahead with it. It comes . . . What follows after that and so on: it keeps coming . . . all the way.

DAM Yes. And now even if you heard someone else telling a version of the same thing—of the same story—that wouldn't make any difference to your story? It's your own story that you'd keep . . .?

DAJ Oh, it's my own story that I'd keep. Yes. Yes.

DAM Yes.

DAJ Even if I were wrong in it, it's the way I learned . . .

DAM It's the way you learned . . .

DAJ The way I learned.

DAM That's it. That's it.

DAJ I'd keep it the way I learned it.

DAM The way you learned it. Yes. Yes. The picture you got at first, as it were?

DAJ Yes. Yes. Yes indeed. The picture I got—just the vision I got of it from the beginning, yes . . . Yes . . . That's it.

DAM Yes. Oh, that's good. That's good.

DAJ That's how I'd do it. Though I was telling myself I was wrong in it . . . that was the way I learned it and that was the vision I had to keep.[15]

DAM Yes. And that's what you give every time . . . the vision . . .?

DAJ Yes. Yes.

DAM Oh well, that's great.

DAJ There you are, then.[16]

DAM Well, that's well worth a wee dram.

DAJ Oh God, God, away with your dram. You and your dram.

DAM Where did you put . . .? It's here.

DAJ Just a wee drop in it now.

DAM Oh well . . .

DAJ Oh God, God save us!

DAM It's just a wee one anyway . . .

DAJ Oh, by God on the throne up above, there's not another one on the dresser as big as it! It's the biggest one there.

DAM What are you going to do anyway but go to bed soon, I suppose?

DAJ Oh I am indeed.

DAM One's no worse . . . One's no worse for . . .

DAJ I'd have been in bed before now if you hadn't come.

DAM Oh I believe . . . Yes, I'm sure you would, Donald Alasdair.

DAJ Oh I'm usually in bed at ten—or a little after ten, always.

DAM . . . Every night, are you?

DAJ Every night . . . There's no one coming . . . no one coming céilidhing anyway and . . . The céilidh itself has stopped.

DAM Oh, the céilidh has stopped altogether.

DAJ Oh yes, indeed, the céilidh has stopped everywhere . . . Well, indeed the céilidh was a fine thing.

DAM Oh, so it was.

DAJ And . . . something to pass the time, so that you wouldn't notice the night passing.

DAM So it was too.

DAJ When two or three would come céilidhing there and there were stories here and stories there and there would be this and there would be that—and the night wouldn't be a minute passing—so different when a man's sitting alone, with no one to talk to him or anything, unless you talk to the dog.

DAM Aye. But there's . . . Well, you've got the tales though, to think about . . .

DAJ Oh yes. Oh I sometimes think about these. I sometimes tell them to please myself, just, in my mind.

DAM Yes.

DAJ Sometimes. Yes. Well, Good Health, then!

DAM Good Health, Donald Alasdair . . . And I suppose you keep remembering the old days too—how things were and . . .

DAJ Oh God yes. So I do, by God. So I do, by God, my lad.

DAM And now, all the old people keep telling me it was a happier world.

DAJ Oh God, yes. So it was—a happy world in the old days.

DAM Yes.

DAJ When I can first remember.

DAM Yes.

DAJ Oh, my dear lad yes. The people were so natural to each other—and everyone was so kind to everyone else.

DAM Yes, quite.

DAJ They used to . . . You look at the céilidh itself there. They used to go céilidhing to each other's houses and: I'll go to céilidh to you tonight and you'll come tomorrow night—and so on. There's nothing like that today.

DAM No. No.

DAJ Well, now, it's a sort of hate they've got for each other . . . since they're not like that any more. It must be.

DAM Yes. They're not so close to each other, anyway.

DAJ No. That's what I'm saying . . . that they're not.

DAM No.

DAJ Indeed they're not . . . And today, they . . . If you happened to get anything they're so envious today, but then it was just: "By God . . ." and it was just: "By God, weren't you lucky" . . . "God . . . God bless you, weren't you lucky".

DAM And people would be pleased you had got . . .?

DAJ That's what I'm saying—at that time. That's what the people would say to you . . . but today, they're just envious if you get . . .

DAM Yes, indeed.

DAJ Anything at all more . . . more than anyone else.

DAM More than anyone else. Yes, quite.

DAJ They're envious of you nowadays for it.

DAM . . . And the little they had long ago, they'd share among . . .?

DAJ They'd share it among them. Though it was just a bannock, you'd get the quarter of it.

DAM You would. You would indeed.

DAJ Yes, they would . . . And they'd just go . . . If you gave today . . . They'd go . . . They'd go to ask for a loan of tea from that one and that one would come tomorrow, maybe—a loan of tea and . . . or a loan of sugar, or something from them . . . in those days . . . There's nothing like that nowadays. No . . . If you did that today, there's no knowing . . .

DAM But that's how people ought to be, though.

DAJ That's how people ought to be, Donald Archie . . . And today too, that's how they ought to be.

DAM Yes indeed. But this business of money has ruined things today.

DAJ This business of money. Yes, and the world is none the better for this television.

DAM No, neither it is. Neither it is.

DAJ It's done great, great harm to the world, and to the people.

DAM Yes. People would rather watch television than see each other.

DAJ They would . . . And see how many crimes it's caused.

DAM So it has, too.

DAJ Things they see on that television there.

DAM So it has, too. They're none the better for it.

DAJ None the better.

DAM None the better.

DAJ The television's all right if they could take it at its own value.

DAM Yes. That's just it but . . .

DAJ But they don't . . .

(End of interview. Tape runs out)

NOTES

1 For further information on Donald Alasdair Johnson and some examples of his storytelling see *Scottish Studies* 14 : 133-54; 16 : 1-22 and *Tocher* 2 : 36-57; 7 : 222-9.

2 This is especially noticeable in the several performances now recorded of his version of the romance *An Ceatharnach Caol Riabhach*, (see also Note 15 below).

3 Ability to memorise plots and various other aspects of memory are admirably dealt with by Professor Kenneth Jackson in his Gregynog Lectures (Jackson 1961 : 55-64).

4 My colleague Dr Bruford refers to visual imagery as an important factor in remembering stories as follows: 'It seems likely that the average storyteller, who does not memorise a whole story word for word, remembers much of it in the form of a series of tableaux, possibly actually visualised, which he then describes in his own words; it may even be the normal way of learning stories for all storytellers . . . It is often apparent that the storyteller has a scene clearly in his mind's eye, especially if it is an unusual one' (Bruford 1969 : 217).

5 I know of no-one else who can tell a full version of this tale, which used to be very highly prized by Gaelic storytellers. This particular telling lasted about 50 minutes. In summary it goes as follows:

The son of the King of Ireland when out hunting on three successive days meets the Tuaraisgeul Og (son of the giant Tuaraisgeul Mór). They play cards and on the first two days the prince wins the maiden who has come with the Tuaraisgeul Og and his bay mare (both of whom have been stolen by him). On the third day the Tuaraisgeul Og wins and imposes *geasa* on the prince: he must find out for him how the Tuaraisgeul Mór met his death. The prince imposes counter *geasa:* the Tuaraisgeul Og must stand, a foot on each of two hills, facing wind and weather till he gets back. With the maiden's help, and the bay mare whose speed is miraculous, the prince visits her father and two uncles—the Knights of the Red, Green and White Shields. When refused admission by their porters, the mare leaps over the gates of their castles. The third knight directs him across a river to an old man, great-grandson of a still older man who has shrunk to a tiny size with old age. The mare leaps the river and the great-grandson, very impressed, wishes to buy her. Following advice, the prince sells the mare in exchange for the great-grandfather, but keeps the bridle with which he can summon her back. Again following advice, the prince carries off the great-grandfather but refuses to accede to his requests. At length his thwarted captive leads him to a clump of rushes which he pulls up to reveal a rusty cauldron with a sword under it. The old captive turns out to be the man who slew the Tuaraisgeul Mór. He starts to tell the details to the prince and as he does so he also writes the story on the blade of the sword:

He himself had been a prince with a cruel stepmother. By striking him with a magic wand she transformed him into a dog. He killed her sheep and she sent men and dogs in pursuit of him. He

leapt over a cliff landing on a little clump of vegetation. The pursuing dogs fell into the sea. He attracted the attention of a ship by barking and was taken aboard and befriended by the captain. The owner of the ship kept him at home while the captain and his ship were away on a long voyage. Three years in succession the owner's wife bore a son but each in turn was snatched away by a giant hand that came down through the roof. (The midwives who had fallen asleep blamed the dog which was in danger of being destroyed.) On the third occasion the dog tore off the great hand but the other hand snatched the child. The dog followed the trail of blood to an island. The Tuaraisgeul Mór was lying sleeping there, wounded, and the three children were with him safe and well. The dog managed to make the giant's own sword fall on his throat and beheaded him. He rescued the children. On the next voyage with the captain the ship was wrecked near the prince's father's palace. His father had died. His stepmother, in anger, when the dog tried to repel her advances on the captain, struck him with the same magic wand and he was restored to human form. That is the story of Tuaraisgeul Mór's death. The old captive asks the prince to bury him under the cauldron and go back and read the story off the sword blade to the Tuaraisgeul Og. He must read as quickly as possible. The prince buries the old man regretfully, shakes the bridle, recovers the mare and returns. The Tuaraisgeul Og has become a little heap of bones where he was forced to stand on the hillside, but as the story is read to him he gradually assumes his own shape and is almost fully resuscitated when the story comes to an end. The prince strikes off his head with the sword—but the head tries to rejoin the body. Finally the head takes off and tries to attack the prince from the air. He holds the sword aloft and the head splits in two on it. The prince marries the maiden (SA 1973/41-42A1). For further references to *An Tuaraisgeul Mór* see Bruford 1969: 157-9.

6   For references to Duncan MacDonald see Dr Alan Bruford's contribution to this volume. For Angus MacLellan see *Stories from South Uist* and *The Furrow behind Me*, both edited by Dr John Lorne Campbell (Campbell 1961 and 1962 *passim*).

7   I have since touched on the subject with a number of informants, eliciting varying degrees of response—though nothing nearly as dramatic as Mr Johnson's testimony. I have also covered much the same ground again with Mr Johnson himself following his telling of a version of AT 314. *The Magic Flight*, in 1974 (SA 1974/55B1-2). This interview confirms much of what is printed above but adds nothing new of real importance.

8   Compare the tradition of the poetess Maighread Ni Lachainn: *a' feitheamh na bàrdachd a' ruith air na glasfghadan*, 'seeing the poems running along the turves that formed the intersection of wall and roof', quoted by my colleague Dr John MacInnes (MacInnes 1968 : 41).

9   Despite the hesitation and apparent denial here, it seem clear from what follows that he does in fact see colour.

10 About two words unclear on tape.

11 Perhaps visualised like flashes on the shoulders of military uniform.

12 Unfortunately, coming as they do at this fairly crucial point, these few words are unclear on the tape and must be regarded as a conjectural reading.

13 Mr Johnson's replies here and below *passim* would seem to indicate that summary plots are of little consequence to his own method of remembering stories. That he was, however, quite capable of effectively summarising a tale is well demonstrated by an efficient three minute summary of a considerable part of his story of *Righ nan Ceist* (AT851), which he reeled off for me when I was slow to grasp which story he was referring to (SA1974/55B3). This he normally told in a much more extended form.

14 I have recorded a considerable amount of information from Mr Johnson about the céilidhing and storytelling sessions which were regular occurrences in his own home when he was a boy. His father John Johnson (Iain Mór mac Dhòmhnaill 'ic Iain 'ic Raghaill) from whom he learned almost all his tales, was the most notable storyteller in the Rubha Ghàisirnis area of South Uist.

15 Mr Johnson's fidelity to what he learned in his youth is well demonstrated by an incident connected with his version of *An Ceatharnach Caol Riabhach* (see also Note 2 above). In 1970 Dr Bruford and I published in Scottish Studies a version of this tale recorded in the previous summer from Mr Johnson by Mr A. J. MacDonald (MacDonald and Bruford 1970 : 133-54). Mr Johnson sub-sequently read this printed text and all our notes and comments. At Easter 1972 I again recorded

the story from him (SA1972/34A) and this time he incorporated in it an extra episode, the trick of blowing away the straw, as referred to in note 9 to our published version. Mr Johnson explained that when he read the note he remembered that his father's version of the story had included this episode. Accordingly he had re-incorporated it in his own version. All our other variant episodes and readings he had totally and, in his own terms quite rightly, ignored.

16   Much of what follows is not, strictly speaking, very relevant to the subject of 'memory' but I feel there is a strong case for presenting this interview complete and unabridged.

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Recitation or Re-creation?
Examples from South Uist Storytelling *

ALAN BRUFORD

Students of the folktale have tended in recent years to concentrate on the creative aspects of storytelling, and to treat as typical those cultures in which both wording and plot of a story may vary considerably from one telling to another, if not to deny entirely the concept of tale-types. In contrast it is worth stressing the extreme conservatism of many Gaelic storytellers, which has been commented on in Ireland and Scotland since the eighteenth century (see Bruford 1969 : 59 for some instances). 'The tale must be passed on as it has been received, unaltered, not in regard to language, but in form and plot,' says Delargy (1945 : 194), interpreting a common Irish formula to end a tale, 'Ní mise a chúm ná a cheap é.' ('It is not I who made or invented it.') In fact a few Irish storytellers can be shown to have invented or at any rate put together new tales; but at the other end of the scale some Scottish Gaelic storytellers have tried to pass on their tales unaltered in language as well as plot.

For the wording alone of a story there are three possibilities: the storyteller may memorise a mere skeleton plot and one or two names for the characters, and recreate the whole story in his own words; he may memorise the whole tale word for word as he heard it; or he may use a combination of these techniques, learning some passages of dialogue or description by heart and recreating the rest. Examples of each can be found among South Uist storytellers who have been recorded in recent years telling the same story more than once, so that we have material for comparison. Since tellers of the longer traditional tales were becoming rare by the time the tape-recorder was introduced we can use actual recordings only in a few cases, and must rely on manuscripts obtained by various techniques, but apart from variations in orthography there is no reason to consider these as necessarily less useful for our purposes than recordings.

The late Duncan MacDonald, Peninerine ('Dunnchadh Clachair', 1883–1954) was famous for his long hero-tales learned from his father Donald, who died in 1919 aged over 80 and had learned most of his tales from his father Duncan, who died about 1865. The best known of these tales is *Fear na h-Eabaid* ('The Habited Man', because the hero wears a clerical habit), or *Sgialachd an Dithreich* as Duncan's grandfather

more properly called it'—'The Story of the Hermit', a mysterious character who meets Murchadh son of Brian Bóramha and tells him how he won a wife in a supernatural kingdom and then had to rescue her from a succession of abductors. I have dealt with the history of the tale and the relationships of the defective manuscript and more complete oral versions elsewhere (Bruford 1968; 1969 : 136–40); it need only be remarked here that our version (called D and H4 respectively in these two studies) follows particularly closely the sequence of dialogue and description in the introductory section which is all that survives of the story in the only seventeenth-century manuscript. As at least one manuscript containing such tales was circulating in Uist as late as the beginning of the nineteenth century (Bruford 1965) there is no reason to doubt that this version has been handed down with exceptional accuracy from such a manuscript through the tradition of a family of famous storytellers. In two cases at least obscure phrases may be the result of rote learning from a manuscript using deliberately archaic language in the way of seventeenth-century scribes: 'có 'n taobh as *nas tànaig* am fiadh' has puzzled several transcribers, especially as it seems to mean 'where the deer had *gone*', not, as the words suggest, 'come from'; and 'Có nighean na tréin agus na tréithe ruaidheadh a tha seo?' ('What daughter of might (?) and red royalty (??) is here?') is quite incomprehensible as addressed by the Hermit to a male abductor, yet both of these occur in every version of the tale recorded from Duncan or his brother. Is it too much to suggest that the first derives from an archaising scribe's misuse of an infixed pronoun?[2]

Two of Duncan's versions (D2 and D4 below) have been briefly compared in a study by Maartje Draak (1957 : 52–53), but several more are available, spanning a period of nearly twenty years. D1 was taken down by Miss Peggy Lowe (now Mrs R. W. McClements), an undergraduate at Edinburgh University, in 1936, and eventually deposited in the School of Scottish Studies by the Reverend William Matheson. It has one or two differences from other texts which may be due simply to the difficulty of taking down a long, quickly-told story in longhand; but as the earliest text by eight years it is evidence of a sort which we lack for any other of Duncan's tales, even though a storyteller is perhaps unlikely to change his style substantially after reaching his fifties. D2 is the well-known version printed by K. C. Craig (1944 : 17–29); the one date given is not the year of publication but that in which the tales were taken down from Duncan's (presumably repeated) dictation (IFC MS. 1180 : 244–5). D3 was recorded by the late Dr Calum Maclean on Ediphone in March 1947 and his transcription is in IFC MS. 1031 : 152–85. D4 was recorded on wire by Dr John Lorne Campbell in February 1950 and transcribed and translated by the late Professor Angus Matheson and Derick Thomson as a booklet for the participants in the International Conference on Celtic Folklore at Stornoway in October 1953. D5 is a tape-recording, SA 1953/34 A4–35 A1, made by Calum Maclean in March 1953 for the School of Scottish Studies: I have used a transcription by my colleague D. A. MacDonald. Unnumbered quotations of passages common to

most versions follow this text. It is also worth considering a version from Duncan's younger brother Neil MacDonald (1884–1955), which I will call N: this was taken down by Duncan's son Donald John MacDonald in May 1955 and is among the valuable manuscript collection made by him for the School of Scottish Studies' (DJM 3524–83.) Neil learned it from his father and, with one exception to be noted later, tells it in almost the same words as Duncan.

As Professor Draak noted, Duncan changed his words very little from telling to telling. She found one difference of substance: the character who recognises the Hermit in the final episode is 'fear garg dubh' ('a ferocious black-haired man')[4] in D4, 'duine og aimeasgaidh mì-chiallach' ('a meddling, reckless young fellow') in D2 (and all the other versions). She divides the variations in wording into five sections: firstly 'different interjections, for instance 'n dà (indeed), where the other text has o . . . or agus (and) at the beginning of a new sentence-unit, where the other text has no "up-beat". Et cetera.' We may add phrases meaning 'then' which appear after the beginning of the sentence but have the effect of conjunctions—'an uair sin', 'an seo', 'mu dheireadh' and the like, which are freely used; the meaningless 'dh'fhalbh e agus' ('he went and') to open a narrative sentence; and the emphatic device 'what should . . . but', though this tends to be a regular feature in certain places—D1 has 'chunnaic e fiadh' ('he saw a deer') in the opening paragraph, but all the other texts have 'gu dé chunnaic e ach fiadh' ('what did he see but a deer').

Draak next mentions synonyms, with an example from the same opening paragraph where Murchadh goes after the deer and hound, 'to catch them': 'air son breith orra' in D2–3, 'air son greim a dhianamh orra' in D4–5, 'gu greim a dhianamh orra' in D1. N has a different construction, 'feuch am beireadh e orra.' Scottish Gaelic is rich in synonymous expressions and constructions, and Duncan quite often utilises these in the less formal pieces of narration, as when the Hermit throws down his load of wood: 'chaith am fear mór dheth an t-eallach' in D1, 4 and 5, 'shrad . . .' in D2 and 3—only N has the more commonplace 'thilg.' An even simpler example is when the Hermit speaks of this load earlier, of 'an eallaich so' in D1, 'an eallaich a tha seo' in D4, 'an eallaich a th'ann a seo' in D3 and 5 ('an eallaich a tha mi dol a dhianamh an a seo' in D2, where the speech exceptionally comes before the making of the bundle): three different ways of saying 'this load'.

