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 chum 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 Dìthreich* as Duncan's grandfather

* This paper was written as a contribution to an unpublished collection of papers by former pupils and colleagues presented to Professor K. H. Jackson in June 1976 to mark his completion of 25 years as Professor of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).

more properly called it'—'The Story of the Hermit', a mysterious character who meets Murchadh son of Brian Bŏramha 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: 'cŏ '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 'Cŏ nighean na trếin agus na trếithe 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 òg 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 rêir 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 fhéin de fhearann, agus nan tuigte bhuaithe e uair 'sam bith le foirneart gun leigeadh thusa 'ga ionnsaidh pàirt de an fhearann agad fhéin.

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 fhéin.

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 fhéin.

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 fhén. 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 fhéin.

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 fhèin 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 fhèin 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 fhèin 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 fhèin, '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 fhèin 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 nì 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 dhith 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

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.[13] 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 dè 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 agas 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' rádha 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 esan, '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

I am grateful to my colleague Donald Archie MacDonald for advice on the transcription and translation of the Gaelic tales.

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 *tanicc,* 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 bhaideitein 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 cnâmh 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.

REFERENCES

Printed Books

BRUFORD, ALAN

1965 'A Lost MacMhuirich Manuscript.' *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 10 : 158–61. London.

1968 'Murchadh mac Briain agus an Dithreabhach.' *Éigse* 12 : 301–26. Dublin.

1969 *Gaelic Folk-Tales and Mediaeval Romances*. Dublin.

1974 'The Grey Selkie.' *Scottish Studies* 18 : 63–87. Edinburgh.

CRAIG, K. C.

1944 *Sgialachadan Dhunnchaidh*. Glasgow.

1949 'Sgialachdan Eile ó Uibhist.' *Béaloideas* 19 : 134–51. Dublin.

DELARGY, J. H.
1945 'The Gaelic Storyteller.' *Proceedings of the British Academy* 31 : 177–221. London.

DRAAK, MAARTJE
1957 'Duncan Macdonald of South Uist.' *Fabula* 1 : 47–58. Berlin.

MACDONALD, D. A.
1963 'A Uist Legend.' *Scottish Studies* 7 : 209–15. Edinburgh.

MACDONALD, D. A. and BRUFORD, ALAN
1970 'An Ceatharnach Caol Riabhach.' *Scottish Studies* 14 : 133–54. Edinburgh.

MACLEAN, CALUM I.
1959 'A Folk-variant of the Táin Bó Cuailnge from Uist.' *Arv* 15 : 160–81. Uppsala.

MACLELLAN, ANGUS
1961 *Stories from South Uist.* Translated by John Lorne Campbell. London.

TOCHER
1971– Edinburgh.

Manuscripts and Archive Tape-Recordings

DJM — Donald John MacDonald MS. collection (see note 3). School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh.

IFC MS. — MSS. of the Irish Folklore Commission, now Department of Irish Folklore, University College, Dublin.

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