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JOHN SHAW

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Articles are invited and should be sent to:

Dr John Shaw
The Editor, *Scottish Studies*
The School of Scottish Studies
The University of Edinburgh
50 George Square
Edinburgh EH8 9LH

All articles submitted are sent out to readers for peer review. Enquiries may be made by email to: j.w.shaw@ed.ac.uk

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Contributors

V.S. Blankenhorn, School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh

Janice Fairney, Chamcook, NB, Canada

Carl Lindahl, University of Houston, Houston TX, USA

Tony Voss, Mandela University, Port Elizabeth, South Africa

Editorial

In November of 2017, the School of Scottish Studies Archives successfully moved to its new location at 29 George Square. In addition to the sound archive of some 33,000 field recordings, the refurbished building also hosts extensive collections of manuscripts, books and photographs, which are readily available to students, staff and independent researchers.

Within its new setting Scottish Ethnology has continued to develop. Major printed/online publications recently produced include Volume 1 of *An Introduction to Scottish Ethnology: A Compendium of Scottish Ethnology*, which completes the comprehensive fourteen-volume *Scottish Life and Society* series; '*A Guid Hairst': Collecting and Archiving Scottish Tradition*, a fieldwork-based collection of essays from around 20 contributors edited by School staff; and *The Carrying Stream Flows On*, a volume of essays celebrating the 60th anniversary of the founding of the School with accounts from national and international perspectives of its founding, history and continuing projects. As part of the Scottish Tradition Series, the work of bringing out edited materials from the sound archive has continued with a CD of Gaelic songs from North Uist; a double CD issue of recordings from the field made by the late Calum Maclean (1915-1960), who served as a full-time field collector for the School; and a selection of traditions of the island of Tiree. Staff and students have regularly contributed their specialised knowledge and performance skills to events within Scotland and abroad, including festivals and workshops in traditional music and storytelling, and the weekly Celtic and Scottish Studies Seminar Series, featuring postgraduate students and visiting scholars, has continued to play an important role in keeping the scholarly community informed of recent developments in the field.

International academic contacts are regularly promoted and maintained through a series of conferences and seminars, along with visits from foreign researchers. Conferences on comparative mythology, initiated over a decade ago, have been continued in a series of annual gatherings; this year marks the publication of *Celtic Myth in the 21st Century,* a volume of selected conference papers published under the editorship of Dr. Emily Lyle. Dr. Lyle's contribution to ethnology has been further celebrated in Volume 59 of *Tocher,* the School's in-house journal, featuring her work in the field. Staff have contributed to national and international projects such as the production of a new critical edition of Walter Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*; a study of the legacy of the Brothers Grimm in the development of folkloristics in Western European countries; and ongoing work providing searchable online access to Scotland's major ethnological sound collections.

Songs of the Hebrides and the Critics

V.S. BLANKENHORN

> *Soraidh le NicUalraig-Fhriseal*
> *bean uasal ise gun chron;*
> *spoth i ar Ceòlraidh lùthmhor*
> *'s chuir i siùcar air an lot.*
>
> Farewell to Kennedy-Fraser
> An untarnished gentlewoman;
> She gelded our vigorous Muses
> And put sugar on the wound.
>
> – Somhairle Mac Gill-Eain (2011: 420-1; *trans.* Christopher Whyte in Mac Gill-Eain 2007: 142n.)

Marjory Kennedy-Fraser has been a figure of controversy for a long time. Indeed, no aspect of her life and work – her expeditions to the Gàidhealtachd for the purpose of collecting Gaelic songs; her transformation of these into art-songs with English texts and piano accompaniments; her subsequent publication of *Songs of the Hebrides* and related works; her lecture-recitals of Gaelic and other 'Celtic' music in the halls and drawing-rooms of Edinburgh; her collaboration with the Rev. Kenneth MacLeod and her friendship with prominent figures in the Celtic Revival; even her physical appearance and character – has escaped the notice of her critics, including some who became heavyweight champions of the art and culture of Gaelic Scotland. For the past seventy years and more, the noise and smoke generated by these big guns has made any objective reassessment of Mrs Kennedy-Fraser difficult and unlikely. Even today one continues to hear her name disparaged by people who, however little they actually know about her, nonetheless take refuge in the common consensus that her work was of no value – indeed, that it did actual harm to the Gaelic tradition – and that she herself was little better than an air-headed, money-grubbing opportunist.

In this paper, I would like to examine Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's life and work in light of the criticisms levelled at her. Enough time has now elapsed that the battle over her reputation has a certain historical interest; and while some snipers may yet be lurking in the hedgerows, it should now be possible to determine why and how the battle was joined in the first place.

The details of Marjory Kennedy-Fraser's background and upbringing have been the subject of frequent summary; those of the Rev. Kenneth MacLeod are perhaps less well-known, the most illuminating picture of his life being that published by the Rev. Thomas Murchison in his introduction to MacLeod's Gaelic prose writings, *Sgriobhaidhean Choinnich MhicLeòid.* While we shall have more to say regarding their collaboration in due course, a brief review of their lives may be helpful at the outset.

Marjory Kennedy-Fraser (1857–1930)[1]

Marjory Kennedy was born into a musical family in Perth. Her father, David Kennedy, was a tenor specialising in Scottish song. As her father's accompanist from the age of thirteen, Marjory regularly performed with him for concert audiences of nostalgic Scots both at home and on extensive overseas tours. In the course of these travels she studied singing in Milan and Paris, where she absorbed not

[1] This summary of Marjory Kennedy-Fraser's life and work is largely indebted to Dr Per Ahlander, whose introduction to his edition of Marjory Kennedy-Fraser's autobiography, *A Life of Song*, presents a balanced, insightful and sympathetic account of her activities and their place in the cultural life of her times.

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only the latest vocal techniques, but also the musical language and theoretical basis underpinning nineteenth-century opera and art-song.

Marjory was in her mid-twenties when she began to take an interest in Gaelic song. The intense nationalism of late-nineteenth-century Europe, and the resulting enthusiasm for art reflective of national heritage – including the fashion among composers of the time for appropriating and transforming musical materials encountered among 'the folk' – no doubt encouraged her to think of her Gaelic-speaking ancestors and wonder about the songs they had sung. The language, however, was a difficulty. Although her maternal grandfather had been brought up with Gaelic, he refused to speak the language as an adult, and Marjory herself had had little exposure to Gaelic as a child. To address this deficit she began in 1882 to study the language and songs of the Gael with the poet Mary Mackellar, then living in Edinburgh. That same year she arranged a number of Gaelic songs for a trio of unaccompanied female voices, and the performance of these became part of the family's concert repertoire.

Following her father's death in 1886 and that of her husband, Alec Yule Fraser, in 1890 after only three years of marriage, Mrs Kennedy-Fraser supported herself and her two children by teaching, performing recitals, and lecturing on musical topics (one popular series was entitled 'Songs and Song-Writers') to Edinburgh audiences. In 1892, she joined the first intake of women students at the the University Edinburgh, where she undertook formal study of music with Professor Frederick Niecks. Beginning in 1904, she was a regular music critic for the *Edinburgh Evening News*. As a result of all of these activities, she became a familiar member of Edinburgh's cultural scene at a time when the Celtic Revival was attracting the enthusiastic interest of middle-class audiences and the attention of artists and scholars in the capital and beyond. Indeed, her friendship with Alexander Carmichael, whose *Carmina Gadelica* had begun to appear in 1900, his daughter Ella Carmichael, and with symbolist painter John Duncan were to have a direct influence upon her work in later years.

Mrs Kennedy-Fraser first visited the Western Isles in 1905, when she was persuaded to travel to Eriskay by Duncan, who had visited the island the previous year, painting and studying Gaelic. The trip was intended to furnish material to expand her repertoire; in the event, it altered the course of her professional life. From 1907 onwards, her performances of Gaelic songs – arranged as art-songs with piano accompaniment – became a phenomenon of the Celtic Revival movement in Scotland, in which context her concerts and lecture-recitals proved enormously popular. When the first volume of *Songs of the Hebrides* appeared in 1909, its sales indicated that there was a strong market for such productions, and Marjory undertook further collecting-trips, usually accompanied by her daughter Patuffa or, in later years, by her sister Margaret Kennedy. Further volumes of *Songs of the Hebrides* appeared in 1917 and 1921; *From the Hebrides: Further Gleanings of Tale and Song* was published in 1925; and a final volume, *More Songs of the Hebrides,* came out in 1929, a year before her death.

That same year saw publication of her autobiography, *A Life of Song*. Per Ahlander describes the influence of *Songs of the Hebrides* upon the arts establishment in Great Britain, and her role in bringing Gaelic song to the notice of a wider audience both at home and abroad (Ahlander 2012: xxi):

> In her ambition to show Gaelic culture as one of the many, equally valuable and important components of Europe's cultural heritage, Kennedy-Fraser was successful indeed. Influential individuals of the period were fascinated by the many songs and tales she published together with Kenneth Macleod.... Her *Songs of the Hebrides* recitals became regular features of the prestigious London music scene, and her

recitals in continental Europe, as well as her contacts with Maurice Duhamel and other international authorities on folk music, made Hebridean music known far beyond the Anglo-Saxon parts of the world. ... Apparently her voice even found its way into Westminster. In July 1918, when the Scottish Grand Committee discussed an amendment to the Scottish Education Bill, 'providing for the inclusion of schemes for the teaching of Gaelic in Gaelic-speaking areas', Mr A. F. Whyte MP ...[stated that he] 'should be prepared to base his case for the fostering of Gaelic on one point alone, namely, on the very remarkable collection of poems

The Rev. Kenneth MacLeod (1871–1955)

Kenneth MacLeod was born in Eigg, where his father, Donald MacLeod, was schoolmaster. Following the death of his mother when Kenneth was only six years old, his father's sister Janet came to look after him and his five surviving siblings; this aunt, who was still alive during the period of his and Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's collecting activities, was the source of many of the items recorded in *Songs of the Hebrides*. Kenneth was proud of his MacLeod ancestry: his father's family were MacLeods from Fàsach in Waternish in Skye, and he was proud of the care his ancestors had taken to preserve and maintain not only the family *sloinneadh* (Kenneth could trace his descent from Iain Borb, Chief of the MacLeods of Harris, Dunvegan, and Glenelg in the first half of the 15th century) but more especially the poetry and oral traditions of the MacLeods. In addition, his upbringing in Eigg, at the centre of Clanranald territory, enabled him likewise to absorb the lore and traditions of that great clan. During Kenneth's childhood, Eigg retained a large enough population that he was able to experience first-hand the vigour of the native traditions of the Gael – ceilidhs and waulkings, songs and lullabies, prayers and charms, clan sagas and legends, stories of Cuchullain and Fionn Mac Cumhaill, supernatural tales and lore, proverbs, onomastic legends, legends of St Columba – in their natural setting and social context. From boyhood he took a keen interest in such material, and this enthusiasm remained with him throughout his life.

'Road to the Isles'

Thèid mi thun nan Eileanan
is ataidh mi lem bhaothalachd
mu bhruthan sìth an Canaidh 's Eige
mu ghusgal ròn an Èirisgeidh,
mu chlàrsaichean 's mu Eilean Bharraigh,
mu Fhir Ghorma 's mu Chaitligich
mu thaighean dubha 's tràighean geala,
mu Thìr nan Òg 's mun Iùbhrach Bhallaich:
cuiridh mi iad ann mo phòcaid
airson snaoisean mo shròine,
airson boillsgeadh mo shùilean,
airson gealach mo rùintean,
airson braisealachd goil coire
a thaobh brèige is goileim.
Gabhar dhìom am fìor Ghàidheal
a rèir meud mo mhòr-phàighidh
leis na tàlantan diadhaidh
a thruis 's a sholair mi 'na crìochaibh:
gabhar sràid leam an Dùn Èideann
an crois 's am breacan an fhèilidh,
boillsgear follais aig gach cèilidh:
càrnar leam tùis mar dh'fheumar
air altairean Khennedy-Fraser,
seinnear duanagan…

I will go to the Isles
and inflate with my vapidity
about fairy mounds in Canna and Eigg,
about the wailing of seals in Eriskay,
about 'clarsachs' and the Isle of Barra,
about Blue Men and Catholics
about 'black' houses and white strands,
about Tir nan Og and the Speckled Barge:
I will put them in my pocket
as snuff for my nose,
as a light to my eyes,
a moon to my desires,
to make my kettle boil the quicker,
for lies and chatter.
I will be called the 'true' Gael
according to the extent of my large endowment
with the holy talents
I collected and procured in this country.
I will promenade in Edinburgh
in the belted, kilted plaid;
I will shine at every 'ceilidh',
heap incense, as is fitting,
on the altars of Kennedy-Fraser.
I'll sing ditties...

– Somhairle Mac Gill-Eain (2011: 14-15)

Kenneth MacLeod was thus heir to generations of orally-transmitted lore from two of the great clan traditions of the Gàidhealtachd; and what he had not learned in boyhood he absorbed during his twenty-year career as a Church of Scotland lay preacher, and thirty as an ordained minister of the Gospel. For half a century he served parishes in Morvern, Skye, the Uists, Kintyre, Perthshire,

Strathspey, Ardchattan, western Inverness-shire, and – for most of his ordained ministry – Gigha and Cara. In all of these places he gained familiarity with a variety of Gaelic dialects and the lore and traditions embedded in them. MacLeod was thus ideally qualified to guide Mrs Kennedy-Fraser, whose slender knowledge of Gaelic and of the ways of the Gael required the support of a Gaelic-speaking advisor if her project of recording Gaelic songs were to succeed. As the well-regarded heir to a wide spectrum of traditional material, Kenneth MacLeod spoke with authority. Among his fellow Gaels he was widely respected, and when Mrs Kennedy-Fraser asked Professor Donald Mackinnon of Edinburgh University to suggest a Gaelic-speaker who might be able to advise her in her work, Mackinnon recommended Kenneth MacLeod.

Despite what we are told was an initial reluctance to be drawn into Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's undertaking, MacLeod was eventually persuaded to offer his services, and the collaboration between them lasted for 20 years (Murchison 1988: xxxiv). Indeed, the project seemed tailor-made for him. Thomas Murchison quotes an address given by MacLeod in 1932, on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee Concert given by the St Columba Choir, in which he recalled a performance he had heard them give in 1889:

> 'MacCrimmon's Lament', as sung that night...has been singing in my ears ever since. Every singer in that choir was for the time being MacCrimmon himself, pouring into other hearts the nobleness of his sorrow, which means, of course, great singing. I am glad to know that two or three members of the 1889 choir are with us tonight, and after all those years I thank them from the heart for having set a Hebridean boy dreaming of what might be done with the songs of the Gael. Not only was the choir formed at the very dawn of the modern Gaelic movement, but in a real sense it was itself that dawn. At any rate, it created an atmosphere in which it was possible for patriotic Gaels to make great ventures, such as the founding of the Mod in 1892, and, if the best way of drawing people towards Gaelic is through song, then we owe that best way to the St Columba Choir, the mother of many children (Murchison 1988: xvii-xviii).

Clearly, here was a Gael who, by his own account, believed that something 'might be done with the songs' of his native people, and who approved the efforts in that direction undertaken by 'patriotic Gaels' in founding the Mòd, the organization largely responsible for promoting the harmonized rendition of Gaelic song.[2]

MacLeod's approach to Gaelic texts was, to say the least, flexible. He saw no harm in allowing his imagination – informed, as he saw it, by his rich upbringing in Gaelic lore – free rein in adapting and improving texts that were fragmentary or that he deemed second-rate or flawed. The results are to be seen throughout *Songs of the Hebrides*, in his editing of the Gaelic texts of songs he and Mrs Kennedy-Fraser collected, in his composing of new texts for tunes that had none (or whose texts he

[2] Malcolm MacFarlane took a very different view of the St Columba Choir, whose annual concerts he for some years attended: 'The singing which I heard at those concerts was of quite another order. The main difference consisted in the music being regarded as of first importance and the words of secondary importance. ... [T]he soloists at those concerts... made themselves, more or less, musical instruments, contrary to the practice of the old singers, who mostly sang with animation and feeling, determined to do justice to the words, be the fate of the music what it might. The St Columba Choir was the pioneer Gaelic Choir, and it had much influence in modernising the style of Gaelic singing. In fact, it was that choir which made choral singing one of the phases of the Gaelic Movement' (MacFarlane 1929: 254).

deemed unsatisfactory), in his English translations and adaptations, and in his summaries of legends and lore, interspersed among the songs, which are clearly intended to authenticate the texts of the songs to which they refer. The Gaelic material was, after all, the property of the Gael – of people like him – and he claimed the right to make such changes as he himself thought appropriate and consonant with Gaelic tradition.[3] Murchison quotes as follows from an unspecified paper among Kenneth Macleod's 'lectures and other writings' (1988: xxxi):

> I now come to the question which is asked oftener than any other: Will you tell us exactly how you have treated the material collected in the Hebrides? First of all, Mrs Kennedy-Fraser and myself had to decide whether we should work from the artistic or from the antiquarian standpoint. Sometimes, of course, the two can be combined; sometimes they cannot. If you hear a beautiful tune wedded to hopelessly poor words, or beautiful words to a hopelessly poor tune, and you give them to the world exactly as you heard them, you are working from the antiquarian angle. If you throw away what is worthless, whether tune or words, and try to get something better, you are working from the artistic angle. It seemed best, both for Gaeldom and for the world at large, that we should only preserve what was worth preserving.

In the following passage, MacLeod revealingly distinguishes between 'the people' and 'the public', signalling his understanding that the presentation of Gaelic songs to the latter would require certain changes (Murchison 1988: xxxvi):

> For instance, labour songs, as sung by the people, have no stereotyped beginning or end. In fact, they have no end at all, being circular tunes. If you wish to arrange them for the public you have to choose where to begin and where to end effectively. Sometimes, too, in Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's arrangements, a commonplace phrase is omitted altogether, and a particularly attractive one repeated oftener than in the original version – repetition being perhaps the dominant note in genuine Hebridean song, whether words or music. But no matter how the tune is arranged, the original material remains – nothing is added to it, though something may be purposely left out. Nothing

[3] Indeed, MacLeod appears to have taken similar liberties with the story of his own life. Murchison writes (1988: iii): 'Whimsical, imaginative, humorous, and (as a friend of many years said) "a past-master in the art of gentle leg-pulling", Kenneth Macleod was the kind of person with whom and about whom fact and fancy so easily become intermingled. Over the years he was frequently written about, and especially by a number of authors who wrote books about the Highlands and Hebrides. There is the mystery about the precise year of his date of birth. There are myths about his sudden ending of his Glasgow University course because of ill-health and his immediate going on a sea trip to Australia ...; about the circumstances of his entry into collaboration with Mrs Kennedy-Fraser; and about how and where he wrote the song, "The Road to the Isles".... There is the myth of his having been a student at St Andrews University. There were times when one could not be sure whether one was meant to believe the story he was telling, or whether he himself believed it! A friend who knew him well said this in a published tribute: "There was an elusive quality about him that made it impossible to gauge whether he believed in the fabulous lore that seemed to rise spontaneously out of his knowledge and his poetic invention".'

> has amazed me more in Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's art than her gift of making a few notes into a song, and yet preserving the tune as sung by the folk.

Clearly, both Kenneth MacLeod and Marjory Kennedy-Fraser agreed upon a basic principle: native Gaelic song would require modification if it were to be rendered comprehensible to an audience of non-Gaels. What neither of them perhaps anticipated was the possible reaction of Gaeldom itself to their comprehensive appropriation, re-arrangement and re-presentation of traditional material as art-song for the mainstream, middle-class, urban-dwelling, English-speaking audiences of their time.

Admirers and Adversaries

Mr A. F. Whyte, MP, was not alone in praising Mrs Kennedy-Fraser and *Songs of the Hebrides*. Indeed, Mrs Kennedy-Fraser included two early 'appreciations' of her work on the last page of the second volume (*SOTH* II: 244). First, she quotes eminent music critic Ernest Newman:

> Mrs Kennedy-Fraser holds the highest place among British folk-song collectors. She has laboured hard in the collection and editing of Hebridean song. She has a poet's love of the islands and the peculiar phase of civilization they represent; but she is also a very skilled musician, and the accompaniments she has arranged for these songs are equal to the best that has been done in any other field.

Significantly, Newman praises Kennedy-Fraser as a collector, editor, and arranger; the actual composition of the melodies he credits to the island 'song-writers' themselves, whom he considers the equal of Schubert and Hugo Wolf: 'Schubert himself never wrote a more perfectly satisfying or more haunting melody, for example, than that of the "Sea-gull of the Land-under-Waves".' On the same occasion, Kennedy-Fraser quotes composer Granville Bantock's opinion that *Songs of the Hebrides* 'is a classic work, unique in its knowledge and expression of the peculiar characteristics of Gaelic Music'. These reviews clearly pleased and encouraged Mrs Kennedy-Fraser, and in subsequent years she cited the authority of Newman and Bantock when called upon to explain and justify her work.

Shortly thereafter Ezra Pound, in a 1919 review written under the pen-name 'William Aetheling' in *The New Age*, reveals that Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's arrangements of Gaelic song had found an enthusiastic audience in London:

> There is music which reminds one of great forests, of wind and unbridled ocean; there is music, by no means inferior, which reminds one of gilded chairs and the court of *Le Grand Monarque*; and there is music which reminds one of nothing so much as of too much underwear and too many waistcoats.... These traditional melodies of the Gael are among the musical riches of all time, and one need use no comparatives and no tempered adjectives to express the matter. They have in them the wildness of the sea and of the wind and the shrillness of the sea-birds, and whether they will pass away utterly with the present industrious collector I am unable to say.[4]

[4] As quoted by Anne Lorne Gillies (2010: 1).

The appearance in 1925 of *From the Hebrides: Further Gleanings of Tale and Song* inspired the following from Hugh S. Roberton, founder of the Glasgow Orpheus Choir, who wrote as follows in *The People's Journal* (as cited in MacDiarmid 1975: 99):

> In turning over the pages and finding here and there a gem of purest ray serene and everywhere the stamp of the pure gold of achievement, my heart went out to that patient grey-haired woman who lives under the shadow of Edinburgh Castle, and who over many years has laboured so fruitfully in this field of her own choosing. .... What is there within knowledge that is likely to outlive 'The Eriskay Love-Lilt' or 'The Seagull of the Land-Under-Waves'? .... Many of these Hebridean songs fall easily within the category of 'great'. That they are not all exactly as they fell from the lips of the people is not the sound argument many well-meaning Gaels think it is. Nor does it take us further to say that some of the songs, like the 'Twa Sisters', have been pieced together. Both statements may be true, but might be adduced more fitly as testimony to the art of the composer. Again, some folk are fond of reminding us of the invaluable collaboration of Kenneth Macleod.... The fact is Mrs Kennedy-Fraser has done what only a fine artist can do. She has put the songs into what seems to her (and what seems to many competent judges) the most artistic and permanent form. Furthermore she has given to the songs a background of pianoforte accompaniment which in itself is a work of genius....

Five years later, equally fulsome praise was heaped upon *Songs of the Hebrides* by George Malcolm Thomson, journalist and publisher, whose *A Short History of Scotland* appeared in 1930 (Thomson 299). In crediting Mrs Kennedy-Fraser with 'discovering' Gaelic song 'before it passed away', Thomson goes beyond calling her a 'collector' and provides a vital arguing point for future critics:

> …the discovery by Mrs. Kennedy-Fraser of an exquisite folk-poetry and folk-music among the Gaelic-speaking fisherfolk of Eriskay and other Hebridean islands. It is one of the most romantic and fortunate accidents in modern history that this small and lovely world yielded up its treasure before it passed away.

Sir Robert Rait and Dr George Pryde, co-authors of *Scotland* in the Modern World series, express a similar view (1934: 302):

> In our own day Mrs. Marjorie Kennedy-Fraser tapped an almost untried source in Gaelic folk-poetry (though Burns did use a few Gaelic airs) and made the nation her debtor with her edition of songs of the Hebrides. To deride work of this kind as a tampering with the genuine product of the folk spirit is inept and ungracious, yet it is still occasionally done. Not only is it clear that the essentials of the originals are generally preserved and that the alterations and additions are improvements; it is even doubtful if, in many cases, anything would have survived without the interested labours of these collectors.

Such views were no doubt representative of the mainstream, non-Gaelic-speaking 'public' who were, after all, the intended audience and market for *Songs of the Hebrides*. It also seems clear that Kennedy-

Fraser's arrangements found approval among many middle-class Gaels seeking respectability and acceptance in mainstream Scottish society – Gaels who, since the Education Act of 1872, had been educated solely through the medium of English, who supported the National Mòd and the Comunn Gàidhealach, and whose musical and literary tastes had become conditioned by their exposure to the mainstream culture over several generations.[5] Just as many of them (including Marjory's grandfather, Charles Fraser) declined to speak Gaelic as adults because it carried, for them, a stigma of backwardness and poverty, so they also preferred Gaelic song as performed on the concert platform, rather than as it would have been sung round a smoky fireside in a thatched house in which the human inhabitants shared living-space with cattle.

As we shall see, the excessive praise initially lavished upon *Songs of the Hebrides* eventually provided a stick with which subsequent critics attacked the work. Even so, some people appear to have expressed misgivings at an early date, when the volumes were still coming out and the concerts were first being performed. Here is a letter, dated 30 November 1909, written by Frances Tolmie to Marjory Kennedy-Fraser after hearing two of the latter's recitals of Gaelic song (Bassin 1977: 118):

> Let me express in a few lines how much I was impressed at both your Recitals of our native melodies arranged according to the principles of Art.
> I listened with much pleasure, as I recognised each familiar strain, but at the same time with bewilderment, and a sense of my own profound ignorance of the region into which you were leading the audience, and a strong desire to hear everything *over,* and *over* and *over* again, and learn in truth. Could one leap at a bound into all this inner meaning and exposition of our Hebridean life to which you have devoted your genius, without preliminary experience, however true one's power of Intuition might be?
> Aspiring, waiting, and thanking Miss Kennedy and you with all my heart for a great Lesson, and with kindest regards to you, and to Mr. Kenneth Macleod who has done his part so admirably....

Frances Tolmie – native Gael, author of *105 Songs of Occupation*, her collection of songs from Skye which was published in the *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* in 1911– knew a great deal more about Gaelic song than Mrs Kennedy-Fraser; but, self-effacing and ladylike to a fault, she confesses only to 'bewilderment' at what she has heard, and gently questions whether 'Intuition', however powerful, might be capable of 'leap[ing] at a bound into all this inner meaning and exposition of our Hebridean life.' Tempering these comments – which hardly need tempering in any case – she characteristically expresses the hope of 'learning in truth' from Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's work more about the artistic value of her own tradition.

We may assume that other early critics spoke directly to Kennedy-Fraser and Kenneth MacLeod; at the very least – as we may adduce from Hugh Roberton's references to 'many well-meaning Gaels' and to Sir Robert Rait and George Pryde's reference to the 'ungracious and inept' comments of

[5] John MacInnes tells me that, as a boy attending Portree School in the 1940s, he and his classmates occasionally attended concerts of Gaelic song at the Portree Drill Hall. These concerts regularly featured Mòd Gold Medal winners like Gilbert MacPhail, Kenneth MacRae, and Neil MacLean – trained singers – and some of the concert arrangements they sang were undoubtedly those of Kennedy-Fraser. He and his classmates unquestioningly accepted that what they were hearing was 'outstanding singing'. It was only later, having discovered elderly relations who knew songs from oral tradition, that he came to appreciate the difference between the concert versions and 'the real thing'.

unnamed critics in the passages quoted above – they grumbled among themselves. The following argument, from the introduction to the second volume of *Songs of the Hebrides*, is a clear – if admittedly specious – response to people who had apparently objected to the piano accompaniments (*SOTH* II: xix):

> For me, these sea-chants of the Isles are always accompanied (in the mind's ear) by nature sounds. Conrad speaks of "the deep bass-like chant of the sea," and of the "shrill pipe of the wind played on the sea-tops," and "the occasional punctuating crash of a breaking wave". These are ever behind all the croons we heard in the Isles, and we cannot do full justice to the Hebridean songs if we attempt – away from the sea – to sing them unaccompanied. The accompaniments, therefore, have not been provided merely for the "amusement of a lay public," although such subjective treatment has been accused of being "more artistic than documentary," yet, on the other hand, the bare statement of a melody in notation does not convey its full significance, and phonograph records even give but a rhythmically emasculated version of many of the finest songs.[6]

The first Gael openly to express an opinion was Malcolm MacFarlane (1853–1931), who commented upon *Songs of the Hebrides* in an address to the Gaelic Society of Inverness in 1925 (1929: 252-72). In comparing Kennedy-Fraser's work to that of Frances Tolmie, in remarking upon the 'false Gaelic spirit' of the 'new words' supplied to the songs, and in drawing attention to the commercial motivation for the work, MacFarlane's remarks presage the critical storm to come (MacFarlane 1929: 261):

> Mrs Kennedy Fraser's Collection is also marred by the tunes being adapted to English words and by the liberties taken with their original forms; and they have, in cases, to be timed anew for the Gaelic singer. Also, the new words are often conceived in a false Gaelic spirit for which there is no valid excuse. Miss Frances Tolmie's excellent collection of Skye airs can be relied on as giving the tunes in accordance with the forms in which she found them. …. It was not, like some recent publications, conceived in a mercenary spirit, for upper and middle class English consumpt, but was given for preservation to the Folk-Song Society.

Another early critic was the redoubtable Hugh MacDiarmid (C. M. Grieve, 1892–1978), guiding light of the Scottish Literary Renaissance, who was to exert a considerable influence on Sorley MacLean and other Gaelic poets and writers in the coming decades. In an article published in April,

[6] Mrs Kennedy-Fraser, if she is indeed the author of this passage, is expressing views shared by Kenneth MacLeod, as in the following: "This question of accompanied or unaccompanied singing I am not, of course, competent to discuss. But let me say that I have hardly ever heard unaccompanied singing in the Hebrides. Rowing songs were accompanied by the swish and the swash of the oars and the plashing of the waves, waulking songs by the thumping of the same waulking, spinning songs by the hum of the wheel and the foot-work of the spinner.... Personally, then I like to hear an artist's accompaniment, if only as compensation for all that the songs lose when taken away from their own surroundings" (Murchison 1988: xxxviii).

1926, in the *Scottish Educational Journal*, MacDiarmid soundly rebutted Hugh Roberton's piece in *The People's Journal* (MacDiarmid 1975: 99–100):

> What is the truth about these *Songs of the Hebrides*? In the first place they are not Hebridean songs at all. They are in no way essentially Scottish even. And above all...they do not even belong to the present; they are definitely 'dated' – they belong to the '90s and have the appropriate artificiality and decadence. The readiness with which they have found widespread popularity – their success in 'playing to the gallery' – is, in itself, the strongest evidence against them. .... Already questions are being asked.... Mr Ernest Newman, for example, feels 'that the application of cold scientific tests to the whole body of Hebridean song would yield some quite positive conclusions.' .... The first stage in that work, were it to be undertaken, would require to be the establishment by strict scientific principles of a reliable basis on which to found the theories that were to follow. That could not be done with the *Songs of the Hebrides* as issued to the public by Mrs Kennedy-Fraser and her collaborator. Their work is not done on scientific principles, cold or otherwise; and anyone undertaking research or study in Hebridean song and music as revealed in them would be wasting time and effort. The music given to us – at least in some of the more popular items – is adapted to the accompanying English words and the original Gaelic ones are disregarded. The tunes would have to be taken out of their settings, which are not in keeping with the melodies and the original words. The English words would have to be relieved of all camouflage which tends to delude the unwary. For instance 'Kishmul's Galley' would have to be tamed down to 'MacNeill's Boat.' .... Evidence along these lines...(the examples mentioned will be in themselves sufficient to show most people that we have here again something not dissimilar to the mongrel work of Ossian or 'Fiona Macleod' in the literary sphere)... in no way impugns the artistic quality of the Kennedy-Fraser work; but it proves that to call it Hebridean is misleading and unwarrantable and that if, through it, 'the name of Scotland is carried furth of Scotland and honoured,' Scotland is accepting bouquets on false pretences.

MacDiarmid's broadside marked the onset of a torrent of criticism, and may indeed have sparked some of it. Whatever critical views may have been politely expressed while the enterprise was still underway, in the 1930s the gloves came off, and it became clear that a number of Gaels were happy neither with the contents of *Songs of the Hebrides*, nor with the praise that the work had received. By then, the Celtic Revival and the genteel fantasies of Edwardian Scotland had been swept away. The emergence of Modernism in the years following the Great War had a peculiar intensity for Scotland, and especially for Gaels: not just the carnage of the war itself, which robbed so many communities of their young men; nor the worldwide economic slump of the 1930s, with the decline of Scotland's shipbuilding and other heavy industry, that deprived those who had survived the war of a livelihood; but also the unkept promises made to those who had fought, the Gaels' ongoing demand for rights to the land upon which they had lived for centuries, the continuing erosion of the Gaelic language, and the mass emigration of Gaels to Canada and elsewhere – anger about all of these things energized the response of a new generation of university-educated Gaelic-speakers to what they rightly saw as the

exploitation of their native arts by the same dominant culture that seemed hell-bent on destroying their way of life.

For such critics, Mrs Kennedy-Fraser represented an ideal target, especially in light of her commercial success and the praise that had been lavished upon her. Sorley MacLean (1911–1996), just twenty-three years old, sounded the outraged keynote in his seminal essay 'Realism in Gaelic Poetry', first published in 1934 (MacLean 1985: 19):[7]

> The special brand of romanticism attributed to the Gael and his poetry is a romanticism of the escapist, otherworldly type, a cloudy mysticism, the type suggested by the famous phrase, 'Celtic Twilight'. This Celtic Twilight never bore any earthly relation to anything in Gaelic life or literature. It was merely one of the latest births of the English literary bourgeoisie, and its births are to Gaelic eyes exceedingly strange, whether they be Mr John Duncan's St Bride or the late Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's 'Mairead òg with her sea-blue eyes of witchery'.

In a subsequent essay he draws the following vivid analogy (MacLean 1985: 107):

> In 1920 the 'image' of Gaelic song was to almost all articulate Gaels only as mediocre Victorian Gothic is to the Gothic of the 12th or 13th centuries.... The Celtic Twilight of the 1890s and its product, the *Songs of the Hebrides*, were to the realities of Gaelic song poetry as Victorian Gothic is to the North French cathedrals.