The passages which show most variety in wording, however, seem to be those where the concept involved is in itself awkward to express and for some reason there is no set formula to express it. So when the Hermit promises to mend the cut drinking-horn, 'in such a way that nobody would ever know it had been cut' D1 has 'airson nach aithnich thusa na neach eile gu'n deach a ghearradh riamh'; D2 'air chor agus nach saoil'; D3 'air chor agus nach aithnich'; D4 'cho math agus nach aithnich'; D5 'cho slàn agus nach aithnich'; N has 'airson agus nach saoil', and it seems fair to deduce that their father used some such phrase which Duncan was continually trying to improve upon. Or take the passage where Murchadh hears chopping and heads for

the source of the sound; D1 says merely 'ghabh e suas a rèir an àite' ('he headed up towards the place'); D2 amplifies 'suas ma thuaiream an àit anns na dh'fhairich e a' bhuille' ('up in the direction of the place where he had heard the stroke'); D3 expands again 'an àit 'sna dh'airich e a bhith a' bualadh na buille' ('the place where he had heard the stroke being struck'); D4 'an àit as an cual' e bhith toirt seachad na buille' ('. . . being delivered'); D5 shortens this a little to 'an àite 'n cual e bhith toirt na buille'; N is simpler again, 'an àite anns an robh e a cluinntinn na buille' ('the place where he was hearing the striking'). Again Duncan seems to be trying to refine the concept—not the place where he heard the stroke, but the place from which he heard the sound coming: the location of the axe, not the ear. So too when Murchadh is saying to the Hermit that he has never known anyone else want a load lifted on his back without giving a hand himself, the wish is hard to express. D1 'Chan fhaca mi duine riamh bhitheadh airson eallach a thogail air a mhuin'; D2 (and N) '. . . duine . . . a bhite fiachainn ri eallach a thogail dhà'; D3 '. . . a bha air son eallach fhaighinn air a mhuin'; D4 '. . . a bha toil aige eallach fhaighean a chuir air a mhuin'; D5 'Chan fhac mi móran riamh a bhiodh toil aca eallach a thogail suas air a muin'. The difficulty is to express the passive infinitive: not somebody who wants to lift a load, but somebody who wants a load lifted. Duncan is trying to overcome the limitations of his own language.

One example on a larger scale may be permissible: the Hermit's judgment between the Gruagach and her brother on the land dispute.[5]

D1 'Se an ceart a dheanainn-sa dhuibh, esan a ghabhail leis na tha aige fhèin de fhearann, agus nan tuigte bhuaithe e uair 'sam bith le foirneart gun leigeadh thusa 'ga ionnsaidh pàirt de an fhearann agad fhèin.

D2 . . . gabhadh esan leis na bheil aige do dh'fhearann an dràsd, agus ma thachras e ris gun caill e uair sam bith e le fòirneart, leigidh tusa ga ionnsaigh an uair sain an darna leith agus na th' agad fhèin.

D3 . . . gabhadh thusa (*sic*) leis na bheil aige do dh'fhearann mar a tha e, agus mas e agus gun caill e a' fearann sin uair 's a' bith, air neo pairt dhith, lige tusa an uair sin ga ionnsaigh blaigh dhe na bheil agat fhèin.

D4 . . . gabhadh easan leis na bheil aige do dh'fhearann, agus ma thachras dhà uair sa bith gun caill e e, na gun caill e pàirt dheth, leigidh tusa 'n uair-san g' a ionnsaigh roinn dhe na bheil agad fhèn. Sin ma chailleas easan uair sa bith a' fearann a th'aige le fòirneart.

D5 . . . gabhadh esan leis na bheil aige do dh'fhearann, agus mas e agus gun caill e e le fòirneart, na gun caill e pàirt dheth, ligidh tusa ga ionnsaigh an uairsin an dàrna leth agus a th'agad fhèin.

N has much the same words as D2, though the order within clauses is different and 'ris' has changed to 'a rithist.' Leaving aside minor changes and the varying orthography, points worth noting are the different ways of expressing the remote possibility that the land may be lost, the appearance in later versions of the second possibility that part of it may be lost, the alternation between half and part of the

other's land as compensation, and the recapitulation in D4 to make sure that the word 'fòirneart' is included—not, I am sure, because *force majeure* would be an essential ingredient of the legal claim, but simply because Duncan's father had used that word. The wording is very formal, but there is scope within that formality for considerable variation in detail and order, and even for improvisation ('pàirt dheth') to add a little touch of realism.

Variation in word order is in fact the next point mentioned by Draak, and it is so obvious that little more need be said about it, except to emphasise the force of her second comparison: 'But, said the Man-with-the-Habit, I rose very early—' (D4) against 'But I rose, said the Man-with-the-Habit—' (D2). The dialogue is the most constant and formal part of the narration (apart from runs), but it is regularly broken up in different ways by different placings of 'ors' esan' ('said he') and the like. Changes in the order of phrases within clauses may be illustrated from the previous paragraph: sometimes the order of sentences and the alternation of dialogue and narration within a passage may change too without altering the substance or even most of the words used. We may illustrate this from the passage where the Hermit starts to parcel up his firewood.

D2 Ach dh' fhalbh Fear na h-Eabaid a seo agus thug e mach ròp a bile na h-eabaid agus sgaoil e naoi-fillt air a' mhòintich e. 'A ghaisgeich chòir,' ors esan ri Murchadh mac Brian, 'na glac droch mhios orms',' ors esan, 'air son a dhol a ghiùlair an eallaich a tha mi dol a dhianamh ann a seo, a chionn gum b'fhurasda dhomh fear agus fear agus tè agus tè fhaotainn a thigeadh ga iarraidh, ach cha tugadh a h-aon dhiubh leotha ann an aon eallach na chumadh teine ri Gleann Eillt latha agus bliadhna mura nì mis' e.' Agus thòisich e air dianamh an eallaich. Agus ciod a bha Murchadh mac Brian na ghaisgeach, 's ann a bha e gabhail oillt nuair a chunnaic e miodachd an eallaich a bha an duine a' dianamh. Nuair a bha an t-eallach ullamh a seo aige, 'Teann a nall,' ors e fhéin ri murchadh mac Brian, 'agus tog an t-eallach seo air mo mhuin.'

D5 Agus dh'fhalbh Fear na h-Eabaid a sin agus thug e ròp a mach a bile na h-esbaid agus sgaoil e naoi-fillt air a' mhòintich e, agus theann e ri deanamh an eallaich. Agus bha Murchadh mac Brian ag amharc air, agus ged a bha Murchadh mac Brian e fhéin na ghaisgeach, 's ann a bha e 'gabhail oillte nuair a bha e faicinn miodachd an eallaich a bha Fear na h-Eabaid a' deanamh. Agus 'nuair a bha seo an t-eallach ullamh aig Fear na h-Eabaid 's a cheanghail e suas e: 'A ghaisgeich chòir,' ors e fhéin ri Murchadh mac Brian, 'na glac droch mhios ormsa nist airson a dhol a ghiùlain an eallaich a th'ann a seo agus gum b'fhurasda dhòmhsa fear agus fear agus tè agus tè fhaotainn a thigeadh a dh'iarraidh na cuail-chonnaidh ann a seo, ach cha tugadh a h-aon aca leotha ann an aon eallach na chumadh teine ri Glinn Eillt lath' agus bliadhna mar a nì mise; ach teann nall a nist,' ors e fhéin, 'agus tog an t-eallach-s' air mo mhuin-sa.'[6]

D1, D3 and D4 follow the same order as D5, though they are slightly shorter,[7] and D3 unusually starts the passage as an appenix to the preceding speech of the Hermit: '"... agus nach math a ghabhadh tu fhéin do lethsgeul," agus e aig an aon am a' toirt ròpa a mach ...' ('"and how well you could excuse yourself," [said he], meanwhile taking out a rope ...'). On the other hand N has the same order as D2, and I

suspect that this is how Duncan learned it, with the Hermit's two speeches separate: in D4 he actually combines them in the wrong order:

Ach co dhiubh, 'nuair a bha 'n t-eallach deiseil aige, agus a cheangail e saus e, 'Teann a nall,' orsa Fear na h-Eabaid a nis, 'agus tog an t-eallach air mo mhuin-sa, agus na glac droch mhios orm air son a dhol a ghiulain an eallaich a tha seo cuideachd, a chionn . . .'[8]

But realising his mistake, he repeats the first part at the end:

'. . . mar a ni mise. Agus teann thus' a nall agus tog an t-eallach seo air mo mhuin.'[8]

Evidently the order within this section of the tale is not too important but it must begin and end with the right phrases which link it to the adjoining sections: the next sentence in fact shows Murchadh obeying the request: 'Theann Murchadh mac Brian a null . . .'

It is convenient to consider next Draak's fifth class of variation: 'Occasional mistakes. Once in (D4) Duncan said *Murchadh mac Brian* when it ought to have been *Fear na h-Eabaid* . . . and once he said *subhachas* (gladness) when it ought to have been *dubhachas* (sadness)[9] . . . And because of the dialogue-character of the tale Duncan sometimes got mixed up with his *He*'s and *I*'s in the story-part within the story.' This means not only that in the in-tale Duncan sometimes has 'orsa Fear na h-Eabaid' ('said the Habited Man') when the hermit as narrator should have said 'orsa mise' ('said I'),[10] as Draak amplifies in a footnote, and once in D5 'orsa mi fhìn' ('said I [myself]') is inserted after a passage of narration instead of 'orsa Fear na h-Eabaid', but occasionally whole sentences or paragraphs, especially towards the beginning of the in-tale, are put in the third person. Other sources of confusion are the sex of the gruagachs (Bruford 1968 : 324; 1969 : 213) and the relationship between the Hermit and his cupbearer: in D5 the cupbearer uses the respectful forms of the second person pronoun that might be expected throughout their dialogue, '''Bheir mi *dhuibh-s*' i,''' '''On is *libh-se* chuile cuid dhe sin, *sibh* a gheibh an deoch,''' but in D1 and D4 he uses the familiar form ('dhu's', 'lea'sa', ''s tu') and in the other texts, including N, the forms are mixed.

Here too we may note some differences between D1 and other versions: it is possible that they may indicate points at which Duncan decided the form of his text late in life, but none of these variants are found in N and they are more probably the result of hasty writing from dictation. 'Talamh na h-uamha' ('the land of the cave') where later texts have 'talla (*or* aitreabh) nam fuamhairean' ('the giants' hall') is clearly a mistake; so probably is 'Mac Rìgh Lochlann' for the rarer 'Macan Liathach Lochlann.' 'Gu 'dhà ghlùin fodha anns a' mhòintich' where later texts have 'ann an talamh cruaidh creadhadh' may perhaps show Duncan making an improvement—it is more impressive to be forced knee-deep into hard clay than into peat-moss—but if so Neil copied him. '''Gu dé an ceart a bha dhìth oruibh?''' ('What judgment did you need?') for '''Gu dé an ceart a bha tighinn eadaraibh?''' ('What rights made trouble between you?') could be normal variation or an easy mishearing.

Finally we come to what Draak calls 'real variants'—phrases (but not plot details) which appear in one text but not another. With six texts to choose from it becomes apparent that in most cases (including the instance chosen by Draak) what is involved here is the omission by one or two texts of details which are to be found in others, and which therefore were probably learned from Duncan's father. The only large-scale instance of this is the sea-run which in D2, D4 and N introduces the pursuit of the first and third of the main series of abductors. In D1 it does not appear at all; in D3 and D5 Duncan leaves it out the second time, as according to Draak (1957 : 48, 53) he did in telling the tale in Stornoway, 'not wishing to bore us'. The omission shows artistry as well as diffidence: the first episode is much shorter than the following two, and to omit the run there would spoil the balance of the story, whereas to leave it out of the third episode positively improves the balance. The total omission in D1 was no doubt chosen because of the difficulty of dictating the obscure language, or upsetting its swift flow to repeat a phrase.

Most of the optional passages however are mere details of wording or at most of description, such as the laid table which Murchadh sees on entering the Hermit's castle in D2, D4 and D5 but not in D1 and D3. In one case at least a point included in all other versions is omitted by one without doing any harm. The narrative usually mentions how Murchadh caught two blackcock in flight as he was trying to keep up with the Hermit: in D5 this is omitted, but as Murchadh tells the Hermit about it soon after in any case, the cut is if anything an improvement, making the story more concise. There does seem to be one passage where Duncan felt the need to add something, though he did not get far with it: this is in the dialogue when the Hermit hears of the third abduction. He reacts strongly to the news of the first two abductions, wondering which way to go after the first and saying after the second that he knows well where to go, for—''S cruaidh, 's cruaidh an gabhadh as an d'fhuair a' cheart triuir mise reimhe.' ('Sore, sore were the straits into which these same three put me once before.') For the third abduction such speculation will not do, as he knows that the abductor came from Greece: perhaps there was another reaction which has not been handed down to Duncan and his brother,[11] for in D1 he simply leaves in pursuit without comment, and in D2 and N he gets ready ('fhuair mi mi fhìn air dòigh') before leaving, as with the second abduction. D3 however adds a minimal reaction: '''O seadh,'' orsa mi fhìn.' D4 and D5 add to this the Hermit's own reflection: 'Cha robh comas air.' 'Oh yes, it can't be helped' is not a very striking reaction, but it avoids the baldness of making the hero leave without a word, while still leaving it open to the hearer, perhaps, to feel that he says no more because this third calamity has left him speechless.

There is still room for a more detailed comparison than this partial sample of variations[12] provides: in particular, I have not produced examples of the most remarkable feature, that for the most part all six texts are almost identical in wording—it is easier to study the differences because they are only a small part of the

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whole. But for lack of space and computer help it may be more profitable to ask whether *Fear na h-Eabaid* is typical of Duncan MacDonald's storytelling. It is certainly not typical of South Uist storytelling in general, let alone Gaelic storytelling: D. A. MacDonald's paper in this volume illustrates another and probably far more representative approach to long folktales from the same island. Brief comparisons of the different versions of other tales of this type which Duncan told—the other four printed by Craig (1944) in fact—suggest equal if not greater consistency in wording. This leaves two possibilities: that he always told the tales exactly as he heard them from his father, or that at some time in his younger days, before any of our texts was taken down, he worked out a text of his own, using a plot and some formal phrases remembered from his father's telling and recreating the wording of the rest in the usual way, and memorised this as the form in which he would tell the story from that time on. The latter is frankly what I expected to find, as I recently noted (Bruford 1974 : 80, note 20; *cf. id.* 1969 : 223–4, n. 21), but it seems to be clearly disproved by the texts from Neil MacDonald, which are for the most part as close to his brother's texts as one of those is to another. Neil could perhaps have been influenced by hearing the tales as told by his older and more famous brother as well as by his father, but there is little evidence that he was or considered himself to be Duncan's inferior as a storyteller: in one case he was certainly his superior—he knew and told, in his brother's lifetime, the whole of another long and complex tale, *An Ceatharnach Caol-Riabhach,* of which Duncan a few years before had admitted he only knew the first episode and claimed that his father himself had forgotten the rest.[11] It seems clear that both brothers had learned some of their father's tales virtually word for word.

It is worth mentioning two places in *Fear na h-Eabaid* where Duncan possibly did add something to his father's text. The more doubtful is the paragraph where after the second main abduction the Hermit comes upon his wife alternately laughing and weeping. The very same words are used in Duncan's versions of *Conall Gulbann* where the hero likewise finds his bride in her abductor's house. There is no trace of them in D1, and Duncan could perhaps have added them to our tale after 1937. On the other hand N as well as all the later texts from Duncan have them, and on the whole it seems more likely that Duncan omitted them in dictation because of the difficulty noted above of using 'dubhachas' and 'subhachas' in the right phrases, or took up the story a little later after pausing to repeat the word 'amalach' ('cathair amalach òir'—'a dovetailed(?) golden throne') which is queried in the manuscript. The second and greater interpolation is more probable. Neil omits entirely the two extra abductors in the first series, and has only the single intruder who takes the Hermit's bride from her mother's hall, calls out a challenge, and is disposed of in the slightly different manner which Duncan reserves for the final abductor. It seems possible that this is not a mistake on Neil's part, but may be the way in which his father told the tale, and Duncan himself decided to lengthen it by triplicating the abduction—a development not found in any other oral version of the story.[14] Little

invention is needed: virtually the only difference between the three episodes is that in the first two the abductor's javelin misses the Hermit and in the third it hits him, but only on the bronze rosary above his brow,[15] so that he soon recovers and aims his own javelin more accurately. In D1, however, the later episodes are much abbreviated: the dialogue between the abductor at the door and the gruagach, and the Hermit's response, are omitted, and he leaves in pursuit without more ado: 'Smaointich mi fhéin nach leiginn cho fad o'n tigh an oidhche sin i agus dh'fhalbh mi as a déidh' ('I thought to myself that I wouldn't let her get so far from home that night and I set off after her.') This may again be simply the result of dictation, but it seems possible at least that this is a half-way, experimental stage in Duncan's extension of the story.[16]

Duncan MacDonald did, however, tell a great many other stories not belonging to this genre of long, rather literary folktales (which correspond to one usage of the Irish term *fianaíocht:* there seems to be no equivalent term in Scottish Gaelic). His recorded repertoire includes a few long folktales of international *Märchen* type, also learned from his father, and these seem to have been re-told on a remembered framework in a much more normal way. Here, for instance, are two corresponding passages from *Triùir Mhac Rìgh Éireann* ('The King of Ireland's Three Sons', AT 551), the first as taken down by his son in August 1953 (DJM 366–89), the second (SA 1953/233 A1) as recorded by Calum Maclean in October of the same year, presumably during the conference at which Professor Draak met the storyteller:

DJM 'Nuair a thàinig am feasgar air bha e air coille dhlùth a ruighinn agus bha e fàs sgìth. Gu dé a chunnaic e ach biasd mhór a tighinn a rathad agus leum e suas dha'n chraoibh bu ghiorra dha. Thàinig a bhiasd gu bonn na craoibhe agus 's ann a dhìrich esan na b'àirde faisg air mullach na craoibhe.
   'Thig a nuas as a sin,' ars a bheist *(sic)* ris, 'tha mi g' aithneachadh math gu leòr co thu.'
   'Cha tig,' ars' esan.
   'Coma leat,' ars' a bheist, 'thig thu nuas an ceartuair,' agus rug i air a chraoibh agus chrath i i agus chaith i esan a bàrr na craoibhe na thoitean a dh'ionnsaigh a chnuic. 'Na biodh sian a dh'eagal agad romham-sa,' ars' a bhiasd, 'chan eil cuideachadh a bhios riatanach dhut air do thurus nach dean mi riut . . .'

SA Agus. nuair a rànaig—'s e thanaig a' seo bial na h-oidhche—rànaig e coille dhubh dhorcha. Agus chunnaic e biast mhór a' tighinn 'na choinneamh, air cumadh eich. Agus dh'fhalbh e agus dhìrich e suas a thé dhe na craobhan. Agus ghabh a' bhiast a nall gu bonn na craoibheadh.
   'Thig a nuas a sin,' ors' ise.
   'A, cha déid,' ors' e fhéin. Agus mar bu mhotha dh'iarradh a' bhiast air tighinn a nuas 's ann a b'àirde 'dhìreadh esan a's a' chraoibh. 'Ó, tà,' ors' a bhiast, 'cha bhi mise fada 'gad chrathadh as.' Agus dh'fhalbh i, agus rug i 'na bial air meangan dhe'n chraoibh air a' robh e, agus chrath i null agus a nall e, agus shrad i 'na thoirean(?) a dh'ionnsaidh a' chnuic e.
   'Nach dana tu as a nist?' ors' ise.
   'O, thànaig,' ors' esan.
   'O, ma thà.' ors i fhéin, 'na gabh sìon a dh'eagal romham-sa. Chan eil 'fhios 'am,' ors' i fhéin, 'nach mi a b'fhearr dhut a thachair fhathast ort, agus a chuidicheadh tu air an turus air a' bheil thu 'dol cuideachd.'[17]

The incidents do not differ, except for the detail in SA that the creature resembled a horse—perhaps added to make it less surprising that the hero later rides on it—but the wording, even the dialogue which is the most constant feature of many tales, is entirely different. SA actually has more dialogue. Later in the tale quite important details of character and plot differ from one version to the other. Thus in DJM the creature, in SA a cobbler at whose house they have halted, instructs the hero how to catch an eagle to carry him to the magic well; DJM contains detailed instructions from the creature to the hero about his route home, which SA omits entirely; DJM's Ridire Bàn (Fair Knight) is called Ridire Geal (White Knight) in SA (but Duncan corrects this mistake in the next episode); in DJM the hero leaves a bottle of wine with the daughter of the Ridire Donn (Brown Knight) and a dove with the daughter of the Ridire Dubh (Black Knight), but in SA the gifts are reversed.[18] The conversations between these knights' daughters and the heroine are reported almost entirely in indirect speech in DJM, direct in SA. There is no doubt that Duncan had memorised only the barest framework of the story and had to recreate minor details and wording each time he told it.

