Gaelic Songs of the 'Forty-Five

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I have often thought that it would be a salutary exercise and a sterling service if someone were to compile a history of the 'Forty-five based simply on genuine Gaelic and Gaelic-derived sources. On the one hand, one would hope to establish a corrective to the welter of invention, fantasy and garbled memory which surrounds the popular view of Highland history and even unsettles the thinking of historians who should know better. And on the other hand, the 'Forty-five was a real watershed in the history of the Gaels, who deserve better than the flawed 'export' versions they are currently constrained to subsist on.

However, the undertaking would not be a straightforward one. For one thing, it would be necessary to collate and synthesise widely differing particular experiences, perspectives, and levels of understanding of the overall pattern of events. For another, the Gaelic sources are unevenly spread and require delicate handling. The special obstacles to be negotiated would include the barriers raised by the pride, shame or fears of Gaels, of non-Gaels, and of Gaels responding to the expectations of non-Gaels.

In fact my sights are set considerably lower than that larger objective: my intention is to stick pretty closely to the eighteenth-century song-texts named in my title. This limitation presents several advantages. First, the surviving Gaelic poetry about *Bliadhna Theàrlaich* ('Charlie's Year') is relatively manageable in bulk. In the second place, its poetic form has insulated it from some of the categories of interference and distortion which affect oral texts. It thus offers us a sense of nearness to the action, of immediate contact with at least sections of the spectrum of contemporary sentiment. Again, Gaelic society traditionally expected its poets to speak out on matters of current concern, simultaneously reflecting, ordering and guiding opinion. This public dimension of poetry, which has remained a strong instinct down to the present century, lends an analytic quality and a homogeneity to at least the more 'official' genres of Gaelic verse, and is a decided advantage for our present purposes.

That is not to say that Gaelic Jacobite poetry is without difficulties as historical source material. On the contrary, it is highly nuanced and highly tendentious. Nor are its texts free from interference either, since accretion, bowdlerisation and excision can be suspected or demonstrated not infrequently, over and above the normal 'weathering' of orally preserved material. And in more general terms we have to take account of differing survival rates in different areas of the Highlands due to such independently varying factors as depopulation, decline of Gaelic-speaking, and the presence and tastes of collectors of Gaelic song at strategic moments from the eighteenth century to the present.

The upshot of all this is that what has survived of Gaelic Jacobite song can at best be regarded as representative of what would would have been obtainable. Certainly it must be presumed to fall short of giving a rounded picture of what the Highlanders 'as a whole' might have had to say about the 'Forty-five (*c.f.* Campbell 1935). Fortunately, what has survived is sufficiently varied and substantial to be illuminating in a number of ways. For instance, there is a geographical spread embracing Sutherland, Braemar, Argyll and the Outer Hebrides. There is a social spread extending from the entourages of chiefs and leaders to the women's world of the waulking board. And the tonal variations which mark successive phases in the course of events from the Prince's arrival until the Disarming and Disclothing Acts shed light on the psychology and articulation of the Gaelic poetic tradition itself.

As for the texts which concern us, they were mostly composed as songs for oral circulation. Of those cited below some exist only in manuscript or printed collections, but others have been sung continuously down to the present day. (In such cases, however, the fullest texts are usually, if not invariably, to be found in sources written down much nearer the time of composition.) The most prolific composer of all the Jacobite poets, Alexander MacDonald (Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair), saw his works printed first in 1751; and although the earliest published anthologies of Gaelic verse (Ranald MacDonald's Collection and the Gillies Collection, published in 1776 and 1786 respectively) were inclined to be reticent as regards the songs of the 'Forty-five, later anthologies, from Turner's Collection (1813) to John MacKenzie's *Beauties of Gaelic Poetry* (1841) were less inhibited; and some of the manuscript collections made from the later eighteenth-century onward supply further items as well as independent versions of songs appearing in printed collections. The first anthology of songs about the 'Forty-five was that appended by John Mackenzie to his *Eachdraidh a' Phrionnsa* (1844). A more substantial selection is available with English translation in John Lorne Campbell's excellent *Highland Songs of the 'Forty-five.*[1]

The political orientation of these songs is overwhelmingly Jacobite and anti-Hanoverian. There is a good reason for this. There had gradually evolved in the Highlands a polarity involving two sorts of clan who, if all other things were equal, tended to find themselves on opposite sides when British political crises impinged on the Highlands. This polarity had become a fixture during the Wars of the Covenant, and was manifest at the time of the Revolution and in 1715. One camp tended to be royalist, Catholic (or at least non-Presbyterian), and culturally traditionalist; the other parliamentarian, Presbyterian and culturally progressive. The former axis, which included especially the Clan Donald and its satellites, was the one which provided the more favourable circumstances for the composition of Gaelic poetry in the mid-eighteenth century and for its transmission subsequently. Of course, there were chiefs and leaders within that axis who had accumulated good reasons for toeing the Government line by the time of the 'Forty-five; but old attitudes died hard amongst their followers, and Gaelic poets tended to be traditionalists. Indeed it is noteworthy that even in areas where

the leaders were staunchly Hanoverian, such as Argyll and the Reay country, poets like Duncan Bàn Macintyre or Rob Donn Mackay followed an ambivalent or openly Jacobite line.

Against this near unanimity as regards political persuasion we must recognise diversity of different sorts. Our poets range from educated gentlemen and officers with access to the military thinking of the Jacobite leaders, through traditional Gaelic bards accompanying their chiefs on the expedition, to womenfolk waiting at home for news or lamenting the deaths of their loved ones in battle. While some of the Gaelic songs are 'Jacobite songs' in the same sense as their Scots counterparts, complete with toasts, exhortations to the converted, and loyal messages 'over the water', others, especially the anonymous women's songs, provide us with something very different, much nearer to the elusive *vox populi*. We must therefore be prepared to recognise 'higher' and 'lower' styles, 'court' (*i.e.* 'bardic') and 'folk' strains, and so forth.

We must also allow for conscious manipulation of these categories by some of the more sophisticated of our poets: compare, most obviously, MacMhaighstir Alasdair's Jacobite 'waulking songs', discussed below (pp. 30, 48). It is partly because of this deliberate blurring of traditional distinctions that I have preferred not to use these different poetic viewpoints as an ordering principle in what follows, though that would have offered some obvious attractions. I have chosen rather to adopt a loosely chronological approach, fastening on certain phases or moments suggested by the disposition of the material. That is, I shall begin with the build-up of expectation or apprehension which attended Prince Charlie's setting sail and arrival in Scotland. This will be followed by songs associated with events from the raising of the Jacobite standard at Glenfinnan through the early successes to the long march south to Derby and back north again. The following sections will deal in turn with Culloden; the Prince 'in the heather'; the aftermath of reprisals, occupation and legislation; and, finally, the passing of Highland Jacobitism—*i.e.* the gradual blurring of the issues and the gathering of a romantic haze over the events of 1745-6.

A fair amount has been written about the motives of the Highlanders who came out in support of the Prince. To some they have appeared as impractical idealists, to others as caterans on a glorified cattle-raid, and to yet others as men driven to desperate action by cultural and religious persecution. Dr Campbell, who favours the last alternative, has justly complained that too many historians have attempted to answer the question aprioristically without reference to the testimony of Gaelic sources (*HS*: xviii).[2] Granted that they require to be handled carefully, the Gaelic songs of the time can tell us a good deal about the psychology and the motivation of Highland Jacobitism, as I now hope to show.

The ultimate reason for taking action is consistently presented as a moral imperative—*còir* 'right, what one should do', *ceart* 'what is right, just' and *dlighe* 'what is due (to and from one)' being the operative terms. The action prescribed is to drive out the usurping ruler and to restore the rightful one. Some powerful old concepts underpin this prescription. First, the older Gaelic bardic poetry, which was a prime source of political ideology

in traditional Gaelic society, had always laid great emphasis on the existence of a compact between rulers and poets, in which the latter were supposed to set the seal of acceptability on a king's rule by giving it their praise, or conversely to withhold that praise if the king's justice faltered—the point being that in mediaeval times the poets' censure was held to be a blemish on a king, and a blemished king could not rule. (See, for example, Carney 1967, Breatnach 1983.)[3] This belief in the possibility of rejecting a monstrous ruler, together with the assumption that it fell to the poets to publicise his shame, lies somewhere behind the readiness of the Gaelic Jacobite poets to couch their political poetry in the form of personalised satires against members of the House of Hanover.

In the second place, Gaelic political mythology clung to the ancient notion that the just king's reign was accompanied by plenitude and fine weather, while storms and poverty were signs of something rotten in the State. (See, for example, Kelly 1976: xv; Gillies 1977 and 1986: 110.) To the Gaelic poets the rule of the House of Hanover constituted such a state of outrage. The various ills and grievances which Highlanders laboured under as a result of present or past Government policies, including the Union, became tokens of the rule of an unjust king and were used to establish King George's ripeness for deposition. The poets rehearsed the 'case for the prosecution' in an age-old way by declaring the blemishes of the royal house, at the same time setting out the legitimacy and rightfulness of the claims of the House of Stewart. Thus Alexander MacDonald begins one of his Jacobite songs with the following evocation of the idea that Nature reflects the quality and justice of the present King's rule:

Is fuar, fearthainneach gach lò,
gach oidhche dorcha, doinionnach;
's tursach, donn gach lò,
murtach, trom le ceò;
ach mosglaibh suas, a shlòigh,
's ur n-airsteal trusaibh uaibh air chairteal,
's cartaibh uaibh ur bròn:
tha *leug* ri muir 's ri speur
ri bhith aig Aeolus 's aig Neptun,
's thig gach tlachd 'na déidh.
Thig soinionn leis an Rìgh,
teichidh sneachd is eighre uainn;
fògrar dòruinn shìon,
thig sòlas, falbhaidh pian . . .
(*AMD*: 118; *HS*: 94)[4]

'Every day is cold and raining, every night dark and stormy. Miserable and grim is every day, oppressive and heavy with mist. But waken up, people, and banish your dejection. Cart away your sorrow; Aeolus and Neptune are about to make a pact covering sea and sky, and every sort of ease will attend it.

Fair weather will come with the [rightful] King, snow and ice will retreat from us; hurtful storms will be proscribed, solace will come and pain will go.'

Later on Rob Donn Mackay was to express the same idea in more matter-of-fact terms when he addressed Prince Charles as follows:

Tha cupall mhìos is ràithe
o'n là thàinig thu do dh'Alba so,
's bu shoilleir dhuinn o'n tràth bha sin
an fhàilte chuir an aimsir oirnn;
bha daoine measail, miadhail oirnn,
's bha àrach nì a' sealbhach oirnn,
bha barran troma tìr' againn,
bha toradh frìth is fairg' againn.
(*RD*: 80; *HS*: 230)

'It's now five months since you came over to Scotland, and since that time the weather's welcome to you has been obvious to us. People have been appreciative and well-disposed towards us; stock-rearing has prospered with us, the crops have been heavy, and the deer-forest and the sea have done us proud.'

Here we have to remember that there had been real food shortages in the land, and also that there really had been outstandingly good weather at harvest time in 1745 (Grimble 1979: 62). Nevertheless, the poet is also exploiting well-understood conventions here.

In order to find out what the House of Hanover had actually done wrong one has to wade through a mass of conventional abuse. The animal similes, the physical and mental debilities, the accusations of criminal behaviour and unnatural vices, and all the other tokens of misrule may or may not have had a foundation in truth, or at least in popular belief. (It was believed that unmerited satire could recoil on its reciter.) But they are here principally as part of the currency of satire. It boils down, in the last resort, to a question of genealogy. As Alexander MacDonald puts it later on in the poem already quoted, George's *còir* to the throne was based not on heredity, since there were 'fifty better qualified' than he to succeed, but upon a mere Act of Parliament (*i.e.* the 1701 Act of Settlement).