John Lorne Campbell (1906–1996) had, in the 1930s, not just an aesthetic but also a practical motive for objecting to the work of Mrs Kennedy-Fraser. He was at that time embarking on his own collecting work in Barra and South Uist, and knew the rich heritage of song that still survived in the Western Isles and, to an extent, in mainland Gàidhealtachd areas. In this and in later commentary he lamented the assumption, expressed by many of Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's admirers, that Gaelic culture was dead, that she had 'saved' the last remnants of Gaelic song, and that therefore (and this was his greatest fear) nothing else need be done. Here is what he wrote in *The Book of Barra*, first published in 1936 (1998: 223–4):

> Gaelic [Mrs Kennedy-Fraser] did not know and never came near to mastering. … The methods of her collecting involved formal recitations of a kind that must have been prejudicial to the spontaneity of the singer. It is not too much to say that she regarded the traditional music of the islands as an excellent mine, a source of good musical material to be refined and made presentable for English-speaking audiences. … The result has been widely acclaimed…. It has

[7] It seems probable that MacLean was voicing the views not just of himself but of Hugh MacDiarmid, with whom he had become friendly, and of other Gaelic poets of the period. In a February, 1940, letter to fellow-poet Douglas Young, George Campbell Hay praised MacLean: 'How long ago was it that the last Gaelic poetry that really meant anything was produced? At the time of the evictions? Long since anyway. But from these poems it looks as if we are getting out of the rut at last. ...[Mr MacLean] has avoided our continual lyricism, which at present looks like becoming as maudlin as the Lowland lyric once was. .... Nor...has he wandered off into a drawingroom Tìr Nan Òg at the heels of the Clàrsach Society and the Kennedy Frasers' (Hay 2000/2003: 503).

> also created…a curiously false impression of the Hebrides based on the author's own romanticized attitude. … Moreover, as long as it is taken for granted that the *Songs of the Hebrides* is a collection of authentic Gaelic airs and words, the danger will remain that the genuinely authentic versions of these songs will perish unrecorded.

Campbell's concern was echoed a year later in a perceptive comment by Australian musician and folksong enthusiast Clement Hosking (1896–1966), when he was interviewed by the music critic of the *Glasgow Herald* following a visit to the Hebrides (Coombs 2006: 17):

> Mr Hosking, while fully appreciating what has so far been done for Hebridean song, particularly by Mrs Kennedy Fraser – it was through her work that his interest was first aroused – believes that the general result is not quite true to the originals. And in Barra he was impressed by the number of songs he heard which the people declared had never been collected – songs with the most intricate rhythms and fascinating variety of melody. 'I am convinced,' he told me, 'that the only way such songs could be faithfully secured would be by means of careful recording strictly adhered to. The records would capture the text with the tune: and the text, say the people, must be regarded as of equal importance with the melody.'

The scorn expressed by MacLean and the practical note sounded by Campbell and Hosking were both to the fore some years later, when a concert of Gaelic song presented at the Edinburgh Festival in 1948 provoked a storm of controversy in the letters columns of *The Scotsman*.[8] The argument was ignited by a comment from a Banffshire correspondent writing under the pseudonym 'Sleepers Awake':

> It does not seem to be realised by all Gaels that, with few exceptions, the only editions of Gaelic songs which are of sufficient musical standing to be internationally presentable (I mean as music, not as folklore) are those of Marjory Kennedy-Fraser. One has only to read the comments of European music critics (including Ernest Newman, who may be regarded as of European standing)…to see how very highly her own concerts were appreciated all over the most civilised and cultured parts of Europe. What higher praise could possibly be given than to be compared with Schubert and Wolf? … If the Festival announced that the entire Kennedy-Fraser collection would be systematically worked through in, say, three years, the Usher Hall could be filled many times over….

To this red rag a trio of Gaelic bulls – Sorley MacLean, Hector MacIver and Torquil Nicolson – predictably responded:

> For many years the presentation of Gaelic songs on the concert platform and on the radio has been a pain and humiliation to all who really know and care

[8] 28 August–16 September 1948. The examples given here are excerpts from longer letters published in the paper. Other notable contributors to this correspondence included poet and scholar Douglas Young, a former leader of the SNP; and Arthur Geddes, son of Patrick Geddes, an Edinburgh contemporary of Marjory Kennedy-Fraser's in the pre-war years.

> for the unequalled song music of Gaelic Scotland. … At the Central Hall on Friday… Miss MacMillan gave the great lament for John Garve of Raasay, but gave it spoilt by Mrs Kennedy-Fraser. Miss MacDonald sang the very fine 'Reubadh na Mara,' also a Kennedy-Fraser adulteration…. Mrs Kennedy-Fraser has always spoilt the really great song, sometimes, it is true, only a little, but often, very much.

Another anonymous correspondent, 'A. M.' of Edinburgh, weighed in to similar effect:

> 'Sleepers Awake' seems to demand of Gaelic folk-songs to be something which they are not. No one should require of the folk-songs of any country to be artificially translated into another idiom, as has been done in the case of Hebridean folk-songs by Mrs Kennedy-Fraser. … In art, as in other media, the genuine is preferable to the sham. Mrs Kennedy Fraser's versions of Gaelic folk-songs are not claimed by her as her own original work. Neither are they faithful reproductions of the songs as originally heard by her. Had she recorded the genuine article in addition to her own rendering of it there would be less reason to find fault with her. It could then be left to the individual taste to choose between the two versions. As things are, foreigners are deluded when they think they are listening to Hebridean folk-songs. What they are listening to is Hebridean folk-songs as Mrs Kennedy Fraser thinks they should be sung.

At this point Joyce Fleming, another Edinburgh correspondent, expressed what was likely to have been the view of many members of what Kenneth MacLeod called 'the public':

> Your Gaelic purists would have it both ways, and submit cultured audiences to the Gaelic songs in their raw state, inflicting upon them interminable verses in which the melody is lost in an overdose of words and impoverished by singers who have either lost the natural art of singing or have failed to acquire it. These are the faddists who choose to vilify the work of a great pioneer and musician of Mrs Kennedy Fraser's calibre, without whose work the songs of the Hebrides would undoubtedly never have penetrated beyond the Minch, and would, in fact, exist only in their raw condition, geographically inaccessible and musically indigestible to the world in general.

Joyce Fleming may have wished she had kept her head down when she read the riposte from Messrs MacLean, MacIver and Nicolson the following day. Clearly, the concept of the 'flame-war' predates the Internet by a good many years:

> Gaelic civilisation, which by inference [Joyce Fleming] disparages, is much older, much more invested with prestige, much more noted for the production of beautiful art forms, much more charged with pride and dignity than anything native to the 'civilised audiences' for whom the fine Hebridean songs must apparently be emasculated and distorted and 'set' and 'arranged' to bring them within the range of their appreciation. We believe that very many of the older Gaelic songs are great music in their own right, and deplore the meretriciousness which Mrs Kennedy-Fraser has too often substituted for their

> intensity and subtlety. Our only concern with Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's work is that it interferes with the genuine preservation of a heritage of songs that, properly presented, would be Scotland's greatest contribution to the Festival. But we are 'faddists' to the extent that we think none the less of 'Cumha na Cloinne' and 'Maol Donn', although they have never been hits with the petty bourgeoisie of Edinburgh and London.

At last John Lorne Campbell, writing from Barra, contributed to the argument. His letter was co-authored by Annie Johnston, who had herself helped to facilitate Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's collecting activities in Barra, and who subsequently recorded many songs at the behest of both Campbell himself and of researchers from the School of Scottish Studies:

> We would like to express our complete agreement with the recent letters of Somhairle Maclean, Hector MacIver, Torquil Nicolson, and 'A. M.' on this subject. The neglect of the objective method in the study, recording, and presentation of our Gaelic folksongs is extraordinary and inexplicable. If Scotland had been a Scandinavian country our universities would long ago have sent trained collectors to record, preserve and publish every scrap of our Gaelic folk music in an authentic form. As it is, this magnificant tradition has been the plaything of dilettantes and careerist musicians, and nine times out of ten at least is presented on concert platform and radio in a garbled form.

A couple of days later, Campbell wrote again, this time at greater length, as President of the Folklore Institute of Scotland, the organization which he hoped would encourage 'objective' collecting and become a repository for the traditional culture of Gaelic Scotland.[9] He, too, began by addressing Joyce Fleming:

> Nor is Mrs Kennedy Fraser the pioneer in the field of Gaelic folklore collection that Miss Fleming thinks; much more valuable work was done, from an objective point of view, by Miss Frances Tolmie, who published 105 genuine folk-songs, with the words, from the Isle of Skye...but, being an objective study, of course it got no recognition from the lovers of Celtic twilightry. Mrs Kennedy Fraser was indebted to Miss Tolmie for a number of her airs.... Actually, the most interesting part of Mrs Kennedy Fraser's publications are those portions of the prefaces where a few untouched-up versions of the airs are printed – usually without words. For the rest a particularly objectionable feature is the invention of imaginary categories of Gaelic folk-songs to which arch and sentimental titles are usually attached, such as "Sea Rapture Songs," "Clan Chants," and so on – all part of the subjective method used.
>
> As regards Mrs Kennedy Fraser's records, these were made on a very primitive type of recording machine and were, even before this war, totally inaudible owing to the growth of mould on the wax cylinders. ... Fortunately, however, better recordings of the same and many other songs have been made both before and since the last war by myself and by the Irish Folklore

[9] See Hugh Cheape, '"Tha feum air cabhaig": The Initiative of the Folklore Institute of Scotland'. *Scottish Studies* 37 (2014), 53–62.

> Commission, and work is now in progress preparing the genuine versions of the songs for publication, after which it will be possible for both musical and Gaelic students to make a direct comparison between Mrs Kennedy Fraser's version and the real thing.[10]
>
> Mrs Kennedy Fraser did not pretend that her versions were the original folk-songs, and they should not be presented at concerts as such. Nor is she the only person who has collected folk-songs in the Hebrides, nor is her collection exhaustive or anything like exhaustive of Gaelic folk-song. The merit of her arrangements is a matter of musical taste; at least those of us who know what the real thing is like are entitled to hold the opinion that the real thing is superior to her versions of it. It is remarkable how the fog of the Celtic twilight persists to bemuse public opinion: all this is on a par with MacPherson's "Ossian" and Villemarqué's "Barzaz Briez." It is time this twilight was illuminated by a little objectivity.

Among all of these commentators, Campbell was clearly the most inclined to treat Mrs Kennedy-Fraser in a fair and – to use his own favourite word – objective manner. On the one hand, he was appalled by the extent to which her presentation of Gaelic song reflected the gaseous excesses of the Celtic Twilight, as in this passage from an article published in *The Scots Magazine* ten years after the *Scotsman* letters appeared (Campbell 1958: 309):

> The first volume of *Songs of the Hebrides* appeared in 1909, and it… appealed to the preconceived ideas and emotions of a public ignorant of the true nature of Gaelic folksong and oral literature. … But the great mass of the English-speaking public prefers to have it vague, misty and sentimental; that is what Mrs Kennedy Fraser gave it, and she had an immense and immediate success.

At the same time, he was careful to give credit where it was due. In the same article he wrote (309-10):

> All three [i.e. Marjory Kennedy-Fraser and the American collectors Evelyn Benedict and Amy Murray, all of whom visited Fr Allan MacDonald in Eriskay in 1905] were infected with the Celtic Twilight in varying degrees, but…Mrs Kennedy Fraser's infection comes out in her treatment of the tunes she collected, while her descriptive writing on Eriskay, which obviously impressed her very much, is excellent. ...
>
> We must praise [Mrs Kennedy Fraser] for her qualities of resolution, appreciation, musicianship and determination to collect her material in the face of very considerable physical difficulties of travel and with only very primitive recording apparatus, whereas modern folklore collectors with tape recorders and much better transport, have a far easier time of it.

[10] Campbell and Francis Collinson's three-volume collection of waulking-songs, *Hebridean Folksongs*, appeared between 1969 and 1981. This is very likely the work-in-progress to which he is referring here.

Perhaps most important, he was fair-minded enough not to blame Mrs Kennedy-Fraser for the excessive claims made by her admirers (Campbell 1958: 313-14; my italics):

> If the arrangements of Mrs Kennedy Fraser and Kenneth MacLeod have given pleasure to millions outside the Hebrides, it is equally the case that *the effect of the dead hand her admirers have laid upon the recording and study of our authentic Hebridean folkmusic has been utterly deplorable*. … I would like to suggest that we Scots should honour Mrs Kennedy Fraser for her discoveries and her good qualities, which I have mentioned, without being blind to the defects inherent in her system of presenting her material, and, still more, without being blind to the very inadequate measures taken to follow up her pioneer work.[11]

Campbell's willingness to acknowledge that Kennedy-Fraser had actually done 'pioneer work' stands greatly to his credit. Unfortunately, however, the even-handedness of his remarks has not been sufficient to settle the matter of Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's controversial legacy. The criticism has continued to the present day, and the idea that her art-song arrangements somehow 'destroyed' traditional Gaelic song has now become common wisdom among right-thinking Gaels and, for that matter, non-Gaels who wish to be thought right-thinking. (Perhaps significantly, it is always Mrs Kennedy-Fraser herself who attracts the opprobrium; the Rev. Kenneth MacLeod's role is rarely mentioned.) Note the unappealing mixture of willful ignorance and arch *ad feminam* comment in the following, from Roger Hutchinson's biography of Fr Allan MacDonald (2010: 175-77):

> [Marjory Kennedy-Fraser] embarked on a lucrative crusade to collect, clean up, rearrange and rewrite in English for a drawing-room audience as many Gaelic songs and tunes as she could find. If she could not find them, she made them up. … [While John Duncan painted, Marjory Kennedy-Fraser] strolled around [Eriskay] with the musical equivalent of a butterfly net. … The disciplined philologist and folklorist in Allan MacDonald cannot entirely have approved of this English speaker cherry picking in his culture….

As we shall see, 'strolling' is hardly a fair description of the difficulties Marjory encountered in getting around the island; and to call her activity 'cherry-picking' is as unfair as it is unattractive. As regards Fr Allan's attitude towards her, there is every evidence that he was not only a willing teacher, but that she was an apt and interested pupil.

Another critic, the singer and broadcaster Anne Lorne Gillies, in addition to commenting on specific items from *Songs of the Hebrides* in the notes to her own collection, *Songs of Gaelic Scotland* (2005), has more recently reviewed the latest edition of Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's autobiography, *A Life of Song* (2012), in *ElectricScotland,* an online publication.[12] Like Hutchinson, Gillies feels herself to be on safe ground. Dismissing Ezra Pound's opinion, expressed in the 1919 review quoted above, she

[11] Campbell felt that he had good reason to complain, writing that, in the 1930s, his academic interest in Gaelic song had been viewed by some as 'an example of narrow nationalism…; or as indicative of personal bias or feelings against Mrs Kennedy-Fraser, a thing which has been continuously hinted at by sundry critics of our work and our writings on traditional Gaelic song'; see Campbell and Collinson, *Hebridean Folksongs* III (1981): 324n.

[12] The article, downloadable as a pdf file, is six pages long; page numbering is absent from the document but has been assumed here for ease of reference.

argues that, far from suggesting 'great forests…wind and unbridled ocean', Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's work literally stinks (1):

> To most Gaelic noses, I suspect, Marjory Kennedy-Fraser's arrangements smell more of the gilded chairs and waistcoats. And most Gaelic-speakers, I'm sure, would argue that the obstinate refusal of their culture to 'pass away utterly' owes little to the industry of Kennedy-Fraser.

Secure in the support of 'most Gaelic-speakers' for her views, Gillies summarizes the events of Marjory's life as if she were drawing a cartoon (2):

> Who could not marvel at the intrepid twelve-year-old Marjory who sets off to play pianoforte accompaniment for her father...on a prolonged concert tour that turns her adolescence into a blur? From city concert halls to barns in remote villages, Marjory (with parents, siblings and piano in tow) sploshes, splashes, slithers, rides bareback and, when all else fails, walks across fords, ravines, sands and quagmires to bring echoes of "their ain folk" to home-sick ex-pat Scots in every corner of the British Empire.... Who could not admire the feisty Edwardian widow who keeps the wolf from the door by teaching singing and piano, writing music reviews and delivering lecture-recitals, and is rewarded by a CBE, a Civil List pension and an honorary doctorate from the University of Edinburgh?

But of course, the whole enterprise comes down to money-grubbing in the end (2):

> She had already learned to sing a few Gaelic songs in her youth, her interest apparently aroused by what she calls her 'racial' background: her father's great grandfather fought at Culloden...; and of course a Gaelic song or two, arranged for female trio, would be useful for the Kennedy sisters to perform on tour.

Gillies' choice of language and her relentlessly sarcastic tone – signified all too often by her use of inverted commas – reveal how comfortable she feels criticising a non-Gael, a classically-trained musician who (oddly enough, not unlike herself) made her reputation performing artfully-arranged Gaelic songs to tasteful accompaniment, and publishing sumptuously-printed collections of such songs for a paying public. Kennedy-Fraser's decision to devote one of her lecture-recitals to the music of the Outer Hebrides was 'presumptuous' (2). She is credited at one moment with having a 'good sense of humour', but in the next is accused of having 'an alarming lack of it' (3). She is acknowledged to have been 'one of the first British song-collectors to make mechanical recordings of Gaelic songs', but in the next phrase it is implied that the credit for her use of the technology should be given to 'able and educated Island community leaders like Annie Johnson *(sic)* of Barra and her brother Calum' (4). Finally (4):

> …[H]aving carefully carried her fragile "graphaphone" to the Outer Hebrides, can she easily be forgiven for openly and unrepentantly 'processing' this 'raw material' into (to quote Professor Tovey of Edinburgh University) 'settings that would find wide acceptance among music lovers other than those disposed to confine their attention to primitive music…'

Forgiven? Apparently not. Kennedy-Fraser's attitude towards the words of the songs she collected was, according to Gillies, 'cavalier' (4). When English words were needed to complete the song arrangements that would illustrate 'A visit to the Outer Hebrides and Celtic Music', her first lecture-recital on the subject, we are told that Kennedy-Fraser 'hurriedly concocted "English translations" based on her memories of a few weeks spent as a visitor in a Hebridean island' – as if her hubris knew no bounds (3).

Kennedy-Fraser's own account of this incident is rather different. Before she left Eriskay in 1905, Fr Allan MacDonald had agreed to send the words to the songs she had collected after her by post. Unfortunately, Fr Allan fell ill of influenza and died only weeks after her visit. So when the time came to prepare the songs chosen for inclusion in her first lecture-recital,

> …English singing words had to be provided. I had not yet got in touch with Kenneth MacLeod, who later collaborated with me; so, *faute de mieux*, I myself wrote 'The Skye Fisher', 'The Mull Fisher', and others (*A Life of Song*: 90, 92).

Interestingly, Marjory does not call her English texts 'translations' at all. Gillies conveniently overlooks Marjory's self-deprecation, because it doesn't fit the picture she wants to paint of an overweeningly-ambitious and competitive woman animated solely by greed. Let one further passage suffice (3):

> Perhaps we should not judge [Kennedy-Fraser and MacLeod] against the ethical standards that determine today's ethnomusicological practice, though the Folksong Society was already producing work of integrity, including that of another Gaelic collector, Frances Tolmie. But previous generations of Scots 'collectors' (notably MacPherson, but also Scott, Hogg and even Burns) had enhanced their reputations and satisfied the public appetite for antiquity and romance by passing off their own poetry – and/or 'improved' versions of ancient fragments – as long-lost examples of 'oral tradition'. And Kennedy-Fraser was sucked into this whirlpool before she'd had time to whisper 'Pelleas et Melisande'.

Anne Lorne Gillies won the Mòd Gold Medal and enjoyed a successful career as a performer of Scottish song. Roger Hutchinson, whose remarks about Kennedy-Fraser clearly derive from Gillies' comments in *Songs of Gaelic Scotland*, calls her (in contrast to Kennedy-Fraser) 'a real authority on Gaelic music' (2010: 176). But while Gillies is correct to point out that we should not judge *Songs of the Hebrides* by today's standards, her entire argument proceeds from the assumption that what Mrs Kennedy-Fraser set out to do was publish Gaelic songs as she had heard them from the mouths of the people, and that she dishonestly presented her arrangements as genuine traditional song. Hutchinson expresses the same view when he accuses Kennedy-Fraser of 'making up' some of the songs (2010: 176). Such commentary is as unjust as it is unworthy of both of them; but it is nonetheless an important reflection of how many Gaels (and those who, self-justified by second-language acquisition of Gaelic or by an interest in Gaelic song, like to think of themselves as Gaels) today regard the work of Marjory Kennedy-Fraser and the Rev. Kenneth MacLeod.

So what is the truth of the matter? Do Marjory, the Rev. Kenneth, and *Songs of the Hebrides* really deserve the harsh treatment meted out to them? Or is it time for a closer look at what they did and why they did it?

Songs of the Hebrides

The five volumes published by Marjory Kennedy-Fraser – that is, the three volumes of *Songs of the Hebrides* (1909, 1917, and 1925) plus *From the Hebrides: Further Gleanings of Tale and Song* (1925) and *More Songs of the Hebrides* (1929) – contain a variety of materials, including lively and detailed accounts of her travels and descriptions of island life; theoretical discussion and musicological analysis of Gaelic melody; forty-six prose legends supplied by Kenneth MacLeod, many of them labelled 'literal translations from the Gaelic'; and some 114 additional tunes and tune-fragments, most of which do not appear in the song settings.

Principally the volumes contain 239 concert arrangements of Gaelic melodies collected in Eriskay, Barra, South Uist, Benbecula, Eigg, Skye and elsewhere in the Gàidhealtachd between 1905 and 1927. Much of this material also circulated as individual items of sheet-music. Whatever one may feel about their intrinsic quality, however they may compare to songs by Schubert, Wolf, and other great European masters of the genre, these compositions were intended to be performed and heard as art-songs, a category that is understood to include 'folksongs' when they take the form of 'concert arrangements with piano accompaniment written by a specific composer.'[13] Mrs Kennedy-Fraser herself described her intended audience:

> Much has been done to re-circulate the songs among the people themselves by the publication of some of them in a cheap form, as, for instance, in the 'Celtic Lyre' and the 'Coisir Chiùil'. The present collection aims at bringing many songs that have never before been published in any form (and a few that have) within the reach of singers who are accustomed to the support of a pianoforte accompaniment…. (*SOTH* I: xvi)

In other words, she was not composing for 'the people themselves' but for – to borrow Kenneth MacLeod's term again – 'the public'. It is therefore unfair to condemn her compositions for not being accurate transcriptions of the songs as she heard them in the Gàidhealtachd. Art-song has its own set of rules and commonplaces, and she set out to express the melodies she had heard within those parameters. It goes without saying that the result will not satisfy the purist who knows and loves traditional Gaelic song as sung by the Gaels themselves; but how many of those who know and love English folksong have attacked Delius or Vaughan Williams or Britten for creating art-songs based on English traditional material? If Kennedy-Fraser's compositions are to be condemned as inferior, as having, as Ethel Bassin put it, a 'period charm' that had 'too facile, too voguish an appeal to last', then let it be so – but let them be condemned on their own terms (Bassin 1977: 143).

The relationship between Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's tunes and the traditional repertoire of Gaelic singers has, since her time, been extensively studied. John Lorne Campbell and Francis Collinson devote considerable attention to it in their three-volume compendium of waulking-songs, *Hebridean Folksongs.* Ethel Bassin, in her biography of Frances Tolmie, identifies the songs that Miss Tolmie shared with Kennedy-Fraser, or that the latter borrowed from published sources, notably Keith Norman Macdonald's *Gesto Collection* and his collection of puirt-à-beul, to both of which Miss Tolmie had contributed. Today, thanks to the digitisation of taped material recorded by researchers from the School of Scottish Studies, by John Lorne Campbell himself and by the BBC, much of it

[13] Wikipedia, 'Art Song', accessed 10/08/2014.

now available online, it is somewhat easier to ferret out what Kennedy-Fraser must have heard on her travels, and to trace the connections between the traditional material and the concert versions.[14]

A detailed inventory of the changes to which the native melodic materials were subjected in their transformation from unaccompanied traditional song to concert art-song is not the subject of this essay. Suffice it to say that a number of principles appear to have been applied:

- The identification of recurring melodic motifs in the native airs, and their expansion and development to reflect the familiar structural matrix of European song-form. For this purpose, Kennedy-Fraser often combined more than one melody, or variant versions of the same melody, in order to produce a rounded-binary (AABA or ABBA) form overall.
- The transformation of native Gaelic tonality – based on modal and often pentatonic scales, and including notes that may be tonally ambiguous – to a tonal system amenable to the tempered tuning of the pianoforte and the requirements of staff-notation.
- The indication of interpretive techniques common in the classical repertoire to emphasize the emotional content of the song – variations in tempo, dynamic contrast (loud vs. soft), and the use of *tempo rubato* being foremost among these – and the assumption that those undertaking to perform these songs would have received classical training in singing.
- The creation of pianistic accompaniments designed to highlight and enhance the emotional values being expressed.
- The simplification and abbreviation of texts, where original Gaelic texts were used at all. While Mrs Kennedy-Fraser believed that if singers would 'learn to pronounce the original Gaelic" they would "find themselves amply repaid for their trouble', she understood that English translations would render her collection accessible to a wider market. All textual reworking – including emendation of existing Gaelic texts, composition of new ones, and the majority of English translations – was the work of the Gaelic editor, the Rev. Kenneth MacLeod.

These principles reflect the aesthetic values and assumptions of the non-Gaelic, mainstream European musical world at the end of the Romantic period – values that are at considerable variance from those of Gaeldom, as expressed in its native song.

In addition, the popularity of the 'Celtic Twilight' trope – encompassing the foggy mysticism; the twee representation of otherworld legends; the liberal application to music, verse and prose elements of a glaze of whimsy (treacle applied as an aerosol spray); the overarching atmosphere of so-called 'Celtic Gloom' – reinforced the popular notion of the fey, impractical, dreamy Celt, and drove Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's compositions even further from what she had encountered in the Gàidhealtachd. Indeed, the atmosphere of the Celtic Revival enveloped the whole undertaking; and one could hazard a guess that Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's work and reputation were too closely bound up

[14] The online database Tobar an Dualchais (www.tobarandualchais.com) contains much useful material, and a great deal more is available for consultation in the Scottish Studies Archives, University of Edinburgh. Even so, the work of identification is not straightforward, as the melodies are too often separated from their original texts which, when present, are a very useful clue. A thoroughgoing examination, now underway, of the restored and digitised wax cylinder recordings made by Kennedy-Fraser on her travels, and their comparison with (1) her manuscript transcriptions and notes and (2) with recordings made in later years from the singing of some of her informants and their descendants, will eventually yield additional evidence of her sources.

with that *Zeitgeist* to have survived its decline in the turbulent first half of the twentieth century in any case.

The influence of the Celtic Twilight aside, however, two other aesthetic factors are of fundamental importance if we are to understand the transformation of these native songs into *Songs of the Hebrides*. First of these is the notion of 'separability' – the idea that it is possible to think of 'tune' and 'text' as separate and distinct elements. This is such a common distinction in mainstream culture that it is taken for granted, but it is irrelevant in the context of Gaelic song. Mrs Kennedy-Fraser was one of many song-collectors in Gaelic Scotland – and Gaelic Ireland for that matter – who failed to recognise the organic inseparability of tune and text in recording Gaelic songs.[15] To Marjory, with her background and education, the distinction of a melody from its words seemed natural, and no doubt explains her focus upon the musical elements at the expense of text.[16] European composers had, after all, long been setting to music poems not originally intended to be sung, and many were also adapting traditional song and dance tunes for use in chamber and symphonic works. Classical instrumental music had, by this time, evolved a considerable distance from its origins in popular culture, and Kennedy-Fraser was certainly not the first to appropriate traditional airs and dress them up for the concert hall.

To a Gaelic traditional singer, however, the separation of a tune from its words is unnatural. John MacInnes has pointed out that 'the separate concepts of words and music of a song did not exist' (2006: 218). Even when two or more songs can be said to have the 'same tune', the truth is more complex than the simple borrowing of the musical element. What has been borrowed is, in fact, the whole song, with the new words being modeled upon (or even extending) the existing text, conforming in terms of metrical form and structure to the original, so that the new song may carry with it, often quite intentionally, the frame of cultural references and associations established by the original.[17] Thus a musically-gifted visitor from a non-Gaelic background, who may be able to learn the air to a song without learning the text associated with it, may get more credit than he deserves from his Gaelic informant, as the following anecdote related by A. Martin Freeman suggests. Freeman made a collection of songs in Ballyvourney, Co. Cork, but it is clear that the same principle applies among the Gaels of Scotland (Freeman 1920–21: xxv):

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[15] In Ireland, the collecting activities of Edward Bunting (1773–1843), George Petrie (1790–1866), and P. W. Joyce (1827–1914) focused upon the melodies, with texts being gathered separately – if at all – and often from singers other than those who had supplied the tunes. For discussion of Scottish collectors in this context, see below.

[16] In a work first published in 1772, John Aikin lamented the decline of poetry as the principal element in the construction of English song in his day: 'The luxury of artificial harmony, taking place of the simple graces of melody, rendered instrumental music chiefly sought after, and the assistance of poetry in consequence unnecessary. The present age is characterised by a languid, sensual indolence, averse even in its pleasures to anything that requires attention of the mind. The ear instead of being an avenue to the heart, expects to be gratified merely as an organ of sense, and the heroine, poetry, must give place to the harlot, music. And when the latter has deigned to borrow the vehicle of words, she has shown by her choice that she has regarded poetry rather as a burden upon her exertions than an assistant' (Aikin 1810: 10).

[17] Mrs Kennedy-Fraser may be hinting at an understanding of this process when she writes of a 'Jacobite Rising Song' from Eigg: 'Such *tunes* are likely to be much older than the times and doings commemorated by the *words* – the special Jacobite appeal of the words here having probably ousted the earlier verses' (*SOTH* III: xiii).

> If you tell him that two of his songs have the same tune, he will answer that that is impossible, since they are different songs. If you then say, that the tunes are very much alike, he will agree, and look upon you as a musical genius for having noticed it. "What a marvellous thing" he will exclaim, "for a man who was not brought up in Irish to know so much about our songs!" For the tune without the words is as a voice without a mouth. He thinks that you understand the song (that is, the words) so perfectly, that you have got the tune.

Despite what her musical arrangements might suggest, Mrs Kennedy-Fraser appears to have had some understanding regarding the important interdependency of tune and text. She quotes Thomas Pattison, whose observation echoes that of Freeman (*SOTH* I: xxi):

> Of the close correspondence between the rhythm and vowel-music of the words and tunes to which they are sung [Thomas Pattison] says, 'It is as if they were the twin births of one passionate experience. Sometimes for a few lines,' he adds, 'it would almost appear as if it were difficult to say where the music begins and the words end – they blend and fit so wonderfully together.'[18] One may well apply in such cases, the saying of the Breton folk in regard to their songs, 'Qui perd ses mots, perd son air.'[19]

Malcolm MacFarlane, in his address to the Gaelic Society of Inverness, describes the singing of the older generation that he heard in his youth (1929: 253):[20]

> At those old concerts I heard old and new songs;...and although there was little good singing, I never failed to enjoy what I got. There was something within which responded to it. .... The prevailing style of singing then was different from that mostly heard now. The old Gaelic singers sang so that a listener was able to catch the words of unfamiliar songs and follow their meaning. And their taste in the choice of songs differed from that prevailing to-day. They accorded more importance to the subject and sentiment of the songs, and the art with which the bard expressed himself, than they did to the art of the musical composer as displayed in the tune.

Indeed, it is the text that carries not just the circumstantial significance but also the emotional weight of the song, a fact reflected in the understanding, among Gaels, that a song is not so much 'sung' as 'told'.[21] In purely practical and functional terms, the text very often dictates the rhythm and structure

[18] Kennedy-Fraser describes Thomas Pattison as 'the writer on Gaelic song who has best understood the vowel-music of Gaelic poetry in its intimate relation to music proper' (*SOTH* I: xxi). For the passage she quotes, see Pattison 1890: 126.

[19] 'Whoever loses the words, loses the melody.'

[20] See also note 4 above.

[21] John MacInnes tells me that his grand-uncles in Skye used to say, 'Feumar an t-òran *innse*' ('The song must be *told*'). He emphasises that this injunction did not refer to the rationale or story behind the song, but rather to the manner in which the song itself should be performed, i.e., with respect and due care for the text (see also MacInnes 2006: 208-9). In Ireland, a similar expression – 'abair amhrán' ('say a song') – expresses the same concern.

of the performance, accounting for the variability of the musical element from one iteration to another, and for the structural circularity that Mrs Kennedy-Fraser noticed in many of the melodies.[22]

Even so, it was the appropriation of tunes in the absence of their texts which led to many of the changes to which critics of *Songs of the Hebrides* have objected. The fabrication of new lyrics, either 'translations' or new texts entirely, was seen as essential; and these texts, whether in English or in Gaelic, then contributed to the rhythmical and structural redefining of the chosen melodies – melodies that Mrs Kennedy-Fraser wished her listeners to appreciate as having a particularly 'Gaelic' character.[23] Much of the criticism accuses Mrs Kennedy-Fraser of acting as a 'filter', and argues that her audiences were not getting Gaelic song (as she would say) *pur sang*, but rather her *interpretation* of Gaelic song, informed by what she had encountered on her collecting trips, but ultimately shaped by her understanding of the requirements of the concert platform.