Two tellings of *Am fear a thug am boireannach as an Tuirc* ('The man who brought the woman out of Turkey', AT 506; Craig 1949 : 134–44, and DJM 390–438, recorded about 1946 and in 1953 respectively) are equally diverse in narration, but in this case several passages of dialogue are given in virtually identical words and must have been memorised. Some imagination has been used in recreating the narrative, as at the beginning where in the later version Duncan takes the trouble to account for the poverty of the hero's mother, which forces her to have him brought up by an English merchant—his father had died after a prolonged illness and she had spent everything on doctors. A similar combination of free narration and partially stereotyped dialogue can be found in the local historical and supernatural legends taken down from Duncan's telling by Calum Maclean and Donald John MacDonald. So in IFC MS. 1054 : 87, he opens the story of *Mac Mhuireich agus an Cuilean* ('MacMhuirich and the Pup'; *cf.* MacDonald 1963) as follows:

Chaidh Mac Mhuireich latha a dh'ionnsaigh a' chladaich ann a Stadhlaigearraidh, nach robh fada bho'n taigh aige, agus thachair cuilean ris agus thug e leis dhachaidh e, agas an oidhche sin thànaig guth chon na h-uinneig a dh'èigheach dha: 'Cuir a mach mo chuilean 'ugam.'

'Nì mi sin,' orsa Mac Mhuireich, ''nuair a nì thu taigh dhomh agas chan fheum clach na sgrath na sgolb a bhith 'ga dhìth ma soilleirich a' latha. Gheibh thu do chuilean an uair san.' Dh'fhalbh i, an creutair a bh'ann, agas thòisich i air an taigh agas bha an tobhta a seo ullamh agas thòisich i air cuir cheann air, ga'r bith dè na bha comhla rithe: 'Chan 'eil slat 's a' choill,' as ise, 'ach fiodhagaich. Chan fhaigh mi mar a chuireas mi.' Ach co dhiubh bha an taigh ullamh m'an dànaig a' latha agas tha mainnireach an taigh a bh'ann a sin ri fhaicinn ann a Stadhlaigearraidh gus a' latha an diugh. Agas thànaig i chon na h-uinneig air ais a dh'iarraidh air Mac Mhuireich an cuilean a chur a mach uice.[19]

DJM 578–84, some five years later, is more detailed throughout: the first sixty words

introduce the MacMhuirich family and their position as hereditary historians to Clanranald, before continuing:

A nis, thachair do dh'fhear do [Chloinn] Mhuirich, agus cha b'e am fear mu dheireadh idir dhiubh, a bhi latha air choireigin air a chladach, agus gu dé a thachair ris air a chladach ach cuilein beag, agus thug e leis dhachaidh e. Bha e an oidhche sin a dearrais ris a chuilein a stigh, agus a cleasachd ris, agus bha sin a còrdadh ris a chuilein fuathsach math. Ach an so, gu dé a chual e ach guth aig an uinneig a g' ràdha ris, "S luinneagnach a nì thu suigeart.'

'O,' arsa Mac Mhuirich, "s e mo bhuinig mhór a nì an glagan.'

'Cuir a mach mo chuilean ugam,' ars' a bhiasd a bha muigh.

'Nì mi sin,' arsa Mac Mhuirich, 'nuair a thogas tu tigh dhomh agus na biodh clach neo maide neo sgrath no tughadh ga dhìth mun tig a latha.' Agus dh'fhalbh i agus thòisich i air an tigh. Nuair a bha i a cur a chinn air, ge bith có na bha comhla rithe, thuirt ise, 'Chan eil slat sa choill ach fiodhagaich, 's chan fhaigh mi mar a chuireas mi,' agus i na cabhaig feuch am biodh an tigh ullamh mun tigeadh a latha. Mu dheireadh bha an tigh deas, agus bha a latha gun tighinn. Dh'fhalbh i chun na h-uinneig aig Mac Mhuirich, agus dh'eubh i dhà, 'Tha do thigh a nis deiseil agam, agus cuir a mach a nis mo chuilein ugam.'[20]

The later version incorporates a dialogue exchange at the beginning which is so formal that it must surely be traditional, and was just forgotten in the first telling, unless it has been incorporated from another tale; this in its turn requires explanation, and so the detail is added—uniquely as far as I know in this relatively common legend—that the young creature was happy playing with MacMhuirich. The creature's request for her young and MacMhuirich's counter-request are clearly formal, traditional and memorised, and so is the stock complaint of the supernatural builder about the wood available (as in MacDonald 1963 : 212 and n. 5). Later DJM again goes into details which were not in the earlier version: there are 180 words describing the making of Clachan Lainginis, and the beautiful construction of the causeway as it now is—Duncan was after all a mason by trade—and at the end, before the creature is banished from Uist, the international motif of the handshake with the piece of red-hot iron (K.73 or variant) is introduced. The extra factual details on the causeway and the MacMhuirich family are optional features of a sort peculiar to local legend; the added dialogue and international motif were probably in the tale as Duncan learned it (as always, apparently, from his father) and the interesting point is that the story could evidently be told without them, without any feeling that this was an inadequate version. The one point in the passage above where IFC is apparently superior to DJM, the reference to the ruins of the house being still visible, is taken up at the end of the story in the latter: 'Tha roinn do thobhta Mhic Mhuirich ri faicinn gus an latha diugh' ('Part of the walls of MacMhuirich's house can be seen to this day.')

There is some reason to think that the pattern of these stories—narrative wording improvised on a memorised framework, but much of the dialogue learned by heart—was the most usual one for experienced storytellers in South Uist. It certainly seems to have been the normal techique for Angus MacLellan (Aonghus Beag), who was generally considered the best storyteller in the island after Duncan's death. My

impression on my own visit to Angus, in the year before he died at the age of 96, was that he was sitting in his corner going over stories under his breath whenever he was not telling them aloud.²¹ Again I felt it likely that Angus had at some stage put together and learned off his own texts of the stories he was used to telling, for he seemed to tell them in the same words but in much less formal language than Duncan used for his most famous tales. This may well be true, but only of the dialogue: the narration varies quite considerably each time. Thus in Angus's celebrated tale of Cú Chulainn and the bull Donn Ghuailleann, derived in part from the early Irish *Táin Bó Cuailnge*, not only are the formal exchanges between Cú Chulainn and his adversaries reported in the same words (except for the placing of 'ors esan,' 'orsa Cù Chulainn,' and so on) but the same applies to the conversation round the table after the boy Cú Chulainn has killed the hound, though the killing itself is described in quite different words in the version published by Calum Maclean (1959 : 165) from his recording in the same year (SA 1959/38 A2) and that which I recorded in 1965 (SA 1965/119 B2).

1959 Agus 'n uair a rànaig e'n drochaid, bha an uair suas. Agus chan fhaigheadh e a null air an drochaid: bha an cù roimhe. Agus bha e ag iomain ball agus caman aige 'ga iomain roimhe. Agus sheas Cù Chulainn m'a choinneamh. Agus dh'fhalbh e agus bhuail e am ball agus ghlac an cù e. Agus chaidh am ball ann an amhaich a' choin. Agus bha e *aige* leis a' chaman agus mharbh e '*n cù*. Agus chum e air aghaidh *gon do* rànaig e taigh an uachdarain. Bha e 'ga fhalach fhéin mu'n cuairst gus na shuidh iad a seo aig na bùird. Agus fhuair Cù Chulainn a staigh chun nam bord.

Agus thog athair a cheann agus chunnaic e e agus thuirt e: "*N dà*, gu deara(bh),' ors esan, 'tha mi a' faicinn rud a tha a' cur iongnaidh orm,' ors esan.

'Dé tha sin?' ors an t-uachdaran.

'Tha am balach beag a dh'fhàg mi a staigh,' ors esan, "*nuair a* tha e aig a' bhorsd comhla ruinn,' ors esan.

'An dà, ma tha sin fìor,' ors an t-uachdaran, 'tha mise gun chù,' ors esan.

1965 'Nuair a rànaig Co Chulainn an drochaid bha Co Chulainn agus ball aige 'ga iomain le caman. Bha 'n cù roimhe agus a bhial fosgailte, a' feitheamh gos a bhith aige, agus cha b'urrainn dha dhol na b'fhaide. Dh'fhalbh e agus chuir e 'm ball air groban agus bhuail e buille dha'n chaman air agus chaids an cù 'na bhial e, agus dé rinn e ach a dhol an amhaich a' choin. Agus bha Co Chulainn aige leis a' chaman agus chuir e 'n t-ionachainn as a' chù. Mharbh e e agus fhuair e seachad air an drochaid. Cha robh e ach 'ga fhalach fhéin timicheall an taighe ma faiceadh 'athair e, agus 'nuair a shuidh iad a' seo aig na bùird nochd Co Chulainn e fhéin: fhuair e staigh agus fhuair e chon a' bhùird còmhla riutha.

Seo 'nuair a thug 'athair an aire dha, agus thuirt 'athair: "N dà, gu dearbh,' ors esan, 'tha mi faicinn rud tha cur iongnadh orm.'

'Dé tha sin?' ors an t-uachdaran.

'Tha,' ors esàn, 'am balach a dh'fhàg mi staigh,' ors esan, "nuair a tha e còmhla ruinn aig bòrd na bainnseadh.'

"N dà, ma tha sin fìor,' ors an t-uachdaran, 'tha mise gun chù.'²²

The narration in both cases amounts to the same thing, but is expressed in quite different words: even the sentence-patterns and the order in which events are told are

different. The language is colloquial enough to include the English word 'catch'. The dialogue here is in almost equally ordinary language, except perhaps for the laconic simplicity of the landlord's last statement, but the words are identical but for one change of order and a single extra epithet in each telling ('balach *beag*', 'bord *na bainnseadh*'). The same could be said of most of the dialogue throughout this tale.

Angus learned the story from Duncan MacDonald's father—who had perhaps forgotten it himself by the time that Duncan, fourteen years younger than Angus, was listening to him: certainly Duncan never told it. Had he been able to memorise it, it might well have been in formal language throughout, though if the common touch which makes Cú Chulainn into a tenant farmer fighting to keep his famous bull was not added by Angus's interpretation, it is not certain that it would have been regarded as a tale on a level with *Fear na h-Eabaid.*[21] In any case Angus had apparently not been in the habit of telling it and only recalled it when prompted by Calum Maclean, who had heard a fragment of it from his sister Mrs Peggy Macdonald (Maclean 1959 : 172). Moreover the memorisation of an entire story was probably foreign to Angus's technique, though he did know runs (notably in *Conall Gulbann*) and there is one sentence of narrative in the Cú Chulainn story which is evidently learned by heart: 'Thug e seachd bliadhna air Drochaid nan Ceud gun chù, gun duine, gun teine, gun tuar, gun teodhadh.' ('He spent seven years at the Bridge of the Hundreds with no dog, no man, no fire, no victuals, no warmth'—so 1965: longer series in 1959 version.)

It is evident that Angus MacLellan memorised historical legends in exactly the same way. Thus in the South Uist parallel to the William Tell legend, *Gille Padara Dubh agus an Geall* ('Black-Haired Gilpatrick and the Wager'), the protagonists exchange very much the same words in Calum Maclean's 1960 recording (SA 1960/29 B2) as they do in John Lorne Campbell's 1950 one (SA 1950/6, translated in MacLellan 1961 : 78 80) but their actions are described differently. The language used is in no way remarkable, but the wording, whether devised by Angus or learned from his source (in this case probably Alasdair MacIntyre, 'Alasdair Mór'), remains remarkably constant. This suggests that the story was remembered in a dramatic form; the scene would be visualised and described, and the characters' words memorised and repeated, as if by an eye-witness of a recent event.

Where the story was noted for its language, whether because like *Fear na h-Eabaid* it had originated in a manuscript romance or because some storyteller had dressed it up in similar literary language, it would be natural for the listener, especially if he had any thought of telling it himself some day, to remember as much as he could of the high-flown language. Otherwise, he would remember the plot; rarely, a formal phrase in the narration of that particular tale (as against runs which could be used in appropriate situations in any tale); and usually some of the things the characters said. Whether all, the more striking parts, or none of the dialogue was memorised would depend on various factors: the preferred technique of the learner, the technique of his

source, the circumstances of telling, and the nature of the story itself. Thus it appears that Angus MacLellan regularly memorised most of his dialogue, no matter in what tale; whereas Duncan MacDonald memorised only the more formally worded or significant passages in the general run of tales. Where he memorised next to none, as in *Triùir Mhac Rìgh Éireann,* he may have heard the story only once himself; or his father may have used little but indirect speech in telling it; or the source may not really have been his father, but someone with a different technique; or he may simply have found no dialogue in it worth remembering. We can only note that Duncan had a more varied technique of storytelling than Angus. What we have hardly touched on, the creation of a new or altered story from stock elements, probably did exist in Scottish Gaelic, though it is doubtful if it could be found among recent storytellers: but I think it is fair to assume that the much more limited methods of re-creating a story which we have studied above have been more typical for longer than the century or so during which tales have been collected.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

NOTES

1 'Iain Ruadh mac Thormoid', who returned to live in the neighbourhood as a man of nearly 90, mentioned this to Duncan as the title of a story of his grandfather's, and when Duncan mentioned *Fear na h-Eabaid* identified this as being the same tale (SA 1953/270 A1). The word *Dìthreabhach* appears in the title both of the early Scottish (1690) and later Irish (1817) manuscripts of this tale.

2 A few sentences later the Hermit asks Murchadh whence he has come, 'có as as tànaig e?' which seems to be a reflection of the same form: I have not noticed it anywhere else in the tale. In correct Old Irish the prefix *no-* would not of course be used with a compound form such as *tánicc,* but an archaising scribe 700 years later would not know this.

3 This collection has been unduly neglected hitherto because of some fault found with later volumes, but the early volumes in particular contain much of great interest. As far as I know the stories were largely taken down from dictation, though Mr MacDonald did at one stage have a tape-recorder. As the pagination is continuous throughout the series of 69 notebooks only page numbers are given. In quotation only obvious slips in spelling and punctuation have been corrected; otherwise the orthography of this as of other sources has been left as it stands. Gaelic quotations throughout are translated either in the text or in the notes unless untranslatable details are being compared, in which case the gist of the passage is usually given in the text.

4 This is the normal description of the Hermit's cupbearer earlier in the tale, and has probably been borrowed from there by a simple slip of the tongue.

5 Translations of two versions should give an idea of the main translatable differences:
   D1 The judgment I would give you is that he should be content with what land he has, and if it should ever be taken from him by force, that you should let him have part of your own land . . .
   D4 . . . let him be content with what land he has, and if it ever befalls him that he loses it, then you shall let him have a portion of what you have. That is, if he ever loses the land he has by force.

6   D2 But now the Habited Man went and took out a rope from the folds (?) of the habit and he laid it
     out nine-fold on the moor. 'My good champion,' said he to Murchadh mac Brian, 'don't think ill of
     me,' said he, 'because I'm going to carry this load I'm going to make up, since it would have been
     easy for me to have got man after man and woman after woman to come for it, but none of them
     could have taken in one load as much as would keep the fires going in Gleann Eillt for a day and a
     year, unless I do it myself.' And he began to make up the load. And though Murchadh mac Brian
     was a champion, he was appalled when he saw the size of the load the man was making. Now when
     he had the load ready, 'Come over here,' said he to Murchadh mac Brian, 'and lift this load on to
     my back.'
     D5 And then the Habited Man went and took out a rope from the folds of the habit and he laid it
     out nine-fold on the moor, and set about making up the load. And Murchadh mac Brian was
     watching him, and though Murchadh mac Brian was a champion himself, he was appalled as he saw
     the size of the load the Habited Man was making. And now when the Habited Man had the load
     ready and had tied it up: 'My good champion,' said he to Murchadh mac Brian, 'don't think ill of
     me now because I'm going to carry this load, for it would have been easy for me to have got man
     after man and woman after woman to come to fetch this bundle of firewood, but none of them
     could have taken in one load as much as would keep the fires going in Gleann Eillt for a day and a
     year, as I can do; but come over here now,' said he, 'and lift this load on to my back.'
7   D3 and D4 omit 'Bha Murchadh mac Brian ag amharc air', though D1 has '. . . a' sìor-amharc air'
     but not the rest of the sentence; only D4 mentions the tying up of the load; the specific 'a
     dh'iarraidh na cuail-chonnaidh' is elsewhere "ga iarraidh' as in D2. The emphatic forms at the end
     in D5 are perhaps only for the variety rather than dramatic effect.
8   But anyway, when he had the load ready and had tied it up, 'Come over here,' said the Habited
     Man now, 'and lift the load on to my back, and don't think ill of me because I'm going to carry this
     load either, since . . .'
     '. . . as I can do. And do you come over here and lift this load on to my back.'
9   The same confusion occurs in D5, but the recording is interrupted at this point by a change of tape
     and apparently a temporary breakdown, so a mistake where the story is resumed is not surprising.
10   Several times in D4 and D5 it is noticeable that Duncan inserts 'ors' e fhèin' ('said he') into the
     Hermit's narrative shortly after to make it clear that he is reporting the tale at second hand.
11   After the second abduction the gruagach at first will not tell him where his bride has gone—she is
     past caring: "'S coma liom fhìn cà 'il am boirionnach sin fhèin.' (As Draak (1957 : 53) points out,
     this is inconsistent with the present form of the story where she is the girl's mother: originally she
     must have been at closest her aunt by marriage.) The Hermit is tempted to kill her for this, but
     spares her because nobody else could tell him where the girl has gone, and presently she consents to
     tell him. This is missing in D1. It seems possible that this detail belongs originally to the third
     abduction (by which time the gruagach would have more reason to have lost interest) and the gap
     there is caused by its accidental transfer to the second.
12   Points for discussion were chosen largely on the basis of a detailed comparison of the first half (up to
     the beginning of the first series of abductions) of versions D1 and D2, followed by sampling of what
     seemed interesting points later in the story.
13   Neil's text (DJM 596–605) was most regrettably overlooked when we published Donald Alasdair
     Johnson's version of this tale (MacDonald and Bruford 1970). A fragmentary recording and a
     transcription of the complete first episode recorded by Calum Maclean from Duncan were recently
     discovered in the Department of Irish Folklore, University College, Dublin by Miss Kay Muhr.
14   In Irish versions of the story the Hermit wins the girl by saving her from the man who abducts her
     from her wedding to a third man, and this may well be the original form of the episode: the fact that
     she is already promised to the Hermit makes it possible here to triplicate the episode without making
     nonsense of the story.
15   'As a bhaideirein unga bh' as cionn na mala'—though in arming himself for the first pursuit the
     Hermit puts the *bone* beads there and the bronze ones round his neck in all versions: 'mo
     bhaideirein unga ma m' amhaich agus mo bhaideirein chnàmh as cionn mo mhaladh.' The
     inconsistency does not seem to have struck Duncan (or Neil): the formal phrase, which occurs in two

other Hebridean versions of the tale as 'baidean cnàmh os cionn a mhala' (Bruford 1968 : 320 n. 4) is all that matters.