It is open to us, of course, to regard this complaint also as a mere label, a cipher for something deeper and inarticulate, rather in the way that we have to look beyond the nominal targets of nineteenth-century satires addressed to sheep or shepherds if we wish to find the real villains of the Highland Clearances. Support for such an approach might possibly be found in the fact that the Gaelic poets of the 'Forty-five seem at times to be trying with difficulty to identify an 'enemy' beyond the usurping King, with 'them' coming out sometimes as *Goill* ('Lowlanders', or perhaps 'non-Gaels'), sometimes as *Sasannaich* ('English', or perhaps 'Saxons'), sometims as *luchd Beurla* ('English speakers') and sometimes as 'Parliament'. Things had been more clear-cut in 1715, when the enemies of the Jacobites tended to be called simply *'A' Chuigse'* ('The Whigs').

Nevertheless, I believe that the poets' repeated references to *fuil* ('blood') should be understood as a serious and self-sufficient concern. For we are dealing here with the tail-end of an intensely conservative aristocratic tradition in which birth counted for every-

thing, and a good number of clans, including Clan Donald itself, traced their descent back to the Kings of the Scots, or actually claimed kinship with the Stewart kings. Moreover, this sense of having a stake in the continuance of the Stewart line became a particularly attractive aspect of the past in the eyes of more conservative Gaels (including, *par excellence*, the poets and shennachies) at a time when the traditional bases of Gaelic society were rapidly crumbling away. I am therefore prepared to believe that Alexander MacDonald sought to touch a deeply responsive chord when he referred to the Gaels as *àlach gun mhàthair* ('a motherless brood') in the absence of a Stewart ruler, or when he addressed the Old Pretender as 'our earthly father under the heavenly Father', whose coming would put an end to present tribulations (*AMD*: 76, 124; *HS*: 74, 102).

In contrast to the terms of dispraise which Gaelic poetry mostly employs when dealing with the House of Hanover, Charles and James, being 'rightful rulers', fall to receive the standard accolades of Gaelic panegyric. This involves a value-system whose virtues include not only the qualities which one can strive to embody (such as justice) but also some which most ethical systems would regard as morally neutral, and which are more the product of nature than of nurture—*e.g.* physical strength, comeliness of appearance, and nobility of birth. (The classic account of this system is that contained in the Introduction to Knott 1922.) Rob Donn nicely articulates the parameters of praiseworthiness (and nicely demonstrates the methods of praise-poetry) in his song to Prince Charles already quoted:

Gur cal' an am na h-éiginn e
ar carraig threun gu stiùradh air,
thug bàrr air cheud am buadhannaibh,
's tha cridh' an t-sluaigh air dlùthadh ris.

Chan ioghnadh sin 'n uair smuainichear
an dualachas o'n tàinig e,
an doimhne bh' ann gu foghluimte,
gun bhonn de dh'éis 'na nàdar dheth:
mar Sholamh 'n cleachdadh reusanta,
mar Shamson treun an làmhan e,
mar Absolom gur sgiamhach e,
gur sgiath 's gur dìon d'a chàirdean e.

(*RD*: 80-1; *HS*: 232)

'[The Stewart prince] is a haven in time of distress, our stout rock to steer by, supremely endowed with virtues, and the people have taken him to their hearts.

When one considers his heredity the depth and completeness of his culture comes as no surprise: he is like Solomon, just in dispensation; like Samson he is strong of arm; like Absolom he is fair of face; he is a shield and bulwark to his friends.'

The Stewart king over the water is not infrequently presented in an almost messianic light. He is 'the one we desire', the 'awaited' or 'longed-for' one. There is a visionary quality in the following, one of Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's best-known songs:

O, hì-ri-rì, tha e tighinn,
o, hì-ri-rì, 'n Rìgh tha uainn,
gheibheamaid ar n-airm 's ar n-éideadh,
's breacan an fhéilidh an cuaich.

'S éibhinn leam fhìn, tha e tighinn,
mac an Rìgh dhlighich tha uainn,
slios mór rìoghail d'an tig armachd,
claidheamh is targaid nan dual.

'S ann a' tighinn thar an t-sàile
tha 'm fear ard as àille snuadh,
marcaich sunndach nan steud-each
rachadh gu h-eutrom 'san ruaig
(*AMD*: 68; *HS*: 48)

'O hì ri rì, he is coming, o hì ri rì, the king we desire, let us take our weapons and battle-dress and the tartan kilt plaided up.

I rejoice, he is coming, the son of the rightful king we desire, a great kingly frame well-suited to weaponry, the broadsword and patterned targe.

He is coming over the sea, the tall man most handsome in appearance, the high-spirited rider of the chargers, who would go lightly in the pursuit.'

The next verse is a fine example of MacDonald's capacity to get carried away by his own words, raising the poetic stakes dramatically. The translation does no justice at all to its rhythm or density or to the menacing onomatopoeia of the last line:

Samhuil an Fhaoillich a choltas,
fuaradh-froise 's fadadh cruaidh;
lann thana 'na làimh gu cosgairt,
sgoltadh chorp mar choirc' air cluain.

'His appearance is like the stormy close of Winter, the chill breeze before a squall, a glimpse of a storm-riven rainbow; a slender blade in his hand to make carnage, scything through bodies like oats in a field.'

Whether this picture serves to remind us of the Renaissance figure of the divine ruler (as in van Dyck's portrait of Charles II on horseback), or of a near-blasphemous version of 'Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord', this is heady stuff.

On a few occasions the awaited leader becomes 'the Promised One', 'the Prophesied One'. In the aftermath of Culloden John Roy Stewart is able to anticipate better days:

Ma thionndas i [*sc.* cuibhle an Fhortain] deiseal an dràsd',
's gum faigh Frangaich am Flannras buaidh,
tha m' earbs' as an tairgneachd a bhà,
gun tig armailt nì stàth dhuinn thar chuan.
(*HS*: 188)

'If . . . the French prevail in Flanders I have confidence in the old prophecy that an army to sustain us will come over the seas.'

Similarly, one of the poets represented in Turner's Collection (1813: 281) talks of his confident expectation '*that it is fated* that we shall gain the upper hand . . .' However, this theme with its dream-vision stereotype is not so developed in surviving Jacobite poetry in Scotland as it is in Ireland. (It is presupposed by a few poems like *An Taisbean*, discussed below, p. 50.) More common are Old Testament parallels between the Gaels and the Children of Israel: the Gaels, like Israel borne down by the oppression of Pharaoh in Egypt, await the appearance of their Moses (*e.g. HS*: 30; 188). Or again Charles may be seen as playing David to King George's Saul (*e.g. HS*: 88, 230).

The idea that 'God is on our side' in fact occurs in various guises, and should be taken seriously in view of its importance in 'royalist' thinking in general. Not every poet goes so far as Alexander MacDonald, who termed Jacobitism a *soisgeul* ('gospel'), and even after Culloden claimed that the inheritance of the Gaels was 'to be loyal—yes, that is our creed'. (See *AMD*: 88, 360; *HS*: 62, 160). But the sense that the coming war was a sort of Crusade is strong in a number of the poets. Thus 'Aonghus Mac Alasdair' (Macdonald) addressed the Jacobite clans as follows:

A chlannaibh nan Gàidheal
dh'am b' àbhaist bhith rìoghail,
hó-ró, togaibh an àird;
is freasdailibh an dràsda
do Theàrlach mar dhìlsean,
hó-ró, togaibh an àird;
freasdailibh dha uile
gun fhuireach ri rìghneas,
na leughaibh ur cunnart
ach bhith 'm muinighin Chrìosda . . .
(SC: 382; *HS*: 10)

'Clans of the Gael, who have traditionally been "loyal", . . . give service now to Charles as his loyal followers. Attend him, every one of you, without dragging of heels; do not dwell upon the danger to you but put your trust in Christ.'

Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair himself addresses the Almighty with the following prayer:

Och! a Rìgh nan dùl,
na leig-sa neart a ghnàth thar cheart;
ochòin! Aon Dia ta 'd thriùir,
's ann duit as léir gach cùis,
tog dhinn a' mhuc 's a cuing,
's a h-àl breac, brothach, uirceineach
le'n cuid chrom-shoc thar tuinn;
's cart gu glan *Whitehall*,
air chionn an Teaghlaich Rìoghail sin
bha ' n sinnsreadh ann an tàmh.
(*AMD*: 124; *HS*: 104)

'O God of all, never let might overpower right . . . Remove from us the Pig and his

oppression . . . and clean out Whitehall completely on behalf of that Royal Family whose ancestors resided there.'

Not only is God on the Jacobite side, but there are signs that the present time is propitious. Where Rob Donn talks about the way weather and crops bear testimony to the rightfulness of the Pretender's claim, Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair regards 1745 as the moment when history is about to be made:

O! sheanchaidhnibh nan Clann,
Suas! Dèanaibh eachdraidh éifeachdach!
O! sheanchaidhnibh 'san am,
glacaibh dubh is peann:
So a' bhliadhna chòrr . . .
(*AMD*: 118; *HS*: 94)

'Historians of the Clans, arise and write effective history; historians of the present time, seize pen and paper: this is the special year . . .'

Also prominent is the idea that the 'Wheel of Fortune' is turning, or about to turn, in favour of Jacobitism and the Stewart cause. The poetess Nighean Aonghais Oig puts it thus:

Ged leig Dia greis air adhart
do'n mhuic bhith cladhach ad àite,
nis o'n thionndaidh a' chuibhle
théid gach traoitear fo'r sàiltean.
(*HS*: 22)[5]

'Although God allowed a period of advancement to the Pig, (to enable him) to root in your place, now that the Wheel has turned every traitor will go under our heels.'

Even more pointed are references to a Jacobite belief that a new star appeared for the first time when Prince Charles was born:

Tha rionnag a bhreithe mar thà
toirt fios agus fàisneachd fìor,
gur mac rath a thàinig an dràsd',
chuir Athair nan Gràs g'ar dìon.
(*HS*: 4)

'The star of his birth already provides knowledge and true presage that the one who has now arrived is a "son of fortune" whom the Father of Grace has sent to protect us.'

In the poem already cited by Rob Donn the demonstration that Charles is the 'rightful ruler' includes the following testimony which makes explicit the Christian parallel and also implies the Messianic message:

Nach fhaic sibh fhéin an spéis a ghabh
na speuran gu bhith 'g ùmhladh dha,
'nuair sheas an rionnag shoillseach anns
an *line* an robhta stiùradh leis?

An comharra bh' aig ar Slànuighear—
roimh Theàrlach thighinn do'n dùthaich so—
'nuair chaidh na daoine ciallaidh ud
'ga iarraidh gu h-Ierùsalem.
(*RD*: 81; *HS*: 232-4)

'Don't you see for yourselves the care which the Heavens took to make obeisance to him, when the shining star stood out in the line by which men were setting their course (?): the (very) sign which was associated with our Saviour at the time, before Charles's coming to this country, when those wise men went to Jerusalem to seek Him.'

Finally, we meet a confident insistence that support for the Jacobite cause will be overwhelming when the Prince comes. In his 'Song of the Highland Clans' Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair proceeds to a roll-call of the clans he expects will rise. It includes not only those most obviously likely to support the Jacobite cause, but also some more surprising names (e.g. the Campbells); and it furthermore includes reference to participation by 'British'—that is, presumably, Lowland Scots plus English—'and Irish Jacobites' (*AMD*: 78 and 128; *HS*: 74 and 142).[6]

It should be clear from the foregoing paragraphs that, whatever else it was, Gaelic Jacobite poetry of the sort quoted was far from being a neutral commodity. Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, besides being the leading visionary and intellectual amongst the Jacobite poets, was also a tireless propagandist for his ideals, using poetry and song in the same way that a political evangelist in a modern, literary society would use hustings and media, debating chambers, journals, pamphlets and books.[7] Moreover, as he says himself, and as not a little of his poetry shows, he was literally 'high' with enthusiasm for Prince Charlie:

Thu 'g imeachd gu sùrdail air tùs a' bhatàili,
cha fhroisinn aon driùchda, 's mi dlùth air do shàilibh,
mi eadar an talamh 's an t-athar a' seòladh
air iteig le h-aighear, misg' chath' agus shòlais . . .