At this point it seems fair to ask why Kenneth MacLeod, himself a Gael and presumably well able to set Mrs Kennedy-Fraser straight on these matters, did not insist that she maintain the integrity of texts and tunes in the published arrangements. Indeed, today's critics often point out that 'he should have known better'. One can only adduce, from the description of his character and from his own pronouncements, that Kenneth MacLeod was as much a creature of the Celtic Twilight as Mrs Kennedy-Fraser herself, if not more so. Whatever his motives may have been, he seized the opportunity to re-work the heritage of the Gael to reflect the artistic tastes of his times. In doing so he followed the well-worn path chosen by James MacPherson and the tiresome multitude of other 'improvers' whose re-inventions, conflations, collations, pastiches and outright forgeries, while they have provided deep fodder for generations of academic researchers, have long distracted attention from the richness and subtle beauty of genuine Gaelic tradition.[24] Indeed, Alexander Carmichael – one of Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's sources for textual material – was also at this game; and MacLeod was a protégé of Carmichael.[25] The following description of Carmichael's activities could just as well be applied to MacLeod's method in producing textual material for *Songs of the Hebrides* (Stiùbhart 2008: 27):

> Using his remarkable knowledge of Gaelic tradition...Carmichael set to work on the material he had at hand. It is clear from Carmichael's manuscripts that

[22] In many songs, notably puirt-à-beul and waulking-songs, the musical element does dictate the rhythmic character of the songs, and the resulting dislocation of syllables in the text is part of the charm of these performances. Apart from such genres, however, the rhythm of most Gaelic songs is determined by the natural rhythms of Gaelic speech.

[23] With regard to translations, Mrs Kennedy-Fraser acknowledged Cervantes: 'Did not Don Quixote trenchantly remark that they were like the wrong side of an embroidery?' (SOTH I: xvi). Unfortunately this observation did not prevent the wholesale re-working of texts in *Songs of the Hebrides*.

[24] William Gillies lists a number of 'creative editors' who demonstrably 'gilded the lily', including 'John Mackenzie (1806–48) (*Sar Obair),* Rev. Alexander Maclean Sinclair (1840–1923), Professor John Stuart Blackie (1809–95), Revs. Angus (1860–1932) and Archibald (1855–1948) Macdonald, Rev. Kenneth MacLeod (1871–1955) and A. J. MacDonald (1900–75) (*Beyond the Farthest Hebrides*) to name but a few' (2008: 111).

[25] Disentangling the original items Carmichael collected from his own 'improvements' and those of his collaborators (like MacLeod) has recently provided the focus for a major study led by Dòmhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart at Edinburgh University; see Stiùbhart (2008).

> he was prepared to hone, polish, even rewrite substantial portions of his original material before publishing, smoothing metre, cadence, and rhyme, heightening and refining language, adding esoteric referents, even introducing obscure vocabulary and archaic names in order to enhance the impact which the hymns and charms – and indeed the quotations from the informants themselves – would exert upon the reader of *Carmina Gadelica*.

Stiùbhart goes on to cite a letter in which MacLeod, writing to Prof. W. J. Watson in 1930, confesses to having produced a poem, 'worked…up from a few stray lines' of tradition heard in the islands, which Carmichael fully approved and to which he added some 'touches' of his own (Stiùbhart 2008: 27).[26]

It is revealing that MacLeod himself, in later life, sought to distance himself from *Songs of the Hebrides*. In a 1978 review of Ethel Bassin's book *The Old Songs of Skye: Frances Tolmie and her Circle*, Professor Colm Ó Baoill writes (1978: 142):

> Possibly Miss Bassin is a little unfair in naming Mrs Kennedy-Fraser and Kenneth MacLeod together...in some of her strictures: Dr J. L. Campbell tells me in a letter that Kenneth MacLeod...once told him that having worked with Mrs Kennedy-Fraser for a time and seen what she was making of the songs, he wanted to give up, but was persuaded by [Professor Donald] Mackinnon to stay on, lest someone less suitable should be given the work.

Given MacLeod's own statements and his undoubted enthusiasm for 'what might be done' with the songs of the Gael, I am inclined to regard his comment to Campbell as disingenuous. MacLeod was clearly a wholehearted participant in the project. Unfortunately for him, he lived long enough to see *Songs of the Hebrides* come under hostile fire – not least from Campbell himself. I suppose it is understandable that he should wish to shift blame elsewhere, and Marjory Kennedy-Fraser, having died in 1930, provided a convenient target. It is obvious, however, that Kennedy-Fraser herself would have been incapable of the wholesale re-invention of the textual material in *Songs of the Hebrides*, not to speak of the inflated apparatus of legend and lore intended to justify and legitimise the textual conflations and re-inventions of both the English 'translations' and the newly-composed Gaelic verses. In this context it may be revealing that Kennedy-Fraser insisted, whilst she and MacLeod were proof-reading the pages of the first volume of *Songs of the Hebrides*, that his name appear in connection with the pages of myth and lore designed to authenticate some of the songs (*A Life of Song*: 115):

> In September I went up to Straloch to pass the proofs with Kenneth Macleod. We sat on the steps of his church in the sunshine and passed page after page. He was for putting in anonymously the beautiful little tales and legends such as 'The Christ Child's Lullaby' and 'The Seal-woman's Croon', but I insisted that they should be signed; and as he would not do this himself I wrote the name, Kenneth Macleod, at the bottom of each already engraved page.

[26] 'Achan Mathar', a reconstruction of a ritual prayer, was never published in *Carmina Gadelica*, but may have been intended for vol. 3, which was uncompleted at Carmichael's death. Stiùbhart calls it 'one of the more artificial creations' (2008: 27).

It seems likely that, far from acting as a counter-weight to Kennedy-Fraser's flights of fancy, MacLeod encouraged her to 'interpret' the traditions of the Gael through her own 'racial' (i.e. 'Celtic') consciousness. With the death of Fr Allan MacDonald shortly after her return from Eriskay in 1905, she had lost an important mentor, one on whom she was demonstrably prepared to rely for help with textual material, and whom she would most likely have consulted for guidance as the project went forward. Kenneth MacLeod, while he may have been as steeped in traditional lore and song as MacDonald and theoretically well-qualified to step into the role cast for him, seems to have brought a very different agenda to the work. Why he should for so long have escaped his fair share of the opprobrium so liberally heaped upon Kennedy-Fraser is a mystery indeed.

A second aesthetic difference between mainstream and native Gaelic culture involves the expression of emotion in song. As a product of the Late Romantic musical environment, Mrs Kennedy-Fraser believed that music's function, in song, was to provide a suitable setting for the emotional content of the text, and that it was subsequently the singer's task to deploy a variety of sophisticated musical techniques – elements analogous to paralinguistic features in speech – in order to render that emotional content as explicitly as possible. Thus the dramatic use of dynamic changes, of changes in tempo, the distinction between *staccato* and *legato* tone, the use of various ornamental features and commonplaces – all of these are tools of the trade for trained platform-singers and, indeed, for concert orchestras and chamber musicians in the European tradition. Music on its own – regardless of any underlying text – clearly has the power to express emotional reality that is otherwise ineffable, and Marjory Kennedy-Fraser felt at home in that musical idiom.

Such overtly musical expression of emotion is, however, uncharacteristic of Gaelic singing. For the Gael, a song's emotional meaning is contained in its text; the melody is simply a vehicle for that text, and carries no intrinsic emotional weight apart from its association with the words. As Malcolm MacFarlane put it in his critique of the St Columba Choir, the 'old singers, who mostly sang with animation and feeling, [were] determined to do justice to the words, be the fate of the music what it might.'[27] This is not to say that such melodies are not evocative, that they do not haunt the mind; but they do so, for the Gael, in the context of the words with which they are associated. By investing the musical element with its own layers of meaning, Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's compositions proportionately reduce the emotional weight of the text; and by rendering the remaining text – however little, if any, of the original text may have survived the process of condensing, adapting and translating – more difficult to hear and comprehend through the addition of expressive techniques, operatic-style delivery, and piano accompaniments, her arrangements represent a thorough departure from the emotional reality of native Gaelic song.

The close identity between the text of the song and the song's emotional meaning makes traditional Gaelic song very difficult for the outsider to fathom on its own terms. Whatever her own understanding may have been of the symbiotic relationship between music and text among the Gaels, Mrs Kennedy-Fraser knew that her listeners would not be able to grasp that relationship, for the simple reason that the Gaelic texts were beyond their comprehension. The tunes and texts would have to be dissociated from each other; English 'singing words' would have to be supplied; and the emotional significance of the song as a whole would reach the listener not directly, through its text, but implicitely, through its musical setting – a setting created and manipulated by the composer and

[27] See above, n. 3.

performer. While Gaels might rightly consider this a grievous loss, it remains necessary to remind ourselves that Gaels were not Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's intended audience.

So to what extent are Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's serious critics (leaving aside the views of her defenders and advocates) justified in their wholesale condemnation of *Songs of the Hebrides*? Does her work contribute anything of value to our understanding of traditional Gaelic song and the communities that sustained it in the early years of the twentieth century? Or must we continue to dismiss – as her critics for the past seventy years and more have done – the entire enterprise as being not only worthless but positively damaging to the reputation of Gaelic Scotland and its musical heritage?

In essence, the critics complained:

1. That Mrs Kennedy-Fraser was unqualified to collect or present Gaelic song, because she herself was not a Gael, did not speak Gaelic, and lacked any sustained experience of the native culture of the Gàidhealtachd.

Obviously, fluency in Gaelic would have been a desirable attribute for Marjory, and she knew this. It may be argued that *Songs of the Hebrides* would have been a very different publication had the Rev. Kenneth MacLeod not brought his own 'improving' agenda to the work. Kennedy-Fraser was not, however, the first person with inadequate Gaelic to undertake the publication of Gaelic song: Alexander Campbell, compiler of *Albyn's Anthology* (1816–1818), was not a fluent Gaelic-speaker and, according to William Matheson, 'his imperfect knowledge of the language resulted in some grotesque renderings of the Gaelic originals' (1955: 73).

2. That the sole – and reprehensible – motivation for the production of *Songs of the Hebrides* was commercial.

Mrs Kennedy-Fraser unquestionably had a family to support, and the success of *Songs of the Hebrides* no doubt made her life more comfortable. However, she was not alone among compilers of Gaelic musical anthologies in having a pecuniary motive. The collections of Patrick McDonald (1784) and Captain Simon Fraser (1816) were aimed at drawing-room performers on the violin and pianoforte; some of the items in the latter collection were Fraser's own compositions. The songs in *Albyn's Anthology* included piano accompaniments, and Campbell clearly hoped for commercial success, as did the compilers of Finlay Dun's *Orain na 'h-Albain* (1848) and later 19th-century productions such as Charles Stewart's *Killin Collection* (1884). Alfred Moffatt's *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Highlands,* containing arrangements for singer and pianoforte of well-known Gaelic songs as well as of newly-composed poems by the likes of Henry Whyte ('Fionn'), appeared in 1907, whilst Mrs Kennedy-Fraser was preparing the first volume of *Songs of the Hebrides*; it, too, was clearly aimed at the drawing-room musician. The only collector who cannot be accused of having a commercial motivation, apart from those whose work remained in manuscript during their lifetimes, is Frances Tolmie. Indeed, people continue to produce compilations of Gaelic songs to this day, and by all appearances they (or their publishers) expect them to sell. The critics, on this point, may have been bemoaning not so much Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's motivation as her success and, indeed, her fame – something which others who have sought to capitalize on Gaelic song have perhaps not enjoyed in quite such lavish measure.

3. That the songs should have been mechanically recorded, using some appropriate scientific method, and that transcriptions of these recordings should have been made available alongside the concert versions.

This criticism reflects a legitimate concern but, apart from John Lorne Campbell, those who have expressed it have neglected to mention that Marjory Kennedy-Fraser was one of the first to bring a recording device into the Gàidhealtachd for the purpose of recording Gaelic song, and did so at considerable hardship. She also transcribed the airs she recorded, and many of these transcriptions found their way into the introductory essays in her published volumes. The absence of texts from the majority of these transcriptions is unfortunate but understandable, given her limited Gaelic. One heartily wishes that the Rev. Kenneth MacLeod had provided her with accurate transcriptions of her recordings while the wax cylinders were still in a fit state to be listened to, so that the original texts could have been printed alongside the airs. MacLeod's stated opinion that many of the original texts were inferior or faulty may account for this omission – in which case, it is he who should be taken to task for it.

4. That tunes and texts should not have been separated during the editorial process, thereby causing unwarranted and lamentable changes to the rhythmic integrity of the music itself.

If it is fair to criticise Marjory Kennedy-Fraser on this important point, it is also fair to say that the separate recording of texts and tunes was a common error. Patrick McDonald's collection (1784) includes 186 'vocal airs' with titles but no texts, and the provision of a piano bass-line suggests instrumental performance (McDonald was a violinist). Elizabeth Ross's manuscript (1812) contains around 100 song-airs, and provides Gaelic titles for these, but no texts. The Torloisg manuscript, an early 19th-century collection made by the MacLean-Clephane sisters in Mull, also gives titles but no texts to the songs noted. Captain Simon Fraser of Knockie's collection (1816) presents the airs as instrumental settings and includes no words; neither does the manuscript collection made by his son Angus. Finlay Dun's *Orain na 'h-Albain* (1848) provides 43 items with English texts, with some fragmentary Gaelic verses. The only pre-1850 collection to provide words in Gaelic was Alexander Campbell's two-volume *Albyn's Anthology* (1816–1818).[28] Later 19th-century collections, such as Charles Stewart's *The Killin Collection of Gaelic Songs*, include both text and music, but the airs are clearly modelled on the rhythm of the English words. All of these collections had a dreary tendency to borrow from one another, so the same errors are repeated over and over.[29] Keith Norman MacDonald's *Gesto Collection* (1895) and his *Puirt-à-Beul* (1901; Lamb 2012) contain a number of items contributed by Frances Tolmie; Kennedy-Fraser borrowed tunes of Tolmie's from both works. Other works – such as Thomas Pattison's *The Gaelic Bards, and Original Poems* (1890), Alexander Carmichael's *Carmina Gadelica,* and the other major anthologies of Gaelic poetry with which Mrs Kennedy-Fraser would have been familiar, such as Mackenzie's *Sàr-Obair nam Bard Gaelach* (1841), Sinclair's *An t-Òranaiche* (1879), and Watson's *Bardachd Ghàidhlig* (1918) – contain no tunes at all.

On the basis of the example set by such works, not to mention the anthologies of Scottish songs in English and Scots with which her early career would have made her familiar – works such as Robert Burns' *The Scots Musical Museum* (1787-1803) and George Thomson's *Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs for the Voice* (1793–1818), both of which featured chamber arrangements of Scots songs by the likes of Beethoven, Haydn, Pleyel and Hummel – it is hardly remarkable that Marjory Kennedy-Fraser chose the path she did. It would have been remarkable indeed if she had not. And while her

[28] For a detailed discussion of all of the published collections mentioned here, especially with reference to this particular shortcoming, see Matheson (1955: 75–82).

[29] For a detailed examination of this practice in the context of one Gaelic song, see Blankenhorn (2014).

critics often mentioned Frances Tolmie's collection as an example of how the work should have been done, we need to remind ourselves that Mrs Kennedy-Fraser and Kenneth MacLeod had already chosen the 'artistic' approach over the 'antiquarian' (as he put it) before Miss Tolmie's collection appeared in 1911.

5. That the aesthetic consciousness of the Celtic Twilight enveloped Kennedy-Fraser's production in a foggy miasma of bogus dreaminess and cloying sentimentality entirely unrepresentative of what Sorley MacLean called the 'realism' of the Gaelic poetic tradition.

6. That the work's arrangements of Gaelic song caused actual harm to native Gaelic tradition, as well as 'pain and humiliation' to Gaels.

These two criticisms reflect less upon Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's methods and motivation than upon the aesthetic values of late Victorian and Edwardian Britain. The idea that Mrs Kennedy-Fraser should be held personally responsible for the aesthetic excesses of the Celtic Revival is, plainly, ludicrous; yet from the tone of some of the criticism levelled at her one would assume that she had quite intentionally set out to destroy the tradition and humiliate Gaeldom.

7. That the popularity of *Songs of the Hebrides* led people wrongly to conclude that the dying remnants of Gaelic song had been 'saved' and that no further work needed to be done.

Marjory Kennedy-Fraser was certainly aware that the life of the Gaelic communities she visited was under threat, even in the peaceful years before the outbreak of the Great War. Indeed, she herself suggested the sort of approach recommended by Campbell and Hosking, saying, 'While there is yet time it would be wise to collect zealously in every corner (preferably with the phonograph) that we may save what is fast dying out' (*SOTH* I: xvi). At the same time, she recognized that there was still life in the singing tradition, as when she remarked on the continued vitality of the waulking song tradition 'in isles where the homespun wool is still woven and shrunk by the folk' (*SOTH* III: xvi). And in her autobiography she included the following anecdote:

> In Skye in 1922 and 1924 Margaret and I were the guests of Macleod of Skeabost and his lady. We found a number of enthusiastic young men singers there, who sang songs for our recording and who will doubtless do much to keep alive the traditional singing for well over another generation (*A Life of Song*: 141).

So while Mrs Kennedy-Fraser may have advocated the speedy recording of as much as possible, she did not consider that the tradition of singing was already dead, but looked forward to its continued vigour for at least another generation. Nor did she view or represent herself as its saviour. It was some of her over-enthusiastic fans who made that claim, which later critics then wrongly attributed to the lady herself. The fact that misinformation and exaggeration are by-products of fame should come as no surprise to anyone who follows the lives of 'celebrities' in today's tabloid press.

The unhappy reality is that, while Gaelic oral tradition was not quite dead when Mrs Kennedy-Fraser encountered it, its days were numbered. One hundred years after the publication of *Songs of the Hebrides,* those who sing in the traditional style in the islands she visited are few and far between. Younger singers, whether native Gaelic-speakers or learners, derive much of their repertoires from recordings and other published sources. They sing in modern 'trad' styles, use instrumental accompaniments, and sing as part of a career strategy rather than as accompaniment to a day's labour

in a rural community. This situation has come about as a natural and predictable consequence of the tsunami of change that swept away traditional Gaelic society in the twentieth century, and that has facilitated the wholesale assimilation of Gaelic culture to that of the mainstream.[30]

'Pioneer work'

Alone among her critics, John Lorne Campbell tempered his criticism of *Songs of the Hebrides* with some acknowledgement of Kennedy-Fraser's achievements. He remarked that 'the most interesting part of Mrs Kennedy Fraser's publications are those portions of the prefaces where a few untouched-up versions of the airs are printed'. He admitted that Mrs Kennedy-Fraser 'did not pretend that her versions were the original folk-songs'. He pointed out that 'her descriptive writing on Eriskay, which obviously impressed her very much, is excellent' and urged us to 'praise her for her qualities of resolution, appreciation, musicianship and determination to collect her material in the face of very considerable physical difficulties of travel and with only very primitive recording apparatus....' He recognised that it was not Mrs Kennedy-Fraser herself but her admirers who had pronounced Gaelic song 'dead'; and he sought to encourage others to 'follow up her pioneer work'. Some of these comments are surely worth examining in detail.

Cathlin MacAulay, Archivist of the School of Scottish Studies Archives at Edinburgh University, draws the following distinction between 'insider' and 'outsider' ('emic' and 'etic') fieldworkers in describing the work done by researchers at the School of Scottish Studies during the period of greatest collecting activity in the Uists from the 1950s to the 1970s (MacAulay 2008: 159):

> The main collectors from the School in the Uists, Donald Archie MacDonald, Angus John MacDonald, John MacInnes and Ian Paterson in Berneray were all, as it were, natives and Calum Maclean became one by adoption. Knowledge of the community gave access to individuals, initiated greater trust and a sense of what was available. And of course speaking the language – Gaelic – was invaluable. The main disadvantage as far as I can see is that the common day-to-day aspects such as a curious anthropologist might have asked relating to domestic tasks such as what time people got up, who set the fire, and other such questions, were not sought. And scarcity of this domestic detail is, I think, particularly apparent in relation to women's lives.

Unlike the majority of those who later became engaged in active collecting in the Gàidhealtachd, Marjory Kennedy-Fraser brought a female perspective to the task. While the inadequacy of her Gaelic was undoubtedly a hindrance, she was able to count on assistance not only from the Rev. Kenneth MacLeod (once he joined the project in 1908) but also from the likes of Fr Allan MacDonald and his successor, Fr John MacNeill, from Annie Johnston, her brother Calum and others in Barra, from Fr Ian Macmillan in Benbecula, and from many other islanders who, throughout her collecting activities, helped her to interpret not just the language but also the habits and customs of the Gaels. And because she was an outsider, she was not burdened with knowledge that might have prevented her asking

[30] Maighread Challan has recently described the traditional milieu in which singing, along with the other diverse activities associated with the traditional oral culture of the Gàidhealtachd, was an integral part of community life; she also described the concatenation of factors that led to the demise of that culture and that community. Challan's book is in Gaelic; for a review in English that provides a brief summary of the contents, see Blankenhorn (2013b: 140–143).

questions that are of increased interest to us now that we are all – Gaels and non-Gaels alike – outsiders looking back at a vanished way of life.

With the help of such people, Mrs Kennedy-Fraser kept a lively written record of what she saw and heard, much of which subsequently found its way into the introductions to her published volumes and into her autobiography, *A Life of Song*.[31] These notes reveal a keenly intelligent, well-read and enthusiastic person with an open mind and endless curiosity about the islanders and their way of life. At the same time, they reveal her insight into how the islanders probably viewed her, confessing that her lack of Gaelic was a problem, and acknowledging that she cut a somewhat odd figure, as in the following passage in which she recounts her determination to record a song from an Eriskay fisherman named Gillespie MacInnes (*SOTH* I, xviii-xix; my italics):

> [B]y-and-bye the old man came in, and he told me that Gillespie was already out in the boat, which was lying at anchor in the harbour, and that he would be mending nets till midday, when they were to set sail. This was getting serious. I wanted that tune. So I went to Father Allan with my tale of woe, and he listened with a glint of humour and sympathy in his eyes, and said 'Come with me.' *I trotted by his side* – he was a tall, spare man – down from the presbytery on the rock to the little harbour, and by the door of the small store...leant Dugald of the post-office and the clerk who attended to the sales. Father Allan gave them orders to take me out in a small boat to the fishing-smack, where we would find Gillespie at his nets. The store was locked at once, the two men got a boat, and handing me off the slippery seaweed-covered rocks in the low tide, rowed me out to the harbour. Gillespie was busy with his nets, and *they chaffed him, I could see, about the strange lady who was running after him for his singing*.

She willingly admits to the occasional blunder, as when, in the spring of 1908, she returned to Barra to try to gather 'the words of some of the airs which I had collected there the previous summer' (*SOTH* I: xxvi):

> Unwittingly I had gone at the very busiest season of the year, when the herring-fishing and the digging over of the croft-land occupied old and young, men and women alike, and when song-collecting was out of the question till darkness drove the weary field-workers home for the night. Unthinking people, Mrs Maclean at Skallary remarked to me, will tell you that the islanders are lazy; and yet, she said, look round you at this time of the year and you will see that the whole island is dug over like a garden....

Despite her error, Mrs Kennedy-Fraser shows herself able to take advantage of being in Barra during the spring planting to absorb the details of life at that time and record them in her journal.

Kennedy-Fraser's ability to make friends and colleagues of those she met clearly indicates that the islanders liked and respected her, as she did them. Her approach was collegial, because she knew that she needed help. Here she describes working with Peggy MacDonald, who had come across from South Uist to Eriskay to visit friends (*SOTH* I: xxv):

[31] Although Kennedy-Fraser reused much of the narrative she had published in *Songs of the Hebrides* when she came to write *A Life of Song*, the latter volume contains additional narrative detail not included in *SOTH.*

> She...was storm-stayed with us for over a week, greatly to my advantage, since living in the same house with her I was able to carry on the work of song-noting at all hours, beginning often in the morning before breakfast and filling in moments at odd times till the night was far spent. We were like-minded in our enthusiasm for Hebridean songs, and she listened with the keenest of interest to the phonograph records of songs I had collected from others, swiftly memorizing both words and music of such as took her fancy.

In *The Book of Barra* John Lorne Campbell opined that 'the methods of her collecting involved formal recitations of a kind that must have been prejudicial to the spontaneity of the singer' (1998: 223). Probably so; but if this was the case, Kennedy-Fraser was aware of it. The following account, describing a visit to North Bay, Barra, when she brought the recording machine to a woman she had previously interviewed without it, demonstrates her empathetic understanding of the informant's point-of-view (Kennedy-Fraser and MacLeod 1925: xxi):

> This time our singer [Bean Shomhairle Bhig, Mrs Mackinnon] had been forewarned, and...her cottage was crowded with sons and daughters and grandchildren of all ages, and we had a grand *ceilidh.* But her singing lacked the ecstasy of our first meeting. No wonder! Singing into the aluminium bell of a graphophone clips one's wings.

Campbell would have done well to admit that singing into a microphone isn't much easier, and that the formality of his own recording technique – audible on the many recordings from his collection that are now available on the *Tobar an Dualchais* website – may have had a similar inhibiting effect.

Kennedy-Fraser's first journey to remote Eriskay provided the occasion for some of her richest descriptive writing. Today the trip from Edinburgh to Eriskay can be accomplished in a day by car, thanks to improved roads, to Caledonian Macbrayne, and to the causeway between Eriskay and South Uist. A century ago the journey involved a twelve-hour crossing from Oban to Lochboisdale, and a further three-hour journey by fishing-boat which ended, not at Eriskay's small harbour, but on a rocky shoreline. A further mile of walking, in the dark – it would now have been ten o'clock at night – was required to reach the pre-arranged lodgings. Not bad going for an urban-dwelling woman of forty-eight, dressed in the long skirts of the day!

Once settled on the island, the only means of getting about was on foot – a difficulty whenever the recording machine needed to be transported, as on the aforementioned occasion of recording Bean Shomhairle Bhig in Barra (Kennedy-Fraser and MacLeod 1925: xxi):

> North Bay is a good 6 ½ miles from Castle Bay, our headquarters, and it was a grand walk over the rocks by the east side of the Isles, or by choice through the great stretch of sheen-white sands on the west. For my first visit...we were fortunate in finding the singer alone in her cottage. She was, that afternoon, in a state of rare ecstatic musicalness, and she sang us song after song, pouring them forth in such rapid succession that it was impossible to note or even to remember any of them. So we had to turn homeward, vowing to get the phonograph sent on with the utmost despatch. On my second visit, Annie Johnson accompanied me, and while I noted the airs, she wrote the Gaelic words. For we always make a point of getting such words as still cling to the

> melodies, whether in the end they prove valuable or not. I had got what I wanted, I had noted all the airs that appealed to me, but I still hankered after that phonographic verification. So, fortunately, just the day before I left the Isles, the phonograph arrived from Skye...and we started out again for a last song-foray on North Bay. We had ordered a little two-wheeled trap to come for us, but alas, it arrived late, with two spokes of one of its wheels run through the tyre! We had to proceed at a snail's pace. I walked for a bit and got a lift in a cart. But the cart turned in to a hamlet, and about half-way a violent rain and thunder storm drove us into the maimed dog-cart, dangerous turns of the road notwithstanding.

The journey back to Castlebay that evening – seven miles through wind and rain – they accomplished on foot, fortified only by sandwiches. The recordings they carried with them, but the dog-cart was useless, and the 'phonograph' machine had to be left behind for collection at a later time.

Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's descriptions of Eriskay and the other islands are, as John Lorne Campbell admitted, excellent. They are all the more valuable as Eriskay in particular was, at that time, not accustomed to travellers from the mainland; indeed, this remoteness was one of Kennedy-Fraser's reasons for choosing to go there.[32] She describes the topography of the island, observing that 'the hill in the middle bear[s] about the same proportion to the sloping shores that Arthur's Seat does to the King's Park in Edinburgh' (*SOTH* I; xvii). She describes the house where she stayed, where it stood in its physical environment, and its nearest neighbours and their inhabitants. She describes how the houses were built, how they were furnished, and how the furnishings were used. She describes the islanders' modes of dress, agriculture and animal husbandry. She describes the fishing, in those islands where fishing was possible – in Benbecula it was not – and the work associated with the sea and the shoreline. In effect, she describes the islanders' way of life, and the harsh challenges they faced (*SOTH* I: xvii-xviii):

> [O]n this rock, with a little sandy soil in its hollows and peat bog in one part, five hundred souls were making a livelihood by fishing, keeping a cow, a pony perhaps, and a few hens, and by growing little unfenced patches of potatoes and grain, grain which I have seen harvested by handfuls, roots and all. … No fences, no roads – with the exception of the footpath – no carts, no wheelbarrows even; burdens of all kinds were carried…in creels on the backs of the people, or in panniers on the flanks of the Barra ponies. Sometimes the load would be seaweed for manure, or a particular kind of seaweed which they spread on the rocks out of reach of the sea till, sweetened by the rain and sun, it is fit to be used for bedding, and very good mattresses it makes. The peats, too, had to be carried in creels or in the horse panniers, and heather had to be fetched from a distance as there was none on the island, so boats could be seen leaving in the early morning for South Uist to fetch bracken and heather for thatching; and, returning the same night, men and women could be seen with the laden creels, toiling up the slope with their burdens, and storing the stuff in

[32] 'To make sure of fresh ground it was necessary to go beyond the reach of the tourist steamer, beyond that even of the small local plying vessels, and such a spot we found in the little Island of Eriskay, lying far out to the west of Oban, and less known to the outside world than the remote St. Kilda' (*SOTH* I: xvi).

> byres, against the needful re-thatching of the cottage roof. At all hours of the day, children, old wives and maidens were to be seen herding, for in an unfenced world everybody's cow was always getting into everybody else's corn, and at any hour an exciting chase might be seen, when some four-footed feeder got into forbidden pasture. Then the boats, with their graceful brown wings, were a feature of the Monday mornings, going out to the fishing, and again, on the Saturdays, returning. Occasionally a boat went round to Loch Boisdale with barrels of fish or the like, and returned with stores; and although every morning Father Allan Macdonald held service in the little chapel on the hill, it was on Sunday mornings that the whole island turned out.

While Mrs Kennedy-Fraser would have made no claim to be an anthropologist or ethnographer, her descriptions stand head-and-shoulders above most of the 'travellers' tales' penned by non-Gaels in the nineteenth century. They provide a richly-detailed record of life in a relatively untouched part of the Gàidhealtachd as it was lived in the peaceful years before the catastrophe of the Great War set in motion the forces that destroyed it forever; and the topics Kennedy-Fraser treats are those that, given that destruction, are most interesting to us now. She describes the native hospitality of the islanders, and how she was welcomed into people's homes, as on the occasion when she visited the home of Gillespie MacInnes and was met by his mother (*SOTH* I: xviii-xix):

> [She] came to the door when I knocked, and kindly bid me 'Thig a stigh.' I had enough Gaelic to know that I was asked to walk in.... She sat me down on a low, three-legged stool by the peat fire which was burning brightly on the floor, and seated herself on another. ... The interior of the old hut was really beautiful in the morning light, which slanted down from the small, deep-set windows on the dear old woman by the fire, who did not appear to regard my early visit as an intrusion, but cheerfully and promptly set herself to entertain me. She had no English, and I had little conversational Gaelic, so we sang Gaelic songs to one another, and she was pleased, and with Highland politeness said that I had 'Gàidhlig gu leor.'

She describes what she learned about holidays and holiday customs (*SOTH* I: xix):

> Another of the frequenters of the post-office kitchen was Duncan Macinnes, a crofter-fisherman with a big family of bright blue-eyed boys who came to the ceilidhs in the wake of father or mother, and, perched in twos on the corner of any available stool or vacant arm of a bench, drank in with evident avidity the songs and tales of their elders. Duncan had the 'gift,' as the isles-folk put it, of story-telling and of song. He would repeat long Sgeulachdan with a command of breath and rapidity and clearness of articulation that were the envy of all comers. He had a rich store of old world songs and sang me one of the Duanags in which the lads, on Christmas Eve, after an old fashion, chant the story of Christ's Birth. On this night of the year they make a round of visits in the townland, collecting Bannocks of Rye and Shekel. At each house they go through certain mysterious old rites, such as moving three times in a circle

> round the heads of the houseman and his wife, carrying a lighted candle the while, and if the light goes out, the augury is taken as a forewarning of death'.

No doubt some of these details Kennedy-Fraser learned in conversation with Fr Allan and others in the island, as she herself was not in Eriskay at Christmas-time. Another priest, Fr Ian Macmillan in Benbecula, provided her an opportunity of witnessing a wedding in that island (*SOTH* II: xiv-xv):

> Father Macmillan kept watch through the little gable window that gave on the *machar* southwards. He was expecting a bridal party. Suddenly he exclaimed, 'Here they come,' and straightway carried us all off to his little church, and, after the ceremony, to the little presbytery, where we assisted, in the nine-foot-square vestibule, in a festal reel, the piper and the onlookers craning their necks from the adjacent parlours to take part in the fun. After the reel, the customary gunshots were fired, and the bridal party formed up, with a piper at its head, to recross the *machar*, making straight across country some five miles to the bridegroom's house. And as we drove back in the misty moonlight, by the high-road, we could follow the track of the bridal procession by the sound of the pipes across the moor, and the signalling gunshots that came from each lamp-lit, low, thatched cottage as the bridal party approached and passed.

Understandably, much of Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's writing describes the occasions for singing, and the function of song in community life. In Eriskay, the postmaster's house next door was a recognized gathering-place (*SOTH* I: xviii):

> Their little clean, sanded kitchen, with its tiny home-made 'dresser' adorned with fine old painted bowls and jugs, its two wooden benches along the walls with accommodation below for peats, its barrel of flour topped with the baking board (serving as a kitchen table), and its bag of oatmeal by the fire, was the recognised rendezvous of the island. There everyone was welcomed to the evening 'ceilidh', and when word would go round that we were going down in the evenings, there would be gatherings of all who could sing or tell a story.

Because song was an essential accompaniment to manual labour of all kinds, a good deal of Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's attention focused on its function within the work environment. Here she describes the importance of the waulking process in preserving songs in Benbecula (*SOTH* II: xii-xiii):[33]

> From the guidwife we got labour lilts *guleor*, with intoxicatingly rhythmic refrains.... These were mostly *waulking* songs, sung at the shrinking of the home-spun web. As this process of fulling the cloth was long and heavy, the songs used for it were correspondingly stimulating. And many ancient airs are still preserved in Benbecula just because the work of weaving still goes busily forward there. A much larger crofter community than that of Eriskay – there were some 1,300 folk in the Isle of Benbecula – hardly a day passes that is not

[33] Kennedy-Fraser was probably well aware of the waulking-song tradition before ever setting foot in Eriskay. Her Gaelic tutor, the Skye poet Mary MacKellar, had in 1887 presented a paper to the Gaelic Society of Inverness (read on her behalf by John Whyte) which contained a long and detailed description of the whole process of cloth production in the Gàidhealtachd. It would be surprising if she had not shared her knowledge with her pupil (Campbell & Collinson 1969: 11–14).