16 It is possible that Duncan may have added similarly to the list of abductors in *Conall Gulbann* who allow Conall to fight them and demand his wife or their life before replying nonchalantly 'O, chan eil am bàs os mo chionn idir!' ('Oh, Death is not standing over me at all!' in reply to the formal threat in which the hero demands ransom or their life) and revealing that someone else has taken the lady. A sequence of seven abductors is unparalleled in Scottish versions of the tale, and only two appear in the version told by Angus MacLellan, who had learned the story from Duncan's father. But it appears that Angus knew two versions of the story, the other probably learned from Alasdair Mór (see p. 39), which he conflated in telling: sometimes Conall recovers his bride after killing Macan Mór (SA 1963/14 A1), sometimes Macan Mór yields her (SA 1959/42 B1). Neil has as many abductors as Duncan (DJM : 2847⁻2910) so it seems more likely that their number was increased by a storyteller of an older generation.

17 DJM When evening came upon him he had reached a thick wood, and he was growing tired. What should he see but a great monster coming his way, and he leapt up into the nearest tree. The monster came to the foot of the tree, and then he climbed higher, nearly to the top of the tree.

    'Come down out of there,' said the monster to him, 'I know well enough who you are.'

    'I won't come,' said he.

    'No matter,' said the monster, 'you will come down in a moment,' and it gripped the tree and shook it, and it cast him off the top of the tree down to the ground in a heap. 'You needn't be afraid of me at all,' said the monster, 'there's no help that you will need on your journey that I won't give you . . .'

    SA And when he got there—nightfall was coming by this time—he got to a black dark wood. And he saw a great monster coming towards him, shaped like a horse. And he went and climbed up into one of the trees. And the monster came over to the foot of the tree.

    'Come down out of there,' it said.

    'Ah, I won't go,' said he. And the more the monster urged him to come down, the higher he was climbing into the tree.

    'Oh, but,' said the monster, 'I won't be long shaking you out.' And it went and gripped a branch of the tree he was on in its mouth, and shook it back and forth, and flung him down to the ground in a heap(?) 'Haven't you come out now?' it said.

    'Oh yes,' he said.

    'Oh, in that case,' it said, 'don't be afraid of me at all. I don't know,' it said, 'that I'm not the best thing you've met yet, and one that can help you too on the journey you're going.'

18 The version in DJM has more force, for the other knights' daughters return the hero's gifts to the heroine (from whom he took them) willingly enough, though they originally desired them enough to ask for them—and the wine seems to have remained untasted—but the dove has pined for its owner and is given back for this reason, so it is best as the last of the three.

19 One day MacMhuirich set off for the shore in Stilligarry, which was not far from his house; and he came upon a pup and took it home with him, and that night a voice came to the window crying to him, 'Put out my pup to me!'

    'I'll do that,' said MacMhuirich, 'when you make me a house, and there must be no stone or sod or stick of it wanting before day dawns. You'll get your pup then.' She left, this creature, and started on the house, and now the walls were finished and she began putting the roof on it, whatever helpers she had: 'There's not a stick in the wood,' said she, 'but bird-cherry. I can't get enough wood to keep me going.' But for all that the house was ready before day came, and the ruins of the house that was there can be seen in Stilligarry to this day. And she came back to the window to ask MacMhuirich to put out the pup to her.

20 Now it happened that one of the MacMhuirichs, and this was certainly not the last of them, was on the shore one of these days, and what should he come upon on the shore but a little pup, and he took it home with him. That night he was frisking about (?) with the pup in the house, playing with it, and the pup was enjoying this very much. But then, what did he hear but a voice at the window saying to him, 'Mirthfully do you sport!'

'Oh,' said MacMhuirich, 'great will be my gain from the noisy little creature (?).'

'Put out my pup to me,' said the creature that was outside.

'I'll do that,' said MacMhuirich, 'when you build me a house, and let there be no stone nor stick nor sod or thatch of it wanting before day comes.' And she left and started on the house. When she was putting the roof on it, whoever she had to help her, she said, 'There's not a stick in the wood but bird-cherry, and I can't get enough wood to keep me going,' for she was in a hurry to try and finish the house before day came. At last the house was ready, and day had not yet come. She went to MacMhuirich's window and cried to him, 'I've finished your house now, and put out my pup to me now.'

21 At this stage Angus was too deaf to pay much attention to the conversation in the rest of the room or to his sister Mrs. Campbell's singing. I do not suppose, however, that he would have been going over stories if he had not been stimulated by the presence of a visitor with a tape-recorder.

22 The Gaelic text of the 1959 version follows the version published in *Arv*, which supplies some vowels and particles not audible on the tape, except for the italicised words which depend on a new transcription of the same tape:

1959: And when he reached the bridge, the time was up. And he couldn't get across the bridge: the hound was in the way. And he was driving a ball—he had a shinty-stick to drive it as he went. And Cu Chulainn stopped, facing [the dog]. And he went and hit the ball, and the hound caught it. And the ball went down the hound's throat. And he set about it with the shinty-stick and killed it. And he kept on his way until he reached the landowner's house. He hid himself about the place until they came to sit down at the tables. And Cu Chulainn got in at the tables.

And his father raised his head and he saw him, and he said: 'Well indeed,' said he, 'I can see something that surprises me,' said he.

'What's that?' said the landowner.

'It's the little boy I left at home,' said he, 'when here he is at the table along with us,' said he.

'Well, if that's true,' said the landowner, 'I've lost my hound,' said he.

1965: When Cu Chulainn reached the bridge, Cu Chulainn had a ball he was driving with a shinty-stick. The hound was in his way with its mouth open, waiting to fall on him, and he couldn't go any further. He went and teed up a ball and hit it with the shinty-stick, and the hound caught it in its mouth, and what should it do but go down the hound's throat. And Cu Chulainn set about it with the shinty-stick and knocked the dog's brains out. He killed it and got over the bridge. All he did was to hide himself about the house in case his father saw him, and when they came to sit down at the tables Cu Chulainn showed himself: he got inside and got to the tables along with them.

This was when his father noticed him, and his father said: 'Well indeed,' said he, 'I can see something that surprises me.'

'What's that?' said the landowner.

'It is,' said he, 'the boy I left at home,' said he, 'when here he is along with us at the wedding table.'

'Well, if that's true,' said the landowner, 'I've lost my hound.'

23 But it may be significant that Angus took off his cap to tell the story (Maclean 1959 : 172) as earlier reciters did out of respect when they began a ballad (or tale?) of the Fenian cycle.

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           Edinburgh.

IFC MS.   MSS. of the Irish Folklore Commission, now Department of Irish Folklore, Univer-
           sity College, Dublin.

SA   Sound-recording Archive, School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh.

Traditional and Bogus Elements in
'MacCrimmon's Lament'

V. S. BLANKENHORN

As Derick Thomson has pointed out, one of the most fascinating and least-explored areas of Gaelic studies is that of the bogus literature and scholarship of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (1958 : 172 ff.). The antiquarian tastes of the reading public of that time encouraged and rewarded the efforts of James Macpherson and his imitators, and their productions had a marked influence on the romantic revival of the nineteenth century.

A proven method of dealing with bogus productions is to compare them with genuine traditional materials which are associated with the same subject. Once scholars were content to conduct a searching examination of the traditional Fenian materials the solution to the problem of Macpherson's authenticity was not far to seek. In the present essay the field of enquiry is both smaller and broader. It involves a number of items, both traditional and bogus, which are associated with the name of Domhnall Bàn MacCrimmon, a piper who died fighting with MacLeod of Dunvegan in the 'Forty-five. These items include (i) stories and 'legends' about Domhnall Bàn, both genuine and spurious; (ii) a poem in English, 'Mackrimmon's Lament', by Sir Walter Scott, which has the death of the piper as its theme; (iii) two Gaelic poems in imitation of Scott; (iv) a bagpipe lament, 'Cha till mi tuille', attributed to Domhnall Bàn; and (v) various musical productions, traditional and non-traditional, based upon the bagpipe air. Taken as a whole these materials illustrate the range and effectiveness of post-Macphersonic romanticism, not only in the more scholarly type of literary production, but also in the 'legends' and musical settings which their authors perpetrated in order to give such productions the necessary air of authentic antiquity.

Domhall Bàn MacCrimmon belonged to the fourth generation of that family whose members had been hereditary pipers to the MacLeods of Dunvegan. The MacCrimmons were known throughout the Highlands not only as masterful performers on the bagpipes, but also as instructors in that art, and in that of composing for the instrument. A college of piping, endowed by MacLeod and established at Boreraig probably in the time of Padruig Mòr MacCrimmon (who held office 1640–70) drew aspiring pipers from all over the Highlands. In the approximately one hundred years that the college flourished, the MacCrimmons contributed significantly to the *piobaireachd* form known as *ceòl mòr* (Campbell 1953 : 16).

In 1745, Norman MacLeod, 22nd Chief, decided to lead his clansmen into the field on the side of the government, and in August of that year set sail for the mainland to join the Independent Companies under the command of Lord Loudon. Accompanying him in the office of piper to the company was Domhnall Bàn, younger brother of Malcolm MacCrimmon, MacLeod's hereditary piper, who for some reason was unable to join the campaign (Grant 1959 : 444). MacLeod and his clansmen reached Inverness on 9 September 1745, and were billeted there along with the rest of Lord Loudon's troops, 1700 in all (MacKintosh 1903 : 46).

On 16 February 1746 Loudon learned that the Prince had arrived, virtually unattended, at Moy Hall, the seat of Mackintosh of Mackintosh, a few miles to the southeast of the city. The place was largely unguarded, Mackintosh and his clansmen being occupied elsewhere in the Royalist cause. Lady Mackintosh, however, was a fervent Jacobite, and feared that Loudon might learn of the Prince's presence; so, for some protection, she armed the blacksmith, one Donald Fraser, and four or five others with muskets and told them to keep a look-out on the moor, along the Inverness road. That night, Fraser and his men perceived a body of men approaching—in fact, Lord Loudon and most of the Inverness garrison, including the MacLeods. The situation called for desperate bluff: the watchers retired behind some peat stacks which stood near the road at the Pass of Creag-an-eoin, and when the column of men came into the pass they burst out of hiding, loosed off their blunderbusses and bellowed the war-cries of various Jacobite clans, urging these non-existent reinforcements into battle. With this, in the dark, Lord Loudon assumed that the Prince's entire army were at hand, and signalled a speedy retreat. This is the incident rather gleefully referred to in Jacobite histories as the 'Rout of Moy'; the only sober aspect of the affair was that Domhnall Bàn, the piper, got in the path of one of the bullets and was killed on the spot—the only casualty (MacLeod 1933 : 45–6; MacKintosh 1903 : 46).

It is sometime during this period that Domhnall Bàn is supposed to have composed the *pìobaireachd* 'Cha till mi tuille' which is attributed to him (see Fig. 1 below). The circumstances of its composition are impossible to determine with any certainty, although several accounts are available to us which purport to tell the story. Sir Walter Scott gives one version in a note to his poem, 'Mackrimmon's Lament', in *Albyn's Anthology*. Referring to the bagpipe air, which is printed along with his poem, he writes:

> Mackrimmon, hereditary piper to the Laird of Macleod, is said to have composed this Lament when the Clan was about to depart upon a distant and dangerous expedition. The minstrel was impressed with a belief, which the event verified, that he was to be slain in the approaching feud; and hence the Gaelic words, *"Cha till mi tuille; ged thillis Macleod, cha till Macrimmon;—*I shall never return; although Macleod returns, yet Mackrimmon shall never return! The piece is but too well known, from its being the strain with which the emigrants from the West Highlands, and Isles, usually take leave of their native shore (Campbell 1818 : 57).

It seems to me that the bareness of this account argues against its being a product of Scott's imagination: understatement is so far from being his style that I cannot believe that he would normally refer to the 'Forty-Five Rebellion as a 'feud'! It seems more likely that he heard the story during his visit at Dunvegan in 1814 (although his diary makes no mention of it), or that he got it from some Highland correspondent to whom the details were unknown. The story probably represents the truth as far as it was known to Scott. His reference to the music's connection with emigration is probably based on fact; this aspect will be discussed below.

Scott's statement that MacCrimmon was convinced he was to be killed in the coming engagement may be traceable to the following report of an incident which is supposed to have occurred before the expedition set out for Moy. It is contained in Theophilus Insulanus' *Treatise on the Second Sight*, 1763:

> Patrick MacCaskill, an honest Country Farmer, of good Report with all his Neighbours, who deserves Credit as much as any Church-man of the most unblemished Morals, and is mentioned in the Body of the Treatise, declared to me, that, in the Evening before the Earl of Loudon attempted to surprize the young Pretender, at the Castle of Moy, Donald MacCrummen, Piper to the Independent Company, (commanded by the young Laird of MacLeod,) talked with him on the Streets of Inverness, where they were then under Arms, to march, they did not know whither, as their Expedition was kept a Secret; and that, after the said Donald, a goodly Person, six Feet high, parted with him about a Pistol-Shot, he saw him all at once contracted to the Bigness of a Boy of five or six Years old, and immediately, with the next Look, resume his former Size. The same Night, MacCrummen was accidentally shot dead on their long March, which concluded the Operation of that Night's Enterprize (Kirk 1815 : Appendix, 91⁻92; see also MS 1820 : 146⁻7).

Mr William Matheson informs me that this account resembles the Lewis version of the MacCrimmon story, in which the man has a dream in which he sees himself lying dead on the field of battle:

> 'Bha fear air a' bhlàr 's fhuil bhlàth a' sileadh.'
> (There was a man on the battlefield, his warm blood flowing.)

In any case the story is reminiscent of any number of accounts involving second sight, and unmistakably belongs to the native Gaelic tradition, whether or not it represents a true occurrence.

The same cannot be said for the account given by F. T. MacLeod in his history of the MacCrimmons which he puts forward as an explanation of the circumstances in which Domhnall Bàn composed his pipe air. He claims to have got this story from the grand-daughter of Domhnall Bàn, and says that she in turn heard it from her grandmother, the piper's widow:

> You will remember, *mo leanabh*, my oft telling of the great love and happiness MacCrimmon and I had together, and of our longing for the day when the old line of Kings should be restored to Scotland. Many a time on his Chanter my husband played to me when walking by the shore a wonderful joyful piobaireachd he had made, but which

he would not put on his pipes till he should go forth with the Clan under MacLeod for the King. Joy was in our hearts when we heard of the landing of Prince Charlie, and we were hourly expecting the summons for the Clan to rise on his behalf. But there came gloom and apprehension—MacLeod was not himself but pondering deeply. We could not believe it when word came that the MacLeods were to fight against the race to which they had always been loyal. Sad was MacCrimmon that day . . . How could he be against his King? How could he be against his Chief? Sad was my heart when from the point I saw the birlinns leave, MacLeod in the stern of the foremost birlinn, looking sad and mournful and MacCrimmon in the prow playing a piobaireachd but not the joyful piobaireachd but a sad sad tune (MacLeod 1933 : 82⁻4).

It seems unlikely, on two grounds, that this is anything more than the fruit of someone's imagination (probably, in the first instance, that of Dr Norman MacLeod, whose contributions will be discussed below). In the first place, the style and sentiment of the account are far more representative of nineteenth-century English romance than of the Gaelic point of view at any period. Second, the historical outlook presented is also that of the nineteenth century, when the Jacobite movement had ceased to be a reality and was reduced to providing raw material for fantasy, like many another attractive lost cause before it. In point of fact, the MacLeods were far from keen to join the Prince's ranks, and took a very cynical view of the whole Jacobite business, having been disappointed in their expectations at the time of the Restoration. They joined the Jacobite cause neither in 1715 nor in 1745.

Several elements suggest that F. T. MacLeod's story may have some connection with Sir Walter Scott's poem, 'Mackrimmon's Lament', which first appeared in 1818. This poem was included, along with the note given above, in the second volume of *Albyn's Anthology*, set to a tune which, in its melodic shape if not in its rhythm, is identifiable as the *ùrlar* or ground of Domhnall Bàn's bagpipe air, 'Cha till mi tuille' (see Fig. 1).

> Macleod's wizzard flag from the grey castle sallies,
> The rowers are seated, unmoored are the galleys;
> Gleam war-axe and broad-sword, clang target and quiver,
> As Mackrimmon sings "Farewell to Dunvegan for ever!"
> "Farewell each tall cliff, on which breakers are foaming;
> Farewell each dark glen, in which red deer are roaming;
> Farewell lonely SKYE; to lake, mountain and river,
> Macleod may return—but, Mackrimmon shall never!"
>
> "Farewell the bright clouds, that on Quillan are sleeping;
> Farewell the bright eyes, in the Dun that are weeping;
> To each minstrel delusion farewell—and for ever—
> Mackrimmon departs—to return to you never!—
> The *Banshee's* wild voice sings the death-dirge before me,
> The pall of the dead for a mantle hangs o'er me;—
> But, my heart shall not flag, and my nerves shall not shiver,
> Tho' devoted I go—to return again never!—

> "Too oft shall the notes of Mackrimmon's bewailing
> Be heard when the GAEL on their exile are sailing;—
> Dear land! to the shores, whence unwilling we sever,
> Return—return—return shall we never!—
> Cha till, cha till, cha till sin tuille!
> Cha till, cha till, cha till sin tuille!
> Cha till, cha till, cha till sin tuille
> Ged thillis Macleod, cha till Macrimmon!"

Several elements in this poem, *e.g.* references to a departure by sea (ll. 2–4) and to weeping women-folk left behind (l. 10) may very well have a basis in fact: MacLeod and his clansmen undoubtedly did travel by sea; MacCrimmon may have left a lamenting wife or sweetheart behind him; and the pipes would be most likely to have played at such an important leave-taking. These points, along with other details about MacLeod traditions (*e.g.* the 'fairy flag', referred to in line 1) and scenery around Dunvegan, are probably the fruits of a visit which Scott paid to Skye and the Highlands in 1814 (Lockhart 1842 : 281–5). Scott's inventiveness is here confined to the art of poetry, the evocation of a mood, rather than to the fabrication of an historical account.

But if Scott's poem was an honest literary production, it was used by some of his admirers as the basis for further productions which were not quite so honest. In 1830 there appeared in Dr Norman MacLeod's publication, *An Teachdaire Gaelach*, the following translation of 'Mackrimmon's Lament' into Gaelic (vol. 2 no. 19 : 165). It was not acknowledged as a translation, but was simply printed, with no comment whatsoever, under the title 'Macruimein, no, Cumhadh an Fhògarraich' ('Macruimein, or, the Exile's Lament'):

> Bratach bhuadhail Mhicleòid o'n tùr mhòr a' lasadh,
> 'S luchd-iomradh nan ràmh greasadh bhàrc thair ghlas-chuan;
> Bogha, sgiath, 's claidheamh mòr, 's tuagh gu leòn, airm nam fleasgach,
> 'S Macruimein cluich cuairt—"Soraidh-bhuan do Dhun-Bheagain".

> Slàn leis gach creig àrd ris 'm bheil gàirich àrd-thonnan—
> Slàn leis gach gleann fàs san dean cràchd-dhaimh an langan—
> Eilein Sciathnaich àidh! slàn le d'bheanntaibh 's guirm fireach
> Tillidh dh'fhaoidte Macleòid ach cha bheo Macruimein.

> Soraidh-bhuan do'n gheal-cheo tha còmhdachadh Cuillein!
> Slàn leis gach blàth shuil, th'air an Dùn, 's iad a' tuireadh!
> Soraidh-bhuain do'n luchd-ciùil 's tric 'chuir sunnd orm a's tioma!
> Sheòl Macruimein thar sàil 's gu bràth cha phill tuilleadh.

> Nuallan allt' na Pìob-mhòir, cluich marbh-rann an fhilidh,
> Agus dearbhbhrat a' bhàis mar fhalluing aig uime;
> Ach cha mheataich mo chrìdhe 's cha ragaidh mo chuislean,
> Ged dh'fhalbham le m' dheoin—'s fios nach till mi chaoidh tuilleadh.