Do làthaireachd mhórchuiseach dh'fhògradh gach fàillinn,
gun tionndadh tu feòdar gach feòla gu stàilinn
'nuair sheallmaid go sanntach air fabhra do ruisg.
(*AMD*: 96-8; *HS*: 52) [8]

'Suppose you were cheerily marching at the head of the battalion I would not disturb a single dew-drop as I followed close behind you, floating on air with high spirits, with intoxication of battle and of happiness . . .

. . . your gracious presence that would banish every deficiency: why, you would turn the pewter of our flesh to steel whenever we looked greedily into your face.'

If such verse appears sometimes to lose touch with reality we must remind ourselves of its functionality within the honour-based, aristocratic society of the Highlands, and be prepared to tune in to its own wavelengths. Thus Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's already-mentioned roll-call of clans who would rise is to be seen not as misjudgment, over-optimism or wishful thinking, but as invoking the classic bardic carrot and stick of fame

and shame, to say to the Highland gentry, 'Here are the deserved accolades your fathers have won; this is your opportunity to join their Hall of Fame.' This was a worthwhile and practical contribution to the Jacobite cause, given that many of the Highland nobility of the time were not yet wholly purged of a Gaelic consciousness, and that most Highland families contained some Jacobite sympathisers, including those houses whose chiefs took the Government line. Even in the case of the Campbells, the precedent of 1715 revealed some who had defied their clan's 'official' line, and it could be hoped that the same thing might happen again; while the tone of some of Duncan Bàn Macintyre's comments suggests that in territory which was nominally under Hanoverian direction there could be different sympathies amongst the non-Campbell tenantry and peasantry. And at a quite different level of explanation one should not forget the tradition that 'The Song of the Highland Clans' was one of a set carried to Paris by Jacobite relatives of MacDonald's and used to help persuade the Prince that the time was ripe for him to come to Scotland.[9]

The question remains, of course, how far such Jacobite pieces represent widely held views and how widely they were disseminated, understood and acted on. The proceedings of the trial of Lord Lovat contain evidence for the doings of the defendant together with one of our poets, John Roy Stewart, whose escape from Inverness gaol he had recently engineered. A prosecution witness alleged that they spent their time 'in composing burlesque verses, that, when young Charlie came over, there would be blood and blows' (MacKay 1911: 64). Does that relatively enclosed ambience of Jacobite gentlemen and agents account for all, or at least much, of the Gaelic poetry we have been considering? Clearly it played a part. But although our knowledge of the actual circumstances of dissemination of individual songs is usually inferential and fragmentary, I believe there are some grounds for supposing that most of ours were intended to be heard, and were in fact heard, by a wider audience than the narrow circle of the wholly converted. In other words, it is my contention that one may imagine their being sung in inns, at fairs, in *céilidh* houses and 'below stairs' in big houses, and not just in the dining and drawing rooms of a smallish number of the latter.

The reasons for this supposition are both general and particular. In the first place it should be remembered that, if we except Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's works, which were published—presumably directly from the author's manuscript—in 1751, most if not all of the poems under consideration had to undergo, and to survive, a shorter or longer period of oral transmission before attaining written form.[10] Even in MacDonald's case orally transmitted versions of a good number of his poems exist, beside those whose survival depends entirely on the poet's own scribal and publishing activities. The existence of variant tunes and texts for some of these suggests a currency independent of the printed sources. More generally, the object of the Jacobite songs was to buttonhole, persuade, comfort and encourage, purposes which could only be fulfilled if they were allowed to fly fairly freely. Obviously there were certain constraints on the utterance of treasonable sentiments; but song has always been a suitable and favourite medium for subversive comment. Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's seizure of the Ardnamurchan minister's

pulpit to proclaim the Jacobite cause (Black 1986: 35) was a typically excessive gesture; his songs, passing from lips to lips, would have a greater impact.

In the second place, consideration of the linguistic and metrical-musical form of the poems shows that in some cases our poets employed 'higher' and 'lower' styles on different occasions to cover the same subject-matter. This surely suggests a conscious attempt to strike a more communal note when the 'lower' styles are employed. Thus, for example, of John Roy Stewart's three songs on Culloden, one is in the more 'literary' *amhran* form with its four long four-stress lines, while the other two are in more traditional-popular forms. And while some of Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's poems have more complicated structures, corresponding to more elevated language and more recondite allusion, others are couched in simple song-metres or even cast in the irreducibly popular form of the women's waulking-song tradition.[11]

It has, of course, been stated by some scholars that the anonymous oral-popular song-tradition (as opposed to the productions of the named poets in the post-bardic tradition) does not offer much evidence for contemporary composition relating to the 'Forty-five. There is some truth in this. But the conclusion sometimes drawn, that the episode meant little to 'ordinary Gaels', would seem to be less certain. It could be that the relevant genres had ceased to be regularly productive by that time. Again, the time-lapse between the mid-eighteenth century and the time when collectors began to take an interest in such poetry was much longer than in the case of the more literary strata, and the possibility of non-survival was correspondingly greater. And in fact there are a few exceptions—survivals against the odds, as it were—and they do show the attitudes we should expect *a priori*. (*Cf. HF*: 1, 22 and 25; 3, 9.)

The best known of these texts is probably the waulking-song *An Fhìdeag Airgid* ('The Silver Whistle'). One of the Barra versions runs as follows:

Có sheinneadh an fhìdeag airgid?
Mac mo Righ a' tighinn do dh'Alba
air luing mhóir air bhàrr na fairge,
air luing a' mharaiche dh'fhalbh e,
air luing a' mharaiche ghreannmhoir.
Bha stiùir òir is dà chrann airgid,
's tobar fiona shìos 'na garbhlach,
cuplaichean dha'n t-sìoda Fhrangach,
ugalan òir air gach ceann dhiu.

Có theireadh nach seinneadh, sheinneadh:
có sheinneadh ach Eoghainn Camshron?
Có theireadh nach seinneadh, sheinneadh:
sheinneadh Mac Leòid is Mac Coinnich.

Nuair a thig mo Righ gu fhearann
crùnar am Prionnsa le caithream
'san Taigh Bhàn an tàmh na gaisgich . . .
(*HF*: 3, 222)

'Who would sound the silver whistle? The son of my king coming to Scotland, on a great ship over the sea, on the ship of the mariner he has set sail, on the ship of the handsome mariner. She has a golden helm and two silver masts and a well of wine down in her hold, shrouds of the French silk, with golden pulleys at each end of them. Whoever would deny it, he would sound it: who would sound it but Ewen Cameron? Whoever would deny it, he would sound it: MacLeod would sound it, and MacKenzie.

When my King comes to his land the Prince will be crowned in triumph in the White House where the heroes dwell . . .'[12]

And another version contains the following sequence;

'S chuireadh iad na Goill gu'n dùbhshlan,
's chuireadh iad Rìgh Seòras dhachaigh,
do Hanòbhar a null fairis.
'S có sheinneas an fhideag airgid?
Có theireadh nach seinninn, sheinninn:
có theireadh nach seinninn fhìn i?

'And they would put the foreigners to challenge, and they would send King George home, away over to Hanover. And who will sound the silver whistle? Whoever would deny it, I would sound it. Who would deny that I myself would sound it?'

Although the several versions of this song contain traditional passages (*e.g.* the fantastic description of the ship in the first passage quoted) which may well or must ante-date 1745 by a considerable period, the references to *Bliadhna Theàrlaich* are equally unmistakeable and, so far as we can tell, integral to the song.

I turn now to the related question of the relationship between the Jacobite songs and the 'real world'. Evidence is furnished by incidental details in the texts themselves. For whereas we have laid stress up till now on their conventional aspects—ideological framework, symbolism and rhetoric—we must also be clear that, even where these elements predominate, they are never the sum of the message of an individual poem.[13] In particular, a close reading of the texts of our songs soon reveals realistic and mundane hopes, fears and doubts, surfacing in a way which makes the poems seem less impersonal and more in touch with a real state of affairs.

For instance, in Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's *Oran Nuadh* ('New Song'), which speaks inspiringly about the new 'gospel' that has reached the Highlands and is galvanising heroes to action (see *AMD*: 89-95; *HS*: 62-71), we meet with what I presume to be glimpses of reality in such lines as:

'S iomadh neach a théid air ghaisge
tha fìor-lag 'na dhòchas.

'Many a man *who is now pretty faint-hearted* will become heroic (when the Prince comes).'

Soirbhichidh gach nì gu léir libh,
ach sibh féin bhith deònach.

'You will be comprehensively successful, *if only you show willing*.'

However many would drink Jacobite toasts, smash their glass in the hearth and verbally dispose of King George:

. . . 's onoraich' a nis an gnìomh
na cóig ceud mìle bòla.

'Now the deed is more honourable than any number of (punch-)bowls . . .'

And after vaunting the irresistible strength and ferocity of the Highland hosts the poet concludes with a more reflective comment:

'S beagan sluaigh as tric thug buaidh
an iomairt chruaidh a' chòmhraig;
dèanamaid gluasad gun dad uamhainn,
's na biodh fuathas oirnne.

'It is the small army which has won, often enough, in the hard game of battle. Let us march out without being over-awed in any way, and let dread not affect us.'

The realities are made clear in a different way in a poem, attributed by one source to John Roy Stewart (though it is anonymous elsewhere), which takes the form of a dialogue between a young girl who is vehement in her support for the Prince, and an interlocutor who counsels a more canny approach, though with a lack of conviction which hints at the poet's own sympathies. It is basically a 'Heart *vs* Head' debate. In the penultimate verse the voice of Reason has, as its last word, the following comment to make:

A nighean, na toir luadh air Tearlach:
's beag a's fheaird sinn e bhi ann;
tha a naimhdean lionar laidir,
ged nach 'eil a chàirdean gann;
na daoin' uaisle 's fearr ga àicheadh,
ged bha roinn àraidh dhiubh 'na bhann,
cumail Dheorsa anns an àite,
dh'aindeoin ailghios Righ na Fràing.
(A. Watson 1983: 37)[14]

'Girl, do not mention Charles, we are little the better off for his existing. His enemies are numerous and strong, although his friends are not scarce. The 'top drawer' of the nobility are denying him (though a certain element amongst them have treated with him), keeping George around the place despite the desire of the King of France.'

I take it that the two 'voices' in this poem are a device to juxtapose existing views on the political situation in 1745 or 1746, and that, allowing for the discreet loading of the dice on the pro-Jacobite side (which is allowed to speak last), they reflect real trends in calculation and argument at the time.

An especially important poem in the present context is Aonghas Mac Alasdair's *Oran Brosnachaidh* ('Song of Incitement'), which gives some palpably practical advice addressed to the Gaels who were about to set out to put the Prince on the throne (see *HS*: 10-18.) The poet begins by advising them to say farewell to their wives, houses and possessions if they have to be away from home, and then continues:

Na cuireadh fuaim fùdair
bonn cùraim 'nur feòil-se,
hó-ró togaibh an àird,

no musgaidean dùbhghorm
dad mùthaidh 'nur dòchas,
hó-ró togaibh an àird;

nuair theirgeas an fhuaim sin
dh'fhalbh an cruadal 's an dòruinn,
bidh sibh-se 'nam badaibh
leis a' chleachdadh bu nòs duibh . . .
(*HS*: 12)

'Do not let the sound of gun-powder put the slightest anxiety into your bodies, nor blue-black muskets any decline in your hopes; whenever that sound dies away the distress and hurt are at an end, and you will be tackling them at close quarters according to your immemorial practice . . .'