> marked by a waulking. And where there are many waulkings there will survive the greater number of varied and complex labour-song refrains. For at these gatherings the singing is the attraction, and the tedious work of tossing, dumping, and circulating the moisture laden cloth is completely forgotten in the intoxicating swing of the body to the rhythmic refrain. The refrains are sung by the whole company, but there is interest also in the verse lines, which are given by the leader only, and which may be either old classics or topical improvisations. ... To this the workers, seated in opposite rows at a long, improvised table, rhythmically swing the cloth tossing it on the boards to the pulse of the song. ... Presumably women themselves were the authors of most of the labour songs used by them.... Many songs go to the shrinking of one web, and these vary in character and speed with the progress of the work.

Indeed, work-songs formed such an important part of the Gaelic repertoire that Mrs Kennedy-Fraser devoted considerable attention to them, and to the social context that sustained them. In addition to several passages in the introductions to *Songs of the Hebrides*, the first two volumes contain a number of separate essays inserted among the concert arrangements, including 'A Note on Milking Songs' (*SOTH* I: 74) and an essay on 'Hebridean Labour Songs' (*SOTH* II: 110), both by Marjory herself. A third essay on work-songs, this one by Kenneth MacLeod and headed 'Songs of Labour' (*SOTH* I: 22), is particularly worth mentioning, not least because MacLeod is, for once, writing in a clear and straightforward style free of his usual precious turns of phrase. In it he provides a thoughtful assessment of the decline of such songs, and the symbiotic relationship between the songs and the labour that sustained them:

> In the Hebrides labour and song went hand in hand; labour gave rise to song, and song lightened labour. In this book specimens are given of songs associated with spinning, waulking, milking, churning, and rowing. Apart altogether from their musical value, they are of interest as a characteristic element in a life which is fast passing away. Labour is now being more and more divorced from song, and in the course of a very few years the folk will be surprised to hear that their fathers and mothers once used song as a substitute for steam and electricity! One reason is that labour itself is changing; in its old forms it was suited to song; in its new forms the noise of machinery is its music. The quern, for instance, is never used now except in a case of emergency in the outlying isles, and with the quern has disappeared some of the prettiest Gaelic croons. Likewise, patent churns impoverish equally the lilts and the buttermilk, and once sanitary law has forbidden hand-milking and home-waulking (or, at any rate, 'human' waulking!) the last line between song and labour will have been snapped.

He goes on to provide a detailed description of how the structure and character of the songs reflected the various stages of the work processes that they accompanied. With regard to spinning-songs, he writes:

> [T]he long drawn out gradually accelerating phrase culminating in a long pause, is evoked by the periodic rhythm of the spinning itself. The wool is

> carded into rolls or 'rowans' (Gaelic *rolag*), and the time of the song is really determined by the spinner's manipulation of the rolls. As a rule, the spinner is singing the verse and the short chorus as she stretches out her hand for another roll, joins it to the end of the spun one, and gets into the swing of the spinning; this done, the wheel and the long chorus go merrily together, gradually getting quicker, till the spinner, prolonging a note, stretches out as far as her right hand can reach what remains of the roll, and then, with a *hithillean beag cha la o hill iù ra bhó*, runs it through to the bobbin.

With regard to waulking-songs, MacLeod provides a very useful summary of the various stages of the waulking process, and the sorts of songs that accompany each stage:

> Of the labour-songs which survive, the ones used for waulking, for fulling the home-spun cloth, are the most numerous and the most varied. The theme may be love or war or the praise of a chief, or even a tragedy such as the *Sea-Sorrow*; any song, indeed, may be used for waulking, provided the verse is sufficiently short and the chorus sufficiently long. Many of the old Ossianic ballads have been adapted for the purpose, each line forming a verse, followed by a chorus; the result being that ballads which might otherwise have been lost have been thus preserved, though in every case the diction has been greatly simplified and modernised in the process. There are, of course, different songs for different stages of the waulking, and the stages vary from two or three at a 'little' waulking to anything up to twelve at a 'big' waulking. The writer has noted the following well-defined stages at Hebridean waulkings within the last twenty years: (1) Fairly slow songs – *òrain-teasachaidh*, 'heating-songs' – to give the woman time to get into the swing of the work. (2) Lively songs – *òrain-teannachaidh,* 'tightening songs' – to break the back of the work. (3) Frolic-songs – *òrain-shùgraidh* – to give the maidens a chance of avowing or disavowing their sweethearts. (4 and 5) Stretching and clapping songs – *a' sìneadh 's a' baslachadh an aodaich* – to make certain that the cloth is of even breadth. (6) The consecration of the cloth – *coisrigeadh an aodaidh.* (7) Folding songs – *a' coinnleachadh an aodaich....* It may be added that, in the case of the frolic-songs, verses were improvised in which the name of each maiden present was coupled with that of her sweetheart, to whom some slighting allusion was invariably made; and the maiden, in her reply was expected to resent this and to praise the slighted one up to the skies.

Many previously-published anthologies of Gaelic song attach legends to individual songs, purporting to explain how they came to be composed. Such stories are, indeed, an important part of the oral record of certain songs. Mrs Kennedy-Fraser followed this practice, and was correct to do so – even though, in the event, some of the stories in *Songs of the Hebrides*, especially those supplied by Kenneth MacLeod, cannot be relied upon. John Lorne Campbell has pointed out Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's errors in the story she relates in connection with 'A Bhradaig Dhuibh' / 'The Ballad of the

MacNeill of Barra', but the fact that she relates a story at all, and that she credits Mingulay fisherman Hector MacPhie with supplying it, is surely worth noting (*SOTH* I: xxvi):[34]

> This Ballad of the Macneills of Barra is attributed to a Mingulay woman who lived some centuries ago. She was named Nic lain Aoidh (the daughter of John of the Isles). I was told by a Mingulay Fisher that the tradition runs that she had her 'gift' from the Master of the Black Art. The evil one asked when bestowing it, it is said, whether she would sing to please herself or to please others. Fiercely independent, she chose to please herself. No one, said Hector Macphie, my informant, could endure her singing! But she was victorious in a song-contest between herself and a Uist woman, and this Barra Ballad was the song she sang in Uist itself. At the end of the singing, when the vanquished singer dropped senseless from chagrin, the incensed Uist people would have bound Nic Iain Aoidh. But she escaped from them, ran to the shore where her boat lay moored, drew a knife from her bosom, cut the boat adrift, and was off to Barra before they could lay hands on her again.

Although storytelling was a Gaelic art-form quite distinct from song, Mrs Kennedy-Fraser nonetheless took a keen interest in it. Part of her motivation in visiting Benbecula was her wish to visit Calum Barrach (Macmillan), who she believed was 'a singer of sacred songs' (*SOTH* II: x-xi):

> I looked for incantations and hymns and tunes, such as those collected, translated, and published by Dr. Alex. Carmichael in his 'Carmina Gadelica.' What was my astonishment to find that Calum's repertoire, and it was a very large one, consisted entirely of ancient, rhymed heroic tales of pagan origin.... For 70 years (he was then 87) Calum Macmillan had tended his cattle on the *machar* and chanted his tales of the heroes. He was out in the rain herding when we drove over one day, but he came with us to his cottage and courteously ushered us in to the cheerful kitchen. Carding, spinning, and weaving were going busily forward, but at our entrance the guidwife laid aside her carding brushes, her son's young wife her spinning wheel, and the daughter of the house her weaving shuttle to welcome us.

Kennedy-Fraser was astute enough to notice – or wise enough to pay attention when it was pointed out to her – that those able to recite the long narratives enjoyed a status higher than that enjoyed by ordinary singers (*SOTH* II: xi):[35]

> From [Calum Barrach] we heard only Ossianic tales and lays. And ancient custom, we found, did not sanction an easy transition from these to lighter lilts.

[34] Campbell points out that 'the name of the traditional authoress of this song is 'Nic Iain Fhinn', 'Daughter of Fair John', not 'Nic Iain Aoidh', as recorded by Mrs Kennedy-Fraser – which in any case does not mean 'Daughter of John of the Isles' (1958: 312). Unfortunately either Campbell or the printer of the *Scots Magazine* made an error here, as his comment – which is fair enough – appears in the context of a critique of 'Kishmul's Galley' (*SOTH* I:80), rather than of 'The Ballad of the MacNeills of Barra' (*SOTH* I: 4) to which the story is actually linked.

[35] John MacInnes tells me that this status reflects the importance of the seanchaidh in traditional Gaelic society, who enjoyed a position lower only than that of the bard himself.

> At one seance, indeed, attention might be given only to the stuff of heroic tradition, recited and listened to in reverent mood. ... Besides these Ossianic tales proper, the tales of Cuchullan, of the Great Fool (Parsifal?), of Deirdre, tales of suffering, of quest, and of high courage are still recited orally by the folk around the peat fires. This lore was not spoken, it was chanted, and of the forms of chanting used by Calum Barrach, we give one or two specimens....[36]

Chants were, Kennedy-Fraser recognized, an important aspect of sung performance in the islands. In connection with one of her concert arrangements, 'Sea-Sorrow', she notes (*SOTH* I: 117):

> The Air to this song is a form of wailing chant well known in the Isles. The notes of the recurrent refrain are constant, the various members of the reciting phrases are variable and interchangeable, and may be repeated or re-arranged at pleasure. As the old time singers of laments and eulogies were ofttimes bards who improvised under the stress of emotion, they would naturally adapt these traditional chants to the needs of the moment.

She describes the singer who provided the air to 'Sea-Sorrow', a Mingulay woman named Mary MacDonald (*SOTH* I: xxvi):

> From her I heard songs of the most elemental character, consisting of mesmerizing repetitions of one short, strongly marked phrases.... In others, again, the repetition of some strongly-characteristic motive holds the thing together, and fascinates and hynotizes you, the repetitions being strung together on strands of recitative-like sentences, or on more formalized, but still judiciously subordinated, phrases. Such is the chant of the 'Sea-Sorrow' which I heard from her.

In the latter two passages, Kennedy-Fraser could have been describing the singing of Calum Ruadh Nicolson, a Skye crofter and bard who was recorded over a fifteen-year period by a number of researchers from the School of Scottish Studies. Calum Ruadh chanted his poems in improvisatory fashion to variations on a few simple melodic motifs, a process that allowed him and his listeners to focus their attention on the song itself, *i.e.* the words.

As an experienced musician, Mrs Kennedy-Fraser was quick to notice the differences between the musical conventions of the Gael and those of mainstream classical music. One of the greatest of these relates to tonality. She observes (*SOTH* I: xxviii):

> [I]n the European harmonic music of the last three centuries, the scale varieties (for harmonic reasons) have been reduced to two (the so-called major and

[36] One of Calum Macmillan's chants, 'The Lay of Aillte', became the subject of a concert arrangement, to which Marjory appended a further explanatory note; see *SOTH* II: 80ff. Although this *laoidh* is not one of those mentioned by John MacInnes in his discussion of heroic ballads recorded in the 20th century (2006: 184-210), it appears to have been genuinely collected from Calum Macmillan in the circumstances Kennedy-Fraser described. The investigation of this and other *laoidhean* from Calum Barrach's repertoire, for which airs are given in the introduction to volume II of *Songs of the Hebrides*, may eventually expand our understanding of ballads that would have been in living tradition at that time, but had ceased to be so by the time serious recording got underway some decades later.

> minor), the Scoto-Celtic melodic music, on the contrary, still makes use of at least twelve.

Further on she notes (*SOTH* I: xxx):

> [S]ome major scales...are incomplete or 'gapped'. ... These 'gapped' scales are characteristic of Hebridean and indeed of all Scots Folk-tonality. ... In their pure form these scales consist of five notes instead of seven to the octave. ... [T]o correlate them with the scales we have been discussing, let us take the modern major scale, and remove its 4th and 7th degrees; we have thus one form of the five-toned or pentatonic scale.... In many Scots airs we find a hybrid form of this scale, a form in which there is but one gap to the octave, *i.e.,* in some the 4th alone is omitted, in others the 7th. ... These examples of partially gapped scales will serve to introduce us to the genuine pentatonic forms which may be said to constitute the tonal basis of perhaps a third of all the airs native to the isles.

She remarks that, even within this modal system, certain notes in a scale are subject to variation at the whim of the singer, and that 'Folk-song singers...have their own tonal affinities' (*SOTH* I: xxxii–iii):

> One old salt, a Barra fisherman, seemed partial to the Re mode. He was known as the Bard of Bruinish [*recte* Bruernish] and sang the old airs to songs of his own making. He sang air after air to us in the Re mode and (if the evidence of the phonograph be taken) about the Re pitch. In this mode the optional use of B-flat and B-natural [*i.e.* the sixth degree of the dorian or 'Re' scale] seems to have been customary alike in Greek and in mediaeval practice, and we find frequent examples of this *transmutable* B in the songs of the isles.

Or this, in which she refers to 'alternations of the major and the minor third' (*SOTH* II: xxv):

> That the old songmakers could make expressive use of the tonal opportunities of their scales was felt in the *Seal-Woman's Croon* and others in our first volume. In the present, the *Tiree Tragedy* calls for comment as exhibiting a poignant use of alternations of the major and the minor third.

Kennedy-Fraser appears here to be referring to what the Rev. William Matheson called the 'variable third' – a feature that he believes others have chosen to ignore (Matheson 1955: 77-8):

> [W]hen one listens to traditional singers, one hears from time to time airs with the variable third. But when we turn to the collections...one looks for this feature in vain. ... Now it would obviously be stretching probability too far to suppose that the collectors just never came across the variable third, after noting down hundreds of items. We must conclude that they did come across it, but either suppressed it or failed to recognise it.

Mrs Kennedy-Fraser neither suppressed nor failed to recognise the 'variable third'; but by 1955 her work was so far out of favour that Matheson may have felt comfortable not consulting it. Had he done

so, he might also have found himself in agreement with her comment about the inadequacy of written notation (*SOTH* I: xxxiii):[37]

> Unfortunately, all these scales, as sung by the people, differ slightly from anything we can convey by any system of notation as yet in use. If in noting them down and thus trying to preserve them by other than the traditional aural method we sacrifice something of their character in this respect, it is imperative that we go further and compensate for this loss by furnishing them with an instrumental accompaniment.

Whilst we may disagree with the idea that an instrumental accompaniment can somehow make up for the rationalisation of the Gaelic system of tonality to the requirements of tempered tuning, we must allow that Kennedy-Fraser had the honesty to acknowledge the difficulty – an acknowledgement conspicuously lacking in previously-published 'parlour' collections of Gaelic songs.

Tonality was not the only musical element subject to variation at the singer's whim. Kennedy-Fraser frequently notes that Gaelic airs are composed of certain recurring musical motifs which can be re-ordered and recombined as the singer may wish (*SOTH* I: xxii):

> The legitimate licence used by some of the older folk-singers takes the form at times of *ad libitum* repetitions of the easily separable motives of a tune....

Indeed, she deploys this insight in defence of her own procedure in producing her concert arrangements (*SOTH* I: xxi):

> Another pregnant remark of [Thomas] Pattison's which shows musical insight is that 'many of the tunes are to be regarded rather as *germs* of sweet music than as perfect melodies.' They are indeed but germs, many of them – material with which to work – 'motives' capable of elaboration and re-arrangement. And even the present day folk-singers treat them as such, and in the singing of the very old people one can still trace an old time bardic freedom in the use of melody, which should put an end to all disagreements as to authentic versions of this air or of that.

Mrs Kennedy-Fraser argues that it is this variability of melodic elements that gives many Gaelic songs their repetitive, 'circular' quality, where it is never easy to be sure where the tune begins and ends. Many waulking-songs in particular illustrate this circularity (*SOTH* I: xxxi):

> The songs were almost invariably long, consisting often of many verses strung on strongly characteristic recurrent refrains. They were intended, in the case of labour songs, to carry one over long stretches of monotonous labour. To this end it was essential that they should have an inherent *circular* quality; that they should tend to turn ever upon themselves; that they should appear to end, not at the end but at the beginning; that the last note, contrary to custom, should in

[37] D. A. MacDonald (1981), 'William Matheson', *Tocher* 5/35: 283-91; Blankenhorn (2013a: 40, n. 6). See also Matheson (1955: 75-81) for some of the problems arising from the inadequacy of staff notation.

> its very nature be un-restful and onward-driving, carrying the singer perforce to the inevitable repetition.[38]

Or this, which Kennedy-Fraser subsequently illustrates with an example from Barra singer Annie Johnston (*SOTH* II: xxiv):

> Shuffling and rearranging the order of the traditional formulae or 'motives' of the tunes seems to have been characteristic of the free improvisation on themes practised by the hereditary singers, as was also melodic variation within a given framework.

Kennedy-Fraser recognises that waulking-songs, along with *puirt-à-beul*, were most often sung by women (*SOTH* I: xx-xxi):

> The chants and duans that were sung on special occasions are still remembered by a few, although the old customs themselves are dying out. If the somewhat colourless music of these chants continues to exist only for the sake of the words, the words accompanying the 'port-a-beul', or mouth-music, on the other hand exist mainly for the music. This mouth music for dancing is characteristic and exhilarating in the extreme. ... I can quite believe, as old people have assured me, that this voice-music had a passionate quality exceeding that of any dance-music produced by instruments. Certain women were famed for it, as also for the singing of 'Orain Luaidh' (Waulking Songs), and were consequently much in request.

She also states that 'presumably women themselves were the authors of most of the labour songs used by them' (*SOTH* II: xiii).

John Lorne Campbell and Francis Collinson have persuasively shown that the meaningless vocable syllables that occur in the refrains of waulking-songs are likely to have had a mnemonic function, and that even when the tunes with which they are associated may be unknown, they can furnish definite clues to the rhythmic character of that music (1969: 227-37 and 1981: 318-23). John MacInnes points out that 'although they are semantically empty, they seem to have an identity of their own, distinct from that of the verse' (2006: 213). For her part, Kennedy-Fraser recognises the importance of the vocables, and suggests that the choice of vowel-colour may be significant for purely musical reasons (*SOTH* I: xxi):

> In the word-music of this Dance-Song we cannot but feel the musical beauty of the ever-recurrent vowel sound "u" = oo.... Indeed, the use of this vowel "u" in combination with the contrasting vowel "i" = ee ... arises doubtless from a love of colour, as these vowels are much more striking in colour than the broad vowel "a" = ah for example. ... For there is no reason why vocal music should not, in common with instrumental music, express emotion in purely musical terms. In some of the songs we find a preponderance of merely musical syllables with sparsely interjected sentences. ... Much of the intended purely

[38] The performance structure of such a waulking-song is examined in Blankenhorn (2013c: 79–80).

> musical effect of such songs is lost if words with a definite meaning are used throughout.

In a subsequent comment on the same topic she observes that the 'reduction of the text to mere vocalising syllables is not necessarily deterioration. Indeed, a higher level of purely musical sense and homogeneity of mood may thus be attained' (*SOTH* II: xiii). In this, she appears to understand that vocables also function as a counter-weight to the explicit meaning of the text, allowing the listener time to absorb the full significance and emotional content of the words.

All of the above should make it clear that, however we may judge the artistic merits of her concert arrangements of Gaelic song, Mrs Kennedy-Fraser deserves considerable credit for her powers of observation, description and analysis. If the sources mentioned in her introductory notes are any indication, she had read everything she could lay hands on that might have a bearing on her work; and her undoubted reliance upon a number of knowledgeable Gaels – pre-eminently Fr Allan MacDonald in Eriskay, Annie Johnston in Barra, and Kenneth MacLeod throughout – for help in understanding what she saw and heard should not diminish the credit due to herself, for her willingness to observe, to listen and to learn. Her visits to Eriskay, Barra, and the Uists in particular afforded her an opportunity to encounter the culture of the Gàidhealtachd while it yet maintained its characteristic vigour, before the community life that sustained it was swept away by the events of the twentieth century. In the written record of her visits we have a first-hand account that is all the more valuable because it was recorded by an intelligent outsider, rather than by an insider for whom many interesting things might have gone without saying. It seems clear that Marjory Kennedy-Fraser possessed the instincts of what Cathlin MacAulay termed 'a curious anthropologist'; and it is a pity that this aspect of her work – encompassing her descriptions of the geography and topography of the islands, of the traditional economy and way of life, of individual people and the challenges they faced, of the many ways in which the oral tradition expressed itself in the lives of the people, and of their subtle legacy of song – has been so comprehensively ignored by subsequent generations of scholars, who have allowed their view of Kennedy-Fraser's work to be blinkered by the virulent criticism levelled at it over the past century by people who mostly had their own axes to grind.

It could be that Kennedy-Fraser's inclusion of so much anthropological detail in a work designed to sit on the piano in an Edinburgh or London drawing-room itself caused some of the difficulty. Were it not for her descriptions and analysis of what she heard in the Islands – elements never before included in such collections, or never to anything like the same extent – her critics might not have attacked her for what they saw as her 'presumptuous' attempt to bear witness to the complexity of Gaelic song, but would simply have dismissed her work as a continuation of the Victorian tradition of arranging Gaelic songs for the parlour performer. It would be ironic if it were the most valuable part of the project, however flawed, that invoked the wrath subsequently visited upon all of her work.

* * *

Art historian Deborah Root has described the relationship between Western culture – the mainstream culture of North America and of Europe's former colonial powers – and the rest of the world's cultures, especially those touched by colonial rule, as that of consumer and consumed. While some may argue that the days of colonial governments physically and forcibly extracting human and natural resources from conquered parts of the world have passed, colonial attitudes of ownership and entitlement undeniably remain, manifesting themselves in the assumptions of museum curators and visitors in western capitals (do museums in Mumbai and Lagos contain anthropological exhibits

describing the quaint traditions of English village life?); in the titillating appeal of luxurious holidays to 'exotic' destinations; and in the appropriation of the art and culture of non-Western peoples by Westerners seeking to demonstrate their sense of style, their individuality, their open-mindedness, their sense of identity with 'underdog' peoples, their 'spirituality', their interest in their ancestral roots – or all of the above. Advertisers know that exotic images will attract tourists, sell clothing and household goods (think bed-sheets printed with Inca designs), and enhance the appeal of a bottle of expensive perfume. People tired and disillusioned with mainstream, middle-class life can envelop themselves in 'New Age' beliefs; they can purchase a Native American sweat-lodge (portable!) to set up in the garden; they can even train to 'develop powers of mind and body' as an Hawaiian shaman. All of these 'lifestyle' choices are available to any person with the necessary funds.

The dark subtext to all of this choice is, Root argues, nothing less than cannibalism: the ongoing consumption of non-Western peoples and cultures by the West, without any acknowedgement by the consumer of the historical price – too often the blood price – paid by the peoples whose cultural artifacts are subsequently appropriated and consumed. She writes (1996: 21):

> [T]he colonial mentality...can presuppose the right to decide what is valuable and interesting. What this comes down to is the assumption that the colonist possesses the master code within which all data, all people and customs, all art objects, can be assimilated and judged. In this way of thinking it is the colonist – or the museum expert, the anthropologist, the judge at the land claims court – who will decide what is authentic and, by extension, what is worth paying attention to, saving, or stealing. ... The aestheticized appreciation of difference can elide the extent to which the possibility of this appreciation continues to be based on ugly and unequal power relations. It still comes down to a question of who takes and who gives.

Westerners nostalgic for what they imagine to have been a simpler, more authentic time, for the old ways and values of 'primitive' societies, are indulging in 'regret for the loss of aesthetic *styles*, not for the loss of the social, political, economic, and ceremonial institutions on which the aesthetic traditions were dependent and through which meaning was achieved' (33). In other words, we in the West do not wish to exchange our comfortable way of life for that of a tribal society, however serenely regulated; but we assert our right to co-opt what we consider the attractive aspects of the tribe's culture for our own use, while remaining entirely in charge of the process. Underlying this assertion is the unspoken understanding – justified or not – that the targeted culture has already died, or is about to do so, and that therefore 'cultural difference [can] be imagined only as something existing in relation to and at the pleasure of the West' (33).

Root defines 'cultural appropriation' as 'not only the taking up of something and making it one's own but also the ability to do so' (70). She quotes Native North American artist Joane Cardinal-Shubert, who explains the phenomenon in bald terms (70):

> Money, that is what appropriating is about. Whether the issue is land or art or iconography or ceremonial reliquiae, the focus of the deprivation is money. Something to be gained by imitation, copying, stealing.

Westerners who freely appropriate the products of another culture feel entitled to do so, behaving 'as if the desired object or images *already* belong to [them]' (72). She argues that 'the argument that

appropriation is theft focuses on two points: one, that the people from whom the material is taken are not consulted about the appropriations...and two, that the primary motivation for appropriation is financial, with few, if any benefits accruing to the creators of the material'. (72).

At the heart of the controversy surrounding the work of Marjory Kennedy-Fraser is the question of ownership. To whom do the 'songs of the Hebrides' belong? Who – if anyone – has the right to exploit them for commercial gain? The question of who 'owns' Gaelic Scotland's cultural reliquiae is far from straightforward, just as the question of 'who is a Gael?' has become clouded with the demise of linguistically-delimited Gàidhealtachd regions over the past couple of centuries. The situation cannot be reduced to a simple distinction between the dominant culture and the dominated, between Gall and Gael. To answer the question we must ask who indeed is selling, and who is buying, and why.

Since James Macpherson in the eighteenth century, certain educated Gaels have sought to capitalize on their literary heritage, making whatever changes and 'improvements' might be needed to ensure its acceptance within the aesthetic and social values of the dominant culture. Thus if the dominant culture considered epic poetry a manifestation of high culture, then Gaelic must have an epic poem, and 'Ossian' must be hailed as the Gaelic Homer. If the dominant culture regarded song as something to be performed by a trained singer accompanied by a piano, then pianistic arrangements of Gaelic song must be provided. The reward sought for such efforts has been monetary – the ability to sell volumes of poetry or collections of Gaelic-inflected parlour music – as much as it has been to raise the status of Gaelic literature and art in the eyes of the dominant culture. The fact that these 'improvers' have been Gaels themselves and thus rightful owners of the tradition has, as they see it, given them permission to make the changes necessary to effect the desired transition.

The important fact, however, is that these particular Gaels were educated by the dominant culture, and in the process they have – as intended – become to an important degree assimilated to it. They are sophisticated people. They have learned Greek and Latin in school. They are well-read in both Gaelic and English. They are most likely professionals – soldiers, teachers, ministers of the Gospel – who regard the cultural artifacts of traditional, rural Gaeldom with some detachment, as they and their immediate families no longer live in smoke-filled thatched houses, or spend their days harvesting seaweed to fertilize a patch of sandy soil, or grind their own corn, or mend their own fishing nets, or produce their own woolen cloth. From this advantaged position they see an opportunity, as Gaelic-speaking recruits to the dominant culture, of operating on both sides of the cultural divide, appropriating selected items from 'the people', applying an appropriate gloss, and presenting them to 'the public' as genuine tradition. Their own status as native Gaelic-speakers acts as a bulwark against criticism; and the credulity of non-Gaels, who long to experience what they imagine to be the pure authenticity of a society simpler than their own, romanticises their efforts and provides a ready market for their productions.

Macpherson's *Ossian* earned him worldwide fame at the time, and – notwithstanding the efforts of Dr Johnson and other doubters – considerable fortune as well. In respect of commercial success, Macpherson's experience perhaps most closely resembles that of Mrs Kennedy-Fraser a century-and-a-half later. Like Kennedy-Fraser, Macpherson sought and won the acclaim not just of the English and of English-speaking Scots, but that of non-Gaels throughout Europe.

For other educated Gaels, however, the market has always been closer to home. Consider what Deborah Root says about the process of 'deterritorializing' and 'recoding' (85):

> To deterritorialize a traditional dance is to remove it from its social and ceremonial matrix, which initially can liberate the practice because it is no longer subject to a system of religious or social authority. People can dance whenever they want. Recoding occurs when a new system of meaning is attached to the newly free cultural form or practice and it becomes subject to that system of meaning. Today the main systems of meaning in culture tend to be organized around money, so we can say that the dance has been recoded by capital. For instance, the folk dance can be taken out of a community – which is to say, detached from its local social and religious context – and performed in a capital city for tourists. Festival clothes become costumes..., a living cultural practice is subsumed under an abstract notion of folklore, and the performance of the dance is inserted into a new system of exchange dependent on cash payment. The original meaning is decoded...and quickly recoded as something else, according to a new system of meaning determined by outsiders with different values and agendas.

Such deterritorialization and recoding have unquestionably occurred, and continue to occur, in the context of Gaelic song. Once Gaels were taught to aspire to a middle-class standard of living and look down upon the traditional way of life of previous generations, it was a short step to recoding the cultural artifacts of Gaeldom, i.e. those items considered worth preserving for reasons of nostalgia. In this fashion Gaelic song was translated from the rural contexts and environments to which it naturally belonged – and with which its social meaning and emotional significance were tightly bound – into a seemly setting such as a drawing-room or a concert hall.

The National Mòd provides an excellent illustration of the process. Originally intended to support the flagging fortunes of the Gaelic language and the survival of native Gaelic culture, the Mòd deterritorialized Gaelic song by providing an alternative venue for it, one deemed more respectable than the rough-hewn environment of a traditional rural community. In this fashion, singing in Gaelic was recoded as something to be done by 'good' singers performing for an audience in a public space. No longer was singing something any Gael could – and would – do to beguile the time required to complete a job of work, or to amuse a gathering of neighbours. Rather, singing was an activity for those deemed 'good' enough, within the aesthetic parameters set by the dominant culture, to draw an audience of passive listeners who would pay at the door to hear them. Better still, it was turned into a competition – something unknown to Gaelic song in its traditional setting, but which facilitated and supported its recoding, and enhanced its profitability as a commercial enterprise. Gaelic song had become a commodity.

Further commodification was achieved by those who compiled, arranged and published collections of suitably harmonized Gaelic songs; who set themselves up as teachers of singing; who established and led Gaelic choral societies; who adjudicated at the singing competitions and awarded the medals; who arranged the venues for such competitions and concerts; who manufactured and sold the tartan fashion and accessories that competitors came to regard as essential to success; who provided overnight accommodation and sustenance to the large gatherings of people who attended these events; and – eventually – those who produced and marketed audio recordings of the 'best' Gaelic singers, i.e. those 'stars' who most successfully adapted the traditional style that they had heard from 'the people' to the aesthetic requirements of 'the public' – the dominant marketplace of

the day. And in this case, 'the public' – the market for all of this activity – was, and remains, not the English, nor even English-speaking Scots, but the Gaels themselves, assimilated and comfortable within the enveloping arms of the dominant power. Gaeldom has, in effect, become gentrified; and its cultural artifacts have largely become gentrified, too.

But the Western marketplace is fickle. Today, while the National Mòd remains a popular event especially among families with young children, the type of platform-singing encouraged by the Mòd and exemplified by its most famous Gold Medallists has given way to other styles. Now thoroughly deracinated, Gaelic song is today regularly re-shaped for modern audiences, in much the same way that Mrs Kennedy-Fraser re-shaped it for the audience of her day. Today's 'trad' performers, the heirs of the folk-song revival of the 1960s, turn for the most part to recordings in search of material, either commercial recordings or those lodged in the Sound Archive of the School of Scottish Studies or the online database, Tobar an Dualchais. They reassemble texts from published collections of Gaelic poetry, and they revive songs found in early printed collections. They perform to the accompaniment of instruments, including some appropriated from other, non-Gaelic cultures (guitar, bouzouki, beat-box), once again subordinating the text to the musical setting and often rendering the actual Gaelic words difficult to make out, especially in live performance. Some of them employ vocal techniques and mannerisms derived from other genres, including jazz. Some of them – especially female performers – affect garments evocative of the pre-Raphaelite movement, or of some imagined village life of yore: long skirts, long hair, shawls bearing the images of interlacing serpents, and 'Celtic' jewellery. Indeed, many performances evoke the dreamy and mist-shrouded *Zeitgeist* of the Celtic Twilight, heightened by the tasteful application of 'reverb'. Even some of Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's concert arrangements regularly turn up in slightly altered garb, although the performers may be unaware of this connection.[39]

Thus, in the international Western musical genre known as 'trad', Gaelic song has become an ingredient used to support the notion that such music is 'Scottish' or 'Gaelic', although in reality it bears no more intrinsic relationship to genuine Gaelic song than did Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's concert arrangements of a century ago. None of this matters, however, if the music is commercially viable. As Deborah Root puts it (85; my italics):

> The connection between capital and traditional culture, and between the traditional form and the commodified form of culture, is extremely important to the problem of appropriation because *the explicit referencing of a traditional system of meaning is the reason cultural difference sells*.

So where, in this context, are we to place the critics? And how are we to assess Marjory Kennedy-Fraser's work and reputation, given that they have spent the past eighty-five years under a cloud?

By Marjory's own account, she was aware that her lack of standing as a Gael was regarded as an impediment. Notice the subtle way in which she seeks to deflect criticism in the following passage (*SOTH* III: xxii):

[39] John Purser tells me that when he has occasionally pointed out the Kennedy-Fraser connection to such performers, the most frequent response has been consternation and denial. Indeed, they may have thought the Kennedy-Fraser versions were traditional: as Deborah Root argues, 'Consumers may imagine that the representation they encounter is all there is to the cultural tradition in question and reject other versions as inauthentic' (1996: 74). For a taste of some 'trad' performances derived from items in *Songs of the Hebrides*, search YouTube for 'Kishmul's Galley' or 'Cradle Spell of Dunvegan' or 'Mhàiri Bhòidheach' or 'Maighdeanan na h-Àiridh'.

> The work of my own later life has been...to bring some of the art-product of my own race, the Scots Gael, into the market of modern music. ... The airs are faithfully recorded as I found them among the people, and although I re-issue [them] through the medium of my own consciousness, it is the same race consciousness as that of the original composers.
>
> This work was the outcome of a great emotional experience – the finding of myself in my own race surrounded still by the conditions which may have been those of my *forbears*.... From such an experience, one's life receives a dramatic deflection, finds a new centre of gravity....