D

'S tric a chuinnear fuaim bhinn caoidh thiom-chridhe Mhicruimein
'Nuair 'bhios Gàidheil a' falbh thair an fhairge 'ga'n iomain;
O chaomh thir ar gràidh! o do thràigh 's rag ar 'n imeachd;
Och cha till—cha till—och cha till sinn tuilleadh!

The greatest likelihood is that Dr Norman MacLeod himself was the translator. It is a
great pity, however, that he did not acknowledge the fact, since the poem as it stands
has caused a good deal of confusion. It was reprinted, in 1881, in the *Scottish Celtic
Review,* alongside Scott's poem; but instead of perceiving the truth of the situation
the editor of that volume equated anonymity with antiquity and decided that Scott's
poem was a translation of the Gaelic version (*SCR* no. 2 : 157–9). Unfortunately the
Scottish Celtic Review seems to have been influential enough to persuade its
readers—among them W. J. Watson, who refers to the poem in the introduction to
Bardachd Gaidhlig (1918 : lii–liii)—that the Gaelic version of Scott's poem was an
authentic product of native tradition.

But 'Mackrimmon's Lament' inspired more than a translation into Gaelic. In 1836,
the following poem appeared in a small volume compiled by John Mackenzie entitled
*Co-chruinneachadh de dh'Oranan Taoghta: A Collection of the Most Popular Gaelic
Songs* (p. 71), with the note that it was taken from 'an old MS':

Dh'iadh ceo nan stuchd ma aodain Chulain
Gun sheinn a bhean-shì a torghan mulaid:
Tha suile gorm, ciun, san Dun ri sileadh;
On thraill thu bh'uain, 's nach pill thu tuile.

Cha phill, cha phill, cha phill M'Cruimen,
Ann cogadh, no sith, cha phill e tuile:
Le airgead, no ni, cha phill M'Cruimen;
Cha phill gu brath, gu là na cruinne.

Tha osag nan gleann, gu fann a g-imeachd;
Gach sruthan 's gach allt, gu mall le bruthach:
Tha ialt' nan speur, feagh gheugan dubhach,
A'g caoi' gun dh'fhalbh, 's nach pill thu tuile.

Tha'n fhairge fadheoidh, lan broin a's mulaid;
Tha 'm bat' fo sheol, ach dhiult i siubhal:
Tha gair nan tonn, le fuaim neo-shubhach,
A radh gun dh'fhalbh, 's nach pill thu tuile.

Cha chluinnear do cheol, san Dun ma fheasgar,
No talla-mhac na mùr, le muirn ga fhreagairt:
Gach fleasgach, a's oigh, gun cheol, gun bheadradh,
On thriall thu bh'uain, 's nach pill thu tuile.

Translation

The mist of the cliffs has enshrouded the Coolins
And the Banshee has crooned her cry of sadness:
Kindly blue eyes in the castle are weeping;
Since you journeyed from us, and shall never return.

　　No more, no more shall MacCrimmon return,
　　In war nor in peace he'll return no more:
　　Neither with wealth nor property
　　Shall MacCrimmon return until the Last Day.

The breeze of the glen is gently moving;
Each brook and burn is slowly flowing:
The birds of the sky are mournful midst branches
Lamenting that you left, and shall never return.

The sea is at last full of sorrow and sadness;
The boat under sail, but will not set out;
The roar of the waves, with joyless sound,
Is saying you've gone to return no more.

Your music shall not be heard in the castle at evening,
Nor shall the echo of the ramparts joyfully answer it:
Every youth and maiden, without music or sport,
Since you journeyed from us, nevermore to return.

The author of this poem is clearly in debt to Scott for a good many of his images—not to mention the device of the chorus which is taken on wholesale from the other poem. Scott's images involving galleys, the mist-enshrouded Cuillin, the wail of the banshee, the weeping one left behind in the castle—all appear here in much the same function; and the principal unifying device, the reiteration of 'cha till e tuilleadh', is the same in all three poems *i.e.* Scott, the translation, and this last, which might most accurately be described as an imitation of Scott's poem.

It is possible that John Mackenzie himself wrote this poem; he was, in fact, a poet as well as an anthologist. But on the whole it seems more reasonable to guess that Dr Norman MacLeod is the author of this as well as of the translation. The similarity of the two Gaelic poems, in point of language and imagery, suggests this. And to lend support to this supposition we have the fact that this poem appeared in print again, four years after the publication of *Popular Gaelic Songs,* in Dr MacLeod's own publication *Cuairtear nan Gleann.* In this volume, along with the poem, was included the following account of its composition—an account which, needless to say, is designed to convince the reader of the antiquity of what is put before him. Referring initially to Domhnall Bàn and the bagpipe lament, Dr MacLeod writes:

Se Dònull Bàn Mac-Cruimein a chuir r'a chéile 'm port iomraiteach, tiamhaidh sin ris an canar 'Cha till Mac-Cruimein'.
　　'Nuair a chaidh Mac Leòid Dhùn-bheagain a mach bliadhna Theàrlaich leis an arm

dhearg, bha a' chuid bu lìonmhoire de'n chinneadh 'nan cridheachan le Teàrlach, agus nam b'urrainn iad, 's esan a leanadh iad. B'ann san rùn so 'bha Mac-Cruimein. Mun d'fhag iad an Dùn thuairt Mac Cruimein gu'n robh fhios aige nach tilleadh e tuille, agus an latha thug na Leòdaich orra 'mach o Dhùn bheagain, agus mnàthan na tire 'gul is a' caoidh, 's ann an sin a chluich e am port tiamhaidh brònach sin, 'Cha till mi tuille', agus b'fhior mar thubhairt e; anns a' cheud bhlàr anns a robh e, thuit e agus cha do mharbhadh duine ach e fèin. Bha leannan aig Dònull Bàn san Dùn. 'Nuair a chual' i 'm port, chuir i na briathran a leanas r'a chèile (*i.e.* 'Dh'iadh ceò nan stùc') MacLeod 1840 : 1.134⁻7).

Translation

Domhnall Bàn MacCrimmon it was who composed that famous and affecting tune called 'Cha till Mac-Cruimein'.

When MacLeod of Dunvegan went out in Charlie's Year with the red-coats, the greater part of his clansmen sympathised in their hearts with Charles, and if they had been able, it is him they would have followed. MacCrimmon was one of these. Before they left the Castle, MacCrimmon said that he knew he would never return; and the day that the MacLeods took their departure from Dunvegan, whilst the women of the place were weeping and wailing, he played that sad, melancholy tune, 'Cha till mi tuille', and it was true what he said; in his first battle, he fell, and no one was killed but himself. Domhnall Bàn had a sweetheart in the Castle. When she heard the tune, she composed the following words (*i.e.* 'Dh'iadh ceo nan stuchd').

In this story we probably have the original of F. T. MacLeod's romantic account given above, for here are the same historical details and the same romantic sentiments expressed. F. T. MacLeod has elaborated upon these themes, re-cast them in the form of a first-person narrative and attributed them, as he thinks, to an unimpeachable source—the grand-daughter of the piper's widow. It would be amusing to know if he realised that Dr Norman MacLeod had played precisely the same trick one hundred years before him; for Dr MacLeod, too, chose cleverly when he set out to find a suitable 'author' for his own composition. He knew, of course, many genuine examples in Gaelic of laments composed by the female relations of departed heroes. The fact that the style of his own poem in no way resembles that of traditional Gaelic *caoineadh* seems not to have disturbed Dr MacLeod.

One curious feature of these poems is the presence of the chorus, with the reiterated words 'Cha till, cha till, cha till sinn tuilleadh' (in the last example 'cha till Mac Cruimein'). They are most unexpected, of course, in Scott's poem, for Scott's knowledge of Gaelic was scanty, and it is improbable that he should have composed even such a small amount of Gaelic as this chorus contains. The natural explanation—the one that he himself gives, in fact—is that it represents traditional material. In his note, Scott mentions Domhnall Bàn's *pìobaireachd*, 'Cha till mi tuilleadh' as being often played at the departure of emigrant ships. The words 'cha till sinn tuilleadh' (referring to a group) are probably an adaptation of the earlier 'cha till mi tuilleadh' (referring to piper alone) to suit this function of the music.

If Scott's Gaelic chorus is indeed traditional, one might expect to find remnants of

the traditional words amongst the people themselves. This proves to be easily accomplished.

The earliest record of these traditional words which we have from a written source (excluding Scott) is the verse which Angus Mackay gives as the text to his version of Domhnall Bàn's air in his *Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd* (1838 : 17); the translation given below appears in the 'Historical and Traditional Notes' to that volume (p. 4), and is presumably Mackay's own.

> Cha till cha till cha till mi tuille;
> Cha till cha till cha till mi tuille;
> Ged Phillias MacLeoid cha bheo MacCruimein,
> s 'mo thruaighe mo thruaighe mo thruaighe mo chruinneag;
> bidh Suil bidh Suil bidh Suil a' sille,
> bidh Suil bidh Suil bidh Suil a sille:
> S 'mo chul ris an dun s' gan duil ri tille,
> A'n cogadh, na n' Sith, cha till MacCruimein.

Translation

> Return, return, return shall I never;
> Return, return, return shall I never;
> Though MacLeod should return, not alive shall MacCrummen.
> Poor dear, poor dear, poor dear, my sweetheart,
> Her eye, her eye, her eye, 'ill be weeping,
> Her eye, her eye, her eye, 'ill be weeping!
> And my back on the Dun, without hope of returning;
> In war nor in peace, ne'er return will MacCrummen.

It comes as no surprise that the words should be preserved in a collection of pipe-music, for such poetry was apparently often used by the pipers as an aid to memory in the absence of written musical notation (Cooke 1972 : 53). There is every likelihood, then, that this verse is only slightly younger than the *piobaireachd* itself, and that it was composed by a fellow piper who knew what happened to Domhnall Bàn.

We have also several variants of this text which have been obtained from native informants in the last few years. These variants are all in the form of pibroch-songs, *i.e.* songs based upon a bagpipe tune, in this case 'Cha till mi tuille'. (The musical aspects of these variants will be discussed below.) One of these pibroch-songs appears on a recording issued by the School of Scottish Studies, *Music from the Western Isles*. It was recorded in the South Uist from Mrs Archie MacDonald:

> Cha till, cha till, cha till MacCruimean,
> An cogadh na sìth, cha till e tuilleadh;
> Cha till, cha till, cha till MacCruimean,
> 'S gad thilleadh a phìob, cha till MacCruimean.
>
> Cha till, cha till, cha till MacCruimean,
> 'S gad thilleadh MacLeòid, cha bheò MacCruimean;

Cha till, cha till, cha till e tuilleadh,
Cha till e gu bràth go là na cruinneadh.

Mo chùl ri d'chùl gun dùil ri tilleadh,
Mo bheul ri d'bheul 's na deòir a' sileadh;
Mo chùl ri d'chùl gun dùil ri tilleadh,
Mo bheul ri d'bheul 's na deòir a' sileadh.

Translation

MacCrimmon will never come back, never come back, never come back,
In war or in peace, he will never come back again.
MacCrimmon will never come back, never come back, never come back,
Although his pipes may come back, MacCrimmon will not.

MacCrimmon will never come back, never come back, never come back,
MacLeod may come back; MacCrimmon is no more.
He will never come back, never, never come back again.
He will never more come back until Doomsday.

My back to your back and no hope of return
My face to your face and tears flowing
My back to your back and no hope of return
My face to your face and tears flowing.

<div align="right">(TNGM 1971)</div>

A second variant of this song was very kindly supplied to me by Mr William
Matheson, who learned it from his mother, a native of Lewis:

Chorus: Cha till, cha till, cha till Mac Cruimein (× 3)
             Mac Cruimein 's phìob, cha till e tuilleadh.

'S ann ann am Port-rìgh a dh'fhàg mì mo chruinneag (× 3)
Mo thriùir nighean donn 's mo chòigear ghillean.

Dol sìos, dol sìos, dol sìos dh'an iomairt (× 3)
Bha fear air a' bhlàr 's fhuil bhlàth a' sileadh.

Cha till, cha till, cha till Mac Cruimein (× 3)
Nuair thilleas Mac Leòid cha bheò MacCruimein.

Translation

Chorus: MacCrimmon shall not, shall not return;
             MacCrimmon and his pipe shall return no more.

'Tis in Portree I've left my fine girl,
My three brown daughters and my five lads.

Going down, going down, going down whilst playing;
There was a man on the battlefield, his warm blood flowing.

MacCrimmon shall not, shall not return;
When MacLeod returns, not alive shall MacCrimmon.

The most important thematic elements of these three versions, the points on which they all agree, may be summarized as follows:

1   The piper, MacCrimmon, is leaving home never to return. His pipes may return, and his Chieftain, MacLeod, but MacCrimmon himself shall never return.
2   He is leaving behind him in Dunvegan/Portree a woman and, in the third song, a large family; this leave-taking grieves him to the point of tears.

Another set of themes, in addition to these, makes its appearance in the following variant of 'Cha till Mac Cruimein' which was given me by Miss Morag MacLeod of the School of Scottish Studies. She learned it as a child in Harris:

> Nach truagh leat mì gun trì làmhan (× 3)
> Dà làimh 's a' phìob is tè 's a' chlaidheamh.
>
> Mo ghaol, mo bhean òg 's mo chòigear chloinne (× 3)
> Mo thòir, geall òir 's na deòir a' sileadh.
>
> *Chorus:*   Cha till, cha till, cha till Mac Cruimein (× 3)
> Cha till e gu bràth go là na cruinneadh.
>
> Meall òir, meall òir, meall òir mo ghille (× 3)
> 'S ma bhitheas tu beo 's tu prois do chinnidh.
>
> Mo chùl, mo chùl, mo chùl ri m' chruinneig (× 3)
> Mo chùl rì do chùl 's gun dùil rì tilleadh.
>
> *Chorus:*   Cha till, cha till, cha till Mac Cruimein (× 3)
> Ged thilleas Mac Leòid cha bheò Mac Cruimein.

Translation

> Don't you pity me, that I have not three hands:
> Two hands for the pipe and one for the sword.
>
> My love, my young wife and my five children;
> My quest, a promise of gold, and tears flowing.
>
> *Chorus:*   MacCrimmon shall not, shall not return;
> He shall never return until the Last Day.
>
> Gold entices, entices my young man;
> And if you are alive you are the pride of your kinsmen.
>
> My back, my back, my back to my fine girl;
> My back to your back without hope of returning.
>
> *Chorus:*   MacCrimmon shall not, shall not return;
> Though MacLeod returns, not alive shall MacCrimmon.

Verses 1 and 3 and the second line of verse 2 belong to a different tradition altogether, that of 'Uamh an Oir'. According to Daniel Melia, the 'Uamh an Oir' legends may be traced to stories connected with the Lughnasa myths in Ireland. Such stories 'tell of a harper, piper or fiddler who enters a cave, not a fairy mound, in search of treasure and is assumed to be dead when those outside can no longer hear his music—and, indeed, he never returns' (Melia 1967 : 365). In more recent times this story has come to be associated with particular localities: there are specific caves in

Skye, Mull, and Inverness which are pointed out as the scene of the adventure. In many versions of the story the unfortunate piper (often a MacCrimmon) enters a cave and encounters magical beasts, fairy dogs (*galla uaine*, literally 'green bitches') which can only be kept at bay as long as he continues to play his instrument. He knows that he must eventually succumb, and has no hope of seeing the outer world again. Thus he complains,

> Nach truagh leat mi gun trì làmhan
> Dà làimh 's a' phìob 's làmh 's a' chlaidheamh.

Several versions of 'Uamh an Oir' have been published by Frances Tolmie (1911 : 157–9) and K. N. MacDonald (1901 : 47–8). One variant which does not appear in either of these collections is the following long version which was given me by William Matheson. He learned it from a piper in Grogarry, South Uist:

> Nach truagh mi, rìgh, gun trì làmhan,
> Dà làimh 's a' phìob, dà làimh 's a' phìob,
> Nach truagh mi, rìgh, gun trì làmhan,
> Dà làimh 's a' phìob s' làmh 's a' chlaidheamh.

Chorus:
> Eadarainn a' chruit, a' chruit, a' chruit,
> Eadarainn a' chruit, mo chuideachd ar m'fhàgail,
> Eadarainn a luaidh, a luaidh, a luaidh,
> Eadarainn a luaidh 's i ghall' uaine a shàraich mi.

> Mo thaobh fodham, m'fheoil air breothadh,
> Daol am shùil, daol am shùil,
> Dà bhior iaruinn 'gan sìor shiaradh
> Ann am ghlùin, ann am ghlùin.

> Bidh na minn bheaga 'nan gobhair chreagach
> Man tig mise, man till mis' a Uamh an Oir, Uamh an Oir,
> 'S na lothan cliathta 'nan eich dhiallta
> Man tig mise, man till mis' a Uamh an Oir, Uamh an Oir.

> Bidh na laoigh bheaga 'nan crodh eadraidh
> Man tig mise, man till mis' a Uamh an Oir, Uamh an Oir,
> 'S na mic uchda 'nam fir fheachda
> Man tig mise, man till mis' a Uamh an Oir, Uamh an Oir.

> 'S iomadh maighdeann òg fo ciadbharr
> Théid a null, théid a null,
> Man tig mise, man till mis'
> A Uamh an Oir, Uamh an Oir.

Translation

> Is it not a pity, oh king, that I have not three hands:
> Two hands for the pipe and one for the sword.

Chorus:
> The harp, the harp, the harp between us; my
> companions leaving me; between us, my love,
> it was a green bitch that overcame me.

> My side beneath me, my flesh decaying, a worm in my
> eye; two iron pins being constantly thrust into my knee.
>
> The small kids will be goats of the crags, before I
> return from the Cave of Gold; and creel-bearing colts will be saddled
> steeds before I return from the Cave of Gold.
>
> The small calves will be milch-cows, before I return
> from the Cave of Gold; and suckling babes will
> be men bearing arms, before I return from the Cave of Gold.
>
> Many a young maiden bearing her first head-dress
> will go over before I return from the Cave of Gold.[1]

Obviously there are several points of resemblance between 'Uamh an Oir' and the MacCrimmon story, *e.g.* (i) the fact that the principal character is a piper and a MacCrimmon; and (ii) the fact that he is leaving never to return, and that he dies in the end. It is perhaps significant, also, that the supernatural plays a part in both stories: in 'Uamh an Oir' the piper meets death in an encounter with magical creatures; in 'Cha till Mac Cruimein' the hero has an experience of the second sight which forecasts his own death.

But in spite of these similarities the confusion of the two sets of materials is not as widespread as it might be. Of the existing variants of 'Cha till Mac Cruimein' a minority are contaminated with material from 'Uamh an Oir'; and there seems to be no tendency—at least in the examples I have met with—for the contamination to spread in the opposite direction, *i.e.* for materials from MacCrimmon to be found in versions of 'Uamh an Oir'. From this it seems reasonable to assume that the confusion of the two strains is of comparatively recent origin.

It remains briefly to discuss the musical aspects of the problem, *i.e.* the various versions of MacCrimmon's *piobaireachd* 'Cha till mi tuille', and the relations of these versions to the pibroch-songs of oral tradition, and to the nineteenth-century art-songs associated with MacCrimmon's name.

The pipe-tune has long been a favourite, judging from the number of manuscript and published collections in which it appears. Sir Walter Scott asserted, in his note in *Albyn's Anthology*, that the tune was commonly heard at the leave-takings of departing emigrants—a suggestion which Dr Norman MacLeod seeks to confirm in the title which he gives to the translation of Scott in *An Teachdaire Gaelach*, 'MacCruimein, no, Cumhadh an Fhògarraich'—'The Exile's Lament'. If the tune was indeed put to this use, it would have been familiar to many during the period of the Highland Clearances.