Beyond a doubt these are serious, practical counsels to real fighting men—the advice of a survivor of Killiecrankie and the Rising of 1715 (*cf. HS*: 8-9 and, for the military context, Hill 1986: 103, 127). For that reason the following enumeration of the objects of the expedition commands special attention. They appear as a sort of counterpoint, interwoven with the conventional elements of exhortation and panegyric, and are as follows. If the Gaels succeed, and 'win a kingdom', their 'fame will spread over the world' and they will enjoy 'the wealth of every land', and not just their own patrimony (*HS*: 14). The things they will say goodbye to are at least as important as the positive gains depicted:

. . . ragha gach fearainn,
gun ghearradh gun chìs air.
Bidh sibh laisde sochaireach,
gun chàs gun dochaireachd,
agus bàidh 'gur brosnachadh
gun chàch (?) 'gur goirteachadh,
hó-ró togaibh an àird.
(*HS*: 14)[15]

'(You will get) the choicest of land free from import and taxation. You will enjoy ease and comfort, free from hardship and struggle, with goodwill to encourage you and without everyone else injuring you.'

When Charles attains the throne he will not forget his friends, and the lowly as well as the high-born will benefit from the relief from 'turmoil and harassment'. Church and State will resolve their problems and the various Churches will be respected. Trades will prosper and will always be well-provided for (*HS*: 14–16).

Naturally, there is unbounded optimism here, combined with a certain amount of 'pleasure equals absence of pain'. But it would be a poor army that set out without ideals and high hopes; and we know from other sources how important to Jacobite thinking was the assumption that support would be forthcoming from sympathisers throughout the

realm as the campaign gathered momentum. I do not belive one can get nearer to the minds of those who followed the Prince than the mix of idealism, calculation, pride and dissatisfaction which emerges from this poem.[16]

The departure of the contingents of fighting men to join the Jacobite army is captured nicely in traditional accounts of the 'Forty-five recorded by Rev. Thomas Sinton in Badenoch. According to Sinton's informants the MacPherson band marched first to the refrain:

Cha till, cha till, cha till sinn tuillidh,
gus an crùnar an Rìgh cha till sinne.
(*PB*: 210)

'We will not return, no, we will not return again, till the King shall be crowned we will not return.'

They then changed to 'the livelier measures of a favourite marching song':

Carson a bhiodh sinn muladach,
carson a bhiodh sinn brònach,
carson a bhiodh sinn muladach,
gum falbh sinn uile còmhladh.

'S ioma bean a bhios gun mhac,
piuthair bhios gun bhràthair aic',
's maighdean òg gun leannan aic',
ma leanas sinn mar thà sinn.
(*PB*: 210)[17]

'Why should we be miserable? Why should we be sad? Why should we be miserable? We'll all march together!

There's many a wife will lack a son, and sister who'll lack a brother, and young maid who'll lack her love, if we go as we're going.'

Over in Lochaber a MacDonald lady addressed the Jacobite leaders in more formal terms (PT: 182; *cf. HS*: 21 for discussion of the problem of her identity). Prince Charles is 'the Star, the priceless treasure we yearned for' which has now been brought safely to its owners. MacDonell of Keppoch and other leading men are praised and exhorted to heroism, and the MacGregors are urged to throw off the Campbell yoke. On the other hand, Sir Alexander MacDonald of Sleat is roundly criticised for not joining the Rising ('your holding back is becoming tiresome to me'). The general feeling is one of confidence:

Bha an Seanalair gòrach
tighinn a chòmhrag 'nur n-aghaidh;
's teann nach islich e 'shròn
ged thig e spòrsail air adhart;
ach nan cumadh e còmhdail,
mar bha òrdugh a' chladhair',
gum bu lìonmhor fear casaig
gun cheann, gun chasan, gun fhradharc.
(*HS*: 28)

'The foolish General [*i.e.* Sir John Cope] was coming to fight against you; it won't be long before he bites the dust, though he advances with head held high; but if he would keep a tryst, as the coward's orders were, there would be many a red-coat without head, without feet, without sight.'

From the point when the Jacobite army left the Highlands we have two viewpoints to take account of: that of the combatants, and that of those who were left behind awaiting news. (On the question of the time taken for news to reach the Highlands see Grimble 1979: 48, 64.) Because of the ultimate failure of the campaign, the dislocation and confusion which followed it, and the need for all poetic hands to stand to (as it were) to help deal with the trauma of Culloden, surviving participant accounts of the expedition are not common amongst our songs. There are, however, several references to Prestonpans in poems addressed to Highland leaders who distinguished themselves there, and similarly with engagements which occurred during the retreat north from Derby (see, for example, *PB*: 78, 81, 84). An interesting song from the 'home front' is that ascribed by Sinton (*PB*: 206) to 'a Stewart lady', *Seo an tìm tha cur as domh* ('This is the time that is doing away with me'). The poetess opens with a complaint of ineffectuality—loss of voice, as she puts it—when what is needed is strong prayer to help 'the rightful king of the Gaels, who will go from us to London shortly'. What I take to be her prayer assumes the form of an invocation of the stout men who will go with Charles, with pride of place given to her kinsman, Colonel John Roy Stewart, and to another local hero, Major Gillies MacBean. Mention of them seems to bring a measure of confidence, and she refers proudly to Prestonpans:[19]

Am blàr Chòp fhuair thu 'n t-urram,
bu cheann-feadhn' thair gach duin' thu,
's ann a shamhlaich iad uil' thu ri Cléibhir.

'S tu gun cuireadh droch sheòl
fo champa Righ Deòrsa—
'n ceann 's na casan 's na bòtainn' gu léir diu.
(*PB*: 207)

'In the battle with Cope you won the honour, you were a leader above leaders; why, they all likened you to Claverhouse.

It is you who would inject disorder into the camp of King George—minus their heads, their legs and their boots!'

A further roll-call of powerful allies comes next. It includes MacDonald of Sleat. Was the poetess ignorant of the facts, or powerless to exclude the senior branch from a listing of the branches of Clan Donald, or is this another example of the wish being articulated as a means to bring about the reality? At all events, the list of allies gives way to imprecation against the British Army and the 'Argyll Militia', who, in Sinton's words, 'were dispersed in parties over various districts in the North, which were favourable to the Jacobite cause, where they rendered themselves very obnoxious' (*cf.* PT: 281; Hill 1986: 102).

'S masa beò mi cóig bliadhna
chì mi fathasd droch dhìol
air luchd-sgathaidh nam bian far na spréidhe,

air luchd chasagan dearga
's Mailisi Earraghàidheal—
chì sibh fhathasd droch àird air na béisdean.
(*PB*: 208)

'And if I live five years I will yet see an evil requital exacted from those who are hacking the hides off the cattle,

from the people with the red coats and the Militia of Argyll—you will yet see those brutes in an evil way.'

Continuing in invocatory terms but switching back to the Jacobite army, she wishes them the power to ward off lead and powder, and envisages 'English and Campbells' routed 'even if I don't live to see it'. Reverting finally to a personal note she tells us that she is at present 'in the Braes', away from her relatives, and hearing nothing but the belling of the stag. But she will somehow gather her strength and head for home, to the heart of staunch Jacobite territory:

'S a Theàrlaich òig Stiùbhairt,
chì sinne an crùn ort,
's bidh tu fhathasd a' sgiùrsadh nam béisdean.
(*PB*: 209)

'And young Charles Stewart, we shall see the crown on you, and you will yet be scourging the (Hanoverian) brutes.'

The song as we have it is somewhat elliptical in places, though I have tried in the above summary to highlight a sequence of associative steps which, if they are correctly construed, give it a measure of cohesion. On this reading, the song is noteworthy for its fluctuation between confidence and anxiety, and the whole should be seen as an expression of solidarity at a time when hard facts were unobtainable.[20]

When we come to the battle of Falkirk we are more favoured, since we have texts composed by eye-witnesses or participants on both sides. Duncan Bàn Macintyre was with the Argyll Militia on the Government side. He was very probably not yet twenty-one years old (*DB*: xxii-xxiv), and he was serving as a hired substitute for another man, rather than for reasons of personal conviction. Moreover, the occasion for his song was the loss of his sword—or rather that of his hirer—which he treats in a satirical, mock-heroic way. (This is clear from the first edition of Duncan Bàn's songs (1768), which calls this piece 'A song to Fletcher's Sword and to the Battle of Falkirk'.) Nevertheless, in building up a picture of the circumstances of his discomfiture he provides some interesting side-lights on the combatants and action. He shows clearly the confidence of the Government forces:

A' dol an coinneamh a' Phrionnsa
gum bu shunndach a bha sinne;
shaoil sinn gum faigheamaid cùis deth,
's nach robh dhùinn ach dol g'a shireadh.
(*DB*: 2)

'Going to engage the Prince our side were cheery enough: we thought we would get the better of him and that all we had to do was to seek him out.'

They had not considered the possibility that they might be the ones to be 'driven, like sheep before a dog': after all, they had 'the professionals' on their side—men 'well-armed and trained, devoted to the art of killing'. But then 'panic overtook us in the rout' when the Jacobite army charged downhill and 'Prince Charles and his Frenchmen' were breathing down their necks.

Cha d'fhuair sinn facal comannd
a dh'iarraidh ar nàimhdean a sgathadh,
ach comas sgaoilidh feadh an t-saoghail,
's cuid againn gun fhaotainn fhathast.
(*DB*: 4)

'We did not receive a word of command instructing us to smite our enemies—simply liberty to scatter throughout the world; and some of us are still missing.'[21]

The poet then brings the subject round to the sword, its loss, and the repercussions when he returned home without it.

A poem in celebration of the battle was addressed by one Alexander Cameron to his chief, Lochiel. It contains the following view of the same action, as seen from the Jacobite side:

Là na h-Eaglais bh'aig Hàlaidh
thug sibh bàrr air a bhuidhinn,
nuair a thionndaidh na nàimhdean
'nan sia *rancan* sa' bhruthach;
dhuit cha b'iomrall an cruadal,
ghlac thu an dualchas bu chubhaidh;
'n uair theann do chinneadh r' a chéile
ghabh na béistean mu shiubhal.
(*HS*: 260)[22]

'On Hawley's 'kirk'-day (*i.e.* Fal*kirk*) you (Camerons) outreached his company when the (Hanoverian) enemy turned in six ranks on the hillside. Stress of battle did not put you (Lochiel) off your stride; you opted for the course of action which was fitting—the hereditary one. When your clan drew together the (Hanoverian) beasts took to flight.'

Aonghas Og, second son of Iain of Glengarry, was also present on the Jacobite side, at the head of his clansmen, but was accidentally killed shortly after the battle. The elegy for him by Aonghas mac Ailein (*MDC*: 89) adds some further circumstantial details regarding the battle. The poet was 'drinking wine on Sunday . . . when news came of your death; when I saw your wounds my eyes filled with tears.' After some elegiac verses he continues:

Sliabh na h-Eaglaise Brice
bu mhór do mhisneach 's an uair sin;
ge do ràinig na h-eich sinn
cha do leasaich iad gruaim dhuit;
ge bu sgreataidh ri fhaicinn
le lannan glas as an truaill iad,
gum bu churanta t'fhacal
gu cur as ri aon uair daibh.
(*MDC*: 90)

'On Falkirk Moor, great was your courage at that time: although the cavalry came up with us they didn't upset you; although they were horrendous to behold with grey blades unsheathed, your word (of command) was efficacious with a view to destroying them all at once.'

In other words, Aonghas was able to hold his men's fire in the face of the cavalry charge until it could have a devastating effect—a reversal of the usual roles in Highland-Lowland confrontations, and one that called for authority, judgment and nerve. (Compare Hill 1986: 136; where, however, the credit is assigned to Lord George Murray.)

Aonghas Og's death was a severe blow to the morale of the Highland army, and especially to Glengarry's men, as is made clear in these lines from the *cumha* made by Bean Achadh Uaine:

Cùis bu mhath le Rìgh Deòrsa,
o'n là dh'inntrig thu 'n tòs leo,
thu bhith dhìth air do sheòrsa;
dh'fhalbh iad uile mar cheò uait
o'n là chuir iad fo'n fhòid thu;
cha d'fhan dithisd dhiu 'n ordugh—
och, mo chreach, nach bu bheò gus an dràsd' thu.