While acknowledging the role played by her own 'consciousness' in 're-issuing' the songs of the Gael for 'the market of modern music', Kennedy-Fraser asserts her ancestral rights to the language and culture of her 'forbears'. In this, she resembles every North American or Australian of Scottish descent who ever visited Scotland in search of his roots. Both reflect the deep longing of comfortable, middle-class Westerners for some sense of their rural, tribal origins – those places that gave them their surnames and from whence they trace their most cherished myths. In Eriskay and elsewhere, Mrs Kennedy-Fraser found the means of satisfying that craving not only for herself and her own times, but for many like her since.

As we have seen, *Songs of the Hebrides* is indeed a curate's egg.[40] With regard to the concert arrangements, sorting out the traditional matter from the Celtic Twilight gloss – if that is what we wish to do – is no easy matter. The good qualities of the narrative and analytic writing are easier to appreciate, although even there the gushing intrusion of over-ripe sentiment can at times be hard going. What seems clear, however, is that while Mrs Kennedy-Fraser was hardly the first person to publish 'improved' versions of Gaelic traditional materials, she was perhaps the first non-Gael to do so, and certainly the first non-Gael to enjoy such extraordinary commercial success. As such, she was a tempting target, and the fact that she was a woman probably made her more so.

As regards the critics, some are easy enough to comprehend. The outrage displayed by Sorley MacLean and his contemporaries reflects the anger of those who not only witnessed their culture being appropriated for gain by outsiders, but who were also deeply conscious of the unequal power relationship between their own culture and the one doing the appropriating. While one might wish that these critics had acknowledged that such appropriating had been going on for some time, and by Gaelic insiders to boot, their feelings are easy to understand. Their cultural inheritance was being pillaged by a non-Gaelic speaker (the culpability of Kenneth MacLeod is rarely mentioned), and used as part of a money-making enterprise. What made it worse was the fact that the pillager sugar-coated the material, and at no point acknowledged the appalling treatment that Gaeldom had endured at the hands of the dominant culture (Mac Gill-Eain 1985: 20):

> …[W]ith the kind of people who call Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's travesties of Gaelic songs 'faithful reproductions of the spirit of the original', I have no dispute. They are harmless as long as ignorance and crassness are considered failings in criticism of poetry. They have had their hour in the drawing-rooms of Edinburgh and London; they have soothed the ears of old ladies of the

[40] As Anne Lorne Gilles called it (2005 xxvii, n. 24).

> Anglo-Saxon bourgeoisie: they have spoken after dinner, hiding with a halo the bracken that grew with the Clearances…

It seems likely to have been MacLean's uncompromising language in damning Kennedy-Fraser and *Songs of the Hebrides* that led to the 'common wisdom' of today, espoused by Gaels and Gaelic sympathisers, that holds both her work and herself in contempt.

The other group of critics, exemplified here by the views of John Lorne Campbell, represents what Deborah Root describes as the 'non-Native collectors' whose 'interest can be underlain by the insidious salvage paradigm, which assumes that Native cultures are being overwhelmed by Western culture. In other words, the societies in which...art is produced are again treated as if they were dead' (74). Campbell was concerned that popular enthusiasm for *Songs of the Hebrides* would undermine potential support for his own 'salvage' operations, and although he personally identified strongly with the people and culture of the Gàidhealtachd, his criticism of Mrs Kennedy-Fraser was far less personally antagonistic than it was professional and – to use his own preferred term – 'objective'. His own investment of time and effort on behalf of Gaeldom and Gaelic culture – in learning to speak Gaelic, in living among Gaelic speakers, and in devoting his life to collecting, archiving and publishing Gaelic songs – led to his developing a strong sense of ownership and custodianship of the tradition, and he was unsparing of others who, in his opinion, could have done more to support the cause. In this connection it may be useful to consider a comment made by Marcia Crosby, a North American Native artist (Root 1996: 74–5):

> Predicated on the concept of a dead or dying people whose culture needs to be 'saved', those doing the saving choose what fragments of a culture they will salvage. Having done this, they become both the owners and interpreters of the artifacts or goods that have survived from that dying culture, artifacts that become rare and therefore valuable.

It seems reasonable to say, in conclusion, that Mrs Kennedy-Fraser was criticised for reasons that were both wrong and right – or perhaps fair and unfair – at the same time. The critics who savaged her, especially in the early days, lacked the insight to recognise that *Songs of the Hebrides* was part of a continuum of cultural appropriation that began with James Macpherson, a process that has continued ever since, and that has involved Gaels themselves as well as non-Gaels. Now that the memory of traditional Gaelic culture is fading among Gaelic-speakers, the redefining of what it means to be a Gael is well underway, assisted by the efforts not just of today's 'trad' musicians but also of language policy-makers and planners seeking to encourage the renaissance of the Gaelic language among mainstream, urban-dwelling Scots (McLeod 2014). What that will look and sound like – if it comes to pass – we shall have to wait and see. We can be fairly certain, however, that it will not resemble the Gàidhealtachd as Marjory Kennedy-Fraser encountered it on the island of Eriskay in 1905.

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ABBREVIATIONS

SOTH Kennedy-Fraser and MacLeod. *Songs of the Hebrides.*

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The Cultivation and Preservation of the Martial Music of the Highlands by the Highland Society of London

JANICE FAIRNEY

In 1778, the Highland Society of London (HSL) was established to provide a more formal arrangement for Highland gentlemen based in London to come together at a dinner club. A safe haven, where they could enjoy the company of other Gaels and recall shared memories of their youth. But these London Gaels did far more than just remember or imagine the past. They became proactive in preserving a dying culture that was dear to them. It was the first society with a Gaelic cultural remit in either England or Scotland and its successes, which were many, must in some part, be accredited to its membership which consisted of the *crème de la crème* of those Highlanders who spent much of the year in London.

Their aim of preserving the ancient music of the Highlands was second only to the repeal of the Act proscribing Highland dress.[1] They wished to preserve all the ancient music whether that of song, dance or war. However, it was the martial music 'adapted for the Great Highland Pipe' that received most of the HSL's attention.

Although the bagpipe was not specifically mentioned in the Disarming Act of 1746, the prosecution of John Reid, a Jacobite piper captured and executed in England, may have led to some fear on the part of pipers.[2] However, the decline in playing the pipe was more probably due to the breakdown of traditional clanship and all its hereditary systems. With the loss of the hereditary piping schools, pipe music had effectively been silenced. Dr Samuel Johnson noted this fact in his account of his journey to the Highlands and Islands in 1773,

> The solace which the bagpipe can give they have long enjoyed; but among other changes, which the last revolution introduced, the use of the bagpipe begins to be forgotten.[3]

Sir John Graham Dalyell wrote in his *Musical Memoirs of Scotland* that the bagpipe was regarded as 'a military instrument, and its special use to congregate vassals on their chief in warfare'.[4] This purpose may well have added weight to the HSL's object of preservation, for many of its members had their own Highland Regiments, in fact Society members had raised

[1] The HSL led a successful campaign to achieve the repeal of the Disarming Act of 1746 in 1782.
[2] *Scots Magazine* 9 (746): 543.
[3] Johnson: 136.
[4] Dalyell: 88.

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all the Highland Regiments that had seen action during the American Civil War; these men would have certainly encouraged the martial aspect of piping.

The Society did, however, go further in its bid to preserve and cultivate the Great Highland Pipe; for it attempted to establish a piping academy to teach young men to become army pipers. It also encouraged the development of musical notation, to make learning the pipes both easier and quicker than by the old *canntaireachd* method of the hereditary piping schools. It is possible that Rev. Patrick Macdonald may have been the catalyst for action, when he sought the HSL's patronage during 1780. He wanted assistance in publishing his brother's collection of songs, and he was encouraged to enlarge the collection and to include some pipe tunes. This interest in pipe tunes may have led to the decision to hold a pipe competition.

However, we cannot state with certainty what reason was behind the Society's desire to preserve the music of the Great Highland Pipe; only that it wished to preserve the music and the best system of achieving this was initially through piping competitions.

Piping Competitions

According to Sir John Sinclair, it was simply a concern that the music of the Great Highland Pipe was 'fast hastening into oblivion'. Certainly, discussions took place regarding the fate of the Bagpipe, resulting in the proposal 'that a Pipe and flag be given annually by this Society to the best Performer on the Highland Bag-pipe, at the October Falkirk Tryste'.[5] The motion was moved by the Earl of Eglinton on the 12 July 1781, and it was unanimously agreed upon.

The HSL quickly put its resolution into action, deciding that 'the Black Cattle Fairs held annually at Falkirk', considering the numerous Highlanders who were associated with them, would be 'the most suitable place for such a competition'.[6] It was also reckoned that the gentlemen qualified to judge such a competition would also be conducting business at Falkirk.

John Mackenzie, the society's Honorary Secretary, began organising the competition. Advertisments were placed in several Scottish newspapers through the assistance of Mr Elliot, a bookseller in Edinburgh, which stated:

> A handsome Highland Pipe of the best construction is appointed to be given annually by the Highland Society of London to the best Player on that Instrument and also 40 merks in money—likewise 30 merks to be given to each of the two next best players—The competition to be annually at Falkirk Trytse in October.[7]

Mackenzie also ordered the Prize Pipe from Mr Hugh Robertson of Edinburgh, through the auspices of John Clark and his cousin Kenneth Mackenzie, Writer to the Signet. There are

[5] Sinclair: 13.
[6] NLS (National Library of Scotland), MS DEP 268/25: 100.
[7] Mitchell Library (ML), TD.746/1 John Mackenzie's letter 20 September 1781.

no extant minutes for this period, but from the actions of Mr Mackenzie, one can surmise that Mackenzie had also hoped that these two gentlemen would superintend the competition; he may very well have intended being there himself.

However, a fortuitous visit to Mackenzie by Rev. Dr Hugh Macleod, who had some business in London, changed the way in which the first and all subsequent competitions would be handled. For Macleod was a member of the HSL's first branch society, the Gaelic Society of Glasgow, better known as the Gaelic Club of Gentlemen. He accepted the invitation given by Mackenzie: that the Glasgow branch would readily undertake the honour bestowed by the Parent society and superintend the competition.

By this agreement the arduous task of running the actual competition was to be borne initially by the Glasgow branch from 1781, and then by the Highland Society of Edinburgh (HSE)[8] until 1844, when the competition ceased.

Iain MacInnes' MLitt thesis (1989), Angus MacKay's *Pìobaireachd* collection of 1838 and Sir John Graham Dalyell's book of 1849 all give accounts of these competitions, individual pipers and the tunes that were played. However, instead of discussing this aspect of the competitions, evidence will be provided which best reflects what the HSL wanted to achieve through these competitions.

Paramount in the minds of the members of the HSL was that the competitions would provide an avenue which would not only encourage piping, but also act as an impetus to improve the quality of the playing and preserve the ancient pipe music.

It is obvious from the records of the Highland Society of London, the Highland Society of Scotland and those of the Glasgow branch, that the Highland Society of London had overall control of all aspects of the competition. It provided the money for prizes, initially the prize pipes, and it carried all financial liability. The other societies, although bearing the brunt of the work in the actual running of the competition, followed the wishes of the Highland Society of London. This is illustrated in an early letter of the Glasgow Branch; it hoped that it would be 'a sufficient testimony of our zeal to second the laudable and patriotic views of your Society and to carry their [HSL] commands into Execution'.[9] This is illustrated further in the correspondence from the Highland Society of Scotland.

The Glasgow Branch ran the competition for three years. The first competition was a somewhat rushed affair, for Rev. Dr Macleod, having agreed that the Glasgow branch would accept the responsibility of the competition in September, did not return home to Glasgow until October, going via Edinburgh to pick up the Prize pipes. In reality the Glasgow branch had only eight days to organise the competition.

The Gaelic Club of Gentlemen was made up of the *nouveaux riches* of Glasgow, the merchants and industrialists, with the addition of clergymen and army officers; nearly all the

[8] The Highland Society became the Highland Society of Scotland (HSS) in 1808, and later changed its name to the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland (RHASS).
[9] NLS, MS DEP 268/1, 29 October 1781.

correspondence between it and the HSL was conducted through Rev. Dr Macleod, perhaps to add a touch of respectability to the club.

The first competition was a success due to a large extent to the enthusiasm of the Glasgow branch, the detailed instructions from the HSL, plus the assistance of Mackenzie's cousin acting as the HSL's representative. They ran the competitions from 1781-1783. At the beginning of all these competitions Duncan Ban Macintyre recited a poem composed especially for the occasion.

To ensure no bias on the part of the judges, the pipers performed unseen by the judges, and the order of playing was decided by a lottery; each piper pulled out a numbered ticket from a hat. The pipers had to perform a salute, a march or gathering, a lament and a *pìobaireachd*. The judges had to first select the best six players. Those six performed again and then the three prize winners were selected. It was only then that the numbers on their tickets identified the prize winners.[10] Highland dances were performed by some of the competitors to the enjoyment of those in attendance.

At this first competition the Gaelic Club of Gentlemen's committee and the selected Judges decided to take up a collection so that every competitor would receive something towards their expenses according to the merit of their playing.

> Our deputation and their associates all agreed, that it would be cruel to dismiss the Ten unsuccessful candidates, without anything to bear their expence.[11]

This was done in the hope to encourage competitors to return the following year. Duncan Ban Macintyre also received a guinea for his appearance from the largesse of the committee.

The committee through the auspices of Rev. Dr Macleod made several recommendations to the HSL. Additional money should be made available so that all competitors could receive travel expenses as an inducement to compete; also that the winner of the Prize Pipes should not compete again, to avoid any discouragement among competitors who might give up, for it was better that they should be encouraged to improve their playing.

It also recommended that an inscription *'Duais [ ] na Piobreachd, O chomunn nan Gaidhel an Lunnuin'*, perhaps on a small piece of silver plate, with the date of the Competition, be placed on the box of the chanter. It believed that one should be added to Peter McGrigor's prize pipes, and this should be continued at every competition. It also suggested that the second and third placed pipers receive a chanter with an inscription on it, feeling that 'such a lasting monument […] will have greater influence with Highlanders than three times the value in cash'.[12] These recommendations were taken on board by the HSL, but a suggestion regarding the actual prize pipe was rejected. The committee superintending the competition were of the opinion that:

[10] ML, TD.746/1, Report of the Piping competition.
[11] ML, TD.746/1, Report of the Piping Competition.
[12] ML, TD.746/1, Minute Book copy of letter from Dr McLeod to John Mackenzie.

> The great octave Drone an article of considerable expence is unnecessary in a Highland Bagpipe, as it can seldom be filled by any man in motion; & that it will be better to have only the Two unison drones and to apply the expence of the great Drone towards the Prize chanters above proposed.[13]

The first competition brought home the enormity of the fate of the music of the bagpipe; many pipe tunes were being forgotten. At the first competition the 3rd prize-winner was John Macgregor, a 73 year old man, who when asked to play a march, announced that 'he had now forgot how to March or to play marches', but he would 'try to play the same he performed 35 years ago at the Battle of Falkirk'.[14]

At the second competition it was more apparent that some of the competitors could not all play the pieces selected by the judges, so substitution was allowed.[15] There was a good size audience and a collection was taken to provide a bigger handout to the competitors.[16] At that competition the victorious competitors of 1781 and 1782, Peter Macgrigor and John McAlister, preceded the judges in a procession to the Falkirk Church, playing in unison the 'Lament of the Clans' marching around the monuments of Sir John Graham, Sir John Stuart and Sir Robert Munro.[17] The Gaelic Club of Gentlemen had only one recommendation to the HSL, which was that an invitation should be made to gentlemen to send their pipers to the next competition.

The 1783 competition ended in uproar. It would appear that opening up the competition to gentlemen's pipers caused problems, most probably due to the noblemen themselves. Another antagonist to the Glasgow branch's efforts was a certain Mr David Trigge, who announced that he was the agent of the HSL and attempted to inform the judges how they were to run the competition. In a letter to the HSL, David Trigge reported that the competitors accused the judges of favouritism; this was echoed by some of the audience, and questions were raised about the suitability of 'arrogant Tradesmen' running the competition.[18] Trigge also informed the HSL that some of the pipers in expressing their displeasure stated that they would not compete at another competition run by the Glasgow committee. Further, as a means of appeasing the pipers, Clanranald, a member of the HSL who was present at the competition, announced that Captain Clark of Loanhead, Sir George Clarke of Penicuik and John Clarke of Elden:

> would redress the grievances of the Pipers and not only give their aid to encourage these Musicians but to promote the good intentions of the

[13] ML, TD.746/1, Copy of letter from Dr McLeod to John Mackenzie 30 October 1781.
[14] ML, TD.746/1, Copy of letter from Dr McLeod to John Mackenzie, 30 October 1781.
[15] NLS, MS DEP 268/14, 15 October 1782.
[16] *The Scots Magazine*, 1781 (43) 553 and *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 29 October 1782.
[17] NLS, MS DEP 268/14, 15 October 1782.
[18] NLS, MS DEP 268/1, 29 October 1783.

> London Highland Society and ordered me [i.e. David Trigge, agent of the HSL] to invite the Competitors to Edinburgh where they should be treated in the most friendly manner and amply rewarded but nothing would do unless I would assure them that the Glasgow People were not to be there and the Seat of the Competition would in future be moved at length.[19]

An exhibition was held with great success attended by the nobility who were in Edinburgh at the time. Like the 1782 and 1783 competitions, the exhibition ended with all the pipers marching round St Andrew's Square playing 'Clanranald's March'.

The 1784 competition, originally planned for Falkirk, was moved at the last minute to Edinburgh by the HSE, under the direction of John Clarke of Elden. This competition was held in Dunn's Assembly Hall. However, all subsequent competitions were held in the Theatre Royal. It followed the same formula as the exhibition of the previous year, consisting of three acts in which the pipers performed *pìobaireachd* interspersed by Highland dances. Duncan Ban Macintyre opened the competition with his annual Gaelic poem praising the bagpipe. It should be noted that the judges of the HSE held run-offs for a place in the actual competition, and this set the precedent for future competitions. In 1809, the HSL increased the number of prizes to five in each category as a means to encourage participation.

The HSL was desirous that the number and names of tunes known by the competitors should be collected and that musical notation should be encouraged. These desires are illustrated by the alteration of regulations for competitions. From 1805, premiums were awarded to pipers who showed the judges examples of musical scores, as a way of preserving *pìobaireachd*. Prizes were awarded to Donald MacDonald in 1806, his son John in 1808, and to Angus Mackay in 1825, in fact 'a total of sixteen awards were made to nine individuals'.[20] However, in 1829 the HSS committee decided unilaterally to shorten the advertisement for the competition and to leave out that 'part which relates to the notation of Pipe Music'.[21]

In 1823, the HSL informed the HSS that each piper was to submit to the judges a list of at least twelve pieces of *pìobaireachd*. The judges would then call upon each piper to perform one of the pieces from his list. There must have been some concern regarding the actions and perhaps the suitability of some of the judges appointed by the HSS, for the HSL stated that: 'in performing any pìobaireachd, each Piper is to be left entirely to himself, and is not to be directed to play short'. It also ruled that dissatisfied competitors could never compete again.[22]

Although the competitions were well attended, the audiences began to fall away in the 1820s, due in part to the increase in the provincial Highland Gatherings. The 1826 piping competition ran at a loss and the HSS recommended that the competition should be held once every three years.

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[19] NLS, MS DEP 268/1, 29 October 1783.
[20] MacInnes 1989: 215.
[21] RHSS, PMB: 64.
[22] RHSS, PMB: 10.

For the first Triennial Competition in 1829 the HSL recommended the following to be adopted by the HSS:

> In order to prevent pipers not properly qualified from appearing at this great triennial competition, and at the same time with a view of encouraging the competitions at the Provincial or District Highland Societies, and generally to promote the acquirement of perfection in Pipe Music, the Competitors for the Prizes of this Society be in future limited to those Pipers who shall have already obtained Prizes at some of the local meetings, of which they shall be required to produce Certificates from the President or Secretary of the Provincial Highland Societies by whom the Prizes may have been awarded. Regimental Pipers producing a proper Certificate of qualification from their Commanding Officer, or any pipers resident in a District where no local Highland Society is established, producing testimonials from three neighbouring Highland Gentlemen of their being properly qualified to compete for the Prizes of this Society.[23]

In the run-up to the 1835 competition, the HSS recommended that some of the 'ancient pipers' should appear at the competition. However, the HSL felt that it would be more appropriate to hold a competition for all the previous winners of the prize pipes with a Gold Medal presented to the Champion.

The HSS made numerous suggestions to the HSL regarding the inclusion of reels and strathspeys on both the pipe and the violin at the competition from 1835 until 1844. However, the HSL was not interested in this; as Dalyell, one of the HSS committee, said 'The Highland Society of London did not listen to these proposals […] they replied that one named McKerracher from Pitrothis [*sic*] and another Duff at Aberdeen were the best players of reels'.[24] The HSL refused to be drawn away from its goal of preserving *pìobaireachd* and believed that the Provincial Games were a better venue for reels and strathspeys. The last competition run by the HSS for the HSL took place in 1844. The HSS decided it no longer wanted to supervise the competition and suggested that the Celtic Society of Edinburgh might be willing to take its place.[25]

However, the HSL decided to support the Northern Meeting at Inverness as a means of maintaining its initial objective. Several members of the HSL were involved with the Northern Meeting, an agricultural show that introduced a dance and pipe competition from 1839. According to Angus Fairrie:

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[23] RHASS, PMB: 61.
[24] EUL (Edingurgh University Library), Gen.369D: 42
[25] RHASS*, Sederunt Book*, Vol.20: 531

> There seems to have been no formal exchange of credentials. It was simply assumed by the Highland Society that the setting for its historic competition had been transferred from Edinburgh to Inverness. Meanwhile the Northern Meeting, being at this time eager to reinforce the success of its newly established public Games, was happy to accept the addition of the Piping, almost certainly without realising the significance of the move.[26]

The Northern Meeting did have a competition for the popular Marches and Strathspeys but it was only the *pìobaireachd* competition that the HSL was involved with. It gave a gold medal for the 1849 competition; it was not until 1859 that the HSL decided to give an annual award of the 'Champion Gold Medal' for previous winners of the Prize Pipes. In 1887 the award of Prize Pipes at the Northern Meeting was discontinued, replaced by the HSL's Gold Medal for *Pìobaireachd* as the highest award for the competition. In 1875, the HSL also began to give the same award to the Argyllshire Gathering in Oban. These Gold Medals are still regarded as the pinnacle of piping achievement.

The piping academy

As noted earlier the HSL was interested in the establishment of a piping academy as a way of cultivation and preservation. It is doubtful, that the HSL, considered the possibility of a piping college to train pipers for the army, prior to its competitions. However, at the exhibition in Edinburgh a few days after the Falkirk competition of 1783, Clanranald, a member of the HSL and President of the exhibition, presented John MacArthur, also known as Professor MacArthur, with a set of bagpipes. With the bagpipes was a signed declaration from all involved with the exhibition, the committee of management and the other competitors, as an encouragement 'to establish a college for the instruction of such young men as may be sent to be bred to that ancient music, the utility of which in recruiting his Majesty's army, and the military ardour with which it inspires highland regiments, are too well known to say anything further'.[27] MacInnes is doubtful whether MacArthur did indeed start a school and if he did, it did not flourish (MacInnes 1989: 118). At all events, five years later the idea of a piping college arose again.

> It should be noted that Lieutenant Donald Ruadh MacCrimmon, who would later be selected as the Professor, joined the HSL in March 1788. His membership may have acted as a catalyst in the society's promotion of a Piping Academy. He was a member of the MacCrimmon hereditary piping family and had received much of his early training from Patrick *Og.*[28]

It is very possible that conversations regarding the piping seminary run by the MacCrimmon family provided the impetus for Murchison's report regarding the need of a

[26] Fairrie 1988: 42.
[27] *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 27 October 1783.
[28] The Macrimmons were hereditary pipers to Macleod of Dunvegan, who had run a piping seminary for many centuries. Patrick Og was reputedly the last composer of note from that family.

piping academy. In July 1789, 'Mr Murchison produced and read a plan for Establishing a Professor of the Great Highland Pipe'.[29] His suggestion met with support from the members and he was empowered to correspond with Mr Grant of Corrymonie, 'or such Gentlemen in Scotland, as he may judge proper for the purpose of obtaining all possible information, together with Estimates and Statements of the real expence that may be necessary for the completion of this undertaking'.[30]

MacCrimmon had moved to London to find suitable employment, but his fortunes continued to spiral downwards. He had lost his home and lands during the American War of Independence and while in London he became financially destitute and ended up in Newgate Prison for debt. He petitioned the HSL through the auspices of Allan Cameron of Erracht in April 1789. Several members of the society supported the petition and the HSL gave MacCrimmon twenty guineas from its funds.[31] It also provided passage home to Scotland for MacCrimmon, his wife and three children.

Mr Kenneth Murchison gave a further report to the HSL, and after discussion it was decided that the most expedient way to raise money for 'preserving the Ancient purity of the Music of the Highland Bagpipe' was to open a general subscription.[32] It is obvious from subsequent minutes that a General Court meeting of 20 May 1789 had decided that MacCrimmon would became the Professor of the Piping Academy. It detailed what was expected of him in that role and what he was to report back annually to the Society.[33] Although the General Court Minute Book is no longer extant, the minute of 4 June 1790 reported on that resolution of the General Court.

MacCrimmon was nominated to be Professor of the Great Highland Bagpipe, at the Barracks in Glenelg, by Col. Macleod of Macleod. The society gave MacCrimmon his salary for one year in advance with an additional thirty pounds for relocation expenses, but the thirty pounds would be paid in instalments, the last to be paid out during March 1791.[34] Although this was done, the HSL was not so successful in securing the use of Glenelg Barracks for MacCrimmon and his students. Col. Macleod presented the first petition to Lord Adam Gordon, a fellow HSL member who was the Commander in Chief in Scotland. The Marquis of Huntly made a second appeal. By the end of December, the HSL was informed that the Glenelg Barracks could not be used for a piping academy. So Col. Small was requested to make Col. Macleod of Macleod aware: 'of the great disappointment the Committee feel on this occasion as it may prove fatal to the favourite object of the Society in preserving and promoting the Gaelic music' and to ask for Macleod's assistance.[35]

[29] NLS, MS DEP 268/21: 91.
[30] NLS, MS DEP 268/21: 91.
[31] NLS, MS DEP 268/21: 96-7.
[32] NLS, MS DEP 268/21: 99.
[33] NLS, MS DEP 268/21: 148.
[34] NLS, MS DEP 268/21: 115.
[35] NLS, MS DEP 268/21: 126.

In response, Macleod provided a farm on his estate for Mr MacCrimmon. It was then made clear that the HSL had informed MacCrimmon on how he was to instruct his pupils in the (now lost) minute of May 20, 1790.[36] MacCrimmon was reminded of all his commitments to the HSL. However, the June minute notes that he had not complied, and a letter was written to MacCrimmon:

> informing him that as the object of the Society, has totally failed, the salary to Mr Maccremmon [*sic*], is to be discontinued but declaring, that if he will fix himself, in any situation in Glenelg or near Fort Augustus, and carry the Society's original intentions into execution, his Salary will be continued provided he reports his having made progress towards that settlement, on or before the first day of November next.[37]

A letter was received from MacCrimmon's daughter Marion Mackinnon dated 11 December 1793, stating that her father was 'now ready to instruct pupils as proposed by the Society'. A letter was sent to her informing her that the Society 'will receive no communication regarding the piping academy except from MacCrimmon himself'.[38]

The HSL's plan had not worked and the real cause for failure is unknown, but one must assume that the fault did not lie with MacCrimmon alone, for in 1808, after eighteen months of living in London, he again petitioned the HSL.[39] Once more the HSL came to his aid and sent a deputation to His Royal Highness the Duke of York and Albany, who was now the Commander in Chief, asking for a promotion for MacCrimmon, and also informed him:

> That notwithstanding the success with which the efforts of the Society have been attended for the preservation and cultivation of Pipe Music for the Highland Corps in the Army, their endeavour may ultimately prove ineffectual without establishment of a National Academy in the Highlands of Scotland, where students shall be instructed in every branch of Pipe Music. And that the said Deputation do express to His Royal Highness the earnest wish of the Society that His Royal Highness would be pleased to promote Lieutenant Donald MacCrimmon of the 10th Veteran Battalion to permanent Rank in the Garrison of Fort William or Fort Augustus with such provision for the support of the Establishment.[40]

The HSL advanced MacCrimmon as the only suitably qualified candidate, the last of the hereditary family who for five centuries had presided over a similar institution, and emphasised the necessity of doing something before he died, when a whole corpus of pipe music known only by him would be lost forever. The deputation consisted of the Marquis of

[36] NLS, MS DEP 268/21: 147.
[37] NLS, MS DEP 268/21: 152
[38] NLS, MS DEP 268/22: 15
[39] NLS, MS DEP 268/1, petition, 8 August 1808
[40] NLS, MS DEP 268/25: 4-5

Huntly, Maj. Gen. T.R. Mackenzie, Lieut. Col. The Hon. Godfrey Macdonald, Sir John Sinclair, Sir John Macpherson and Sir John Macgregor Murray. The Duke of York intimated that he was in favour, but had more pressing matters that needed attention before he could consider the Society's proposal.[41]

MacCrimmon was at that time on Leave of Absence from his regiment. That leave was quickly running out and he would soon have to embark for Nova Scotia. The HSL wrote to its President, the Duke of Sussex, outlining its position in that letter, stating that it wanted MacCrimmon to be given a Captain's Commission, and that if the barracks were not being used, what better purpose could they be put to 'than to be a Repository for the Cultivation of a branch of Music which is known to animate and preserve the Military spirit of the Highlanders'.[42] It further suggested that as a means of making the proposal successful, the different regiments could by enlistment select suitable candidates for students of the pipe. The Duke of Sussex expressed his compliance with the request to approach his brother, the Duke of York, and to request that MacCrimmon's Leave of Absence should be extended until he could consider the HSL's proposal.

Another period of five years elapsed before the Academy for Pipe Music was raised again. MacInnes reported that MacCrimmon had not been sent to Canada but was stationed at Fort George, and that the Duke of Kent expressed an interest in having MacCrimmon as pipe instructor for his own Regiment.[43] That was in 1813. However, by 1816, Col. Macdonnel of Glengarry was agitating for the Piping Academy to succeed. He had been a member of the HSL for many years, but it was in his role as founder and President of the Society of True Highlanders that he addressed the society. He asked for extracts of the minutes regarding the Piping College at Fort William or Fort Augustus and the reasons for its failure. He hoped that his society might be able to further the HSL plans.[44] The HSL complied with his request, but informed him that it would soon be in a financial situation to continue its plan for an Academy for Pipe Music. It was indicated in the correspondence between the HSL and Macdonnel that the HSL was considering Angus McArthur,[45] who was brought to London by Lord Macdonald, and was related to a past HSL piper, Charles MacArthur. However, Macdonnel disagreed, arguing that:

> The person best qualified by much to fill the situation with respectability and efficacy, unless he has committed some unpardonable offence is Lieutenant McCrummon [*sic*], noticed so properly in the extracts with which you have just favoured me […] but from the estimation in which Mr McArthur stands, and considering

[41] NLS, MS DEP 268/25: 18
[42] NLS, MS DEP 268/25: 24-26.
[43] NLS, MS 19553, fol. 9, quoted in MacInnes: 121-2.
[44] NLS, MS DEP 268/26: 131.
[45] NLS, MS DEP 268/26: 162.

> McCrumons [*sic*] time of life, if he come forward as assistant […] I have not the smallest doubt but that he would be well qualified to fill the vacancy Lieutenant McCrummon must in course of nature give room for another.[46]

The final mention of the Piping Academy was on 5 April 1816 with the usual resolutions regarding the need for one and the suitability of MacCrimmon 'from his high reputation as a Performer, and being one of the few remaining Descendants of the Real MacCrimmon Race the ancient and renowned Professors of the National Instrument'.[47] A vacancy was expected at Fort William in the near future and it was decided to solicit the Lords of the Treasury to appoint MacCrimmon to the vacancy and to allow him to teach students on the pipes. Whether the HSL realised it was flogging a dead horse, or whether more important issues such as the society's incorporation took precedence, the Academy for Piping became a dead issue.

Musical Notation

The HSL, as already noted, was very interested in proper musical notation for pipe music, as a means to both preserve the music and to assist teaching the instrument. The first attempt at achieving this was through the patronage of Patrick McDonald's songbook[48]. The second was Joseph Macdonald's *Compleat Theory of the Scots Highland Bagpipe,* which John Macgregor Murray found in Bengal in 1784. Murray sent it to the HSL, and it was reported at the 28 April 1785 meeting that 'the plan of publication of the Treatise on the Highland Pipe, now under consideration to Mr George Mackenzie and Mr James Morison to report their opinion to the committee'.[49] However, there is no further mention of it, and in 1803 Patrick Macdonald himself published the book by subscription and dedicated it to Sir John Macgregor Murray. In 1804, at the suggestion of Sir John Sinclair, copies of the book were given to those competitors at the Competition of Pipers who had made the greatest improvement.[50] It might also have been given as an encouragement for more pipers to employ musical notation. From 1805 the advertisement for the pipe competition stated that premiums would be given for pipe music on the stave. This was reinforced in 1815, when John Macgregor Murray suggested that premiums should be given to pipers who brought in written pipe music and 'playing from the Book, to facilitate the instruction of performers, and as a means of fixing and improving the music of the national instrument'.[51] Another early work also dedicated to Sir John Macgregor Murray was A. Menzies' *The Bagpipe Preceptor* (1818). In it Menzies says: 'when you are master of the instrument I shall recommend you to attend the competition of pipers in Edinburgh [...] and who knows but you may one of these

[46] NLS, MS DEP 268/26: 143-4.
[47] NLS, MS DEP 268/26: 200.
[48] McDonald 1784.
[49] NLS, MS DEP 268/21: 43.
[50] Mackay 1838: 17.
[51] NLS, MS DEP 268/26: 112.

days "scorn the shepherd's slothful life" and launch into the service of your King and Country in the capacity of a piper'.[52]

In 1819, Mr Andrew Robertson addressed the HSL committee stating that:

> One of the principal objects of the Society being the preservation of the ancient Music of Scotland it was desirable that some attention should be paid to a Plan lately adopted for simplifying the process of learning and teaching Bagpipe Music, it was generally understood that the Piobrachds [*sic*] could be communicated to Paper with the same facility as the music of the Violin and Piano, and it was the utmost importance that these valuable pieces of ancient Music should be forthwith put down so as to be rendered legible to every Musician.[53]

Robertson proposed John MacGregor, the society's piper, for such a task, but the society decided that MacGregor would be employed to 'write and arrange for Bagpipe playing from the information and subject to the approbation of Angus McArthur'. MacGregor was to be paid one guinea for each of the requested twenty-four pieces of music.[54]

However, a further twenty-six 'well selected additional Piobrachs [were to] be taken down by John McGregor from the recitation of Angus McArthur upon the same terms and in the same manner as those formerly ordered'.[55] The manuscript was written during July and August 1820 from 'the whistling of Angus McArthur'.[56] MacInnes believes that McArthur actually used a practice chanter for this.[57] Nearly four years later, the Secretary, John Wedderburn suggested that John Gow[58] should inspect and give an estimate of the cost of publishing the manuscript.[59] Gow's estimate for forty-three pounds and eighteen shillings was duly received and a committee appointed to see the manuscript through publication.[60] It obviously decided to expand the production, and wrote to the HSS for tunes left with the judges of the competition. Charles Gordon, the deputy secretary, on forwarding the sheets of music, acknowledged they were the property of the HSL; he stated further that:

> The very few Pipers who were qualified to note the piobrachd, had generally but <u>one copy</u> of the Tunes committed to writing, and which

[52] A Menzies, *The Bagpipe Perceptor* (Edinburgh, 1818), p. 34, quoted in MacInnes 1989::124-5.
[53] NLS, MS DEP 268/43: 2.
[54] NLS, MS DEP 268/43: 6.
[55] NLS, MS DEP 268/43: 9.
[56] NLS, MS DEP 268/17, 1 July 1820.
[57] MacInnes 1989: 223.
[58] John Gow was the second son of Neil Gow. He performed with his band at HSL meetings until his death in 1827. He also operated a publishing business in London.
[59] NLS, MS DEP 268/27, 6 Mar 1824.
[60] NLS, MS DEP 268/27, 1 May 1824.