The collections of pipe-music in which the tune appears are particularly valuable, not only for the light they shed upon the varying interpretations of the composition as *piobaireachd* (and, incidentally, upon the problems of notation which this form of music presents), but also upon the development of the tune outside of piping tradition.

Fig. 1

The earliest source for Domhnall Bàn's *piobaireachd* is the Reverend Patrick MacDonald's work of 1784, *A Collection of Highland Vocal Airs*. The tune appears there under the title 'Cha till mi tuille' and is designated 'a bagpipe lament' (see Fig. 1). In the preface to the collection MacDonald notes that 'Cha till mi tuille' was one of the four *piobaireachd* which he transcribed from the playing of 'an eminent performer' of Lochaber. Since he was not a piper himself, MacDonald made no attempt to transcribe grace notes or other piping embellishments; he has, however, left us an admirable record of the essential melody of the ground and of the six variations which follow it.[2]

'Cha till mi tuille' is also preserved in Colin Campbell's manuscript, the Nether Lorn Canntaireachd, which dates from about 1800 (Bk. I : 145). In Figure 1 I have attempted to transcribe Campbell's *canntaireachd* notation of the tune into modern pitch notation, using as guides the rules set out by the Piobaireachd Society and the version of the *canntaireachd* printed in *Logan's Complete Tutor for the Highland Bagpipe* (Ross 1962 : 42–3). *Logan's* version corresponds to the ground as Angus Mackay gives it (see below), and is reproduced in Figure 1 in conjunction with Mackay's tune.

The main differences between Nether Lorn and the *canntaireachd* given in *Logan's Tutor* are (i) the first figure, given as 'edre' in Logan and as 'dre' in Nether Lorn, and (ii) the syllable 'hiao' in Nether Lorn as opposed to 'hio' in Logan. Both 'dre' and 'edre' are used in Nether Lorn to indicate the 'throw' on *e* (the same five-note figure as in the other sources); but in other contexts 'dre' is reserved for phrases where the preceding melody note is lower than *e*, and 'edre' when it is higher. The appearance of 'a' in 'hiao' in Nether Lorn is more difficult to explain since 'a' usually indicates the note *d* and it is difficult to see how this note could occur in the context.

The most important feature of the tune, however, is the way in which it begins, for in this it differs materially from Patrick Macdonald's version. In the first place, it preserves no anacrusis, the initial *b* in MacDonald's tune. Why this initial note should have been omitted is a mystery: Peter Cook has suggested to me that the anacrusis (which has disappeared from a number of other *piobaireachd* in similar fashion) may have become lost in the blowing-up process which is a necessary prelude to any performance on the bagpipes; alternatively, it may have somehow been absorbed into the initial 'throw' on *e* with which the *piobaireachd* begins. Other versions of the tune discussed below are similarly bereft of it. But a more crucial difference between this air and MacDonald's lies within the first bar itself, as the most cursory comparison of the two will show. That this melodic difference was taken by pipers to be very important indeed is borne out by other sources.[3]

The tune appeared in print for the second time in 1818, with the publication of the second volume of *Albyn's Anthology*. On this occasion someone took liberties with the rhythm of the tune in order to accommodate the words of Sir Walter Scott's poem. This version is included in Figure 1 because of its early date and because its

melodic outline confirms that of MacDonald's version; it makes no attempt to give the tune in piping terms.

The first person to record the *piobaireachd* in staff notation for the benefit of pipers was Peter Reid, whose manuscript of about 1826 contains two versions of the ground (pp. 48–9). The first of these, which he designates 'A Lament play'd at Funerals', consists of an air essentially similar to MacDonald's, followed by a single variation and its 'doubling'. The second version of the ground, which is followed by no variations, conforms melodically to the Nether Lorn version—although this time the anacrusis is preserved.

By far the most influential source for 'Cha till mi tuille' has been Angus Mackay's *Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd* (1838 : 17–20). Like Reid, Mackay preserves both tunes: as *ùrlar* of the *piobaireachd* he gives the tune which we first encountered in Colin Campbell's manuscript, and as the doubling of the second variation he gives Patrick MacDonald's tune. This is, however, a reversal of Reid's arrangement, in which MacDonald's tune was the one from which the variations flowed, and the other air was seemingly included as a variant of the ground.

In our own century 'Cha till mi tuille' has made at least six further appearances in collections of pipe-music, and the source for all but one of these appears to be Mackay's collection. The earliest occurrence is in Major General Thomson's *Ceol Mor* (1900 : 162), where the Nether Lorn tune appears as the ground, and the other tune as the fourth variation. John Grant's manuscript collection 'The Music of the Mac-Crimmons' in Harvard University Library (1947 : 143–8) is a reproduction, note-for-note and without acknowledgment, of Mackay's *piobaireachd*. Also based substantially on Mackay are the versions reproduced in Sir Archibald Campbell's *Kilberry Book of Ceol Mor* (1953 : 103), in Robertson and Ramsay's *Master Method for the Highland Bagpipe* (1953 : 83), and in *Logan's Tutor*. The only version not conforming to this pattern is that given by Malcolm MacInnes, whose *ceol beag* collection *120 Bagpipe Tunes* (1939 : 58) preserves a variant of Patrick MacDonald's tune, rather than the one which has seemingly come to be regarded—by pipers, at any rate—as the correct ground for 'Cha till mi tuille'.

What is the possible significance of the fact that there are two distinct versions of this *piobaireachd* air? Perhaps some clue is offered (i) by the fact that one of them was included in two volumes purporting to contain *vocal* airs, and (ii) by the circumstances of the same version being called 'a bagpipe lament' or 'a lament play'd at funerals'. In including 'Cha till mi tuille' in his collection, Patrick MacDonald may well have been silently acknowledging that the tune was one familiar not only to pipers, but to substantial numbers of non-pipers as well; the appearance of the same tune in *Albyn's Anthology* confirms its existence as a song (though not with the text given!); and as we shall shortly see this same tune is the one preserved in the pibroch-songs. In other words, the tune was probably never the sole property of the piping fraternity, whatever its ultimate origin as a *piobaireachd* may have been. And if it was

Fig. 2.

frequently heard not only at genuine funerals but also at scenes of emigration, then its popular character must have been marked indeed.

Why then should another tune, differing from this one only slightly, have come to take precedence over it, both in Colin Campbell's manuscript and in Mackay's collection? This is difficult to say, in the light of such scanty evidence as we possess. Perhaps pipers wished for a ground which would be more uniquely their own; or perhaps 'Cha till mi tuille' was borrowed for other purposes (witness 'MacIver's March') leaving a vacancy. It is a curious problem, and one with which someone who is a piper himself might be better equipped to deal.

As I suggested above, the gradual dominance of the Nether Lorn tune in piping collections has not lost the other air to us altogether, for the latter is found as the melody to nearly all the pibroch-songs whose texts were earlier discussed. Futher confirmation of the vocal character of this tune is supplied by the version which appears in Finlay Dun's *Orain na h-Albain* ((1848) : 20⁻17). With the exception of *Albyn's Anthology*, this collection contains the earliest printed version of a vocal setting of this tune; and although the compiler has seen fit to alter the tune in some aspects and to substitute the text of 'Dh'iadh ceo nan stuchd' for the traditional words, the tune is recognisably the same as that given by Patrick MacDonald sixty-five years earlier.

The continuity of the vocal tradition of this tune I have tried to demonstrate in Figure 2. For purposes of comparison I have included Patrick MacDonald's tune (which is the same as the tune in *Albyn's Anthology* without the rhythmical complications), and the tune as it appeared in *Orain na h-Albain*, as well as the three pibroch-songs from the oral tradition. In transcribing these last I have made no attempt to give more than an outline of the melodies; the rhythmical arrangement in none of them is as regular as it is here represented, and the tunes have been transposed so as to be easy on the eye.

Of the three traditional variants, the version given by Mrs Archie MacDonald is closest to the tune as printed in Patrick MacDonald's collection. Mrs MacDonald's version is also interesting in that it preserves the character of bagpipe music in one or two details apart from the melodic contour, as for example in the descending third at the end of the line, which is more major than minor but which is not really in the tempered scale at all. Mr Matheson's variant resembles Mrs MacDonald's in essentials; and while Morag MacLeod's version is quite different from the first two it still retains a discernible relationship with Patrick MacDonald's air. From this we may perhaps be justified in the conclusion that the tune given by Patrick MacDonald, Alexander Campbell and Peter Reid represents a popular version of the bagpipe air, a version which was probably more often sung than played, and which may often have been heard at scenes of emigration and at funerals. It is significant, surely, that this is the version which has come down to us in the oral tradition.

In addition to the piping versions and to the pibroch-songs, 'MacCrimmon's Lament' has for some time enjoyed wide popularity as art-music. As such it appears in

a number of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century song-books. Early productions of this type include *Albyn's Anthology* and *Orain na h-Albain;* later examples are MacBean's *Songs and Hymns of the Scottish Highlands* (1888), and *Coisir a' Mhoid* 1910. Such productions were, of course, principally designed to beguile the winter evenings in Edinburgh drawing-rooms, and had no connection whatever with developments in the living Gaelic tradition.

Fig. 3. Arrangement of 'MacCrimmon's Lament' in Colin Brown's *The Thistle.*

These collections did, however, exert certain influences upon one another. The most influential version of 'MacCrimmon's Lament' as drawing-room music is undoubtedly the arrangement which first appeared in the 1870s in Colin Brown's publication, *The Thistle* (see edition of 1883 : 73). This song is the source for the versions printed in MacBean's collection, and in *Coisir a' Mhoid,* and in others too numerous to mention. The air bears a superficial resemblance to the tune published by Patrick MacDonald; but here the bogus element creeps in again, for it is plain that someone, probably Colin Brown himself, has seen fit to make some 'improvements' in the music (Fig. 3).

It must be acknowledged that the high romanticism of Dr Norman MacLeod's poem and the rather over-ripe qualities of the musical arrangement are perfectly suited to

one another. The pity is that the tune, like the poem, has been represented as authentic and traditional, rather than left alone to stand or fall on its own merits. At its second appearance in print, in the *Scottish Celtic Review,* the editor of that volume acknowledges *The Thistle* as his source for the tune and goes on to say, 'This air, one of the finest of our Highland melodies, is more accurate and natural as now noted than in the common sets' (*SCR* 1881 : 159). It would be illuminating to know what standard he had in mind when he praised the 'accuracy' of the tune.

It is understandable, in a way, why he should have found the music more 'natural' in Brown's arrangement. To ears accustomed to the melodic and harmonic variety of European art-music, the native traditional music may indeed have sounded unnatural. An unvarying feature of pibroch-songs is their repetitiveness; all the traditional examples in Figure 2 display an element of repetitiveness in both words and music. It is this quality which the nineteenth century seemingly found unnatural, for it is this element which the poetical and musical forgers of that age eliminated from their own productions.

Ironically, it is Colin Brown's air, set to an English translation of part of Dr Norman MacLeod's poem, which is fondly believed by many in the modern folk-song movement to be traditional. The song has been commercially recorded by a number of people, among them the unimpeachably traditional singer Jeannie Robertson (Topic Record 12T96). This shows that Brown's arrangement has been popular long enough to acquire a certain oral tradition of its own; it is a pleasant song, and quite worthy to be sung by anyone who fancies it. But the claim should not be made, for either the tune or the text, that it demonstrates any of the qualities of authentic traditional Scottish music or poetry, for it does not do so.

'MacCrimmon's Lament' is not the only example of the confusion of the traditional with the bogus which the nineteenth century produced. But it is an excellent sample of its kind, for it shows how the antiquarian tastes of that century, combined with the romantic impulse, left their mark upon all aspects of the creative arts, and produced an effect which is still being felt today.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NOTES

1 The translation of this text is problematical, particularly that of the chorus. Mr Matheson himself offered one solution: 'The question is whether *eadarainn* is meant to have any semantic content, or whether it is to be regarded as a meaningless vocable. I don't think that singers in recent times have attached any meaning to *eadarainn a' chruit*, but it does not necessarily follow that there was no meaning originally. It might be possible to regard the first verse as a later addition, and suppose that the original story was about a *harper* going into a cave. That is to say, the harp was between him and his attackers, and the magic of its music kept them at bay.' There are several stories of this type, as Daniel Melia has pointed out (1967 : 365 ff.).
2 MacDonald's version of 'Cha till mi tuille' is discussed and translated into modern piping notation by Roderick Cannon in the *Piping Times*, 1978 : 18–21.
3 A recent contribution to the *Piping Times* (Cannon 1977 : 20–21) is a transcription from the Nether Lorn manuscript of 'MacIver's March', which is found to have the same tune as 'Cha till mi tuille' as preserved in Patrick MacDonald's collection. The writer, Roderick Cannon, points out that 'the MacIvers are a sept of the Clan Campbell, so the name "MacIver's March" may have been only a local name, current in the district of Argyll where Colin Campbell lived.' If 'Cha till mi tuille' had indeed become associated with a MacIver chieftain in that area it might explain why Campbell did not include it under the name 'Cha till mi tuille', which in other districts it continued to bear.

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Notes and Comments

The Fiddle in Shetland Society

PETER COOKE

This report of research-in-progress was read to the Royal Musical Association in London on 10 March 1976. It first looks briefly at the question of which instrument was forerunner to the fiddle in Shetland, and then surveys what has already been published on the role of the fiddle in Shetland society supplementing it with data collected in field research during 1970-4. Four questions concerning style are discussed, bearing in mind the physical demands of the instrument and that the musical repertory evolved as dance music: (i) irregular phrasing in older indigenous reels; (ii) unequal time-values in the playing of older fiddlers; (iii) influence of convenient finger patterns on melodic structures; and (iv) intonation, particularly the use of 'neutral' tones.

Lack of data is usually a severe problem for those who research into historical aspects of oral traditions. This is particularly true of so-called 'folk' musical traditions as opposed to 'classical' traditions like those of India or the Arab world, where there is in fact a surprisingly large body of theory and observations on performance practice available for study. There is very little reliable information on the early history of the fiddle (or violin—the terms are used synonymously here) in Shetland. Tradition still carries information on famous fiddler characters from about 1740 onwards, so one can assume that the fiddle was introduced some time during or before the early eighteenth century. Yet George Low, who visited Shetland in 1774, made no mention of instruments when discussing dancing and other forms of social activity including ballad singing. In the island of Foula at least, it seems that only singing accompanied dancing: Low described the music as a Norn *visick* (1879 : 163). By 1809, however, Edmondstone commented that 'among the peasantry almost one in ten can play on the violin', adding that before violins were introduced a two-string instrument called the *gue* was used (1809 : 2.59). It has been generally assumed that this was a type of bowed lyre. Such was the view of Otto Anderson (1956), though apart from Edmondstone's shadowy reference no further information on, or remnant of such an instrument has ever come to light. However, the recent researches of E. Y. Arima and M. Einarsson among Hudson's Bay Eskimo, where a stringed instrument known as the *tautiruut* or 'Eskimo violin' was played up until very recently, led them

to conclude that this bowed zither, somewhat similar to the Icelandic *fiðla*, probably came not from Iceland itself but from Britain's northern isles, Orkney and Shetland, from where so many sailors were recruited for the ships of the Hudson's Bay Trading Company. This lends weight to J. R. Tudor's report that the *gue* 'was said to be identical with the Icelandic *fiðla*, (Tudor 1883 : 176). Edmonston's *Glossary of the Shetland and Orkney Dialect* (1866) includes the term *gue*—'a musical instrument formerly used in Shetland', and *posh*—'a rough kind of violin made in Shetland'. The term *posh* is occasionally used by such late nineteenth-century writers as J. H. Burgess (1886 : 113). Could the *posh* have resembled the French *pochette*, known in Britain as the *kit*? If so, it is unlikely to have come to Shetland with dancing masters: J. F. and T. M. Flett record that 'country districts of Shetland, unlike those of Orkney, do not seem to have been visited by dancing-masters' (J. F. and T. M. Flett, 1964 : 64) and apparently Shetland and Orkney lairds usually sent their daughters to Leith and Edinburgh to be 'put to the Writing, Dancing, and I think the Singing Schools' (Steuart 1913 : 143 and Goudie 1889 : xxxviii). The question remains then—was the Shetlandic predecessor of the violin a type of rebec or, like the *fiðla*, a bowed zither?

Whatever the truth may have been, there seems to have been a lively string-playing tradition which adopted the violin. The variety of nineteenth-century references commenting on the popularity of the fiddle suggest that by the first decade it was playing an important part in a number of rituals. One instance was the custom of playing the tune *Da Day Dawn* on the morning of New Year's day; another was the frequent performance of a sword dance at village weddings (Catton 1838 : 111), though the only detailed information we have on this custom is of the sword dance of the island of Papa Stour (Johnston 1912 : 175). Throughout Shetland dancing seems to have been, and often still is, the most important feature of the wedding ritual, and a wedding celebration spanned three days and nights, with dancing throughout each night until 5 or 6 *a.m.*—except the third, which was usually Saturday night, when dancing had to end before the Sabbath began. Even the religious revival which reached Shetland about 1840 had little effect on the custom of dancing at weddings. Despite what J. T. Reid wrote, 'There is an opinion in many country parishes, particularly among the old people, that every kind of music not sacred is sinful' (1869 : 57), it seems there was biblical justification for the wedding dance, and many people who would not attend other dances would happily take part in the wedding festivities. In any case, not all ministers were opposed to the fiddle and its music. One in South Yell—the Reverend Watson—was an enthusiastic violin-maker, quietly turning them out while colleagues elsewhere were preaching against the fiddle as 'the devil's instrument'.

J. F. and T. M. Flett documented in some detail a composite view of the fiddler's role in wedding rituals at the beginning of the present century, allowing for a great deal of variety from one island community to another (1964 : 65-74). Dancing to the fiddle sealed the contract made in the bride's home some time before the actual

wedding. The groom visited a selected fiddler to ask him to be principal fiddler at the wedding, and invited him to his own 'stag' party the night before. The fiddler often led the procession to and from the church, played a tune on arrival at the bride's home and, of course played for dancing each night, usually from 9 onwards. In places where the bride was ceremonially put to bed the fiddler was also there to play. When masked guisers appeared at the wedding (these are usually uninvited masked persons from another community) they often brought their own fiddler with them, but in any case they danced for a while at the wedding. The principal fiddler was usually paid for his services—in more recent times by the groom personally.

The other time for a great deal of dancing was in the period known as 'the Helly days of Yule'—the period around the winter solstice. This is a longer period than is the custom on the British mainland, for in Shetland all activity was geared to the seasons, and winter was a time when there was virtually nothing to do: one could rarely fish, and the croft was not ready for spring cultivation. Laurence Williamson of Yell summed it up thus (in notes compiled *c.* 1900):

> Shetlanders are much addicted to fiddling. Formerly there were large numbers of fiddlers in every parish. Weddings were usually in the winter and lasted three days and usually there were several fiddlers to play. The chief amusement was music and dancing and fiddlers followed them to church, striking up tunes as they went along. Rants were balls open to every comer. They were held in winter and very frequent, and on almost every one of the 24 Hely nights of Yule, and old and young wended to the spot for miles and miles around. A whole family would even shut up the house and go miles away where their relations stayed. And in the long winter evenings the fiddler would play to the children around the fire. And each Greenland ship used to carry a fiddler, sometimes a Southerner, sometimes a Shetlander, to play to the men while at work to enliven them. And sometimes the fiddlers from several ships would meet and try their skill. And I think I have heard of a Shetland fiddler competing with the Dutch from a buss or ship. No wonder that tunes are so abundant. Several of them are fairy tunes, and are likely very old; many are of Norse origin and many Scotch; and many of them must have been learned from the sources indicated above. There is even a Yaki, i.e. Eskimo tune. (Johnson; 1971 : 125).