Cha bhitheadh Diùc Uilleam
cho trom oirnn—'s cha b' urrainn—
on 's tu sheasadh gach cunnart
is a bhuaileadh na buillean.
Nan do dh'fhuirich an gunna
gun do bhualadh o'n uinneig
gun robh Teàrlach an Lunnainn roimh'n am seo.
(AMS: 178)

'The best news that King George had, since the day you first joined the fray with them, was your being lost to your fellows. They have melted away like mist from you since the day they buried you; no two men of them have remained in rank—alas that you were not alive until today.

Duke William would not be so oppressive to us, nor could he be, since you were the one who could withstand every peril and strike the blows: if the gun had been stayed and not hit you from the window, sure, Charles would have been in London before now.'[23]

In this context it should be remembered that, in the pattern of limited warfare practised by the Gaels of old, the 'rules of engagement' included one to the effect that loss of the leader meant an end of fighting: compare the behaviour of his clansmen after the death

of Keppoch at Culloden. That this concept was especially relevant in the case of the traditionally minded Glengarry MacDonalds may perhaps be suggested by the poets' use of the old term *ceathairn* 'band of fighting men' to describe them in the elegies for Aonghas Òg (*MDC*: 90; AMS: 179). In fact, their position was the more critical in that Aonghas' elder brother Alasdair, the heir, was at the time interned in London. Aonghas mac Ailein, the bardic commentator on the spot, puts it thus, speaking first to Aonghas Òg:

Bha do thuathchearne deurach
's gun an t-oighre bhith 'd àite,
cha bu ghearain mar dh'éirich
nam biodh tu féin aca làthair,
gur e thromaich mo mhulad
thu bhith 'n Lunnainn an sàs ac';
's truagh an fhine Clann Dòmhnaill
ma gheibh Rìgh Seòras làmh làidir.
(*MDC*: 90)

'Your band of retainers were tearful, especially since the heir is not here to take your place; what has happened would have been no cause for complaint if they had you (Alasdair) yourself on the spot. What has deepened my grief is that they have you in captivity in London: woe betide Clan Donald if King George gets the upper hand.'

He turns now, rhetorically at least, to Prince Charles, and articulates plainly the conflict of loyalties which the situation imposed on his clansmen:

Ach, a Thearlaich òig Stiùbhart,
gun d' rug diùbhail glé mhór ort:
na fiùranan glana
nach mealladh sa' chòir ort,
oighre Chnòideart 's Ghlinn Garadh
bhith 'n tùr aig Gallaibh—b'e 'n leòn e—
's ma thig beud riu mu t' anam
gur daor a cheannaich sinn t'eòlas.
(*ibid.*)[24]

'But Young Charles Stewart, a very great loss has overtaken you— fine warriors who would not renege on you in the Cause; the heir of Knoydart and Glengarry imprisoned by the foreigners—that was the wound; and if harm befalls them while fighting for your sake it is dearly that we have purchased your acquaintance.'

In conclusion, however, the poet softens this revealing admission (for both conventional and practical reasons), though he does not retract it:

Ach t' eòlas gun iarrainn,
nam biodh Dia uime deònach,
chor 's gun éireadh gach latha
leat buaidh chatha 's buaidh chòmhnaidh;

fuasgladh grad do m' cheann-cinnidh,
's e sud a shirinn air m' ordugh;
's gur e thogadh mo mhulad
ruaig nan sionnach air Seòras.
(*MDC*: 91)

'But I *would* seek your acquaintance *if* God would so will it that victory would attend you on every day of battle, long-term victory, and swift release for my chief—that's what I would seek if I had my way, and what would dispel my grief would be for George to be hunted like a fox.'

In circumstances like these, plain speaking (by bardic standards) is needed if the poet is to rein in the feelings of his fellow clansmen and offer them a way forward.

The defeat of the Jacobite army at Culloden became burned into the collective memory of Gaelic speakers everywhere, irrespective of religion or political persuasion. The Jacobite dead, 'lying out there on the moors without coffin, without shrouds, without burial itself. . .' (*HS*: 170; *cf. MDC*: 175 'like slaughtered deer', *etc.*), put a bitter twist into the fulfilment of Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's bloodthirsty prediction:

Is mór a bhios ri corp-rùsgadh
nan closaichean 'sa' bhlàr:
fithich anns an ròcadaich,
ag itealaich 's a' cnocaireachd;
ciocras air na cosgarraich,
ag òl 's ag ith' an sàth;
och, 's tùrsach fann a chluinntear mochthrath
ochanaich nan àr.
(*AMD*: 84; *HS*: 84)

'There will be many engaged in stripping corpses in the battlefield—ravens cawing as they flutter and swagger about; kites ravening, drinking and eating their fill—alas, how sad and feeble in the early morning will one hear the groaning on the fields of slaughter (?)'

Important as the battle was at the time in terms of human loss, it became even more important as a symbol—the symbol of something like the end of independent Gaelic action. The bubble of confidence, the conviction that the Wheel of Fortune was on the turn at last, was rudely burst. And from our present point of view the defeat had the further effect of putting the poets into the front line. There was abundant need for elegies; and equally, if less obviously, for the resuscitation of the numbed psyches of the living, by analysing and rationalising the defeat, and preparing men to come out and fight the next round.

This consciousness of a social responsibility (as it were) made for a fair degree of unanimity as to the line poetry should take, and in numerous later compositions one senses that the poetic ranks have closed and an 'official version' is being purveyed. It is well-known that the songs of Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair were influential in this process. However, his was not the only analysis, and other poets' on-the-spot reactions contributed to the view which ultimately prevailed. To the question 'What went wrong?'

the answers were various, some being more subtle than others. In the synthesis which follows I have drawn heavily on the poems of Colonel John Roy Stewart.[25]

In the first place it was suggested that the contest was an unequal one: John Roy Stewart, for example, maintained that the Hanoverian forces outnumbered the Jacobites *ba mhò 's mar air fear mu thriùir* ('by more than three to one').[26] The disparity was exacerbated by the absence of certain Jacobite leaders and their men on the day of the battle. This was perfectly true, of course: those absent included the detachment which had been sent up into Sutherland to seek money and reinforcements (*HS*: 176-8; Grimble 1979: 65-9). But this line of argument also raised the more delicate matter of deserters, late-comers and other non-combatants. Later poets could ignore such inconvenient details; but to John Roy Stewart, composing while in hiding during the summer of 1746, they had to be tackled—albeit in a diplomatic way capable of preserving the possibility of 'shaming' such men into participating in the next round. (See *HS*: 170 for deserters; *cf. op. cit.*: 178 for MacPhersons and MacDonalds, and 182 for Frasers and Lord Lovat.)

It was also commonly (and correctly) stated that the weather and the terrain had been inimical to the Jacobite army, with the result that the Highland charge had been made over rough, sodden heath and bog into the teeth of driving sleet and hail—'a third of our misery came out of the skies', as John Roy put it (*HS*: 170, 178-80; *cf.* Urquhart MS: fo. 103, vv. 3, 5). This in its turn meant that Cumberland's musketry and artillery could take a deadly toll 'fatally pre-empting the brilliance of sword-play' (*HS*: 180; *cf. op. cit.*: 268; *PB*: 84). But facts like these inevitably raised questions about the quality of the Jacobite leadership and the wisdom of their tactical decisions. How had they allowed themselves to be manoeuvred into such a position in the first place, and should they have engaged battle in the circumstances? Considerations such as solidarity, not to mention collective responsibility, may have placed certain restraints on what John Roy could commit to the air-waves of Gaelic song; at all events his surviving songs tell us little of the faction and dissension that preceded the battle, and nothing of his own part in the debates. Thus in one of the three songs he composed on Culloden—one of the more 'popular' in form—he gives simply a circumstantial-sounding, soldier's-eye account of the preliminaries. According to this, after the enemy had adopted battle order, 'we invited them to meet us half-way . . . (but) they would not come up to meet us.' The Jacobite commander then shouted out to his men:[27]

"Bidh sinn caillt' le uisg' is gaoth,
bithibh annta, a luchd mo ghaoil,
chan fhaod sinn a bhith feitheamh orr'."
(Urquhart MS: fo. 103, v. 3)

'We shall be destroyed by wind and rain, (so) up and at them, my beloved ones, we cannot await them any longer.'

Nevertheless, John Roy elsewhere voices some criticisms (admittedly fairly muted and generalised) of 'the leaders' (*an luchd-orduigh*) and the Jacobite tactics (*HS*: 172). For the rest he has recourse to an expedient which should be seen in terms of the constraints I have

mentioned and the audience his Gaelic songs were intended to reach: he seeks a scapegoat, and finds one in Lord George Murray.

Mas fìor an seanchas a bh' ann,
gun robh Achan 'sa' champ,
dearg-mhèirleach nan rabhd 's nam breugan,

b'e sin an Seanalair mór,
gràin is mallachd an t-slòigh:
reic e 'onoir 's a chleòc le h-eucoir.

'S ann a thionndaidh e 'chleoc
air son an sporain bha mór,
's rinn sud dolaidh do sheòid Rìgh Seumas.
(*HS*: 180, *cf.* 172)

'If the stories that circulated are true, that there was an Achan in the camp . . . that man was the great General . . . (who) corruptly sold honour and right. He "turned his coat" for the big purse, and that brought destruction on King James's heroes.'

In the last resort, however, the Gaelic poetic commentators found it impossible to accept that the defeat could have been engineered by human agency alone—and certainly not by that of the Duke of Cumberland, whose military record was by no means awe-inspiring.[28] Many songs, especially those of the more popular sorts, reflect a belief that some form of sorcery or witchcraft must have been involved (*e.g. HS*: 170; *MDC*: 175; *PB*: 84; *AMD*: 132). John Roy himself, as a seasoned campaigner, invokes 'Fortune' (*HS*: 172, 176, 182, 188), and elsewhere exhorts the Deity to keep up His concentration (*HS*: 168); while Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair calls the defeat 'a sort of *tapag*', i.e. a 'slip of the tongue' to be rectified in due course (*HS*: 162). The implications of all this were clear: it *was* possible to explain the disaster, and there *could* be another day, when the Highland charge would once again prove irresistible and the Hanoverians would be swept away forever.

While this poetic propaganda machine was getting under way with the objective of containing the trauma of Culloden, the survivors were making their way home and the dead and missing were becoming known. John Roy Stewart inserted a roll of honour into one of his songs about Culloden, in which he paid homage to some of his Badenoch friends (*HS*:182). [29] There were also personal elegies, of which the magnificent one composed by the wife of William Chisholm of Strathglass is deservedly famous.[30]

Och, a Theàrlaich òig Stiùbhairt,
's e do chùis rinn mo léireadh,
thug thu bhuam gach nì bh'agam
ann an cogadh 'nad adhbhar;
cha chrodh is cha chaoirich
tha mi caoidh, ach mo chéile,
gc do dh'fhàgte mi 'm aonar
gun sian 'san t-saoghal ach léine—
Mo rùn geal òg.

Có nis thogas an claidheamh
no ni chathair a lìonadh?
'S gann gur h-e tha air m' aire
o nach maireann mo chiad-ghràdh.
Ach ciamar gheibhinn o m' nàdur
a bhith 'g àicheadh nas miann leam,
is mo thogradh cho làidir
thoirt gu 'àite mo rìgh math?
Mo rùn geal òg.

Gur mis' th'air mo sgaradh,
's ge do chanam, cha bhreug e,
chaidh mo shùgradh gu sileadh
o nach pillear bho'n eug thu.
Fear do chéille 's do thuigse
cha robh furasd ri feutainn,
's cha do sheas an Cùil Lodair
fear do choltais bu tréine—
mo rùn geal òg.