> copy they declined to leave with the Committee altho' they promised to produce a transcript at some time after the Comp and were promised a reward upon their doing it, in nearly every instance the promises of the Piper were made only to be forgotten.[61]

He also noted that until recently only Military Pipers could make use of notation, and most still learnt the tunes in the old way by ear. He stated that the publication in view 'will also do much to music and fix the paper standard for each tune for at present scarcely two pipers play exactly the same set of any piobrachd'. He also reminded the HSL of Angus Mackay's very large collection of Pipe Music, which the judges had seen at the last competition.[62] The HSL committee was also requested to assess Mr Macrae's collection of *pìobaireachd*.[63] The committee's report was read and accepted on the 4 February 1826.[64] However, Angus McArthur's collection was never published. In November 1833, Robert Edmonstone, a member of the HSL, requested the manuscript for two or three months, explaining that some Highland Pipers were anxious to get their own collection published and wanted access to the manuscript which 'altho' not on the scale of the Pipes they may be of use'.[65] The manuscript was sent, and one of the pipers requesting access to it was probably Michael Macfarlane, for it was his widow who sold it to Charles Bannatyne. The Pìobaireachd Society purchased it on his death and deposited it with the NLS.[66]

The HSL patronised Captain Macleod of Gesto's collection at the recommendation of the HSS. It was called *A Collection of Piobaireachds or Pipe Tunes as verbally taught by the McCrummen Pipers in the Isle of Skye to their Apprentices now published, as taken from John McCrummen, piper to the old Laird of Macleod and his Grandson the late General Macleod of Macleod*.[67] However, it was not what the society had expected, for it would appear that none of its members had seen *canntaireachd* before; this was illustrated by the correspondence between the HSS and HSL. The HSL wanted to know if the HSS had given Macleod any encouragement and how far 'the work may be considered as a means of cultivating the knowledge of Pipe Music or of enabling a Piper without a previous acquaintance with the Tunes to play the pìobaireachd'.[68] The HSS responded 'that it was a curiosity in its way'[69] and that the HSS 'have always abstained from any direct patronage of the Bagpipe or its music which have been so long and so successfully patronised by the

[61] NLS, MS DEP 268/2, 16 Nov 1825.
[62] NLS, MS DEP 268/2, 16 Nov 1825.
[63] NLS, MS DEP 268/27 5 Mar 1825.
[64] NLS, MS DEP 268/27 4 Feb 1826.
[65] NLS, MS DEP 268/4, 18 November 1833.
[66] NLS, MS 1679, the manuscript has been published in a new edition published by Glasgow and Aberdeen University in 2001, Frans Buisman & Roderick D Cannon, eds., *The Music of Scotland: Volume I: The MacArthur-MacGregor Manuscript of Piobaireachd (1820)*.
[67] MacLeod 1828.
[68] NLS, MS DEP 268/27 7 February 1829.
[69] NLS, MS DEP 268/3 26 July 1828.

Highland Society of London'.[70] Eventually the HSL paid the ten guineas promised to Captain Macleod.[71] He dedicated his collection to the HSL.

The collection of *pìobaireachd* that the HSL eventually sponsored, and which greatly influenced and helped to standardise pipe music, was that of Angus Mackay, published in 1838. He was the HSL's piper, as well as being piper to Queen Victoria, the GSL (Gaelic Society of London) and the London Club of True Highlanders. The work was begun in 1835, but it had taken him longer to compile than he had anticipated. He dedicated it to the HSL, stating in his preface that:

> It is with feeling of pride that he now dedicates his labours to the Highland Society of London, whose patriotic encouragement of Gaëlic manners and customs is so well known, and whose patronage, so generously bestowed on his work, confers so much honour, and is so gratifying to the Editor.[72]

MacInnes believed that James Logan was involved with Mackay's publication and cites as evidence a letter written by Logan to the Secretary of the HSL. In that letter he makes reference to copies of Mackay's *pìobaireachd* still in his possession.[73] MacInnes states that he is not sure of the extent of the HSL involvement but feels that it might have been involved with the editing.[74] He was indeed correct in that assumption, as demonstrated by James Logan in a letter to the editor of the *London Scotsman* responding to an article he had read concerning a new 'Collection of Pipe Music' by William Ross, who was at that time piper to the Queen, the HSL and also the GSL. Logan corrects the erroneous statement given in the paper that Ross's was the first published collection, stating that Mackay had published a collection of sixty-one genuine old *pìobaireachdan*, with curious traditional and historical accounts of the composers, the occasions on which they were composed, anecdotes, and other appropriate memoranda, 'which I had the pleasure of arranging for the press'.[75]

Conclusion

The HSL is probably best known for its aim of preserving the martial music of the Highlands played on the Great Highland Pipe. It organised the first ever pipe competition in 1781 at Falkirk, and continued to hold the competition with the assistance of its Glasgow branch and the HSS until 1844. The competitions were soon enlarged to include dress and dance. These competitions were the genesis of the district Highland games run by members of the HSL, which eventually developed into the worldwide phenomenon of Highland Games that we

[70] NLS, MS DEP 268/3 28 April 1829.
[71] NLS, MS DEP 268/14, 2 May 1829.
[72] MacKay 1838: 5.
[73] NLS, MS DEP 268/5, 24 April 1840.
[74] MacInnes 1989: 253.
[75] *London Scotsman*, 13 August 1870: 106.

know today. With the end of the piping competitions it went on to award the HSL Gold Medal at the Northern Meeting and the Argyllshire Gathering. This prestigious award is still the most coveted prize for *pìobaireachd* in the world. The Society's only real failure was not establishing a Piping Academy to train young men as Army pipers. It had more success in standardising pipe tunes by the encouragement of the use of staff notation, a process begun in 1784. This had a dual purpose, of preserving the *pìobaireachd* before they were lost, and of simplifying bagpipe instruction, as a way of addressing the shortage of army pipers. This process led to the standardisation of *pìobaireachd* as we are now accustomed to hear it.

Without the foresight of those first members of the HSL, and the continued determination of its members through the years, Dr Samuel Johnson's diagnosis that 'the bagpipe begins to be forgotten' might have become a reality.

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Storytelling among Lowland Scots since 1800: An All-Female, Upper-Middle-Class Family Oral Tradition in the Context of Written Tale Collections

CARL LINDAHL

In 1821, while on a summer visit to Rossie in Fife, seven-year-old Cecilia Margaret Douglas wrote home to her mother in Edinburgh describing a recent 'play day'. She named among the players a special nurse: 'Jeany Durie was also of the party[;] she is quite well and quite as pleasant as she was last year.'[1] This, with a few other lines from a later letter from Cecilia to her mother, provide the only written testimony yet found for the genesis of a family storytelling tradition spanning at least 150 years.

Jeanie[2] was a riveting storyteller and a special figure for Cecilia, who listened well in her girlhood and then retold the nurse's tales long into life, sharing them with a young niece, Jemima Bannerman. Jemima, as impressed by 'Aunt Ceil's' tellings as Ceil had been by Nurse Durie's, fixed them in memory and finally wrote them down as an adult. Jemima then read the tales to her own niece, Kathleen Mary Turing Bannerman. In 1968, when Kathleen Bannerman, then in her seventies[3], presented a typescript collection of five tales to the School of Scottish Studies, she was passing on a female storytelling tradition shared over four generations. Because the name of Jeanie Durie appears nowhere in the typescript, it is a tribute to the bonds formed between Jeanie and Ceil, Ceil and Jemima, and Jemima and Kathleen—and to the power of their collective love of story—that we know it today.

The 'Bannerman Manuscript', as this tale cache has come to be known, appears a modest vessel for broad speculation, yet its twenty-one typed pages are unique in ways that bear close attention. Slight as these tales are, they witness a long, unbroken tradition of female-to-female transmission. Moreover, they appear to constitute the largest collection of

[1] This and all other quotations from Cecilia ('Ceil') Margaret Douglas are provided courtesy of her great-great-grandson, Rory Cunningham. I gratefully acknowledge his contribution not only of the letters, but also of valuable information and reflections on his family. I also express my gratitude to Anne Fisher (née Bannerman), great-great-niece of Ceil and great-niece of Jemima Campbell Lorimer (née Bannerman), who provided the photograph of Ceil's silhouette and important information on the Douglases and memories of the Bannermans. Cecilia Margaret Douglas was born 10 September 1813; her letter to her mother is dated 17 July 1821.

[2] In a later letter, Cecilia spelled Nurse Durie's name, 'Jeanie'; as that spelling accords more with standard usage, it will be used in all future references to the nurse.

[3] Kathleen Mary Turing Bannerman was born 16 April 1897 on Dean Park Crescent, Edinburgh. Her great-aunt Cecilia died in Belfast 7 February 1898, when Kathleen was 10 months old.

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international folktales in Scots that we can attribute to any one nineteenth-century Lowland storyteller,[4] and they open up questions concerning what constitutes appropriate folktale editing style.

Written Folktale Treatments in Early Nineteenth-Century Scotland

In contrast to the wealth of balladry, folksong, and legendry collected in the Lowlands in the 1800s, Scottish folktales recorded in this period are peculiarly rare. Before Kathleen Bannerman presented Jeanie Durie's stories to Hamish Henderson, nearly everything we knew about Scots folktales and their performance was found in two sources, Peter Buchan's *Ancient Scottish Tales* and Robert Chambers' *Popular Rhymes of Scotland.* The collections of Buchan and Chambers—and ultimately the Bannerman Manuscript—need to be seen and assessed in light of publishing tastes and standards as they developed from Nurse Jeanie's time and into the twentieth century.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, in Scotland and England, collectors of rhymes, ballads and folksongs were rife, but there were no Scottish collectors of oral wonder tales. The stories that emerged in print were derived from chapbooks rather than from oral performance, and the stilted chapbook style persisted as the typical means of rendering oral traditional tales in printed form. But in 1804 in England, Benjamin Tabart launched his *Collection of Popular Stories for the Nursery: Newly Translated and Revised from the French, Italian and old English Writers,* and his books sold very well for the ensuing thirty-five years or so, presenting translations of Perrault's 'Little Red Riding Hood' and 'Blue Beard' side-by-side with modernizations of 'Jack the Giant-Killer' and 'A History of Jack and the Beanstalk.' Tabart's revisions of the Jack tales, nevertheless, largely retained their chapbook flavor. What Joseph Jacobs was later to characterize as the 'flatulent phraseology of the eighteenth-century chap-books' (1892: x) dominates the opening of Tabart's 'Jack the Giant-Killer':

> In the reign of the celebrated king Arthur, there lived near the Land's-End of England, in the county of Cornwall, a worthy farmer, who had an only son, named Jack. Jack was a boy of bold and enterprising spirit; he delighted in stories of magicians, conjurers, giants, and fairies, and used to listen with the greatest attention while his father talked of the valiant deeds of the famous knights of king Arthur's round table (Tabart ca. 1830: 136).

In this first sentence, Tabart is largely faithful to his source: he borrows the chapbook gambit of presenting a glorified, pseudo-historical, ancient past in a familiar, geographically specified place. Tabart's second sentence throws in invented references to Jack's love of story, a not-so-subtle advertisement for his own profession of written storytelling. But the language still lacks an oral flavor; a reviewer of Tabart's work pronounced that 'it recals [*sic*] but faintly the

[4] None of Peter Buchan's fourteen tales (Buchan 1908) is specifically attributed to any teller, and of the tales that Chambers presents, the most attributed to any one teller are the three that Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe attributes to his Nurse Jenny: ('The Changeling,' Chambers 1870: 70-72; 'Whuppity Stoorie,' 1870: 72-75, and 'The Paddo,' 1870: 87-89).

pleasant homeliness of the narrations which used to delight us' (Alderson 1993: 65). English storybook diction was slow to loosen up.

Then came the Grimms. The first part of their *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* was published in 1812. In January 1814 Jacob Grimm sent a copy to Sir Walter Scott, initiating a fruitful correspondence that was to affect the publication of traditional tales in Scotland (Dunnigan 2012; Randall 2012). The brothers were not yet a household name, but Scott was to have a hand in the popularization process. In 1819, writing in *The Quarterly Review,* the journal co-founded by Scott, an anonymous reviewer—identified by some as Francis Cohen and others as by Scott himself—declared, 'the most important addition to nursery literature has been effected in Germany, by the diligence of John [*sic*] and William Grimm.'[5] The first English translations of the Grimms appeared soon thereafter, in 1823 and 1826. Edgar Taylor, a friend of Cohen's, was the translator, and like Cohen, he strove to reach an audience of children and wished to remedy the 'exclusion of works of fancy and fiction from the libraries of children' (Grimm and Grimm 1888 [1839]: iv). But Taylor also sought a nostalgic adult audience:

> Popular fictions and traditions are somewhat gone out of fashion; yet most will own them to be associated with the brightest recollections of their youth. They are, like the Christmas Pantomimes, ostensibly brought forth to tickle the palate of the young, but are often received with as keen an appetite by those of graver years (Grimm and Grimm 1823: iii).

But, wrote Taylor,

> … the amusement of the hour was not the translators' only object. The rich collection from which the following tales are selected is very interesting in a literary point of view, as affording a new proof of the wide and early diffusion of these gay creations of the imagination apparently flowing from some great and mysterious fountain-head, whence Calmuck, Russian, Celt, Scandinavian, and German, in their various ramifications, have imbibed their earliest lessons of moral instruction (Grimm and Grimm 1823: iv).

[5] Alderson (1993: 63) attributes the article to Francis Cohen, later known as Francis Palgrave, but the *Quarterly Review Archive* (Cutmore 2005: http://www.rc.umd.edu/reference/qr/index/41.html), while acknowledging the tradition of assigning the piece to Cohen, states that the attribution is without evidence. Chambers' later editions of *Popular Rhymes of Scotland* (1847: 238; 1870: 89) cite the article and attribute it to Walter Scott. Indeed, the content of the article (which at one point quotes Scott [Anonymous 1819: 92]) and the opinions expressed in it closely parallel statements made by Scott in his letters to Jacob Grimm in 1814 (cf. Dunnigan 2012) and Edgar Taylor in 1823 (Grierson 1932-37: 7, 310-13). As Chambers knew Scott and was familiar with Scott's work on folklore, his attribution deserves to be tested with a close stylistic and content analysis, which is beyond the scope of the present article. The title of the article spells 'Lilliputian' as Swift does, though Tabart's book actually drops an 'l': 'Liliputian.'

Taylor, then, was writing with two audiences in mind. In his notes, he shows appreciation for the Grimms' attempts to simulate an oral style; for example, in commenting on the dialect of 'The Fisherman and His Wife,' he likens it to Lowland Scots (Alderson 1993: 65). Nevertheless, Taylor himself maintains a distanced storybook style that folklorist William John Thoms judged lacking in oral character (Alderson 1993: 65, 75n4).

Taylor sent a copy of his first translation to Scott, who responded with encouragement to all the major points of his agenda (Grimm and Grimm 1868: 334-35). From a scholarly perspective, Scott shows fascination with the occurrence of such stories across cultures; and, from a parent's perspective, he praises their power to engage children in positive ways and finds fault with contemporary nursery literature that threatens to displace the old tales:

> Independently of the curious circumstances that such tales should be found existing in very different countries and languages, which augers a greater poverty of human invention than we would have expected, there is also a sort of wild fairy interest in them, which makes me think them fully adapted to awaken the imagination and soften the heart of childhood than the good-boy stories which have been in later years composed for them. (Grimm and Grimm 1868: 334-35).

Scott also commended the vernacular 'simplicity' of Taylor's translation:

> I have often wished to see such a work undertaken by a gentleman of taste sufficient to adapt the simplicity of the German narratives to our own, which you have done so successfully (Grimm and Grimm 1868: 334).

Scott reveals here that he has clearly read, and also read aloud to his children, the book that Jacob Grimm had sent him a decade before:

> When my family were at the happy age of being auditors of fairy tales, I have very often endeavoured to translate to them, in such an extempore manner as I could, and I was always gratified by the pleasure which the German fictions seemed to convey; in memory of which our old family cat still bears the foreign name of Hinze, which so often occurs in these little narratives. (letter dated 16 January 1823; Grimm and Grimm 1868: 334; Grierson 1932-37: 7, 310-11).

Most important for the fate of folktale publication in Scotland, the translated Grimm stories move Scott to recall stories he had heard when very young, and he volunteers to send his versions to Taylor:

> In a great number of these tales I can perfectly remember the nursery stories of my childhood, some of them distinctly, and others like the memory of a dream. Should you ever think of enlarging your very interesting notes, I would with pleasure point out to you such of the tales as I remember.

Scott then writes out a summary of 'Prince Paddock,' his family's analogue to the first tale in the Grimms' collection, 'The Frog King':

> The Prince Paddock was, for instance, a legend well known to me; where a princess is sent to fetch water in a *sieve,* from the well of the World's End, and succeeds by the advice of the frog, who bids her (on promise to become his bride),
>
> 'Stop with moss and clogg with clay,
> And that will weize the water away.'
>
> The frog comes to claim his bride (and to tell the tale with effect, the sort of plash which he makes in leaping on the floor ought to be imitated), singing this nuptial ditty,—
>
> 'Open the door, my hinny, my heart,
> Open the door my ain wee thing,
> And mind the words that you and I spak,
> Down in the meadow, by the well-spring.'
> (Grimm and Grimm 1868: 334).

'Prince Paddock' was to become a focal text in published Lowland folktale tradition. Versions learned in childhood by John Leyden and Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe would become well known to folklorists by the end of the century (Chambers 1842: 52; Chambers 1847:237-38; Chambers 1870: 87-89).

In 1826, just as Taylor's second Grimm volume was going into print, and just before Peter Buchan began combing the northern countryside for tales, Chambers first published the *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, which, true to its title, focused on traditional verse. But many of the rhymes had been attached to stories and, when he knew those stories, Chambers attempted to summarize them to explain the rhymes. Scott, Taylor, Cohen, and the Grimms are likely to have been exerting some influence over Chambers at this time, for he ended his preface by looking forward to a time when readers, searching their memories, would help him compile a collection of tales that embedded rhymes. At the end of the book he places 'a list, with specimens, of the classes of Rhymes which yet remain to be published,' so that 'the public at large may form some idea of the probable contents' of a later publication, and that 'certain individual readers, who happen to possess stores of such 'legendary lore'' will begin 'jotting down such RHYMES and TRADITIONARY ANECDOTES as may… be called to their memory' (Chambers 1826: vi-vii). Chambers' finders' list includes the category, 'Nursery Legends and Ballads,' and presents one example, 'Pippity Pew,—partly prose—a nursery Legend':

> There was once a cruel mother, who murdered one of her daughters, and made a dish of meat of the body, which she gave to her husband, who devoured it. Sister Kate, the favourite of the mother, (as the murdered daughter had been of the father,) was

> in the secret, and rejoiced in being rid of the rivalry of her sister. The father, on eating his horrid mess, picked all the bones, and threw them, one after another, below the table, where sister Kate sat to gather them. The deceased, after some time, came back in the shape of a bird; and divulged to her father the dreadful deed, by singing as follows:—
>
> Pippety Pew!
> My mammie me slew,
> My daddie me ate,
> My sister Kate
> Gathered a' my banes,
> And laid them between twa milk-white stanes.
> Sae I grew a bird, and away I flew,
> Sing Pippety Pew.
> Da capo
>
> The father, enraged at the death of his favourite child, immediately killed the mother (Chambers 1826: 294-95).

There is no overblown chapbook diction in this rendition, which is nothing but a bare-bones summary, a platform for presenting the rhyme. Indeed, aside from the rhymes that Chambers was bent on collecting, he seems to have been seeking nothing more than mere facts, for in his preface, he thanks 'those to which the collection has been already indebted' for providing 'several hundred examples of original *information*' (Chambers 1826: vii; emphasis added). In 1826, Chambers was showing little promise as a storyteller.

As Chambers was soliciting anecdotes from all over Scotland, Peterhead native Peter Buchan began collecting in the north. Setting out in 1827, he had put together a manuscript of fourteen tales by 1829. Like many collectors in his time, Buchan was convinced that he was salvaging the last traces of a dying art, an art that, he believed, survived exclusively in remote rural areas. In a letter dated September 24, 1827, Buchan wrote,

> I have set about collecting all the *Ancient Fabulous Scottish Tales,* hitherto uncollected or published; and for that purpose, have employed a few old people to canvass for me in the country, where such are only to be found. They are now wearing obsolete, being discarded from the farmer's ingle cheek (Fairley 1908: 1-2).

Buchan's offer only hints at the identity of the narrators: in one letter, he mentions that they were 'several old people in the *North Countrie*' (25 September 1838; Fairley 1908: 4). His manuscript's title page implies that all of his sources were female, for he has gotten his tales 'from the recitation of the aged sybils [sic] in the North Countrie' (Buchan 1908: 11). One of the narrators was probably an 'old Highland woman', with 'a pretty good collection of *auld farran Scottish Prose Tales'*; Buchan states that she has given him 'a few … and some of them

are curious' (25 June 1831; Buchan 1908: 3).[6] Parts of his collection, then, may represent a Highland, rather than a Lowland repertoire, and the fact that Buchan found the Highland woman's tales 'curious' might indicate that he perceived them to vary substantially from Lowland narrative traditions. Nevertheless, the rhymes are in Scots, and the texts constitute the earliest-collected examples of an oral Scots folktale tradition.

A second problem with Buchan's tales is their diction, which accords much more closely with chapbook language than with identifiable Scots oral styles. The opening sentence of Buchan's 'The Young Prince', for example, indulges the chapbook trope of situating the story historically and geographically among the royalty of long-ago Britain. Compare Buchan's sentence to Tabart's opening of 'Jack the Giant-Killer (p. 2, above):

> When Scotland was first inhabited, it was governed by several kings, one of whom had married a princess of great virtue, who had an only son, but, she dying before he came of age, the king married another woman, but less virtuous than the former had been, as she afterwards gave proof by her cruelty to her step-son. (Buchan 1908: 18)

As Buchan was himself a printer, it seems most likely that he normalized all the storytellers' language to the stylistic standards of the popular press; in the end, his style differs little from Tabart's storybook style, and not so dramatically from Edgar Taylor's.

Buchan's tales did not impress his contemporaries. Although he offered up his previously uncollected texts in an era when the Scottish reading public delighted in folk traditions of all kinds, he could not interest anyone in printing them. His manuscript was sent to Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, William Motherwell, the Maitland Society, and also possibly the Edinburgh bookseller John Stevenson,[7] none of whom published it or even seems to have offered Buchan encouragement to have it published. Twelve years after Buchan finished the manuscript, of one of its tales finally made its way to the verge of print. In the 1842 revision of *Popular Rhymes of Scotland,* Robert Chambers thanks Buchan for having 'obligingly submitted' a collection 'for use on the present occasion'.[8] But even with the fourteen tales in front of him, Chambers could not bring himself to print one without recasting it. Chambers' version of 'The Red Etin' is taken from Buchan's, but a few details of Buchan's plot and most of his diction have been altered to the limits of editorial privilege to affect an oral style (cf. Bruford and MacDonald 1994: 22).

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[6] 'Curious' is also often used by antiquarians to signify 'rare and valuable'; it was not necessarily a pejorative term in antiquarian contexts.

[7] Buchan's letters reveal that he sought Sharpe's help in getting the manuscript to Stevenson, but I have seen no evidence indicating that Stevenson ever saw it. See Fairley 1908: 2, letters of 4 February 1829 and 25 August 1829.

[8] Fairley 1908: 4-5. As Fairley points out, this note of thanks to Buchan appeared only in the 1842 edition, and was excised from subsequent editions. Nevertheless, all three editions follow 'The Red-Etin' with the acknowledgment, 'The above story is from Mr Buchan's curious manuscript collection' (Chambers 1842: 58; 1847: 243; 1870: 94).

Nearly 190 years after Buchan completed *Ancient Scottish Tales,* it still has not reached a popular publisher. Furthermore, only a few of the tale titles and plots from the collection have been attested in other sources in Lowland tradition. It has shown little value as a gauge of storytelling in Scots.[9]

***Popular Rhymes of Scotland:* 1842, 1847, 1870**

Ironically, the most significant accomplishment of Buchan's manuscript may have been to inspire the pre-eminent nineteenth-century collection of Scots folktales. In seeking to publish his *Ancient Scottish Tales,* Buchan leaned most heavily upon ballad collector Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe (1781? – 1851), and on the day that he completed his manuscript (4 February 1829), he mailed to Sharpe a special copy, 'in the manner you recommended, with a blank to every written page, for your Notes,' but Sharpe did not respond for at least fourteen months (Fairley 1908: 2). In 1838, nine years after first sending his tales to Sharpe, Buchan was still prodding him to help find well-placed people to help him market his collection. It was most likely in 1838 that Sharpe showed the Buchan tales to Chambers (cf. Fairley 1908: 5). Although Sharpe did not express pleasure with the manuscript, its tales may well have moved Chambers to publish the Scots stories that Sharpe had submitted as early as 1824,[10] and that Chambers had so far chosen not to print. Whatever the case, three Sharpe tales, set down in Scots, appeared in the 1842 *Popular Rhymes of Scotland* alongside the thoroughly re-written version of Buchan's 'The Red Etin'.[11]

'Fireside Nursery Stories,' the section of 14 tales that Chambers inserted in *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*[12] in 1842, marked a major shift in the presentation of folk fiction in Scotland. The new book's two great innovations were to impart an oral flavour to the texts and to evoke the context in which they were performed. Both of these changes showed

[9] Two of Buchan's tales that do resonate with tales collected later in Scotland are 'Rashen Coatie' (Buchan 1908: 29-32; ATU 510B + 511), which shares significant traits with two tales published in Chambers' last edition (1870: 66-69); and 'The Cruel Stepmother' (Buchan 1908: 25-28; ATU 706), a version of 'The Maiden without Hands' tale that includes the 'thorn in the king's foot' motif well known in Scottish Traveller tradition, as well as in many Irish Gaelic tellings; see, for example, Williamson and Williamson 2000: 266-87; and Stewart 2000.

[10] See letters sent by Sharpe to Chambers in April and June 1824; Allardyce 1888: 2, 293, 305.

[11] Sharpe had discussed Nurse Jenny and her 'Paddo Song' as early as April 1824, two years before the first edition of *Popular Rhymes of Scotland.* He was probably referring to the rhymes uttered by the frog in Jenny's tale of the paddo (see note 13, below). At this point Sharpe no doubt remembered his Nurse Jenny's tales as well as the songs they contained, but in their surviving correspondence neither Chambers nor Sharpe mentions Jenny's tales (Allardyce 1894: vol. 2, 293, 305). By 1842, however, it is certain that Sharpe has submitted at least one whole tale to Chambers, for Chambers' quotes from Nurse Jenny's version of 'The Milk-White Doo' (Chambers 1842: 53, a version of ATU 720, *The Juniper Tree*). It may be that Sharpe's paddo and 'Milk-White Doo' texts were deciding factors in moving Chambers to elicit nursery stories for later editions of the *Popular Rhymes.*

[12] The number of stories Chambers prints is an issue of debate. In 1842 he prints 14 *texts*, including one variant; in 1847, 25 texts, including three variants; in 1870, 29 texts, including five variants. A number of these 'nursery tales' would, however, be classified as ballads or songs by folklorists. For example, all three editions include 'The Wee Croodlen Doo,' a ballad and version of Child 12, 'Lord Randall' (Child 1882-1898).

responsiveness to the international movement that had sprouted in Scotland and England under the influence of the Grimms.

The differences between Sharpe's tales and Buchan's are dramatic. Sharpe abjures any hint of literary tradition and attempts instead to ventriloquize the woman who first told him the tales, his nurse, Jenny Blackadder. Sharpe's tale was conjured from his earliest memories, when, at age three or four, he 'would be sitting at the knee of Nurse Jenny, at his father's house in Hoddam in Dumfriesshire, about the year 1784' (Chambers 1870: 89). As printed by Chambers in 1842, Jenny's telling of the Frog Prince tale (known as 'The Walle o' the Warld's End' in earlier editions, but retitled 'The Paddo' in 1870)[13] opens in a poor widow's kitchen and unfolds in a diction that would be familiar to her:

> A puir widow was ae day baking bannocks, and sent her dochter wi' a dish to the walle o' the warld's end, to bring water. The dochter gaed, and better gaed, till she came to the walle at the warld's end, but it was dry. Now, what to do she didna ken, for she couldna gang back to her mother without water; sae she sat down by the side o' the walle, and fell a-greeting. A Paddo then cam loup-loup-louping out o' the walle, and asked the lassie what she was greeting for; and she said she was greeting because there was nae water in the walle (Chambers 1842: 52).

In the 1842 edition of *Popular Rhymes of Scotland,* Chambers sets Buchan's 'The Red Etin' in the company of such heavily Scots-inflected tales as Sharpe's 'The Paddo.' For Chambers' purpose, the diction of Buchan's opening would not serve:

> Near the burgh of Auchtermuchty in Fife, lived two poor widows who were unable to pay the rent of the small plot of ground allotted them by the farmer whose sub-tenants they were (Buchan 1908: 14).

So the tale was recast in diction mirroring that of Sharpe's tales, a simplified story flavoured with Scots. Here is how Buchan's first sentence was transformed:

> There were ance twa widows that lived ilk ane on a small bit o' ground, which they rented from a farmer (Chambers 1842: 56).

[13] The same tale type was known as 'The Walle at the Warld's End' to Leyden (Chambers 1842: 52) and as 'The Prince Paddock' to Walter Scott (Grimm and Grimm 1868: 324). It is a Scottish oikotype of KHM 1, 'The Frog King' (ATU 440), famous as the tale that begins the Grimms' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen.* Sharpe himself identified Nurse Jenny's tale in letters as 'The Paddo's Song,' though the inclusion of 'song' in the title may have been a result of the fact that he was writing Robert Chambers to submit the piece to a collection of 'popular rhymes' (Allardyce 1888: It is very likely that Sharpe was the leading force inspiring Chambers to include tales in the 1842 edition. Chambers retitled Sharpe's tale 'The Paddo' in 1870 only after having found a different tale titled 'The Wal at the Warld's End,' which he published at the end of his section on 'Children's Fireside Tales' (1870: 105-107).

Sharpe seems to have set the 'house style' for the 1842 edition of *Popular Rhymes of Scotland,* for all thirteen of the texts (and one added variant) contain at least a bit of Scots, none is overwhelmingly English in diction,[14] and several are rendered in Scots from beginning to end. Some of the contributors also mirror Sharpe in trying to recreate the language of the first tellers. 'The Wee Bunnock,' for example, was contributed by 'an elderly individual, who spent his early years in the parish of Symington, in Ayrshire'; the tale

> … was one of a great store of similar legends possessed by his grandmother, and which she related, upon occasion, for the gratification of himself and other youngsters, as she sat spinning by the fireside, with these youngsters clustered around her. This venerable person was born in the year 1704, and died in 1789 (Chambers 1842: 54; 1847: 234-35; 1870: 85).

Chambers, then, not only presents texts printed to look the way they would sound when spoken, but also presents the tellers, who are uniformly female, and the contexts, which are always the fireside or the nursery.[15] It was not only Sharpe, but also other of Chambers' anonymous correspondents, who wrote of their nursemaids and grandmothers. The association of oral folktales with 'old wives' was immemorial, but now as the correspondents began to reunite the tales with recollections of their tellers, the nursemaids, in particular, moved to centre stage in his collection.

There was some literary precedent. Edgar Taylor's third English-language Grimm volume had appeared in 1839, and this one differed notably from its predecessors by attaching the tales to one master teller. The frontispiece of *Gammer Grethel; or German Fairy Tales, and Popular Stories* (Grimm and Grimm 1839) was a copy of an illustration of the Grimms' star narrator, Dorothea Viehmann, here rechristened as a granny. The growing popularity of the Grimms in Scotland and England may have had a hand in influencing Chambers to regroup the *Popular Rhymes* around the magnetic figure of the old-time nursemaid, though the major influence must have been the handful of contributors who vividly recollected and strove to recreate the performances of their nursemaids. Gammer Grethel seems to have seized the English imagination, and likely the Scottish as well, for in the first half of the nineteenth century Taylor's translations of the Grimms sold far better in England than the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* was selling in Germany (Bottigheimer 1993: 84).

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[14] Although some of the tales have no more than a slight dusting of Scots, Scots exerts a general effect on the entire collection. The one variant that almost entirely lacks Scots is 'The Red Bull of Norroway,' which appeared in the 1847 and 1870 editions. Chambers offers a bit of an apology in both, stating that the tale 'has reached the editor in a more English form' than 'The Black Bull of Norroway,' which precedes it (Chambers 1847: 248; 1870: 99).