Naturally the repertory of the fiddle is almost entirely dance music and the mark of a good fiddler has been traditionally an ability to play strongly and rhythmically at the right tempo for dancing. The listening repertory has always been, until very recently, small and relatively unimportant. It is easy in our own society to undervalue dance. Its meaning and value are little studied, and are virtually ignored at university level. It plays little or no part in the important rituals of modern industrial society unless one regards solemn armistice parades, or the rhythmic walk of coffin bearers as types of dancing—a legitimate view perhaps. Yet today in many parts of Shetland dance still fulfils important functions. It validates a wedding and is a means of bringing a whole community together and strengthening social bonds. In some of the smaller communities there is still a strict protocol observed in respect of who dances with whom, and when. In Cullivoe in North Yell, for instance, all the inhabitants of

the north end of the island without exception are invited to wedding dances—even those who are not usually on good terms with bride or groom's family. Friends from other islands, or from South Yell and Mid Yell are invited to the dance on the second night. Men, women, children and infants come to the first night dance and if any others are ill and confined to their homes there is a proper time of the evening when the bridal couple go off and visit them. Inviting such large numbers could only happen after community halls were built—between the two world wars. Even so, before this time, if it were possible, there would be more than one dancing house prepared for the wedding night, so that as many as possible could be invited.

Though the custom is dying out now, some communities still begin the wedding dance by having the three principal couples—the bride and groom, the best man and best maid, and 'the married folk' *—open the dance. Since World War I this has traditionally been the three-couple Shetland reel, but danced in such a way that the bride and groom do not come together until the third repeat of the reel. This is still the tradition in North Yell and Fetlar.

The First World War and the building of community halls coincided with and acted as a catalyst for other changes. Concertinas, accordions, guitars and even banjos were introduced, particularly in the Mainland of Shetland, and instruments such as harmoniums and pianos were adopted as accompanying instruments. The larger floor space permitted more than one set (of 6 dancers), sometimes three or four sets, to dance at the same time, and required a greater volume of sound than a single fiddle could provide. By the 1970s, as in mainland Scotland, the usual band consisted of one or more accordions, piano, electric guitars and drum set. Although almost every cottage is still likely to have at least one fiddle, other instruments are more popular with younger people: they have less leisure time to devote to mastering fiddling skills.

In spite of these changes, the fiddle is still regarded as a rather special instrument. For instance, whenever a Shetland reel is called during dances in Whalsay, a fiddler is asked to play for it, and other instruments temporarily take a subsidiary role. The formation of several fiddle bands (the well-known 'Forty Fiddlers' of Lerwick, which operates in association with the Shetland Folk Society, being the longest established) reflect an interest in perpetuating the habit of fiddle playing and in preserving traditional styles and repertories. Shetlanders form an appreciative and most discriminating audience for any concerts featuring folk fiddlers, and they accepted that it was only natural that a Shetlander should win the Scottish fiddle competition sponsored by the B.B.C. in 1969. Three years ago the local education authority appointed a local fiddler and folklorist, Tom Anderson, to teach traditional fiddling in schools and he has since been awarded the MBE in recognition of his service to Shetland music. He now (1976) has about 100 pupils (equal numbers of boys and girls) and teaches in three islands.

* 'The married folk', two older married friends or relatives, not usually man and wife themselves, play important roles in helping ensure the smooth running of the whole occasion.

Even though Shetland reels as dances are going out of fashion, or have already done so in many areas, the tunes survive as a listening repertory, valued not just because they are attractive miniatures but because they serve to affirm the identity of Shetland and its people.

One notices three loosely defined categories of fiddlers: (i) the concert party and dance band fiddler, who can sometimes read music, and prefers to learn much of the Scottish repertory, including the compositions of James Scott Skinner, which have testing pieces such as slow Strathspeys, sets of variations, and marches and reels in imitative 'pipe' style; (ii) the traditional village fiddler of considerable skill who is expected to take his fiddle around with him to social evenings, or whose home is often used as a kind of music centre at which many young men and women will congregate during the winter evenings; and (iii) the so-called 'house' fiddler who can, when necessary, 'knock out' a tune for dancing in his own home, but does not regard himself as a real fiddler and who is not usually asked to play at weddings or other public functions. In some parts, particularly in Yell, there is still a very high percentage of men who, even if they will not admit it, can play the fiddle to a certain degree and fall into categories (ii) or (iii). One cannot help contrasting this situation with attitudes to the violin and string teaching in our urban society—where the violin is regarded as a difficult instrument, where frequently children are carefully screened, and given prognostic tests to help their teachers decide if they have sufficient musical ability to attempt the instrument. Incidentally, Suzuki's methods which lay stress on the innate ability of all children to make music, the importance of general family participation (particularly a parent) and on teaching basic techniques and early repertory principally divorced from the learning of notation, may be admirable: but—to Shetlanders—they are not new.

This then is a very general picture of the changing role of the fiddle in Shetland society. There is a particular danger in generalizing however, for, in the case of Shetland, there is no simple picture: there is no typical Shetlander, nor a typical community. Until recently, communities have been very much isolated from each other and sometimes have contrasting economies. In islands where there are good natural harbours—Whalsay for instance—there is today considerable affluence because of the success of the local fishing fleet. Fetlar, just a few miles north, presents a very different picture: there is no natural harbour, no oil base, just fertile land, and a small community survives through crofting alone. North Yell contrasts with Mid Yell and the south end. Within these tightly knit communities different ways of life have developed, a difference which is particularly noticeable in the playing styles of fiddlers who are typical for their own community. Thus, whereas one can analyse each different style, it is difficult to point to common features that are, or were, distinctive of Shetland as a whole. Unaccompanied fiddling persisted longer in Fetlar, North Yell and Whalsay than elsewhere. Repertories also differ considerably. The older indigenous dances known as the Auld Reels or Muckle reels (see Flett 1964) have

faded from living memory in Yell and Unst, but fiddlers from Papa Stour, Whalsay and Walls (West Mainland) still know their local Auld Reels even though they are no longer danced. Similarly, the later reel, known as the Shetland Reel, is rarely danced on the mainland of Shetland today, being considered old-fashioned, but is still well known elsewhere, particularly in North Yell, Whalsay and Fetlar.

Short pieces of 16 mm sound film made in the islands for purposes of analytical study and now in the archives of the School of Scottish Studies illustrate these regional differences in fiddling and dancing. Andrew Poleson of Whalsay, a notable exponent of his island's traditional fiddling style, held his instrument against his chest and had a stiff but powerful bow arm; he produced a rich harmonic and strongly accented musical texture. (Examples of this can be heard on Side 1, Bands 2 and 3 of the disc TNGM 117). Two fiddlers filmed in North Yell, however, the late Willie Barclay Henderson of Gloup and the late Bobbie Jamieson of Cullivoe, sounded very different: they held their instruments under their chins, used mainly the upper half of their bows, playing somewhat over the end of the fingerboards, and made frequent use of what is called the *draa* (long down bow) on the 'back' (lowest) string, to provide an intermittent drone accompaniment on the note *a* (the pitch of the open string when the fiddle is tuned in what in Shetland is called the 'high bass' tuning, *a-d'-a'-e"*). These two players preferred the high bass tuning for about half their repertory, whereas in other communities it is used rarely. The difference between their style and that of Andrew Poleson can be heard by comparing the examples quoted above with Side 1, Band 1 of the same disc.

The filmed excerpts of dancing from these two communities also highlighted stylistic differences. A younger group in North Yell performed a more stereotyped 'back-step' in contrast to the varied and energetic shuffling movements of the older Whalsay men. These excerpts illustrate also how the simple binary structure of the music of the reel matches the structure of the dance with its alternation between travelling—'reeling'—in a tight figure of eight and step-dancing on the spot. It is not known when the 3-couple Shetland reel came into Shetland, but it may have been an adaptation of a Scots reel. In contrast, the older Muckle reels or Auld Reels consisted either of circle dances or of continuous figure of eight movement. The music for these older reels contains irregular phrasing and is generally more rhythmic and harmonic than melodic—as if the fiddler is playing an accompaniment to dance songs which are now forgotten, a possible result of the language change from a type of Norse to Anglo-Scots. Nevertheless, even in the three-couple Shetland reels, one occasionally finds unusual phrasing and syncopations—particularly in the Whalsay repertory, which is a rich mixture of indigenous reels and Scottish ones. This occurs usually only in the first half (the reeling section) whereas the second half is in stricter tempo and more straightforward rhythmically (Figs. 1 and 2). Could these syncopations and assymetrical phrases be a legacy from an older repertory of dance tunes?

Other aspects of musical rhythm are also puzzling. There are a number of

apparently indigenous tunes in 6/8 and 9/8 'jig' time. Some of the surviving bridal marches are of this kind and are played rather slowly: Figure 3 is a wedding tune from Papa Stour, similar metrically to the Scottish bridal song *Woo'd and married and aa*. It is no longer played for dancing. Other 6/8 tunes are today played in quick jig tempo for two-steps and other non-indigenous dances such as Quadrilles. Yet one wonders how clear the distinction between simple and compound time once was. The tune known as *Da Boanie Isle of Whalsay* is a case in point: the earliest manuscript record of this tune (early nineteenth century; printed in Johnston 1912 : 80) gives it in 6/8 time (Fig. 4a) but all present versions are played as reels in simple duple time. Figure 4b is an early instance of this.

FIGS. 1 and 2 Transcriptions of two 'nameless' reels from Whalsay, played by Andrew Poleson.
(f : note shorter than its partner.)

FIG. 3 Transcription of a 'bride's reel' from Papa Stour, played by John Fraser.
(↑ : note approximately ¼ tone sharp.)

FIG 4 Two early notations of 'Da Boanie Isle of Whalsay': (a) 'Whalsey', from an early 19th c. M.S. printed in Johnston 1912 : 80; (b) 'Quhalsay', from J. Hoseason's M.S. 1862.

The tune known as *The Shaalds of Foula*, popular apparently since the early nineteenth century, exists today in both compound and simple duple (reel) time, one or the other version being played in different islands for the country dance known as the *Foula Reel*. Two early notated versions give it in a type of 12/8 time (one in key A in the less common tuning *a-e'-a'-e"* (Fig. 5), the others in key G). The favoured version of the 'Forty Fiddlers' of Lerwick corresponds with the second version (LED 2057, Side 1, Band 4). In Herra, Mid-Yell, Lell Robertson plays a version in reel time (simple duple time) which he learned from his father, Laurie Davy (TNGM 117, Side 1, Band 6). However, when one compares the performances of both father and son it is noticeable that the father plays with more unequal note values than his son. Indeed, if one were to slow down his recorded performance to half-speed and then transcribe it, one would be tempted to write it in compound time (12/16) rather than

FIG. 5 'Da Shaalds o' Foula,' from J. Hoseason's M.S., 1862. (The key signature is not given: presumably F's and C's should be sharp. 'tr' is editorial: Hoseason's sign is ⑂ which could mean trill, mordent, 'shiver' or some other embellishment.)

simple time (2/4), so that one can use the figure ♪♪ in preference to ♪♪ . When one examines in detail the rhythm of reels played by older players one is struck by the 'unequalness' of time values of pairs of notes which are traditionally notated equally and, incidentally, by their generally slower tempi. Playing in the older style is much appreciated for its rhythm, and the finest compliment is to say that a fiddler gives a 'fine lilt' to a tune, or has a 'fine lift' (or 'lilt') to his bow. One notices that younger players, who generally play at a faster tempo, tend to even out these rhythms, particularly if they have learned to read music. Perhaps there has been a gradual change during the past 150 years from slower jig style music in compound time, such as is still played for some English morris dancing, to a faster tempo required for Scottish reels, but older players still retain traces of the compound-time rhythm (particularly the ♪♪ pattern).

Sixteen millimetres film has proved useful in analysing fiddle style and as a quick way of producing usable style transcriptions. Sound recordings alone are not enough. Figures 6 and 7 were transcribed from film. Here, as in most Shetland styles (that of Whalsay being an exception), the general pattern is of longer down-bow than up-bow notes, which, together with the fact that more bow is used on accented notes, accounts for the need at appropriate points to take three notes in one up-bow to bring the middle of the bow over the strings again. If this did not happen the players might run out of bow. Notice, however, that the second note of each 3-note slur falls on a strong beat, but the rhythmical accent is not weakened. The final step in analysis is to

FIG. 6 Transcription of the reel 'Ahunt da daecks o' Voe', played by W. B. Henderson, Gloup, N. Yell.
(♪ : note shorter than its partner; ↓ : note approximately ¼ tone flatter, or ↑ : sharper.)

FIG. 7 Transcription of the reel 'Oot and in da harbour', played by W. B. Henderson, Gloup, Yell.
(♪ : note shorter than its partner.)

play over such transcriptions oneself. This is a very satisfying thing to do, the bowing *feels* logical and natural and, above all (when one remembers the duration of dances) economical. The occasional down bow *draas*, or up-bow slurs, allow one briefly to relax left-hand fingers or the bow arm respectively. Yet standard notations never show 'notes inégales' (I use this term cautiously) nor the bowings. Hoseason was possibly an exception. His unpublished notations (J. Hoseason's MS, Mid Yell, Dec. 1862. S.R.O.) attempt to grapple with some of these unusual rhythms (Fig. 5). One cannot help wondering how much 'lilt' one should produce when playing from early dance music collections such as those of Praetorious, Susato, Playford, *etc.*; nor is one surprised that French musicians found it necessary to describe in detail the practice of 'notes inégales'. This rhythmic feature is not restricted to Shetland—the playing of some Scots fiddlers shows similar tendencies—but it is more obvious there, probably because of greater cultural stability—resistance to change—and the minimal use of notation.

Whereas this question of rhythm is bound up with the role of the fiddle as a dance instrument, two other interesting features are also related to the mechanics of playing. The first concerns melodic structures and the second intonation. Figure 8 shows a melody constructed entirely from combinations of open string pitches and those produced by fingers 1 and 3. Motifs based on the 1–3 finger patterns occur in a great many other reels. In terms of ergonomics, fingers 1 and 3 operate very well together, fingers 1 and 2 less well, and fingers 2 and 3 even less well—so it would seem to any but the trained violinist. When the second finger is used, it is often preceded or followed by open strings, and 1–3 patterns often alternate with 0–2–0 patterns (see Figs. 3, 6 and 7). While one never fails to be surprised by the nimble fingering of iron-fisted men who spend their days doing the toughest of manual work on land and sea, one must also ask if this apparent preference for certain 'convenient' finger patterns is not a function again of economy of effort. Is it surprising if these melodies arise more from a fusion of physical and mental activity than from the musical imagination alone, especially since the music being created is expected above all to be energetically rhythmic? Such patterns may also have had their origins in the harmonic possibilities of a two-string instrument.

FIG. 8 Transcription of the reel 'Deltingside', played by John Fraser, Papa Stour. ($\dotseighth$: note shorter than its partner.)

The other feature is somewhat related: it is one of intonation and, in particular, concerns the pitches produced by the second finger on the *a'* and *e"* strings. Figure 3 illustrated a common feature in the more traditional playing style where both the G and C are neither sharp nor natural. The late Patrick Shuldham-Shaw, who conducted fieldwork in Shetland during the 1940s, has already commented on the apparent use of neutral tones: they are particularly obvious in A mode tunes played on the upper strings. The *c"* (on the *a'* string) and the *g'* (on the *e"* string) are apparently neither a whole tone nor a semi-tone above the first finger notes *b'* and *f#"*, but approximately three-quarters of a tone away from the pitches on either side of them. Shuldham-Shaw considered that the musicians were usually in no doubt themselves as to whether these notes should be sharp or natural and that they always indicated which pitch they preferred when he sounded them in turn on his (equal-tempered) accordion. He implied that there was a difference between intention and performance (1947 : 74). I am less sure about this: my initial impression is that the fiddlers are discriminating and in some tunes will play both neutral and unambiguous *c*'s within the same piece quite consistently. Furthermore, when one asks them to sing doubtful passages, their vocal intonation matches that of their fiddling. If indeed these neutral intervals were once a feature of older music in Shetland, then there are interesting parallels here with older Norwegian music styles noted by Reider Sevåg (1974) who has found sufficient data in the spacing of Langeleik frets as well as in certain singing styles to suggest that 'semitone-less' modal systems once existed in Norway, whose quality he describes as 'anhemitonic heptatonism'. Further research using frequency analysers is needed before one can attempt to say the same for Scotland.

Three recorded performances of the reel called *Da Boanie Isle o Whalsay* illustrate another aspect of this problem, namely that the situation is dynamic. The first (SA/1971/269) which was played by Andrew Poleson, made a distinctive use of these neutral intervals: his version, though clearly in the 'key' of *a* was equally clearly in neither *a* major nor *a* minor. The second (SA/1971/214) was played by another younger Whalsay fiddler, Gilbert Hutchison, and accompanied by his fourteen-year-old son, John, on a presumably equal-tempered guitar. At the time John admitted he had trouble finding appropriate harmonies and in his playing he side-stepped the problem of 'neutral' *c*'s by omitting them from the *a–c–e* triads altogether. The note *c* is of course crucial in deciding the major or minor feel of a tune in the key *a*— a *c* sharp gives a major feel to the melody, a *c* natural gives a minor feel to it. The third version was played by William Hunter of Lerwick who is regarded as one of Shetland's finest fiddlers and whose paternal home is only a few miles across the sound on the mainland opposite Whalsay (it can be heard on *The Music of Scotland*, published by the National Geographic Society, 1974). He had learned the tune from his father who had been exposed to much more Scottish and English music than the other two players. This last version was played and accompanied unambiguously in A

major, the way most other players outside Whalsay play their reel. Clearly the introduction of diatonic accompanying instruments has forced fiddlers and accompanists to make the tune conform to the prevailing western European intonation. In this case, the change has been made towards the 'lighter' major mode from the 'darkish' neutral mode. Carl-Allan Moberg (1950 : 5⁻49) has suggested that just such a move has been an important aspect of change in Swedish music during the past 200 years. In Shetland, however, occasionally the opposite may have happened and in *Da Mirrie Dancers*, a collection of fiddle tunes published by the Shetland Folk Society, there appear a small number of reels notated in the minor *a*-mode, which are played by older fiddlers with more ambiguous neutral intonation.

It could be argued that the neutral intonation heard in the two earlier examples is a feature solely of the fiddle repertory—that since it is so convenient to place the three left-hand fingers equidistantly on the fingerboard, a repertory has evolved which exploits this neutral flavour. Experience in other fields—in the intonation of some Hebridean singers and in the tuning of early Scottish bagpipe chanters—leads one to think that this is not solely restricted to the fiddle. Is it perhaps worth considering that non-diatonic, or neutral, modes may once have been widespread in northern Europe, and slowly displaced by the Mediterranean and Near-Eastern diatonic modal style now common throughout Europe? Notation, which evolved as a partner to diatonic music, would have aided in displacing such intonation. In culturally conservative areas like Shetland, however, where notation has played virtually no part in the transmission of a lively musical tradition, an older intonation system appears to have persisted into the 1970s.

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The Place-Names of a Deserted Island:

Eilean nan Ròn

IAN A. FRASER

Of all the deserted islands lying off the coasts of northern Scotland, few can be more attractively situated than Eilean nan Ròn. It lies half a mile off the coast of Tongue parish in Sutherland, and for an island that boasts an area of less than one square mile, it bore a surprisingly large population in the last century—some 80 persons—although this figure dropped to about 60 by the second decade of this century.

There are few early accounts of the island. Typical of them is the *New Statistical Account* (NSA 1845 : 167) which offers only the most sparse description:

> Eilean nan roan is of considerable size, and has the appearance of two islands, particularly at high water. Part of it is scooped out into the form of a basin, in which the soil is very fertile, and cultivated by a few small tenants . . .