Bha mi greis ann am barail
gum bu mhaireann mo chéile,
's gun tigeadh tu dhathaigh
le aighear 's le h-éibhneas.
Ach tha 'n t-am air dol thairis,
's chan fhaic mi fear t' eugais:
gus an téid mi fo'n talamh
cha dealaich do spéis rium,
mo rùn geal òg.
(*SO*:373)

'Och, young Charles Stewart, it is your cause which has ruined me; you have taken from me all that I had, in conflict on your behalf. It is not cattle, nor sheep that I am lamenting, but my spouse (and so it would be) even though I were left alone without anything in the world but my shift—my fair young love.

Who now will raise the sword or fill the throne? That is hardly on my mind now that my first love is dead. But how could I find it in my nature to deny what I desire, seeing that my will is so strong to bring my good King to his proper place?—my fair young love.

It is I who am torn asunder, and if I say it it is no lie, my cheerfulness has turned to tears since you cannot be returned from death. It would not be easy to find a man of your prudence and understanding—and at Culloden there stood no-one of your sort who was braver—my fair young love.

I was convinced for a while that my husband was alive, and that you would come home blithely and cheerily. But time has gone past and I see no-one resembling you: till I go to the grave I will not lose my love for you—my fair young love.'

As for the Prince himself, he was on the run with a price on his head. Few knew where he was, even amongst his associates. John Roy, skulking in one of his hide-outs in Strathspey, expresses his anxiety thus:

Dh'fhalbh gach toileachadh uam,
sheac le mulad mo ghruaidh,
's nach cluinn mi 'san uair sgeul éibhinn

mu Phrionns' Teàrlach mo rùin,
oighre airidh a' chrùin,
's e gun fhios ciod an tùbh a théid e.
(*HS*: 176)

'All pleasure has departed me, my cheek is frosted with sorrow, since at present I hear no glad tidings about my beloved Prince Charles, rightful heir to the crown, who knows not which way to turn.'

The times are dangerous. 'Every trusty man who gave service to the King is being pursued in headlong flight throughout the deer-forests.' John Roy himself is an outlaw (*ceatharnach coille*, 'wood-kerne') with bloodhounds (*coin luirg*) on his trail. [31]

By now Prince Charles was no abstract symbol of Kingship to those who had campaigned with him, but the more homely *Tearlach Ruadh* ('Red-haired Charles')—John Roy's 'bonny Red Charles' (*HS*: 168). We catch further glimpses of his wanderings at this time in two women's songs, one of them echoing the courtly tradition and one in a waulking-song fragment. The first seeks to express the speaker's affection in conventional love-praise terms but soon breaks out of that mould:

A Theàrlaich òig a' chùilein[32] chiataich,
thug mi gaol dut 's cha ghaol bliadhna,
gaol nach tugainn do Dhiùic na dh'Iarla,
b'fheàrr leam fhin nach faca mi riamh thu.
. . .
A Thearlaich òig, a mhic Rìgh Seumas,
chunna mi tòir mhór an déidh ort,
iadsan gu subhach is mise gu deurach,
uisge mo chinn tighinn tinn o m' léirsinn.

Mharbh iad m' athair is mo dhà bhràthair,
mhill iad mo chinneadh is chreach iad mo chàirdean,
sgrios iad mo dhùthaich, rùisg iad mo mhàthair,
's bu lughaid' mo mhulad nan cinneadh le Teàrlach.
(*SO*: 373)

'Young Charles with the lovely tresses, I gave love to you which was no "one year love", love which I would not have given to a Duke or an Earl—how I wish I had never seen you.

Young Charles, son of King James, I saw a great pursuit following you: they (were) cheerful, I was tearful, the waters of my head cascading from my eyes.

They killed my father and my two brothers, they destroyed my clan and plundered my relatives, they ravaged my homeland and despoiled my mother—and my grief would be the less if Charles should succeed.'

The second runs as follows:

fhir na faire o hù o
Ciod a chì thu? hó ro hò

Chì mi 'n Udairn 's Rubha Hùinis,
caolas Ròmaidh ceò 'ga mhùchadh.
Am faic thu bhirlinn taobh an Dùine,
bratach bhàn rith' Theàrlaich Stiùbhairt?
Mhuire Mhàthair gràs dha dùbailt',
airgead-ceann air 's Goill 'ga sgiùrsadh:
feachd na Frainge nall g'a chùmhnadh.[33]

' "Watchman, what do you see?"
"I see An Udairn and Rubha Hùinis,
Caolas Ròmaidh with mist obscuring it."
"Do you see the galley beside the Dùn,
flying the white banner of Charles Stewart?
Mary Mother, may grace be doubled for him,
a price on his head and the enemy hounding him;
may the French host come over to help him!" '

Eventually, of course, the woman's prayer was granted in that the Prince escaped safely back to France. We may leave the last word on his Scottish adventure to Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair. Although self-consciously literary in form and propagandist in intention, his dialogue 'The Prince's Departure' has the Gaels speak words which must surely have been intended to represent the feelings of others besides the poet himself:

Ar mìle beannachd ann ad dheaghaidh
's Dia do d' ghleidheadh anns gach àit';
muir is tìr a bhith comh-réidh dhuit,
m' ùrnaigh gheur leat fhéin os àird;
's ge do sgar mì-fhortan deurach
sinn o chéile, 's ceum roimh'n bhàs,
ach soraidh leat, a mhic Rìgh Seumas,
shùgh mo chéille, thig gun chàird'.
(*AMD*: 114; *HS*: 88)

'Our thousand blessings go with you, and may God preserve you in every place. My urgent, open prayer for you is that sea and land be equally smooth for you; and although sad misfortune has parted us, (we are still) a step ahead of death(?); but farewell, son of King James, my heart's desire, and return without delay.'

The Jacobite parts of the Highlands paid the price for their part in the insurrection, and the Gaelic poetry of this period tells of reprisals and executions, estates confiscated and leaders in exile. A fragment of song ascribed to the wife of Fraser of Guisachan and Culbokie is addressed to her son Ruairidh, who (she tells us) was newly born when the soldiers came and burned down her home:

Bhliadhn' a rugadh thus', a Ruaraidh,
's ann a thog iad bhuainn na creachan.

'S trom 's gur muladach a tha mi,
cumail blàiths air aois na seachdain.

Loisg iad mo shabhal 's mo bhàthach
's chuir iad mo thaigh clàir 'na lasair.
(AMS: 249)

'The year that you were born, Roderick, that was when they despoiled us. Dejected and sad am I trying to keep a one-week-old (child) warm. They burned my barn and my byre and fired my wooden-floored (?) house.'[34]

There were exceptions: Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair himself, in his vision-poem 'The Ark', includes a certain Captain Duncan Campbell amongst those Campbells who may be saved from the impending Flood because he had been compassionate to the 'bare and poor of Moidart' and 'would not execute the order which his warrant from the Butcher contained' (*AMD*: 254-6; *cf. DB*: 446). But in general the impression given is of suffering and misery—as indeed was intended by the victors.

Amongst the various measures implemented with a view to 'pacifying' the Highlands, the Disarming and Disclothing Acts, and especially the latter, attained prominence and a certain symbolic value in the songs of the time. Disarming was, in the circumstances, to be expected, and attracts relatively less comment; but the imposition of Lowland dress on all Highlanders excited indignation and became the subject of a considerable number of expressions of resentment.[35] Even before the ban came into force we find Margaret Campbell, wife of Rev. James Stevenson of Ardchattan, inveighing against its provisions and ridiculing the Lowland garb as impractical, unflattering and contrary to immemorial Scottish custom 'since King Fergus was crowned'. The present King had made a bad mistake in banning the kilt (*MDC*: 348). Others took up the complaint—John MacCodrum in North Uist, Rob Donn in Sutherland, Duncan Bàn in Argyll, and Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair himself. The intentions of the ban clearly went beyond the publicised aim of preventing the Highlander from camouflaging himself as he lurked in the heather awaiting his prey. In a sense it may also be seen as robbing him of a mark of his distinctiveness, and compared with initiatives from before and after the '45 aimed at eliminating the Gaelic language. At all events it hit a raw nerve; and the fact that it applied indiscriminately throughout the Highlands presented Jacobite propagandists with a convenient reference point by which to rally anti-Government sentiment. Thus Gaelic poetry hints continually at the insulting and humiliating nature of the ban, and suggests that it will unite the Gaels in furious resistance. To Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair:

Shaoil leis gun do mhaolaich seo
faobhar nan Gàidheal tapaidh,
ach 's ann a chuir e géir' orr'
nas beurra na deud na h-ealtainn.

D'fhàg e iad làn mì-rùin,
cho ciocrasach ri coin acrach;
cha chaisg deoch an iotadh,
ge b' fhìon e, ach fìor-fhuil Shagsuinn.
(*HS*: 158)

'(King George) thought that this (Act) blunted the blade of the brave Gaels; but in fact it put an edge on them, sharper than a razor's bite.

He has left them full of malice, as ravenous as starving dogs; no drink can quench their thirst, even wine—only Saxon life-blood.'

To Rob Donn the Act suggests that 'Charles has a friend in the English Parliament'; for if the Government's friends and enemies receive the same treatment, 'the ones who rose against you made the better choice' (*RD*: 85; *HS*: 236). And similarly Duncan Bàn takes advantage of the 'grey breeks' to criticise King and Parliament in the heart of Campbell country:

'S bha h-uile h-aon de'n Phàrlamaid
fallsail le'm fiosrachadh
'n uair chuir iad air na Caimbeulaich
teanndachd nam briogaisean;
's gur h-iad a rinn am feum dhaibh
a' bhliadhna thàin' an streupag,
a h-uile h-aon diùbh éirigh
gu léir am milisi dhaibh.

. . .

ach 's gann daibh gun cluinnear iad
a champachadh tuilleadh leis;
on thug e dhinn an t-aodach
's a dh'fhàg e sinn cho faondrach,
's ann rinn e oirnn na dh'fhaodadh e
shaoileadh e chur mulaid oirnn.
(*DB*: 12)

'Everyone in Parliament was party to treachery when they imposed on the Campbells the confinement of the breeches, the very men who served them well the year the "spot of bother" came when every one of them enlisted in the Militia for (the Government).

. . . but they will scarcely be heard of encamping again with (Duke William): since he divested us of dress and left us so uncared for, he has done us every possible ill he could think of, to do us down.'

Another way of getting the same message across was devised by Lachlan MacPherson of Strathmashie, who composed a humorous, or purportedly humorous, dialogue between a hunter and a stag in which the stag points out that the poor man has no chance of stalking him while wearing the wretched trousers. The hunter retorts that he only wishes he could draw a bead on King George and the stag at the same time—but the treasonable sting is taken out of this when the stag replies that he will head for Fort William and report the hunter for carrying a gun! (*PB*: 169)

The complaint about the *clô dubh* ('black cloth') thus operated as a device to enable poetic comment to start up in the repressive atmosphere which prevailed after Culloden. It gave rise to a memorable image which was utilised by several poets: 'waulking the Lowland cloth' was used as a kenning or cipher for 'pounding or trampling the Lowlanders'. Thus John MacCodrum speaks of the 'cunning fighters . . . who will waulk the Sutherland tweed' (*JMC*: 12). It received fullest expression, however, in the works of Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, two of whose songs are actually in the form of *òrain luaidh* ('waulking songs'), and exploit various conventions of the genre to give added point to his theme—the summoning of a band of 'waulking women' from Sleat, Glengarry, Keppoch and other 'loyal' areas to help waulk the 'red cloth' (*i.e.* the Redcoats).[36] And in his *Am Breacan Uallach* ('The Proud Plaid') MacDonald explores the potentialities of the metaphor further. After extolling the virtues of the Highland dress in the way that was to become conventional, and declaring that to proscribe it will merely confirm the Gaels in their resistance, he continues:

Gu spìon sibh an cridhe asainn,
  's ar broillichean sìos a shracadh,
cha toir sibh asainn Teàrlach
  gu bràth gus an téid ar tachdadh.