[15] The only exception, one that reinforces the rule, does not occur until the 1847 edition, with its new tale, 'The Marriage of Robin Redbreast' (212-13). Chambers identifies the performer as Robert Burns, and the correspondent is Mrs Begg, his sister. Burns told it 'to the younger members of his father's household', and Mrs Begg, part of the audience, believes that Burns '*made* it for their amusement'. Fraternal and paternal storytelling may have been quite common, but only Robert Burns seems to be able to break the stereotypical mould of granny-or-nanny-to-child transmission.

Chambers' 1842 edition also invokes the figure of the nursemaid as an organizing principle for the two major sections devoted to children's rhymes and stories. It is arguable that *Popular Rhymes of Scotland* came to serve, above all, as an homage to the shadowy figure of the nursemaid. Chambers begins the section 'Rhymes of the Nursery' by praising the nurse as the figure most responsible for educating Scottish children in their cultural heritage, and he sees post-1800 changes in childrearing as damaging to that tradition:

> Nothing has of late been revolutionised so much as the nursery. The young mind was formerly cradled amidst the simplicities of the uninstructed intellect; and *she* was held to be the best nurse who had the most copious supply of song, and tale, and drollery at all times ready to soothe and amuse her young charges. There were, it is true, some disadvantages in the system; for sometimes superstitious terrors were implanted, and little pains was [sic] taken to distinguish between what tended to foster the evil, and what tended to elicit the better feelings of infantine nature. Yet the ideas which presided over the scene, and rung through it all day in light gabble and jocund song, were really simple ideas, often even beautiful, and unquestionably suitable to the capacities of children (1842: 44; 1847: 174; cf. 1870:11).

Chambers then asserts that childrearing in more recent times stresses '*realism* and right-down earnest', but such traits might not 'be so well adapted to the early state of the faculties' and that the current system 'almost entirely overlooks that there is such a thing as imagination, or a sense of fun in the human mind' (1842: 44; 1847: 174; 1870: 11-12).

> There was no philosophy about these gentle dames; but there was generally endless kindness, and a wonderful power of keeping their little flock in good-humour. It never occurred to them that children were anything but children: 'bairns are just bairns,' they would say; and they never once thought of beginning to make them men and women while still little more than able to speak (1842: 44; 1847: 174; 1870:12).

Then Chambers identifies the nursemaid as the preserver of the earliest expressions of Scottish culture and decries a nursery without a nursemaid as a cause of national amnesia:

> Committed as we were in those days to such unenlightened curatrixes, we might be said to go through in a single life all the stages of a national progress. We began under a superintendence which might be said intellectually to represent the Gothic age; and gradually, as we waxed in years, and went to school and college, we advanced through the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries; finally coming down to the present age, when we adventured into public life. By the extinction of the old

> nursery system some part of this knowledge is lost (1842: 44; 1847: 174-75; 1870: 12).

Chambers added a few more words of praise for the vanished nurses to introduce the new section containing the nursery tales submitted by Sharpe and others:

> What man of middle age or above it does not remember the tales of drollery and wonder which used to be told by the fireside, in cottage and in nursery, by the old women time out of mind the vehicles for such traditions? These stories were in general of a simple kind, befitting the minds which they were to regale; but, in many instances, they displayed considerable fancy, at the same time that they derived an inexpressible charm from a certain antique air which they had brought down with them from the world of their birth—a world still more primitive and rude and romantic than that in which they were told, old as *it* now appears to us. They breathed of a time when society was in its simplest elements, and the most familiar natural things were as yet unascertained from the supernatural (Chambers 1842: 51; cf. Chambers 1847: 202; Chambers 1870: 48).

Thus, Chambers found in nursemaids' tales an essential part of the past—a source for nostalgia as well as a repository of an otherwise lost national history, and a means of both stimulating the imaginations and serving the needs of children—that had vanished without an adequate replacement by the mid-nineteenth century.

Chambers' words closely echo those of both Edgar Taylor and Walter Scott (cf. pages 4-6, above; cf. Alderson 1993: 62-65); both had looked hopefully to fairy tale literature as marking the beginning of an 'aera when our children shall be allowed once more to regale themselves with the mild food which will enliven their imaginations, and tempt them on through the thorny paths of education' (Taylor, quoted in Alderson 1993:64).

In its attempt to render tales in the vernacular, and its attention to context, the 1842 'Fireside Nursery Tales' was strikingly innovative—obviously, as compared to the *Popular Rhymes* of 1826, and even when compared to Chambers' own 'New Edition' of 1870. A view of the contributions of Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe to each volume reveals the extent of Chambers' debt to him.

By the time Chambers published the 1826 *Rhymes* Sharpe had been sending him folktales in Scots for at least two years. Chambers had culled the rhymes from these texts, but had persisted in writing the framing narrative in a standard, summarizing style. A glaring example is 'Pippity Pew', quoted in its entirety above (pp. 8-9). Only the rhymes are in Scots; the condensed prose gives no hint of oral style, but Chambers reveals Sharpe's contributions indirectly, in an 1842 footnote to 'The Milk-White Doo':

> Our Annandale authority—Nurse Jenny Blackadder—had a different version …. It represented Kate as sitting under the table, and, 'aye as the gudeman threw the banes to the cat, she catched them' (1842: 53).

In 1826 Chambers had rejected Sharpe's Scots and written instead,

> The father… picked all the bones, and threw them one after another, below the table, where sister Kate sat to gather them' (1826: 294).

In 1842, Sharpe's dialect renderings were strongest. Nurse Jenny concluded her frog tale as follows:

> The lassie wasna lang o' fetching the aix ; and then the Paddo sang—
>
> 'Now chap aff my head, my hinnie, my heart,
> Now chap aff my head, my ain true love ;
> Remember the promise that you and I made,
> Down i' the meadow, where we twa met.'
>
> Weel, the lassie chappit aff his head, and nae sooner was that done than he startit up the bonniest young prince that ever was seen. And the twa lived happy a' the rest o' their days (1842: 52).

But after 1842 Chambers' Scots retrenched. In the 1870 edition, the 1842 rhyme is repeated identically, but some of the Scots has been reconfigured to standard English spelling:

> Well, the lassie chappit aff his head; and no sooner was that done, than he started up the bonniest young prince that ever was seen. And the twa lived happy a' the rest o' their days (89).

The motive for reining in the Scots of the tales may be sales. There is evidence from Germany to suggest that the first volume of the Grimms' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1812) greatly outsold the second (1815) at least in part because the first volume employed more standard, middle-class content, tone and diction, while the second drew more on folk atmospherics (Bottigheimer 1993: 80-81). By 1870, Chambers' *Popular Rhymes* had been exerting enormous influence on England, especially on the work of James Orchard Halliwell, who appropriated much of Chambers' work and even Chambers' book titles, in his own work.[16] Chambers may have been trying to recapture the English market that Halliwell was building. In this market, Scots was often watered down or eliminated altogether from the tales, sometimes in the effort to claim Scottish tales themselves as essentially English. The appropriating and dismissive English attitude is reflected in Joseph Jacob's preface to *English Fairy Tales:*

> I have also included some stories that have only been found in Lowland Scotch. I have felt justified in doing this, as of the twenty-one folktales contained in Chambers' 'Popular Rhymes of Scotland,' no less than

[16] Halliwell's *Nursery Rhymes of England* already owed much to Chambers' *Popular Rhymes of Scotland,* but after Chambers incorporated 'Fireside Nursery Tales' into *Popular Rhymes of Scotland,* Halliwell took the hint and produced a book of rhymes and tales, titling it *Popular Rhymes and Nursery Tales: A Sequel to the Nursery Rhymes of England* (Halliwell 1849).

> sixteen are also to be found in an English form. With the Folk-tale as with the Ballad Lowland Scotch may be regarded as simply a dialect of English, and it is a mere chance whether a tale is extant in one or other, or both…. In the majority of instances I have had largely to rewrite these Fairy Tales, especially those in dialect, including the Lowland Scotch (Jacobs 1892: ix-x).

In paring down his use of dialect but nevertheless retaining some minimal markers of Scots, Chambers may have been attempting to assert his patriotism and bolster his sales simultaneously. In any case, the famous New Edition of 1870 serves to this day as the major anthology of Lowland Scots folktales.

Over time Chambers came to value the tales and the image of the nursemaid more and more. In the 1826 edition, The Nursery Rhymes and Nursery Tales were relegated to four pages of an addendum (293-96). By 1842, in contrast, the nursery rhymes and nursery tales each had a separate section of its own; the tales included thirteen main stories and one additional variant. In the 1847, Chambers printed 22 tales with 3 additional variants; and, finally, in the New Edition, which has become the standard (and where 24 tales and 5 variants appear) the Rhymes, with its preface in praise of nursemaids, opens the book, followed by the 'Fireside Nursery Tales'. The image of the nursemaid and the verbal art of the nursery had become the dominating traits of the book, whose title page was now illustrated with a fireside scene from one of the fireside tales, 'The Wee Bunnock'.

Although Chambers watered down some of Sharpe's dialect writing and although his attempt to render Buchan's 'Red-Etin' in Scots is largely cosmetic, he appears to have left at least four narratives untouched: the three tales of Nurse Jenny, and 'The Wee Bunnock,' contributed by an anonymous Ayrshire Correspondent. The contributors of these four tales seem to have strived mightily to render the tales exactly as they had heard them as children. As much as Chambers was influenced by the nursery philosophy of Scott and Taylor, and by the popularity of the Grimm translations, he was ultimately more deeply influenced by his most committed contributors, whose loyalty to the voices of their nursemaids helped fashion a written collection with a marked oral character. Because a significant proportion of Chambers' tales were contributed by individuals who heard them in traditional contexts and who strived to replicate the performances as accurately as their memories would permit, *Popular Rhymes of Scotland* significantly surpasses the published tales of the Grimms as a record of traditional storytelling in the early nineteenth century.

Jeanie Durie's, Aunt Ceil's, and Niece Jemima's Stories

Chambers and Buchan, considered together, represent a pervasive pattern in the narration and presentation of Scottish folktales. Almost without exception, the original storytellers are cited as poor females; without exception the editors, rewriters and presenters are male, and they are overwhelmingly from the middle or upper classes. In 1842, when Chambers first asked, 'What *man* of middle age, or above it, does not remember the tales …

told by the old *women*' (1842: 51; emphasis mine), he was referring to the time-frame of Ceil Douglas' birth and earliest experiences as a folktale auditor (1813 – ca. 1820).

By 1820, at the latest, Cecilia Douglas was listening to Jeanie Durie's stories. At first glance, Jeanie seems to fit perfectly the mould of the Scottish taleteller as shaped by Buchan and Chambers. She is a nurse, she lives in the countryside, and the 'pleasant' nature she assumes while participating in Ceil's play day would support Chambers' experience that nurses are typically figures of 'endless kindness', possessing 'a wonderful power of keeping their little flock in good-humour' (1842: 44).

Chambers' ideal nurse, like his own nanny, would hold that 'bairns are just bairns'[17] and allow them to gorge on play; he blamed the 'revolutionised' atmosphere of the modern nursery for driving out the old-time nurses and substituting a system that treated children as adults. Yet the correspondence of seven-year-old Ceil Douglas, and some facts about her life, would seem to indicate that, on the contrary, Ceil was treated both as a child and as a young adult, and that she performed quite well in both roles.

Ceil had little choice but to grow up fast. By age seven, when she first wrote of Nurse Jeanie, her father had been dead for two years, a suicide.[18] In her second and final surviving letter that mentions Jeanie Durie, written to her mother when she was thirteen or fourteen, she still has warm words for Jeanie, but Ceil is not living in a simple, child's world. Her father's death is now eight years or more in the past, and her older sister, Elizabeth (1808-1822), has now been gone for five. Ceil is her father's oldest surviving child. One of her companions has just told her, she writes, 'that I am now 'quite a woman in my appearance and very tall for a little person.'' Ceil is now writing poetry about 'Queen Mary and poor Lucy' and reading it to

[17] In the 1870 edition, altering the 1842 introduction to 'Fireside Nursery Stories,' Chambers wrote, ''bairns are just bairns,' my old nurse would say' (1870:12).

[18] Anne Fisher, Cecilia's great-great-niece, has shared with me some sentences attributed to the nineteenth-century doctor, Benjamin Bell (1810-1883), whose family was close to the Douglases: The truth is that poor Lord Reston committed suicide. There was a considerable gathering of friends at Glendoick at the time of the Circuit and although he seemed rather depressed by the painful duty of having to sentence a criminal to be hanged for the first time, he gave no indication of insanity the night before. He did not appear at breakfast and John Craigie (Lord Craigie's nephew) then a young advocate, was asked to tap at his bedroom door which was separated from his own by a dressing room. Entering the latter, he found his Lordship on the floor dead with his throat cut. Dr Macfarlan from Perth came and sewed up the wound and everything was so carefully conducted that for many years the sad occurrence was known to a very few persons. Some 25 years afterwards, a man McKelvie, who had been a footman, either to Lord Reston, or at Glendoick at the time, began to send begging letters to Mrs Douglas, threatening to divulge a family secret. By firm conduct on the part of a legal friend to whom Mrs Douglas had shown these letters, this infamous procedure was brought to a close. I believe that Mrs Douglas died in ignorance of the real facts of the case, although her sons-in-law became cognisant of them'. Ms Fisher adds, 'All of this may have had some influence on the upbringing of the three surviving children and Ceil's interest in folk tales.'

Jeanie Durie.[19] After signing, 'Your most affect[ionat]e Daughter,' Ceil adds in a p.s. that she will answer her younger sister's letter 'after prayers if I have time.'[20]


Cecelia Margaret Douglas

While we lack conclusive evidence that, in nurse Jeanie's presence, Ceil was both a little girl and a small adult, we cannot doubt that, by the time she passed Jeanie Durie's tales on to her niece Jemima, she was a grown woman who had suffered grave losses at the core of her family life. After losing her father and sister when she was very young, Ceil lost her only brother when she was 25 (and he 22), and her firstborn son at age 5 when she was 30. She retained her memory of the nursemaid's performances through all these trying times, and in the process became the only woman narrator from the period whose tales celebrate her nursemaid, as well as the first link in an all-female line of well-educated, upper-middle-class narrators. Ceil's is the only surviving example of an intrafamilial nineteenth-century Scots fairy-tale tradition. We can only guess at how Ceil told the stories she received from Nurse Jeanie, but we can have no doubt that they left a deep impression on her niece, Jemima Bannerman, who in turn retold them, and around 1912 (now married and named Jemima Margaret Campbell Lorimer) wrote them down.[21]

Where Buchan imitated the style of contemporary chapbooks, and Chambers' correspondents sought to render the tales in Scots vernacular, Jemima adapted a turn-of-the-twentieth-century storybook style. And a storybook is evidently what she undertook to write. Peter Buchan and Robert Chambers had earlier assembled their tales with the goal of publication in mind. Jemima was no different, for the second sentence of 'A Scottish Nurse's Stories' warned its young readers that if they became frightened by the tales, their mothers 'would not buy any more of these horrid Scotch stories and that would be a pity of course, for both you and me.'

[19] There is no internal evidence explaining the referent for the poem about Queen Mary and 'poor Lucy'. but Cecilia's great-great niece, Anne Fisher, suggests a possible source: Lady Lucy Preston's audience with Queen Mary II, in which Lucy successfully pleaded for the life of her father, who had been imprisoned and sentenced to die for his Catholic leanings. Lucy's pleas were the subject of popular historical and artistic treatments in the nineteenth century. One of these, 'Lady Lucy's Petition,' was published in London in 1830 (*Mirror* 1829: 13, 293; for a full text, see Watts 1830). See also Cross 1856.

[20] The letter is dated 'August 20th 5 and 20 minutes to nine,' without a designated year; Rory Cunningham, who generously provided the text, estimates that it was written circa 1827, when Ceil would have been thirteen years old.

[21] Although Jemima died in 1929, we know that her niece Kathleen M T Bannerman remembered being fourteen or fifteen when the stories were first read to her. Kathleen was born in 1897, so the tales would have been written down by 1913 at the latest, though there is no evidence to preclude an earlier date.

All three collectors altered their source stories in order to adapt them to the tastes of an audience distanced—in time, space or experience—from the contexts in which the tales were typically shared. Buchan's chapbook diction altered the performances of his sources to fit the aesthetics of the popular press. Chambers, in re-writing Buchan's 'The Red Etin'. and through other means, was trying to make his tales more accessible to his unseen readers—and to make the texts conform to a set idea of what an early-nineteenth-century nanny's storytelling style would look and sound like.[22] Jemima Campbell Lorimer, having delighted in her Aunt Ceil's performances, sought to share her delight with children she would never know. Like Peter Buchan, Jemima never saw her tales popularly published in the form in which she had cast them, though, as in the case of Buchan's 'The Red Etin'. a portion of her work did eventually appear in popular anthologies in greatly altered form.

Two of Jemima's tales—the first published here for the first time and the second heavily edited when published in 1994—convey something of the dilemmas faced by editors and readers seeking to tease a hint of the flavour of long-ago oral performances from frozen literary texts. The first of the five tales, 'A Scottish Nurse's Stories,'[23] signals that Jemima Campbell Lorimer is altering the family's storytelling styles to attract outsiders. In the introductory paragraph she writes, 'I will tell you a story which an old Scottish Nana used to tell to her little children long ago.' This opening is distanced and depersonalized in comparison to the family oral tradition, which identified the nurse as 'Jeanie Durie' and named 'Aunt Ceil' as the little listener who had brought the nursemaid's art to later generations of her family. In the second paragraph, as Jemima launches the tale, she immediately introduces a caricature 'Scotchman' with stereotyped status and behaviour: 'Once upon a time there was a Scotchman, who had, like many other Scotchmen, a great many children.' It is doubtful that such constant reference to a stereotype would have been part of a story shared by a Scottish nurse with an audience composed entirely of Scottish children, or have been part of a story shared by a Scottish Aunt Ceil with her Scottish niece Jemima. None of the other stories that Jemima committed to paper attempts a similar stereotyping of Scots; the fact that this is intended to be the first tale in the book, coupled with the fact that the Scotchman's tale is not given a separate title of its own, underlines the probability that it is intended as an extension of the introduction, a way of introducing a bygone storyworld to a later and much more cosmopolitan audience.

A SCOTTISH NURSE'S STORIES

[22] See, for example, 'The Pechs,' for which Chambers created a composite text; he states that the tale was 'made up from snatches heard from different mouths'; the implication is strong that Chambers himself was the compiler (Chambers 1847: 229-31; 1870: 80-82).

[23] 'A Scottish Nurse's Stories' is undoubtedly the title that Jemima intended for the entire collection. There is only one paragraph of general introduction before she launches the first tale with, 'Once upon a time' – this tale of the 'Scotchman' with many children is not assigned a separate title; it is the only one of the five tales without one, so I here identify it with the only title that precedes it, 'A Scottish Nurse's Stories.'

Dear Children, — If I tell you this old fashioned ghost story you must promise not to be frightened. For, you know, if your mothers were to find you lying awake at night thinking you heard the ghost calling down the chimney, they would say that they would not buy any more of these horrid Scotch stories and that would be a pity of course, for both you and me. So you must remember all this happened long, long ago, before even your fathers and mothers were born, and that there is no chance of these old days coming back again, and so, of course, it would be very foolish to be frightened. Well then, if you remember that, I will tell you a story which an old Scottish Nana used to tell to her little children long ago.

Once upon a time there was a Scotchman, who had, like many other Scotchmen, a great many little children, and not very much money to give them.

Now as the children began to grow bigger he said to himself, 'I wish I had a larger house for them, for though I love them dearly, I should sometimes like a quiet place for myself, where I could smoke my pipe and read my book in peace.' And he wondered and wondered how he could get a big enough house, till at last he remembered that when he was walking in the country one day he had seen a tall old house standing quite empty, though it had a roof and windows and everything else all right. It looked indeed just as if it were waiting for someone to come in to it and make it seem alive.

'What can be the reason that no one lives in that house?' thought he, 'I shall go and ask the people to whom it belongs.' So he went to them and said, 'I wish a big house like that for my little children. How much money must I give for it?'

'Why', said the people, 'if you will be so brave as to sleep in that house and chase away the ghost which lives there, and which disturbs us all so much, we will let you have it for nothing!'

Now as you know a Scotchman, like all people, is very pleased to get something for nothing, so he said to himself, 'Here is a good chance to make a good bargain and get lots of room for my little boys and girls to play in. I shall just take that house, and as for the ghost, I do not believe it will do me any harm.'

In case, however, that the little children should be frightened he said nothing at home about the ghost, but just determined to sleep in the house himself alone first, and see what would happen. It was winter time and very cold, so he had a great fire lit in the bedroom where they said the ghost used to come, and he had a nice hot supper carried up

there in the evening; for you know people always feel braver when they have had plenty to eat and drink, I am sure you must have noticed that? Well, there he sat for some time warming himself and eating his supper and feeling quite brave though he was all alone in the old dark house; at last he began to get so sleepy that he resolved not to watch for the ghost any longer, but just to go to bed.

I suppose he had not been asleep for very long when he was wakened by hearing a dreadful thump on the front door, and then a sound of bump, bump, bump, as if some heavy weight were being dragged up the long stone stairs. Nearer and nearer came the noise, and then, with a crash the bedroom door flew open and there, children, just think how dreadful, stood a coffin upright with a dead man inside it.

I am sure that you or I would have screamed, and hid our heads under the bedclothes, but this you see was a brave and sensible man, so he just waited quietly to see what the ghost wanted. It looked at him piteously and stretched out its cold blue fingers towards the fire crying over and over again, 'I'm cauld, I'm cauld.' 'No wonder, poor creature, in such a freezing night,' said the man to himself, 'I had better ask him to warm himself, and besides, it is always better to be civil.' So he begged the ghost to sit in the chair by the fire and warm himself and to his surprise he did so at once.

Then the ghost began his dreadful moaning cry again, only this time it was 'Oh, I'm hungry, I'm hungry.'

The man had grown bolder now, so he did not wait a minute, but asked his strange guest to have some supper; and it was a fearful sight to see how the poor creature seized on the food and tore it to pieces as if it had not had anything to eat for a long, long time, which was very likely the case.

And then, more terrifying still, he began to cry out, 'Oh, I'm weary, weary. I'm weary, weary' as if its heart would break with its longing for rest, and would you believe it, the man was so brave and kind that he actually asked the ghost to come in to his own bed and lie down and sleep there. But scarcely had he laid down when there arose a terrible wind; it went howling round the old house shaking the windows and shrieking down the chimneys as if evil spirits were abroad that night and were crying and wailing over their lost state and seeking to wreak their wicked vengeance upon some one. Louder and louder the blasts came till the man began to hear voices in the storm, and this is what they howled down the chimney. 'Rug him and rive him and fling us a blad; rug him and rive him and fling us a blad.'

> The dead man seemed to hear the voices too, for he sat up in bed and turned his white face to the fireplace and moaned out in answer, in a voice that rose and fell like the wind.
> 'Hoo-oo can I rug him, and hoo-oo can I rive him, and hoo-oo can I fling [ye][24] a blad? Did he no bid me sit in his chair and warm me, and I wud; did he no bid me eat of his supper and I wud, and did he no bid me lie down on his bed and I wud? Sae hoo-oo can I rive him and hoo-oo can I rug him and hoo-oo can I fling ye a blad?'
> There were then indeed terrible shrieks of rage and disappointment heard round the house, but these gradually grew fainter and fainter as the storm swept past and at last they died away into the distance.
> I do not know what happened then nor did the man either, for when he came to himself again the frosty sunlight was coming in through the windows and all was peaceful and still.
> After that night the ghost was never heard of again; and indeed the man's children were so merry and so noisy and filled the house so full that there would have been no peace and no room for him even if he had come.
> And the moral of this story is that it is always good to be polite, and that if by any chance you ever meet a ghost you must be sure to ask him to supper.[25]

There are snatches of this tale, all embedded in the dialogue, that undoubtedly take us back to the first versions Ceil heard from Nurse Jeanie. Although the stereotyped 'Scotchman' speaks standard English, both the ghost who haunts him and the spirits that dog the ghost speak in Scots. The spirits chant, 'Rug him and rive him and fling us a blad,' and the ghost answers them, in appropriately ghostly diction, 'Sae hoo-oo can I rug him, and hoo-oo can I rive him, and hoo-oo can I fling ye a blad?' But this Scots speech is overwhelmed by the pervasive standard written English of an intrusive narrator. From her first words, 'Dear Children,' Jemima supplies a directorial voice. She uses warnings to advise her audience how to act ('if your mothers were to find you lying awake at night…'), preaches that 'it would be very foolish to be frightened,' intrudes with sententiae illustrating the nature of the protagonist ('Now as you know a Scotchman … is very pleased to get something for nothing'), and uses the second person in a teacher's tone ('you know that people always feel braver when they have had plenty to eat and drink, I am sure you must have noticed that?').

[24] The manuscript reads, 'fling him a blad,' but as the previous dialogue and the last line of the present paragraph indicate, it is the howling spirits that wish to receive a 'blad', or morsel of the man's riven body.
[25] This tale is classified by folklorists as ATU 326A, *Soul Released from Torment,* in which a man accepts a dare to spend the night in a haunted house in return for a promised reward, which is sometimes, as in this case, the house itself. It has been collected sporadically in Scotland, although it is extremely popular in areas of the American Appalachian Mountains that were settled by Scottish and Ulster Scots immigrants.

The Bannerman Family c. 1869
(Jemima back 2nd from left)

The concluding moral is both traditional and nontraditional by Chambers' standards. In *Popular Rhymes of Scotland,* one tale begins with a moral, one ends with a moral, and a third ends with the suggestions of a moral that Chambers (or his correspondent) cuts off abruptly: —'Sae ye see, bairns, &c' (Chambers 1870: 61, 85, 105). Yet Jemima's moral differs from the three in Chambers in its dual voicing: she delivers her meaning half in earnest ('it is always good to be polite') and half in jest ('if by any chance you ever meet a ghost you must be sure to ask him to supper'). Such playful seriousness inhabited the children's literature of late nineteenth-century England and Scotland, from Lewis Carroll to J.M. Barrie, and it would easily have penetrated into the narrative style of Jemima (Bannerman) Campbell Lorimer. In sum, with the possible exception of the moral, the addresses to the 'Dear Children' are unlikely to be either Nurse Jeanie's or Aunt Ceil's, but were probably incorporated into the tale as Jemima recomposed it for potential publication.

Together, Jemima's interactive overlays created a whole new story that did not impress late-twentieth-century folklorists. When A.J. Bruford and D.A. MacDonald set about to create an anthology of Scottish folktales that would represent the best and the most representative holdings of the Archive of the School of Scottish Studies, they selected three of Jeanie Durie's five tales for publication.[26] Not surprisingly, 'A Scottish Nurse's Stories' has never been previously published in any form.

Bruford and MacDonald did, however, choose to publish 'Liver and Lights,' a rendering that undoubtedly struck them as more authentic. Yet the Bannerman Manuscript was apparently not authentic enough for Bruford, because—just as Chambers before him had recast Buchan's 'The Red Etin'—Bruford eliminated Jemima's introduction and conclusion, and made smaller changes throughout the rest of the story.

Below is the first version of 'Liver and Lights' to be published as written by Jemima Campbell Lorimer. Words from Jemima's version that were edited out by Bruford appear in italics. Other changes made by Bruford are signaled by numbers directing readers to the endnotes.

LIVER AND LIGHTS

Now I think I had better warn you that this story of the old nurse's is so shocking that you had better not read it, unless you are quite sure you will never waken in the night and think you see something

[26] The three published tales are 'Liver and Lights' (Bruford and MacDonald 1994: 50-51, 444n6; *Tocher* no. 8, 239), 'The History of Kitty Ill-Prets' (Bruford and MacDonald 1994: 185-90, 455-56n21; *Tocher* 18: 67-71), and 'Strunty Pokes' (56-57, 461n37; *Tocher* 3: 82-83).

come thrawing, thrawing through the keyhole; for then of course you would nearly die of fright and that would be a pity.

Well, the story is this:

Once *on*[27] a time there was a miller, and one night after he and his wife had gone to bed, his wife took an 'awfu greening for liver and lights'[28], and she would not be content until her husband got up and went to the town, a little way off, to buy some.

The miller was very unwilling to go, for he was warm and comfortable in bed and it was still dark and very cold outside, but still as he was a good natured man and liked to please his wife he set out, *as I have said. But on his way to the town he passed a church yard and he thought to himself,* 'It is so dark and so early in the morning that I shall have to wait a long time before the shops are open in the town, besides the long way I shall have to tramp; I'll just go in here and see if I can't get liver and lights nearer home'. So he went into the church yard, and he 'howkit' up a dead body, from a newly made grave, and cut out the liver and lights from the poor corpse, and carried them home to his wife, and she not knowing where they came from, and having a greening upon her, 'she boilt them and she eated them', and was never a bit the wiser, while as for the miller you may be sure he held his tongue.

One night soon after, however, when it was dark, the miller went out to grind some corn and his wife was left alone in the house, and bye and bye[29] she heard something come to the door, and then she saw the something come 'thrawing through the keyhole' and it came up to her and said:

'Is Mungo at hame?'

'No' said she, 'he's at the mill, grinding the corn and he winna be back till it's a' ground!'

Then she looked at 'It' and said: 'What wye's yere e'en sae how?'

And 'It' answered: 'Because the worms have howkit[30] them oot ere[31] now.'

Then she said: 'And what wye's yere feet sae braid?'

And 'It' answered: 'Because I've traivelled, mair than e'er[32] I rade!'

[27] Bruford and MacDonald (1994: 50) read 'Once upon a time'.
[28] Bruford and MacDonald 1994 remove these and most other quotations in their printed version.
[29] The ms. reads 'by and bye'; like Bruford and MacDonald, I emend as 'bye and bye.'
[30] The ms. reads 'howket'; following Bruford and MacDonald, I emend as 'howkit.'
[31] The ms. reads 'e'er'; like Bruford and MacDonald, I emend as 'ere.'
[32] The ms. reads 'e're'; like Bruford and MacDonald, I emend as 'e'er.'

> And then she looked at 'It' again and said: 'What wye's yere puddens trailing out ahint ye?'
> And then with a terrible shriek *(into the listener's ear)* 'It' sprang on her crying: 'Auch ye thief, ye've ate the wyte o't', and just tore her to pieces. *This is a terrible warning to us all against dishonesty and greediness, as I am sure you will all agree.*[33]

If many aspects of the 'Scotchman' story cast doubt on the power of the Bannerman Manuscript to re-capture the nature of an underlying oral performance, 'Liver and Lights' affirms that certain elements of Jeanie's tellings have survived for nearly two centuries. About fifteen percent of the tale's verbiage is rendered in Scots, and Jemima is careful to use quotation marks to surround nearly all of these Scots expressions, which almost certainly date back to Nurse Jeanie's narration.[34] The Scots of 'Liver and Lights' is uncompromising: the questions of the miller's wife and the corpse's rhyming answers offer up phrases that would likely puzzle many English readers and thoroughly dismay Joseph Jacobs: 'What wye's yere e'en sae how?' 'Ye've ate the wyte o't.' Jemima may have begun her collection thinking to sell it to readers unfamiliar with Scots, but as she worked her way through the stories, they seem to have become less for outsiders and more faithful to the family's—and thus, ultimately, to Jeanie's—tradition. Interestingly, she had gone out of her way to avoid frightening her audience in 'A Scottish Nurse's Stories' (with such lines as 'you must promise not to be frightened'); yet, as she begins 'Liver and Lights'. Jemima seems to delight in the possibility of frightening her audience: 'this story of the old nurse's is so shocking that you had better not read it, unless you are quite sure you will never waken in the night and think you see something come thrawing, thrawing through the keyhole; for then of course you would nearly die of fright and that would be a pity.' She is telling a tale that, when performed, purposely plays upon the fears of the listeners and ends with a shriek. She allows the story to overpower her intrusive voice, which simply serves to support the shock-effect of the ending.

In contrast to Jemima's version, Bruford's editing of 'Liver and Lights' misrepresents the tradition that ensured the tale's survival. The opening paragraph, omitted by Bruford, announces that the story comes from the 'old nurse' and that statement points to the obvious conclusion that the present narrator is *retelling* the tale. It is deceptive to omit this. It is also deceptive to remove the quotation marks that Jemima had used to identify Jeanie's speech; in offering an orthographic tribute to the nurse, Jemima was also making it easier for readers to

[33] This is a version of ATU 366, *The Man from the Gallows,* a tale reported rarely in Scotland, but much better known in areas of the United States where Scottish and Ulster Scots immigrants settled.
[34] The incantatory questions posed by the wife and the answers of the corpse are in thick Scots, and undoubtedly part of the nurse's original performances. The language here is so idiosyncratic and perhaps archaic that it unlikely to have been originated with either Ceil or Jemima. This is particularly true of the corpse's last words: 'ye've ate the wyte o't,' a construction so unusual that A.J. Bruford suggested it was a misunderstanding of the phrase, 'Ye aucht the wyt o't.' (Bruford and MacDonald 1994: 445); this implies that the Ceil or her niece had retained the nurse's phrase in her memory without fully understanding it.

see how the nurse's language persisted within, and intermixed with, the performances of the upper-middle-class family that shared and transformed the tales long after Jeanie's death.

Bruford also cuts an important interpolation: the last words of the corpse to miller's wife are supposed to be shrieked 'into the listener's ear', an essential aspect of performance. In Chambers' *Popular Rhymes of Scotland* correspondents contributed not only the tales that they remembered, but also recollections of the narrator, the narrator's style, and certain theatrical gestures made by the narrator to enhance the performance. Thus, we learn from the anonymous contributor of 'The Cattie Sits in the Kiln-Ring Spinning' that as a child he had 'often listened with intense interest' to the tale, as his 'old nurse's *acting* of the story was excellent': her voice would vary from character to character, 'from the poor obsequious mouse to the surly cat,' a dramatic touch that 'carried a moral with it' (Chambers 1842: 54; 1847: 207; 1870: 54-55). Three other correspondents provide stage directions with their tales (e.g., 1847: 215-17, 219-21; 1870: 65, 70, 77); one of these tales, 'The Strange Visitor,' ends in the same manner as 'Liver and Lights,' with a dialogue between a soon-to-die mortal and the supernatural being that has come to devour her. The mortal woman asks the skeletal visitor:

> [Mortal:] 'What way hae ye sic a muckle muckle head?'
> [The Strange Visitor:] 'Muckle wit, muckle wit' (*keenly*)
> 'What do you come for?'
>
> 'FOR YOU!' (*At the top of the voice, with a wave of the arm and a stamp of the feet.*) (Chambers 1847: 217; 1870: 65).