It seems likely, however, that human occupation goes back a number of centuries, despite popular belief that the first settlers were a few families settled there during the early nineteenth century. Blaeu's map of 1654 refers to the island as *Ylen Ronn*, and the presence of a circular symbol indicates some form of settlement. The neighbouring island of *Ylen Isell or ye plan yle* is clearly Eilean Iosal 'nearby. Although the Mercator Map of 1595 marks three islands off the north Sutherland coast, it names them *Ilen Marin, Hyp iland* and *Shyp iland*. These may well refer to Eilean Iosal, Eilean nan Ròn and Eilean nan Naomh respectively (Taylor and Fortune 1968). The isles of 'Handa, Choarie, Gyld, Rone and Coline' are mentioned in a charter of Queen Mary in 1570 (OPS 1855 : ii. 713).

According to several sources, including Mackay,(1962), three young couples were settled in Eilean nan Ròn by the Duke of Sutherland in 1820. Their descendants were to remain until the island was evacuated in December 1938 after a period which saw the decline of the population to twelve, of whom eight were elderly. Clearly, the emigrations of families to the mainland as well as to Australia and Canada, after the Great War, were of such an effect that it was no longer possible to maintain the island as a viable community.

Most people in the Tongue and Skerray areas of Sutherland refer to the island as 'Island Roan'. Even fluent Gaelic speakers do this occasionally. This form of name

was widespread, although the actual derivation, 'seal-island', was generally understood.

The place-names of an island such as this are naturally of immense interest. Not only do they reflect the economy of an island community which was highly self-sufficient, but they reveal some of the more unusual aspects of its life, customs and traditions. The natural resources of the island and its surrounding seas were clearly exploited to the full. Fishing was the main occupation, and seems to have been profitable up till the end of the Great War, when two steam drifters were operated. However, the fertility of the soil of the island must have been a very real incentive to settlement, since it provided most of the islanders' grain, roots and vegetables. The substantial nature of the ruins of the houses is testimony to a fairly prosperous community (see Fig. 1).

The place-names of the island were recorded by the present writer in 1976 and again in the spring of 1977 from Mr Donald Mackay, who was born on the island in 1911, and who now lives in Tubeg, Skerray, having been among the last to leave Eilean nan Ròn in 1938. Mr Mackay's parents and grandparents were natives of the island, so that as a tradition-bearer he is well qualified. As a lobster-fisherman, his knowledge of the island and the adjoining coasts was immense, and he was able to provide us with a mass of information not only on place-names, but also on the various aspects of the way of life of this island community. Since this article is concerned mainly with place-name information, however, fuller details of the agricultural practices, fishing, fowling and sealing must await future publication.

It will be seen from an examination of the list on page 87 that there are few place-names which have uncertain derivations. The Norse content is sparse, with the usual Gaelic borrowings such as *sgeir, geodha* and *mol.* The ON *holmr,* islet, occurs in Meall Thuilm (30), but these apart, there is surprisingly little in the way of old Norse material. This contrasts strongly with areas such as Lewis, where we might expect a much wider variety of terms to occur in minor names. Clearly, the majority of place-names are of no great antiquity. Some of the descriptive names refer to domestic animals, *e.g.,* sheep, stirk, bull and dog. Others obviously reflect the islanders' involvement with marine wild-life. There are two seal caves, and porpoises and whales are also referred to. The occurrence of *Cnoc an Loisgein,* 'Toad Hillock', is a problem and must be a doubtful rendering, since the informant was clear enough in stating that it was now called *Cnoc Loisgte. Losgann,* however, has the alternative meaning of 'drag' or 'sledge', according to Dwelly (1901).

A few of the names are connected with agriculture and husbandry. These include *Cnoc a' Chorrain* (48) and *Carn Talmhainn* (14), and the names referring to domestic animals already mentioned. However, the coastal names offer the most interesting material. Of these, the standard coastal terms are in the majority, such as *gob* and *rubha, port, uamh* and *poll.* The latter, however, is shown in two instances to

FIG. 1 The small crofting area of Eilean nan Ròn, looking from the side of *Cnoc na Caillich* (11). The gulley in the foreground is *Port na b-Uaille* (5), and in the background, the crofts of Melness, across the Kyle of Tongue, with Ben Hope to the left. (*Photograph by kind permission of Mr Tom Weir*)

describe a fishing bank. The occurrence of *cladhan* to describe a narrow channel between islands is noteworthy. *Cladhan na h-Innis* (28) is illustrated as being about a hundred feet deep and only a few yards wide, while the other two examples (55 and 56) fulfil roughly the same conditions.

The occurrence of quite small reefs and submerged rocks in a place-name list of this kind is not surprising, since they tend to be important coastal features, often to be carefully avoided and therefore intensely nameworthy. These usually adopt the term *bogha*, 'submerged rock', or *sgeir* which applies to a number of rock features ranging from those which are attached to the shore to isolated rocks which are visible at most states of the tide. The presence of *àigeach*, normally the Gaelic for 'stallion' is an unusual feature here. The fact that it appears twice in Eilean nan Ròn for very similar features may point to the use of *àigeach* as a partial replacement for *bogha* along this part of the north coast of Sutherland. Although it is not a common term, we do have an example *An t-Aigeach* from Portskerra, to the east. The use of animal names applied to skerries and off-shore rocks is, of course, by no means uncommon. *Mult*, wether, *tarbh*, bull, and *gamhainn*, stirk, are all found in the western seaboard, and *àigeach* itself appears in the Outer Isles, usually in the form of a rock feature on a cliff.

The lack of 'incident' or 'commemorative' names is surprising in the list. Only two personal names appear—*Toll Hendry* (37), a geo, and *Uamh Fhearchair* (54) which is a seal cave on the eastern shore of Eilean Iosal. The latter may commemorate an individual who was a good seal-hunter, but this is entirely speculative. *Aigeach nam Boireannach* (57) refers to a boating incident involving a group of island women.

The descriptive place-names are almost all in very simple form and frequently involve but a single element. *An Gluta* (20), *Am Mol-lochan* (4), *An Innis* (27), *Am Buaile* (44) and *Am Morbhan* (13) are all examples of this. But this is not surprising in a small, self-contained community where the total number of place-names in daily use was fairly limited, and where there was no necessity for complex names of three elements or more, as in the case of mainland communities where descriptive names must often be highly complex in order to provide accurate identification. The two-element names, similarly, are often simple, using straightforward descriptive terms. *Mol Mòr* (3), *Carn Bàn* (16), *Sgeir Leathann* (26), *Meall Glas* (31), *Bidean Beag* and *Bidean Mòr* (32 and 33) and *Blar Mòr* (41) are typical. *Mòr* is in fact used as a qualitative term in seven of the place-names in the list.

All this evidence points to a fairly recent granting of place-names on Eilean nan Ròn. The lack of Old Norse material, and that of obsolete Gaelic terms, suggests that most of the present name coverage does in fact date from the early nineteenth century. However, with the data available, we cannot be absolutely certain about this, although examination of charter material may help to build a clearer picture of the history of this island.

List of Eilean nan Ròn Place-Names

(numbers are shown on the map, fig. 2)

1	*Port Muir Coinnle*	Port of the Candle-lit Sea (so called because of the brightness of the water at night.)
2*	*Mol na Coinnle*	Candle-lit Beach
3	*Mol Mór*	Big Beach
4*	*Am Mol-lochan*	The Beach Lochan
5*	*Por na h-Uaille*	(derivation not clear)
6	*Port Mol Sgaiteach*	Port of the Cutting (or Sharp-pebbled) Beach
7	*Toll Mol-lochain*	Hole of the Beach Lochan
8*	*Leathad Ballach*	Speckled Hill-Slope
9	*Gob a' Bhallaich*	(?) Point of the Speckled Place
10	*A' Chailleach*	The Hag
11*	*Cnoc na Caillich*	The Hag's Hillock
12	*Goban na Morbhan*	Little Point of the Shingly Place
13	*Am Morbhan*	(from *morghan*, 'gravel' or 'shingle', although Dwelly gives *morbhan* 'murmuring')
14*	*Carn Talmhuinn*	Earth Cairn (normally *talmhainn*.)
15	*Geodha na Gamhainn*	Stirk's Geo
16	*Carn Bàn*	White Cairn
17*	*Rubh' an Losgainn*	(see 40.)
18	*Uamh nan Ròn*	Seal Cave
19	*Uamh nam Péileag*	Porpoise Cave
20	*An Gluta*	The Gullet
21	*Geodha Grannda*	Dirty Geo
22	*Na Malannan*	(derivation uncertain, but possibly from *meall*, hill, and may be *meallain*, hillocks; alternatively *mala*, brow of a hill.)
23*	*Uamh na h-Oidhche*	Night Cave (reputed to stretch right across the island.)
24*	*Uamh an Latha*	Day Cave (very bright and well-lit, containing a clay that was 'as good as cement, still to be seen in the masonry of some of the island houses'—D. McK.).
25*	*Port na h-Innse*	Island Port
26	*Sgeir Leathann*	Broad Skerry
27*	*An Innis*	The Island (separated from the main island by a deep channel, 28)
28	*Cladhan na h-Innis*	Channel of the Island
29*	*Eilean Iosal*	Low Island
30*	*Meall Thuilm*	Hill of the Islet (from ON *holmr*)
31*	*Meall Glas*	Grey Hill
32	*Bidean Beag*	Little Peak
33	*Bidean Mór*	Big Peak
34	*Mol nan Caorach*	Sheep Beach (this contained a natural arch which collapsed at the seaward end.)
35*	*Uamh nan Ròn*	Seal Cave
36	*Sgeir Leathann*	Broad Skerry

* Names which appear on the 6" OS Map NC 66 NW
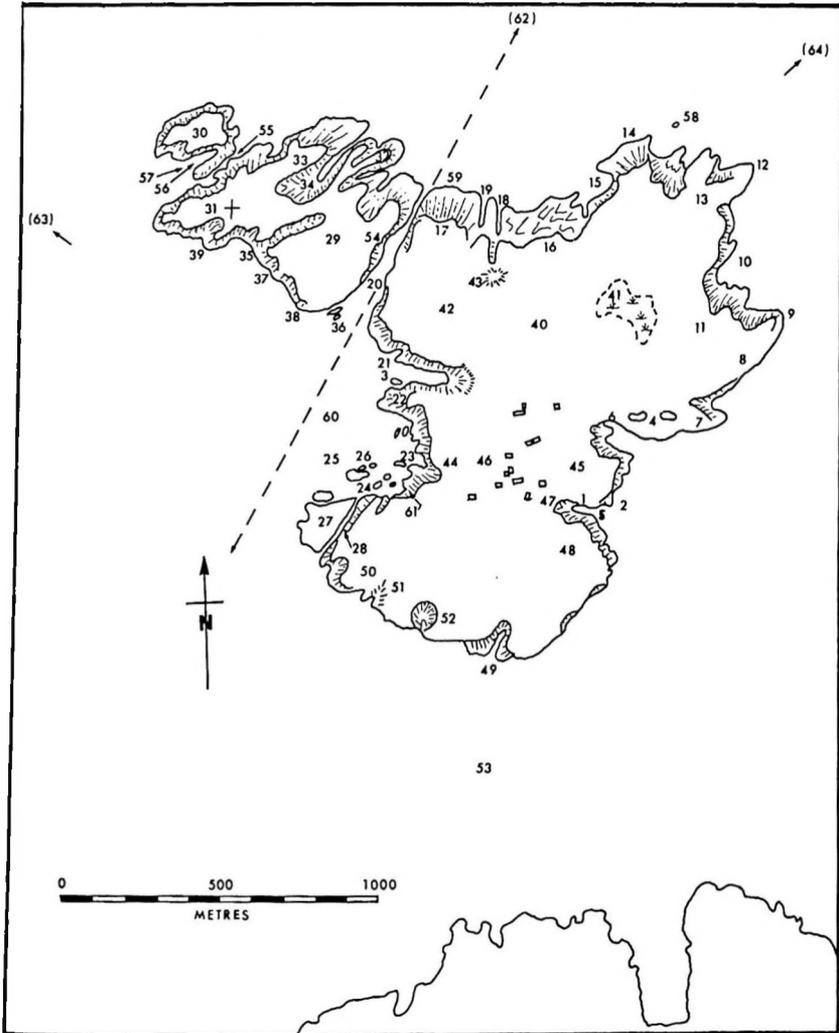
FIG. 2   Map of Eilean nan Ròn (numbers refer to place-name list, pp. 87-89).

37	*Toll Hendry*	Hendry's Hole (a geo)
38	*Tollan*	Little Hole
39	*Sgeir an Tairbh*	Bull Skerry (seals lie here in summer.)

40* *Cnoc an Loisgein*   (Although *losgann* is the usual Gaelic for 'frog' or
                                 'toad' it is masculine, and the map form shown here is
                                 puzzling, since the genitive would be *losgainn*. The
                                 alternative meaning is *losgann* (fem.) 'drag' or 'sledge'
                                 according to Dwelly (1901). However Donald Mackay
                                 called the place *Cnoc Loisgte* 'burnt hillock'. This and
                                 'sledge-hillock' are possible. The nearby *Rubh' an
                                 Losgainn*, 17, '(?) Sledge Point', is clearly connected.)
41   *Blàr Mòr*   Big Plain
42   *Cnoc a' Ghluta*   Knoll of the Gullet
43   *An Toll Dubh*   The Black Hole (a sink hole inland from *Uamh nan
                                 Ròn.*)
44   *Am Buaile*   The Fold (the arable land to the west of the houses.)
45   *Am Bail'*   The Village (or Village Land: arable land between the
                                 houses and the port. The arable land seemed to have
                                 been of two soil types, one dark and peaty, to the east,
                                 and the other, to the west, a sandy loam. No horses
                                 were used. All tillage was done by hand.)
46   *Baca a' Choin*   Dog's Bank
47   *Fuaran Mol Coinnle*   Well of the Candle-lit Beach
48   *Cnoc a' Chorrain*   Sickle Hill
49   *Geodha Mòr*   Big Geo
50   *Ceann a' Chnuic Mhòr*   Head of the Big Hillock
51   *Geodha an Uisge*   Watery Geo
52   *Geodha na Muice*   Pig Geo (probably refers to *mùc-mara*, 'whale'.)
53   *Caol Raineach*   Bracken Sound
54   *Uamh Fhearchair*   Farquhar's Cave
55   *An Cladhan Deas*   The South Channel
56   *An Cladhan Tuath*   The North Channel (impassable for boats.)
57   *Aigeach nam Boireannach*   The Women's Submerged Rock (A boat carrying five
                                 women grounded on this rock when the. men of the
                                 island were away at the fishing.)
58   *Aigeach Charn Talmhainn*   The Submerged Rock of the Earth Cairn
59   *Carn Bàn Tuath*   North White Cairn. (Stone from this area was quarried
                                 and used for building purposes.)
60   *Sgeir Mhòr*   Big Skerry
61   *Geodha Dearg*   Red Geo
62   *Poll na Clach Mòir*   Pool of the Big Stone (a fishing mark. *An Gluta*, 20,
                                 was lined up with *Cnoc an Fhreiceadain*, 'Watch Hill',
                                 the high hill which lies to the E. of the village of
                                 Tongue on the mainland.)
63   *Geodha Brat*   Meaning not known (fishing place off Talmine.)
64   *Poll a' Chriadhaich*   The Clay Pool. (This had a clay bottom, and on a stor-
                                 my day it was frequently calm when the surrounding
                                 seas were rough, and the water 'had an oily look about
                                 it' Fish caught here in winter had a fat, oily
                                 appearance.—D. McK.)

(Recorded by Ian A. Fraser from Donald Mackay, Tuberg, Skerray on PN 1976/6, 7 and
PN1977/1.)

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Musical Traditions in the Forbes Family of Disblair, Aberdeenshire

DAVID JOHNSON

This paper describes the musical activities of the immediate forebears of the ballad-singer Mrs Anna Brown of Falkland (1747–1825), and is intended to supplement the account recently published by David Buchan (Buchan 1972 : 62–64). Two general conclusions emerge which Buchan does not reach: (i) that classical and folk music were not socially divorced in eighteenth-century Scotland, since two male members of Anna Brown's family took an absorbing interest in classical music while three female members were recorded as being singers of traditional ballads and (ii), that it was not essential, in the eighteenth century, to have inherited ballads from one's parents in order to learn to sing them.

Anna Brown's maternal grandfather was William Forbes of Disblair. He was a keen amateur musician: the auction sale of his property after his death included many instruments and volumes of music (Buchan 1972 : 63). He was also a composer, whose compositions, though obscure, appear to have been of seminal importance to the development of Baroque style in Scots fiddle music. Probably from about 1710 he wrote large numbers of folk-fiddle variations on popular tunes, incorporating in them up-to-date Italian Baroque techniques; notable is his 21-strain set of 'John Anderson my Joe,' which is divided into eight sections in varying rhythms and speeds to give something of the effect of a Corellian *sonata da chiesa* (NLS Adv. MS 5.2.25). His fame as a composer had reached Edinburgh by the time he died, for in 1740 David Young copied eleven of his variation sets into the McFarlane MS (NLS MSS 2084, 2085). Of these eleven, two—'Maggie Lauder' and 'Three good Fellows'—were re-worked by a more famous violinist/composer, William McGibbon of Edinburgh, and published under the latter's name in 1742 and 1746, while a further two—'Willy was a wanton Wag' and 'My Nanny O'—were published around 1773, though unascribed and in somewhat corrupt texts (McLean *c.* 1773 : 24, 26).

William Forbes' creative output extended to poetry. Between 1700 and 1704 he published several anti-Union satires, written in polished heroic couplets in the manner of Dryden. The National Library of Scotland has a number of original prints of these; so far, however, they seem to have escaped the attention of Scottish literary scholars.

Forbes' relationship with his wife was curious, to say the least. Born in either 1662 or 1671 (both dates are indicated by AUL MS500), he got married in 1689 to Elizabeth Bateman, an impecunious Englishwoman in the wig-making trade, and during the 1690s they produced a son, John. She divorced him in 1704, but they co-habited

again between 1708 and 1719, during which time at least one of their three daughters Anne, Elizabeth and Lillias was born. After 1719 they again separated. Mrs Forbes took charge of the daughters and fleeced the estate so remorselessly for aliment that Forbes was left almost penniless by 1725. From then on Forbes was supported by a series of loans from George Skene of Skene: by the time of Forbes' death in June 1740, his accumulated debt to Skene was 4,000 merks. Later there was a legal wrangle between Skene and the daughters over the division of the estate (AUL MS 500).

Lillias Forbes was the mother of Mrs Brown of Falkland. In an autobiographical letter (Buchan 1972 : 64, 298) Mrs Brown stated that she had learnt ballads from both her mother and her aunt Anne. Thus both Anne and Lillias sang ballads. But it seems unlikely that they could have acquired the tradition either from their mother (who was English) or from their father (who did not bring them up). Another letter indicates that Anne Forbes learnt ballads from nurses and old women in the Braemar district, after her marriage to Joseph Farquharson of Allanaquoich (Buchan 1972 : 63). But the foundations of her singing ability must surely have been laid at an earlier age. It seems likely, then, that both sisters learnt ballads from their mother's domestic servants.

It is unknown how much contact Lillias Forbes had with her father. Interestingly, however, she married a man whose interests were similar to his, for Thomas Gordon, Professor of Humanities at King's College, Old Aberdeen, was another artistic intellectual. Shortly after their daughter Anna was born in 1747, Gordon joined the newly-formed Aberdeen Musical Society, membership of which was open only to musical performers (Farmer 1950 : 31). Thus Gordon must have been a competent player on one of the eighteenth-century gentlemen's instruments—violin, cello, or transverse flute. Music was no passing whim for him, as he maintained his membership of the Musical Society for over twenty years and served on the Society's committee from 1770 to 1772 (APL Walker 10632, 10633). At the same period, then, that Mrs Anna Brown was learning her—subsequently famous—ballads from her mother at Humanity Manse, Old Aberdeen, her father was going out every Friday night to meet his cronies and play through the latest European music by Handel, Arne and Hasse.

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(Titles of contributions appear in bold type, and names of contributors in small capitals)