R' ar n-anam tha e fuaighte,
  teann-luaidhte, cho cruaidh ri glasan,
's uainn chan fhaodar 'fhuasgladh
  gum buainear am fear ud asainn.
(*AMD*: 360; *HS*: 158)

'Unless you tear our hearts out and rip our breasts right open, you will never remove Charlie from us until we are snuffed out.

He is woven into our souls, firmly waulked and tightly locked; and until yon man is cut away from us no-one can prise him free from us.'

In other songs again the calls for defiance and a new rebellion are open and direct in the years immediately following Culloden. In some of Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's numerous productions from this period the call to arms may seem to contain a desperate note:

O fhuigheall arm tha maireann dinn,
  dlùth-charaicheamaid suas;
le misnich mhóir 's le barantas
  ar n-earraig thugamaid uainn . . .

A Ghàidhealtachd, mas cadal duit
  na fuirich fad ad shuain;
guidheam ort, na lagadh ort
  's do chliù 'ga shladadh uait.

Och, mosgail suas gu h-aigeantach
  le feirg ad lasair ruaidh,
is còmhdaich an aon bhaiteal dhaibh
  nach do bhogaich dad de d' chruaidh.
(*AMD*: 138; *HS*: 118-20)

'O remnant that remains of us, let us close up our ranks, and with great courage and assurance let us make our final fling . . .

O Gaeldom, if you are asleep do not remain long in your slumber; I beseech you, do not run out of steam at a time when your good name is being undermined. O, rise up blithely . . . and demonstrate to them in one battle that your steel has lost none of its temper.'

And later on the defiant mode was to become merely rhetorical. But in the immediate aftermath of Culloden, in the context of serious calls to regroup and lingering hopes of French aid (*e.g. JMC*: 12; *HS*: 126, 188, *etc.*), the 'Forty-five must have seemed, to some at least, a venture that nearly came off:

Chuir baidean beag Ghàidheal trì blàir air Rìgh Deòrsa,
a dh'aindeoin am fòghluim 's an leòsgair d'a chionn;
Gus na chruinnich na bh'aca ann am Breatuinn 's an Eirinn,
ann am Flannraidh ri gaisge, 's Prionns' Hesse ri chéile,
gun chaill iad an spéirid gu leum oirnn le sunnd;
tha seo dhuinn a' dearbhadh gun robh iad 'nan éiginn,
's nan éireadh na Gàidheil lom-buileach gu léir linn . . .
(*AMD*: 98; *HS*: 54)

'A little band of Gaels beat King George in three battles, despite (the Hanoverians') expertise and their ample resources for the purpose. Until there assembled all their forces in Britain and Ireland, those on active service in Flanders, and the Prince of Hesse, they lacked the spirit to attack us with a will. This shows us that they were in dire straits; and if the Gaels should all arise . . .'

Poetry was one of the fires that kept the pot from going off the boil.

It would not be right to conclude this account without brief mention of the ways in which succeeding decades coped with the phenomenon of the 'Forty-five, as the men who had fought in it or witnessed it died away, and the mixture of grievances and aspirations which had given rise to it yielded to fresh preoccupations. To anticipate, one can document a gradual blurring of the image and a process of re-interpretation which eventually led to *Bliadhna Theàrlaich* appearing in transmuted, streamlined terms; to some, as the height of heroic endeavour; to others, as an inexplicable, embarrassing and temporary aberration.

Local and family pride, reinforced by familiarity with songs of the sorts we have been considering, permitted numerous traditional accounts of the 'Forty-five to survive, chiefly in the more strongly Jacobite areas. Such accounts were necessarily partial, being founded for the most part on the experiences of ordinary individuals caught up in the train of events, though they could also be circumstantial and minutely detailed in what they did cover. Thus, as we have had occasion to note, the enquiries of Thomas Sinton, a century after the Rising, elicited a number of such accounts from MacPherson country; and his *Poetry of Badenoch* gives a good impression of the consistency of such traditions as they existed in the nineteenth century. (See, for example, *PB*: 192ff.) Many such memories were preserved orally, to find their way into print in books of local history and tradition in the late nineteenth and twentieth century.

As for the poetry, many poets continued the practice of providing social or political commentary on contemporary events—as indeed some do to the present day. Thus we find John MacCodrum analysing the causes and likely effects of the emigration of the MacDonald tacksmen in 1773, in a keenly analytical and perceptive way (*JMC*: 196). Others sought to adapt the old panegyric mode to new subjects, such as Nature or Highland regiments, as very obviously happened in the works of Duncan Bàn. Yet they and others continued, at least fitfully, to employ some of the themes that had been current at the time of the 'Forty-five. Thus the repeal of the 1746 Disarming Act in 1782 provoked a rash of poems on the Highland dress. (*e.g. DB*: 238; *cf. op. cit.*: 504.) We may also recall the previously mentioned Scottish example of the political dream-vision or *aisling*, printed by John Mackenzie (*SO*: 161) amongst the works of Eachann MacLeòid. In this poem, which is in fact a partially digested reprise of a number of earlier works and genres, a handsome stranger appears to the poet and tells him to pass the news to the nobility of Scotland that the sea is 'like a forest' with French ships, the army has landed, the 'Cock of the North' has crowed, and the Stewarts and Clan Donald have risen, led by 'three lions'—Young John of Moidart, the 'old lion' from Duntulm, and Glengarry. The sympotic element ('here's a health . . .') already present in some contemporary songs of the 'Forty-five, becomes almost a structural feature in many later Jacobite songs, lending them a jollificatory, 'after dinner' tone which had been only marginally present before.[37] Highland Societies now existed in the Lowland cities, and became the new patrons of poets in the sense that they sponsored poetry competitions with set subjects like 'The Kilt and the Bagpipes'. When the 'Forty-five had to be referred to directly it now became *an streup* ('the affray') or *am mì-fhortan* 'the unfortunate incident'.

A particularly interesting case is the song *An Suaithneas Bàn* ('The White Cockade'), composed by William Ross on the death of Charles Edward Stewart in Rome in 1788. Ross, who was born seventeen years after the 'Forty-five, claims that he had lived until the present moment with the 'firm opinion' that the call to arms would be heard and Charles's fleet would come over the sea; but now 'the tryst has forsaken me until Doomsday'. He continues:

'S lionmhor laoch is milidh treun
tha 'n diugh 'n Albainn as do dhéidh,
iad os n-iscal sileadh dheur
a rachadh dian leat anns an t-sreup.

. . .

Bha 'n t-àl òg nach fhac' thu riamh
ag altrum gràdh dhuit agus miadh,
ach thuit an cridhe nis 'nan cliabh
on a chaidil thu gu sìor.

Ach biodh ar n-ùrnaigh moch gach là
ris an Tì as aird' atà,
gun e dhìoladh oirnn gu bràth
ar n-eucoir air an t-Suaithneas Bhàn.

(*WR*: 42; *HS*: 286-8)

'There are many warriors and brave fighters in Scotland who are today bereft of you; those who would have gone keenly with you in the fray are covertly shedding tears.

The young generation who never saw you were cherishing love and regard for you; but their hearts have sunk now since you have gone to eternal rest.

But let our morning prayer each day to the One who is highest be that He refrain from repaying us till Judgment for our injustice to the White Cockade.'

Ross genuinely wants to make contact with the spirit of 1745 but his poetic sincerity results in an elegy which is manifestly of a different era.

Side by side with this tendency for the 'Forty-five to be invested with the qualities of an 'Heroic Age', we can find evidence for a more 'progressive' attitude. In Duncan Bàn's 'Song to the King', composed in the early 1760s, we find the traditional epithets applicable to the 'rightful ruler' being deployed for the young King George III:

'S mór an sonas th' anns an Rioghachd
on a chàidh an Righ seo chrùnadh
anns an àit a bh'aig a shìnnsreachd,
an d'fhuair a shìnnseanair còir dhùthchais.
(*DB*: 26)

. . .

Tha toradh am fâs na talmhainn
gu miosach arbharach pòrach;
chinn an spréidh gu bliochdach bainnear
sona sliochdmhor sailleach feòlmhor;
tha sidheann air sliabh gach garbhlaich,
sealgairean a' faotainn spòrsa,
's tha tighinn air iasg na fairge,
's pailt an t-airgead ri linn Dheòrsa.
(*DB*: 32)

'Great is the happiness prevailing in the Kingdom, since this king was crowned in the place held by his forebears, where his great-grandfather obtained hereditary right (*còir*).

The harvest of what the earth produces is full of fruit, corn, and seed. Cattle have become productive in milk yield, content and fecund, with sleek and heavy carcases. There is venison on every rough moor, with hunters obtaining sport; the fish of the sea are 'taking'; cash is plentiful in George's reign.'

The King's praiseworthy husbandry includes putting a bridge over every river and a school in every glen.[38] As for the Gaels:

Anns a h-uile càs is cunnart
's mór an t-urram fhuair na Gàidheil;
's bhathas greis 'gan cur an duileachd
mar nach buineadh iad do'n phàirtidh.
Ach 'n uair fhuair iad mios is creideas,
's a chreideadh nach dèanadh iad fàilinn,
's iad bu sheasmhaich' air an onoir
a thug lann sholais á sgàbard.
(*DB*: 28)

. . .

Tha daoin'-uaisle 's tuath an fhearainn
mar as math leo thaobh an stòrais,
tha luchd-ciùird a' faotainn cosnadh,
's chan eil duine bochd gun phòrsan.
(*DB*: 32)

'In every hazard and danger great is the respect (they) have won, given that for a time they were held suspect as if they were not part of the nation; but once they won esteem and trust, and it was believed that they would not fail, they were the most steadfast in their honour, of any who drew a bright sword from a scabbard.

Both gentlemen and farming tenants are satisfied with their resources; craftsmen are finding employment, and no poor man lacks a share.'

Another song on the repeal of the Disarming and Disclothing Acts goes even further. This piece, given anonymously in *The MacDonald Collection*, contains the declaration:

Cha chuala mi riamh an seanchas
mar tha Alba an tràth-sa:
na bheil ann air fàs cho dìleas
do'n Rìgh ri aon bhràthair.
(*MDC*: 381)

'I never heard tell of the way Scotland is at present: everyone here has grown as loyal to the King as to his only brother.'

There follows a roll-call of the loyal heroes who will respond to the King's call. The clans are the very ones we meet in Jacobite calls to arms from 1715 or 1745—but the allegiance has changed!

Tha sinn uile deònach falbh le Deòrsa
on a chòrd sinn aon uair;
ged a bha sinn greis ri gòraich
an toiseach na h-aimhreit;
on a gheall sinn a bhith dìleas
bidh sinn cinnteach dhà-san;
's chan eil neart anns an Roinn Eòrpa
a bheir còmhrag là dhuinn.
(*MDC*: 382)

'We are all willing to go with George now that we have reached accord, though we spent a time in folly when the strife began (*i.e.* in 1745). But since we promised to be true we shall assuredly be his, and there is no power in Europe that will last a day in battle against us.'

This 'Wha's like us?' attitude has surfaced in martial and similar contexts down to the present time. On the other hand, the ostentatious insistence on 'loyalty' and the protestations about the 'folly' of 1745 do not appear to have been so widespread, and they disappeared in time, having become anachronistic in the age of clearances, the Napoleonic wars, and religious revival. This left the way open for the romantic view of the 'Forty-

five to prevail, which it duly did, reinforced by the official respectability of things tartan, in the nineteeenth century; but that is another story.[39]

I have attempted in the foregoing account to pick out some of the most important and interesting ways in which Gaelic poetry deals with the 'Forty-five. A certain amount of explanation has been necessary, particularly with regard to inherited aspects of the function of poetry and the role of poets in Gaelic society. I hope it will have emerged that, on the one hand, the ideas and attitudes of the Gaelic-speaking participants do not need to be guessed at *a priori*, since they are available in the poetry; and, on the other hand, that that source sometimes requires careful handling (though no more than is due to any other historical source) before the ideas and attitudes it contains can be integrated with the mass of other information we have about the 'Forty-five. From the point of view of British historians of the eighteenth century the Highland perspective is a decidely 'alternative' one, but it has coherence both synchronically and as an episode within a continuing tradition of historical interpretation. We are fortunate to have it and it deserves fuller and more serious investigation than it has received to date.[40]

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The genesis of this paper is to be sought in the Gaelic poetry classes and tutorials which I have conducted for a number of years within the Department of Celtic at Edinburgh University, and my first debt is to my students, whose questions and comments have helped to determine the direction of my thinking on Gaelic poetry and history in the eighteenth century. A more immediate stimulus to ordering and focusing my thoughts came in 1985 from Lesley Scott-Moncrieff and James Thin—respectively editor and publisher of a proposed collection of essays on the '45—in the form of an invitation to write on a Gaelic aspect of their theme. This appeared under the title 'The Prince and the Gaels' (though 'The Prince and the Gaelic poets' would perhaps have been more accurate) in Scott-Moncrieff 1988. It contains, in 'popular' form, a version of the central part of the present paper: that is, the sections relating to the course of the '45, omitting 'causes' and 'effects'. I am grateful to Ms Scott-Moncrieff and Mr Thin for encouraging me to seek a scholarly outlet for the material and views I had put together, much of which could not be incorporated within their book. I am also grateful to the Editorial Board of *Scottish Studies* for agreeing to publish this material, and to the Editor for help in presentational matters. Certain aspects of the material have also received an airing in the form of seminars—on Gaelic Jacobitism in Dublin and on Gaelic praise-poetry in Aberystwyth—and public lectures on the '45 in Edinburgh and Stromness. Each of these occasions has yielded helpful criticism and fresh perceptions, and my thanks are therefore due to the participants and to the organisers of these occasions: the Department of Modern Irish at University College, Dublin (and the European Economic Community's Collaboration in Research programme, which funded the seminar), the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies at Aberystwyth, the Orkney Folk Festival and Greyfriars Kirk Highland

Lecture committee. Finally I wish to express my thanks to Mr Neil MacGregor for permission to consult his unpublished MA dissertation on the poetry of John Roy Stewart regarding some previously unnoticed versions of the latter's songs.

NOTES

1 The anthologies and editions cited most frequently hereafter are given in abbreviated form in the text and Notes. The abbreviations are explained in the Bibliography. Note that I have sometimes found it expedient or necessary to depart from the reading, spelling or punctuation of a Gaelic source-text, for reasons of clarity or sense. A few significant alterations are indicated editorially or discussed in the Notes. While a number of the source-texts are accompanied by English translations, these are varied in purpose and variable in achievement. In what follows all Gaelic quotations are freshly translated, though I am, of course, indebted—in varying degrees—to existing versions.

2 The problem is perhaps less acute now than it was fifty years ago, though some historians still seem to regard it as permissible to write about the Highlands without consideration of the 'native' tradition and sources, in a way which would attract disrespect in a work on (say) French or Russian history. The recent studies which I personally have found most consistently helpful are: B. Lenman, *The Jacobite Risings in Britain, 1689-1746* (London 1980); F. McLynn, *France and the Jacobite rising of 1745* (Edinburgh, 1981) and *The Jacobite army in England 1745: the final campaign* (Edinburgh 1983); the relevant parts of Hill 1986; and some of the essays in Scott-Moncrieff 1988.

3 On the general background to Gaelic (and other) satire see Elliott 1960; on these specific themes in Jacobite literature in Gaelic Ireland see Ó Buachalla 1983*a* and 1983*b*.

4 The text is metrically defective in places. Read perhaps *trusaibh air chairteal' uaibh* (or *air chairtealaibh*) in line 6, and *ri bhith 'g Neptùn 's aig Æ-olus* in line 9.

5 *Cf. op. cit.*: 3, n. 2. See further Matheson 1970: lines 290, 797; Ó Baoill 1979: lines 1001, 1132.

6 Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair makes more of the Irish links of Clan Donald elsewhere: see *AMD*: 186, 196-8.

7 Thus he dubbed himself the '*smeòrach* ("song-thrush") of Clanranald' (*AMD*: 180).

8 *Cf.* also 'I am intoxicated with love for you; how crazy and lightsome is the thrill in my limbs' (*AMD*: 150; *HS*: 146); though allowance should be made here for the fact that Charles is addressed as 'Mórag' in this poem.

9 On the 'Song of the Highland Clans' see further Gillies 1978: 274 and n. 23; Black 1986: 34. For the wavering loyalty of the people in a nominally Hanoverian area see *DB*: xxiii-xxiv.

10 As has been stated, the earliest collections and anthologies omit the songs of the '45, preferring to concentrate on the more remote events of the seventeenth century. See *PB*: 194-5 for a picture which may have been typical of the oral survival and collection of Jacobite material.

11 Metrical complexity and 'literariness' do not necessarily follow one another, though there is a general correspondence. (For a brief statement on the different strands in Scottish Gaelic poetical-musical tradition see Matheson 1970: 149. A fuller treatment of this subject is overdue.) As regards 'literary' waulking songs, authorial anonymity may have been a motive; but that does not affect our point regarding breadth of intended audience. The case of *Clò Mhic 'ille-Mhicheil*, preserved entirely by oral tradition till the late nineteenth century, yet clearly the work of Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair (*cf.* note 36 below), is testimony to the effectiveness of the stratagem.

12 See further the discussion in *HF*: 3, 294-8. The nature of the vision in this song is worth a separate study. 'The White House' presumably refers to 'Whitehall'.

13 *Cf.* Gillies 1986: 115-16 and 1988: 253-4 for attempts to capture the relationship between the conventional and the specific in Gaelic praise-poetry.

14 The attribution to Stewart is contained in Benjamin Urquhart's MS (Mackinnon Collection 10C in Edinburgh University Library), fo. 101. I owe this reference to Neil MacGregor.

15 In the penultimate line SC has *gun ullach chaich 'g ur goirteachadh* (p. 385), *i.e.* 'without other people's burdens (or the burden of other people) hurting you'.

16 On Jacobite hopes and expectations of support see now John Simpson, 'The causes of the '45' in Scott-Moncrieff 1988. As regards general understanding of the issues, I do not see any evidence to support the view that ordinary Highlanders were *unusually* ignorant of the realities of the situation into which they were drawn; indeed, communal access to political analysis conducted by the poets, and a lack of social barriers to prevent the percolation of informed views, would seem to me to suggest that, if anything, the eighteenth-century Highlander might have been better informed than his lowland, or urban counterpart. If one meets with references to 'folk beliefs' such as the one noted by Sinton, *PB*: 196 (Gaelic only), to the effect that 'King George had a pig's snout and took his food from a silver trough', surely they can be paralleled by British popular lore about the Mahdi or Hitler.

17 *Cf. op. cit.*: 194, for a ditty said to have been composed by a young herd-boy on seeing the men depart.

18 See Hill 1986: 103 for the context to these remarks.

19 As the text stands it seems likeliest that these two verses are addressed, formally speaking, to John Roy Stewart.

20 *Cf. Deoch slàinte Thearlaich* (*AMD*: 108), where the poet's hopes have been excited by the arrival of a letter giving word of a defeat for the Hanoverians—but no details—and the expression of hope triggers off a roll-call of allies. (The motif is discussed by MacInnes 1978: 448-9.)

21 Duncan Bàn's insistence that no orders had been received is repeated in the so-called 'Second Song on the Battle of Falkirk': see *DB*: 410.

22 I follow Dr Campbell in presuming that, *pace* Watson, this piece could not have been composed after Culloden.

23 Compare Aonghas Mac Ailein's view (*MDC*: 96):

Dh'fhalbh gach fortan bh'air Teàrlach
o'n là lotadh an t-àilleagan ùr.

'Every good fortune that Charles enjoyed evaporated from the day that the young precious one (= Aonghas Òg) was hit.'

24 *MDC* reads 'befalls you' (*riut*) in the last couplet. My translation assumes *riu* or *riuth*' 'to them'.

25 Stewart's poems are particularly instructive since, whatever he says, we can assume that he was *au fait* with the thinking of the Jacobite leaders, and as well placed as anyone on the Jacobite side to interpret the course of events. On Stewart himself see, *e.g.*, *PB*: 194-205; *HS*: 165-7 and Addenda (p. 328).

26 See his unpublished 'Song after Culloden' (Urquhart MS, fo. 103, v. 6); *cf. DB*: 412-14 and Hill 1986: 141-2. (For similar exaggeration regarding Prestonpans see *AMD*: 136; *HS*: 116.)

27 There is a little difficulty here: is Stewart referring to Lord George Murray's order to the Jacobite right wing (an order which took a disastrously long time to reach the left wing, where Stewart was stationed), or to some subsequent order (*e.g.* from Keppoch, who attempted to get things moving on the left wing after they had delayed for too long)? See Hill 1986: 147 and Map.

28 See in general *HS*: 170, 176. For the 'disgrace' (*sgannal*) of being beaten by Cumberland see *AMD*: 128, *HS*: 140.

29 The Urquhart MS and the Rose MS (*i.e.* National Library of Scotland MS 14098) contain extra verses in this vein. In circumstances like these a song could become a peg on which to hang local information and commemoration.

30 For a Culloden elegy composed by a serving poet see *MDC*: 175.

31 Based on *HS*: 186-8, together with variants in the Urquhart and Rose MSS. *Cf.* also *PB*: 85 for pressure on the clansmen of Jacobite chiefs 'on the run' to reveal the latter's hiding places.

32 *Sic leg.*? Or *a' chuailein* or *a' chùlain*? Mackenzie prints *a chuilein*, *i.e.* 'my darling' (?).

33 Communicated to me (August 1982) by Dr S. MacLean, from the papers of his uncle, Alexander Nicolson. *Cf. HS*: 336.

34 See further: on burning, *HS*: 172 (Castle Downie); on devastation, *HS*: 174 (Badenoch), 276 (Lochaber); on executions, *HS*: 106 (Lord Lovat), 274 (Dr Archibald Cameron); on exile, *PB*: 80, 83 (Cluny MacPherson), *HS*: 266 (Lochiel).

35 On the Disarming Act *cf. PB*: 85 (the poet's gun, termed 'Charlie's daughter', hidden in a ditch), *DB*: 12, PT: 287 (swords hidden amongst the cairns).

36 See (1) *A Mhórag chiatach a' chùil dualaich*, Alasdair's 'Waulking song which a gentleman made to his lover

on her going overseas' (*AMD*: 148, *HS*: 144); (2) *Clò Mhic 'ille-Mhicheil*. (*HF*: 3, 132; *cf.* p. 268 for the ascription to MacDonald.)

37 For a couple of primarily convivial, secondarily Jacobite songs composed by 1751 see *AMD*: 200 and 208. Such songs may, of course, have been widespread but ephemeral.

38 The whole poem is replete with the old images of kingship: *cf.* Gillies 1977 for Duncan Bàn's mastery of that ideology. The sentiments expressed in this poem are, of course, at variance with those found in his crypto-Jacobite songs and in *Cead deireannach nam beann* (*DB*: 386). It is sometimes hard to know whether Duncan Bàn is being naive or tongue-in-cheek or mercenary. In this case it may have been considered suitable to have impeccable sentiments on display near the beginning of the first edition of his songs in 1768: *cf.* the 'Song to the Halberd' which precedes it.

39 See, for example, Patrick Turner's own contribution to his Collection (PT: 383), entitled 'Royal Charlie—or *Beatha Phrionnsa Thearlaich do dh' Albainn*'.

40 I believe points like the following are worth pursuing further: (1) the contemporary Gaelic evidence for what are sometimes written off as 'myths' nowadays (*e.g.* the *bonnie* Prince; the symbolic value of the tartan; the theme of 'Will ye no' come back again?' immediately after the '45); (2) the possibility of using the songs of the '45 to illuminate the workings of the Gaelic oral tradition (*e.g.* the way a clan poet views military action in which his chief and people have taken part; the reasons for additions and losses to commemorative texts; the areas where personal sentiments and colouring may be expected, and those where they may not).

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