Chambers then adds this comment:

> The dialogue, towards the end, is managed in a low and drawling manner, so as to rivet the attention, and awaken an undefined awe in the juvenile audience. Thus wrought up, the concluding words come upon them with such effect as generally to cause a scream of alarm (Chambers 1847: 217; 1870: 65-66).

Both Jemima's and Chambers' texts give us a better sense than does Bruford of how such 'catch tales' were performed in nineteenth-century Scotland.

The unaltered Bannerman Manuscript reveals how two generations of one upper-middle-class family recalled and preserved the memory of a storytelling nanny, and also how the family shaped the nanny's tales to reflect their own interests, values and tastes. The Bruford version, however, in stripping away Jemima's commentary, gives the false impression that the narrator of 'Liver and Lights' in its current form is Jeanie Durie herself. By ignoring the efforts that Jemima made to distinguish her own narrative voice from Jeanie's, Bruford ironically makes Jeanie an even more distant figure than she had appeared in 'A Scottish Nurse's Stories.'

In Ceil's last letter that mentions Jeanie Durie, the fourteen-year-old assumes an adult tone, and refers to the nurse not as a parent or grandparent figure, but as a friend:

> We went the day after I came [to her hosts in Fife] to see our friends in

> Auchtermuchty, M[r] Leburn[35] and Jeanie Durie both of whom were very happy indeed to see me the tears gathered in poor M[r] Leburns eyes and he clapped me on the back most affectionately. Phemie insisted that I should read my poetry about Queen Mary and poor Lucy to him and my risible muscles were very much inclined to be rebellious when I saw the tears absolutely rolling down the poor man's cheeks at my pathetic muse, it is a tribute never before paid to it I am sure, when I finished he said every *word* of it *would* do. He seemed to like to look back upon old days and the time I first came to Rossie in short it is a pleasant thing to see people are happy to see one. We have begun the inheritance and we all like it very much even old Jeanie Durie who is here just now and forms one of our party in the old nursery, which is now dedicated to literary pursuits in short we are all very happy…. [36]

At this point, Ceil seems to be turning her back on storytelling. 'Old Jeanie Durie' once more joins Ceil in the 'old nursery'. but now the group is engaged in 'literary pursuits'.

In another six or seven years, Ceil would be married to a clergyman, and there were to be no references to storytelling in her later surviving letters. Nor does the married Cecilia ever mention that she once wrote poetry. Instead, she transcribed Christian hymns. Rory Cunningham writes that Cecilia's married life 'seems to have been taken up with Christian piety, her husband's domestic life, and her sister's and her children's lives.'[37] Yet, without the support of writing, the family storytelling went on, and the aunt-to-niece channel of transmission remained particularly strong. Anne Fisher, a great-great-granddaughter of Ceil's sister David Anne and great-great niece of Jemima, heard her aunt Day (Davie Anne Douglas Bannerman) tell stories attributed to Jemima's older sister Ata (Marie Turing Anne Bannerman). Anne writes, 'Ata was … seven years older than Jemima and I'm sure they visited each other frequently, it was a very close knit family. Day's generation had a deep well of stories and poems that poured out from time to time, the result of no screens, radio or television and the luxury of having servants to care for them and well used leisure time.'[38] Around 1946, Anne Fisher listened to Day tell a story that she'd heard as a young child around 1900, from *her* aunt Ata. The tale that Anne remembers is a close cousin of both of Jeanie Durie's tales published here: it features a poor tailor who accepts 'of a large sum to sew a pair o' breeks in

[35] Mr Leyburn, who is cited as a fiddle player elsewhere in Ceil's letters, is likely Alexander Leburn of Auchtermuchty (1767-1836), who, along with his friend James Walker, composed many tunes dedicated to people whom Cecilia likely knew; e.g., 'Mrs. Cheape of Rossie's Strathspey' was dedicated to a lady of the house that Cecilia was visiting when she wrote the letters quoted here. (Leburn and Walker 2006). I am grateful to Rory Cunningham for this identification.
[36] Ceil's letter is dated 20 August, but no year is designated; see note 18, above.
[37] Email to Carl Lindahl, 25 August 2015.
[38] Email to Carl Lindahl, 5 September 2015. Incidentally, Anne Fisher's grandmother, Helen, was herself an author of children's stories, one of which, 'Little Black Sambo,' became an internationally known tale (Bannerman 1899; see Hay 1981).

the ruined chapel of Iona Abbey during the course of one night.' As he sits and sews, a skeleton assembles itself before his eyes. The tailor and the corpse engage in a series of questions and answers reminiscent of 'Liver and Lights':

> By and by a pair o' braw braw feet set down on the floor beside him;
>
> And a voice said 'See ye here these braw braw feet'
> 'That I see but this I sew' quo he and went on stitching the breeks.

The dialogue continues until the skeleton is complete:

> By and by a great big heed, set down on the sma' sma' neck.
> 'See ye this great big heed?'
> 'That I see but this I sew' quo he and went on stitching. 'And whar gat ye
> thon a muckle muckle heed? '
> 'Muckle wit, muckle wit'
> 'And what hae ye come for?'
> 'FOR YOU!'
>
> The tailor put in the last stitch, gathered up the breeks and jumped through the window. He'd won the bet.[39]

Anne is certain that Ata's tale was strongly influenced by 'Liver and Lights.' Her family's philosophy of using oral stories, rather than moralistic storybooks, to enhance the lives of children, closely echoes the written convictions of Chambers and Scott: 'My grandmother, Helen, always said children should not be taught to read before the age of 7 as it would suppress their imagination.'[40] Anne Fisher's branch of this storytelling family does not, however, possess an oral tradition attributing their stories to Ceil Douglas or Jeanie Durie.

As Nurse Jeanie's stories were passing from Ceil to Jemima to Kathleen, these three generations of females were constantly engaged in social interactions that took them worlds away from the Rossie nursery. Rory Cunningham and Anne Fisher have generously shared with me letters, genealogical information, family anecdotes, and personal reflections that illumine something of the lives of these female lovers of story.

In 1821, when seven-year-old Ceil wrote home about the 'pleasant' Nurse Durie, she had already survived her father, David Douglas, Lord Reston (d. 1819), a judge and a

[39] Email to Carl Lindahl, 4 September 2015. This tale embodies elements common to both of Nurse Durie's tales printed here. As in 'A Scottish Nurse's Stories,' the protagonist of Aunt Ata's tale spends a night in a frightening location in return for a reward. Gaelic and Traveller versions of ATU 326A sometimes feature a tailor spending the night in a cemetery rather than a man sleeping in a haunted house. But, like 'Liver and Lights' and other versions of ATU 366, Ata's tale involves a ritual dialogue between a mortal and his supernatural nemesis.

[40] Email to Carl Lindahl 5 September 2015.

descendent of the lairds of Strathendry, Fife. Douglas seems to have divided his time between the family estate in Fife and a home in Edinburgh. As a young man, he had also become the assistant and heir to his father's cousin, the famous economist Adam Smith (d. 1790). Smith bequeathed his library to David Douglas, so Ceil grew up surrounded by learned books when in Edinburgh, and by storytelling nurses when visiting country neighbours in Fife.

Ceil and her niece Jemima continually inhabited circles of eminence, learning, and piety. At age 20, Ceil married William Bruce Cunningham, a minister of the Church of Scotland who served in Prestonpans more or less continually for 45 years. [41] Willliam Bruce's learning also earned him election in to the Philological Society in 1861. Ceil and William's oldest surviving son, Robert Oliver Cunningham, was appointed Professor of Natural Sciences at Queen's College, Belfast. After her husband's death, Ceil seems to have moved in with her son, for she died in Belfast in February 1898.

Jemima was raised in similarly eminent surroundings. Her mother was Lord Reston's youngest and posthumous daughter, Ceil's sister, David Anne Douglas. In 1839, David Anne married James P. Bannerman, a Church of Scotland minister who would become Professor of Apologetics and Pastoral Theology at New College, Edinburgh. He, like William Cunningham, became a leader of the Free Church movement. Bannerman authored 'The Prevalent Forms of Unbelief,' 'Apologetical Theology,' and a number of other tracts. Jemima was one of six daughters in a family of nine children.[42] She obviously had a special relationship with her Aunt Ceil. How many of her eight siblingss also attended and treasured Ceil's story sessions remains an open question. Jemima's niece Kate, who fell heir to the Bannerman Manuscript, continued the family tradition of education and professionalism. Her father was Jemima's brother James P. Bannerman, who, like her grandfather, Lord Reston, excelled in the law; James was a solicitor and Writer to the Signet.

Kay and Douglas Bannerman c. 1905

Given the accomplished history of Ceil's family, its women's devotion to Jeanie Durie's tales is all the more impressive. Demands of status and commitments to legal and educational professionalism, pervasive in all their households, kept them busy. From their

[41] William Cunningham was ordained a minister of the Church of Scotland, and we may assume his career was interrupted at least briefly by the schism of 1843, when he joined the group of evangelical ministers who broke away to form the Free Church of Scotland. As his great-great-grandson, Rory Cunningham, has informed me, William was declared 'No longer a minister' of his Church of Scotland parish on 24 May 1843, but he continued to practise ministry and worked with 'a large Free Church congregation until two months before his death in 1878.

[42] In addition to Anne Fisher and Rory Cunningham, the following sources supplied information on the family of Jemima Campbell Lorimar, née Bannerman. Matthew and Harrison 2004: Vol. 3, 718-19; Stephen and Lee 1908: Vol. 1, p. 1059.

earliest days the Douglas sisters, Ceil and David Anne, bore a palpably heavy burden of learning. Upon their father's tragic death (when Ceil was five and David Anne was not yet born), Adam Smith's library became their legacy, and it was eventually divided between the two sisters.[43] Ceil and David Anne long survived both their father and their husbands. It was probably some time after Ceil first shared Jeanie Durie's tales with David Anne's daughter Jemima, that Ceil, now widowed, sold parts of the Adam Smith library and gave away others,[44] and then likely left Scotland to live with her son, Professor Robert Oliver Cunningham, in Belfast before her death in 1898.[45]

Celia's letters are silent on the subject of storytelling, but we learn something of her interests through the Adam Smith books that she sold as well as those that she chose to keep. She sold the works of Newton and Voltaire, as well as the *Mémoires de la Cour d'Espagne,* by Madame d'Aulnay, who coined the term *Conte de fées.* But she hung on to the great storytellers: Homer, Boccaccio, Chaucer, Swift, and Macpherson (Bonar 1894).

Ceil was heiress both to the library of Adam Smith and to the tales of the nurse from Fife, and though she surrendered the library she clung to the stories. Jemima and Kathleen Bannerman did not inherit one of the Adam Smith books, but they treasured Jeanie Durie's tales all their lives. The three women's emotional investment in the nurse's legacy gives them the right to be remembered as traditional artists, and us the obligation to seek to understand how they experienced and transformed their tales.[46]

[43] Bonar 1894: vii. Bonar states, 'On Lord Reston's death the library was divided between his two daughters, Mrs. Cunningham of Prestonpans and Mrs. Bannerman of Edinburgh.' As Lord Reston had died 14 years before Ceil moved to Prestonpans and two months before David Anne was born, the library was divided much later than Bonar states; it remained with the two girls' widowed mother, Elizabeth (née Craigie) until after 1838, when Lord Reston's only son, Adam Smith Douglas, died, and 1839, when David Anne was married, and thus settled in a home that could receive the books. Rory Cunningham has communicated that a surviving letter written by Ceil to her mother in 1839 mentions the plan to divide the library between the two daughters (email to Carl Lindahl 3 September 2015).

[44] Bonar 1894: vii-viii.

[45] Rory Cunningham writes: 'It seems fairly likely that Cecilia spent her widowhood with Professor Cunningham in Belfast: I cannot find her in the 1881 census either of Scotland or of England; the 1887 letters I have indicate she was living there; I cannot find her in the 1891 census either; and she died in Belfast (on February 7 1898).' Email to Carl Lindahl 22 July 2009.

[46] This article is dedicated to Cecelia Margaret Douglas and all of her descendants, but especially to David Patrick Bannerman, Rory Cunningham, and Anne Fisher, who contributed their ideas, information, memories, photographs, and good will to this exploration of the storytelling traditions of their family.

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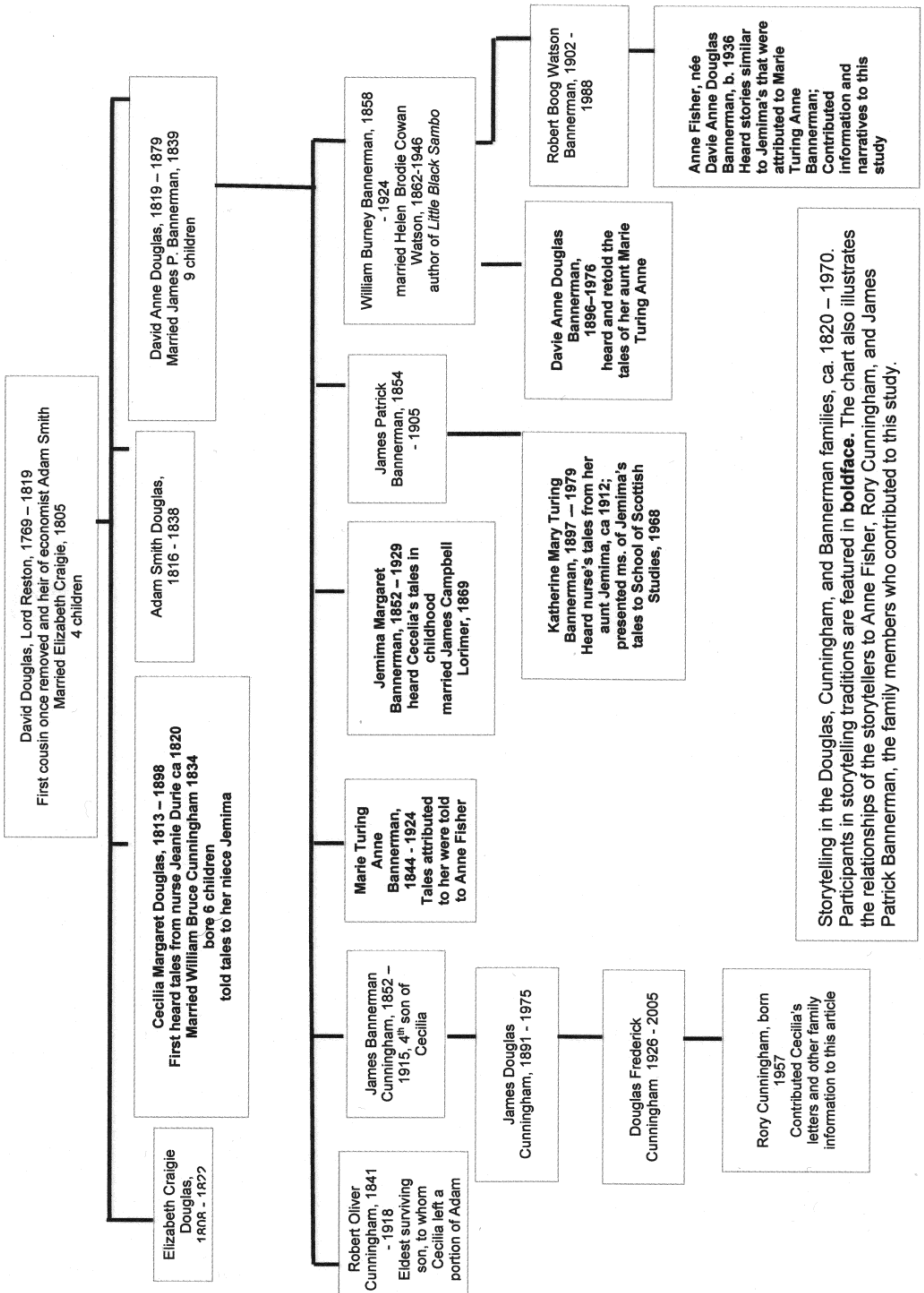
David Douglas, Lord Reston, 1769 – 1819
First cousin once removed and heir of economist Adam Smith
Married Elizabeth Craigie, 1805
4 children
Elizabeth Craigie Douglas, 1808 - 1822
Cecilia Margaret Douglas, 1813 – 1898
First heard tales from nurse Jeanie Durie ca 1820
Married William Bruce Cunningham 1834
bore 6 children
told tales to her niece Jemima
Adam Smith Douglas, 1816 - 1838
David Anne Douglas, 1819 – 1879
Married James P. Bannerman, 1839
9 children
Robert Oliver Cunningham, 1841 - 1918
Eldest surviving son, to whom Cecilia left a portion of Adam
James Bannerman Cunningham, 1852 – 1915, 4th son of Cecilia
Marie Turing Anne Bannerman, 1844 - 1924
Tales attributed to her were told to Anne Fisher
Jemima Margaret Bannerman, 1852 – 1929
heard Cecelia's tales in childhood
married James Campbell Lorimer, 1869
James Patrick Bannerman, 1854 - 1905
William Burney Bannerman, 1858 - 1924
married Helen Brodie Cowan Watson, 1862-1946
author of Little Black Sambo
James Douglas Cunningham, 1891 - 1975
Douglas Frederick Cunningham 1926 - 2005
Rory Cunningham, born 1957
Contributed Cecilia's letters and other family information to this article
Katherine Mary Turing Bannerman, 1897 – 1979
Heard nurse's tales from her aunt Jemima, ca 1912; presented ms. of Jemima's tales to School of Scottish Studies, 1968
Davie Anne Douglas Bannerman, 1896–1976
heard and retold the tales of her aunt Marie Turing Anne
Robert Boog Watson Bannerman, 1902 - 1988
Anne Fisher, née Davie Anne Douglas Bannerman, b. 1936
Heard stories similar to Jemima's that were attributed to Marie Turing Anne Bannerman;
Contributed information and narratives to this study
Storytelling in the Douglas, Cunningham, and Bannerman families, ca. 1820 – 1970.
Participants in storytelling traditions are featured in boldface. The chart also illustrates the relationships of the storytellers to Anne Fisher, Rory Cunningham, and James Patrick Bannerman, the family members who contributed to this study.

William Dawson (1734-1815): Improver and Philosopher

TONY VOSS

In the heritage literature of Kelso and the Scottish Borders, the names of William Dawson 'the improver', and Thomas Pringle (1789-1834), 'poet and philanthropist', are often mentioned with honour. For a short while, when Dawson was approaching retirement and Pringle was still a schoolboy, they were neighbours, but the overall careers of the improver and the man who came to be known as 'the father of South African English poetry' could hardly have been more different.

Thomas Pringle was born in the year of the French Revolution, but his early education and up-bringing in rural Roxburghshire in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries sprang from old Scottish traditional roots, on which Pringle continued to develop throughout his life. The Kelso Grammar School, to which Pringle was sent at the age of 13 in 1802, had been serving what George Elder Davie called 'The Democratic Intellect' since its foundation in the seventeenth century: the syllabus in which Pringle was schooled there may not have changed very much during that time. On the other hand, the Scottish Enlightenment had significant effects even in Kelso, and certainly when he got to Edinburgh University in 1802, Pringle seems to have been exposed to at least the afterglow of that intellectual movement. However, on the basis of what direct evidence we have, Pringle's individual initiatives as a student seem to have been evangelical in social direction, and romantic in literary emphasis. After he left the University, his undertakings in journalism and belles lettres, though unexceptionable and even honourable, were not able to exploit the radical moment of his time.

By 1819, Pringle faced a double crisis: both the rural and the urban dimensions of his culture were threatened. The evangelical values he had brought from the country had not been proof against the ambitious scepticism of the Edinburgh of the Napoleonic War and its immediate aftermath. In that year, Pringle had returned to his archival work at Register House. In the same year the fragile economic foundations of Pringle's rural heritage were exposed:

> A series of bad harvests, and the low prices which came after the long French war, had driven the tenant of Blakelaw [Pringle's father, Robert], like many of his neighbours, to the verge of ruin (Leishman: 50).

It is not surprising that the Pringles were vulnerable to the blandishments of the Colonial Office and its 'scheme of colonising the waste lands at the Cape' (ibid.) Thomas Pringle led the 'Scottish Party' to settle on the Eastern Cape frontier in 1820. His lateral descendants are still there, and

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some of the Scottish names he gave the landscape are still on the map of South Africa. But Pringle left South Africa in 1826, and settled in London as secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society. He died in 1834, shortly after the passing of the act of Parliament which abolished slavery in the British Empire: a liberation which he had been instrumental in achieving. The African experience which Pringle had embarked on as a result of his Scottish setbacks proved, in the end, central to his total achievement.

The work and personality of William Dawson, who lived his whole life in the Scottish lowlands, but for a few years in England during his early manhood,, make an illuminating comparison with Pringle's case. Pringle too, was a farmer; in settling in South Africa he had to adapt from the mixed farming of his Borders youth to traditional African cattle pasturage on the Eastern Cape frontier. Pringle is now mainly remembered in South Africa as a writer and liberal activist. While Dawson is mainly remembered as an agriculturist, he deserves also to be remembered as a writer. William Dawson was born in February 1734, on Harpertoun, a farm in the parish of Ednam, Berwickshire, of which his father was the tenant. At the age of sixteen Dawson was sent to England to learn new farming methods. It may be that his travels were sponsored by his father's landlord; it was not unknown for promising sons of tenant farmers to be advanced by noble landowners in this way. (Burnet: 1) According to one nineteenth-century source ‘after a liberal education’ Dawson ‘was sent by his relations into England’ (Forsyth 1841: II,74). For four years Dawson trained with John Ball, the agent of the Duke of Leeds, on the estate near Sheffield, then spent another year at Lord Fitzwalter's estate in Essex. Before he returned to Harpertoun in 1753, Dawson had met both Robert Bakewell and Arthur Young ‘his contemporaries in age and outlook’ (Burnet: 1), and he had observed Jethro Tull's experiments with drilling and turnip husbandry. Dawson is described as having spent his years in England

> labouring with his own hands under respectable farmers, to whose care he had been committed in consequence of recommendations obtained from Scotland to persons of rank, under whom their farms were held (Forsyth 1841 II:74).

A strong sense emerges of Dawson’s robust character and the complex of social obligations within which he worked. Certainly, when Dawson took over his father's lease of Harpertoun at £83.13.4d. per annum, he was ready to put theory and training into practice on his own account.

Like many tenant farmers of his time, Dawson faced daunting problems on Harpertoun. The impoverished and waterlogged soil was beset by perennial weeds. There was no reliable winter feed for cattle. Farm workers were ill-educated, fatalistic and resistant to change. It was difficult to raise the credit necessary to implement innovation. In the end the soil of Harpertoun proved too thin for turnips, but Dawson enclosed the whole farm, drained the soil and concentrated on

improving it in other ways. After a few years he had developed the farm to the extent that, for the remaining seven years of its lease, it could be let at £331.6.8d. per annum.[1]

In 1759, Dawson took a lease of Frogden, about eight miles south east of Harpertoun in the parish of Linton, across the county border in Roxburghshire, from Wauchope of Niddrie, who was also the landlord of the Pringles on the immediately neighbouring farm of Blaik Law, two miles to the north. Frogden was run down: unenclosed, undrained, without modern tillage. With the support of the landowner, Dawson enclosed the whole farm. In the absence of stones, he used broom to build faggot drains, which proved to have a life of over thirty years. At his own expense, he limed the farm and then cropped it on a four-year rotation. When the soil seemed to be exhausted, Dawson left it to pasture for several years, sown with clover, and folded sheep on the pasture. Heavy crops followed.

Turnip cultivation required skilled ploughing. Dawson had become a master ploughman in England and set about teaching his Scottish farm labourers himself. His best pupil, James MacDougall, went on to train many others, until Frogden-trained ploughmen were in demand north and south of the border. By 1762, Dawson was able to begin turnip drilling on a large scale, an innovation which soon proved its worth. By 1778, when Andrew Wight, author of *The Present State of Husbandry in Scotland* (1778-1784), visited Frogden, he found the land clear of weeds, extensive drill husbandry of turnips under way, and convenient stalls, stables and sheds of the tenant's own design in place (II: 355-358). Farm implements had been invented or modified by Dawson's ingenuity, labourers were well housed, well fed and well paid. New crops, such as red oats, and novel feeds, such as ‘yams’ (coarse potatoes) for horses, had been introduced. The farming was profitable, and credit was readily available.

As his success continued, Dawson leased two more farms, Morebattle Tofts and Grubbets, both of which he improved, and finally bought Graden, an extensive estate adjoining Frogden. Before the turn of the eighteenth century, Dawson had founded a school ‘for the benefit of those in the north-eastern part of the parish’ of Linton (Mackie and Robson: 8), where Thomas Pringle may have been a pupil. The school lay midway between Blaik Law and Graden. Dawson was a member of the Morebattle library, and, more than likely, of the Union Agricultural Society of Kelso. In 1784 he was a subscriber (for two copies) of Captain John Marjoribanks’ *Trifles in Verse*, published in Kelso.

As was the case with Thomas Pringle, class was a powerful determinant of William Dawson's career. A tenant farmer like Dawson held his land, by the payment of ‘ferm’, of a subject rather than of the crown; until he was able to buy, to *own* Graden, Dawson would not have had the right to cast a vote for the knight of the shire. He thus suffered the political exclusion of his neighbour tenant farmers like the Pringles; yet Dawson’s advanced practice of agriculture and

[1] Wight’s *Present State of Husbandry* has Dawson making ‘repeated journeys to England’ after taking over Harpertoun (Wight II 1778: 341).

husbandry isolated him from them and aligned him with the landowning ‘gentleman farmers’ of his time.

Dawson’s achievement was generally acknowledged in his own lifetime, in both the popular imagination, and by word of mouth among at least the Borders farming community, and also in the prestigious national and county surveys of agriculture of the late 18th century (Douglas, Ure, Wight). Andrew Wight’s 1778 summary is characteristic:

> His [Dawson’s] reputation is high, and he is imitated by every farmer of activity, gentleman or tenant. Not a farm in the neighbourhood is to be seen about him, but what wears the face of improvement (Wight: II 1778, 34-342).

David Ure, in 1794, seemed more concerned with the gentlemen of Roxburgh, than the tenants, and mentions Dawson only briefly for his introduction of turnip-drilling into the county (34). Robert Douglas, in his national account of 1798, acknowledges the many aspects of Dawson’s achievement: his improvement of such implements as the harrow (p.51), the introduction of red oats (85), turnip-drilling (84-5, fn.), drains lined with broom in the absence of sufficient stone (131), and the use of marl and lime as manure (135).

Dawson is sometimes identified as a ‘farmer’ to distinguish him from gentlemen, a distinction which might parallel that between land-owner and tenant. The social mobility that generates the relationship emerges from the two definitions of 'gentleman-farmer' in the *OED*: both 'a country gentleman engaged in farming, usually on his own estate' - Lord Kames, for example - and 'a farmer who holds a better social position than the generality of his class' - Dawson. A paradox, perhaps, as Lord Kames, who is named here as one of Dawson’s predecessors, seems to have anticipated when he published *The Gentleman Farmer: an Attempt to Improve Agriculture by Subjecting it to the Test of Rational Principles* in 1776. Whereas 'In former times, hunting was the only business of a gentleman…How delightful the change', Kames wrote (xix) 'from the hunter to the farmer'. While the social hierarchy seems to have been in flux, it is interesting that in 1798, in his *General View of the agriculture in the counties of Roxburgh and Selkirk*, Robert Douglas reported:

> It may not be improper to mention that since the account of Roxburghshie went to press, some alteration has taken place in the state of property there, by which a larger share of it now belongs to peers’ (376) .

Dawson's anomalous social (and historical) position is well illustrated by Robert Forsyth, whose *The Beauties of Scotland* (1805) offers the most eloquent, just and sympathetic account of Dawson’s achievement. Dawson was not the first Scot, but the first Scot of his class, to introduce certain agricultural improvements.

> He was the first Scottish farmer who introduced the cultivation of turnip in the open field. Previous to this date, Cockburn of Ormiston…had introduced them in East Lothian; and about the same period, they were tried by Lord Kaimes in Berwickshire: but practical farmers paid little attention to the enterprises of these or other gentlemen, who attempted to introduce novelties into agriculture. It was impossible for them to calculate correctly the expence attending such pretended improvements, or the profit derived from them. The farmers knew that, though a rich man might throw away some money in forming a garden, adorning his pleasure-ground, or introducing a new crop into some of his fields, he could suffer little by the expence, though the adventure should prove totally unprofitable; but they wisely considered themselves in a very different situation. They had rents to pay, and families to support, by the produce of their industry; and they would have accounted themselves guilty of unpardonable rashness, if they had deserted the plan by which they knew these objects could be accomplished, for the purpose of imitating wealthy men in their costly experiments and projects. But when Mr. Dawson, on the lands of which he became tenant, and for which he paid what was accounted a full rent, began to engage in this new career, the matter was considered in a different light. He was at first regarded as a rash young man who had imported a set of foreign notions, which in all probability would speedily bring him to ruin, and no practical farmer hesitated to predict this termination to his enterprises. At the same time it was evident, that if he should succeed in his operations, his neighbours must speedily change their sentiments. Thus, upon the success or failure of this gentleman in his projects as a farmer did the fate, for many years to come, of the agriculture of Scotland depend (74-5).

In this last sentence Dawson is both ‘gentleman’ and ‘farmer, but generally he is a ‘Scottish farmer’, one of the ‘practical farmers’, payers of rent, as against the ‘wealthy proprietors of land’ (76). Lacking the protection and creditworthiness of ownership -- of property – most of Dawson’s fellow-tenant farmers could hardly afford to risk radical change. They were themselves in a sense bound to a labour-intensive and family-based system. Perhaps the Pringles were among the neighbouring tenant farmers who responded cautiously to the innovations of ‘Dawson, the Improver’, reluctant to follow him in ‘imitating wealthy men in their costly experiments and projects’. The social barriers between farmers and hinds seem to have been as impermeable as those between ‘practical farmers’ and ‘men of fortune’. Dawson was also an expert and innovative ploughman and sought to pass on his expertise . In Forsyth’s account, Dawson finds

> that emulation only exists among equals; and that, as practical farmers disregarded the fine crops of turnips, and even of grain, raised by wealthy proprietors of land, so ordinary ploughmen did not feel themselves disgraced by their inferiority to a young farmer who had received a literary and afterwards an English education (76).

Only when they see that Dawson is becoming 'a rich man' (77) do his neighbours seek to emulate him. Only when he has trained, after two years, one 'expert ploughman' are other 'servants' and 'workmen' ready to learn.[2]

When he was nearly seventy, and while Thomas Pringle was still attending the 'Latin' school in Kelso, William Dawson retired to settle in Edinburgh. His elder son took over Morebattle Tofts and his younger son took over Frogden.[3] *The Edinburgh and Leith Post Office Directory* first lists 'William Dawson, Esq.' in 1804 (covering the period July 1804 to July 1805), and as resident at '19 Catherine Street, head of Leith Walk', a good enough address in an area of the city developed in the late 1770s. The *Directory* of 1805 drops William Dawson's 'Esq.' but finds him at the same address. After two years at No. 15, Catherine Street, Dawson moved to 2, Heriot Row East for a year, then to 2, Heriot Row West, before settling in about 1811 at 21 Heriot Row, where he lived until his death in 1815. (Pringle never enjoyed so good an address in Edinburgh.) Although he had retired from 'practical' farming, William Dawson clearly continued his interest in agricultural advancement and liberal activism. In 1810 he subscribed £5.0.0 to the fund for Andrew Meikle 'who invented and brought to perfection, that valuable and important Implement to Husbandmen, -- the Thrashing-Machine'. Dawson had been the first to propose the fund, some years before, 'but thrashing-machines not being then generally introduced, it was deemed proper to delay carrying it into execution till a more convenient season' (Anon. 1810: 465).

In retirement Dawson published, in the form of a letter to the editor of *The Farmer's Magazine*, what seems to be his only account of his own agricultural experimentation. 'Of the difference in the effect of dung upon different soils' details Dawson's transformation of both Harpertoun and Grubbitts into rich pastureland. The style seems characteristically self-effacing, as

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[2] Forsyth's tribute to Dawson was plagiarised through the nineteenth century (Anon., 1835, 1836, 1840, and Percy 1823). The *Chambers* account is particularly distasteful in its condescension to Dawson's fellow-farmers and to the workers and servants.

[3] Dawson and his wife Elizabeth were also the parents of six daughters, one of whom, Janet (1767-1828) was married to the Rev. David Brown of Crailing, the author of 'A Tour in Scotland in 1802'. Another daughter, Euphemia (1772-1828), was the wife of the Rev. William MacRitchie, of Cluny, author of 'From Perth to Carlisle in 1795', which gives a glimpse of Dawson: 'Drank tea with Mrs Douglas (sister of Mr Dawson of Graden). She introduced us to her niece Mrs. Jeffrey [Agnes, née Dawson (1762-1832)] and her husband, from Ross-shire, who are in their way to see her father and friends, with whom I passed some happy days last summer' (MacRitchie: 111).

when Dawson writes that 'accidental circumstances' (Dawson 1812: 69) had directed his attention to the effects of lime as manure on different soils, but the writer's patience, precision and courage emerge nonetheless.

Perhaps more interesting and important today are two works of political economy which occupied Dawson in his last decade. In 1805 he published *Thoughts on Public Trusts*, an extended argument for constitutional constraints on the trust reposed in rulers. Dawson's 'Introduction' quotes Hume on the contrast between an 'absolute' and a 'republican and free' government, but argues that many absurdities have been committed in the name of republican governments, only the Roman Republic having maintained 'for above 600 years...with any degree of steadiness...a continued succession of rulers, of talents and public spirit' (vii).

The tract goes on to develop this contrast between 'the integrity and patriotism of the rulers in antient Rome, and the rapacity of the rulers in modern France' (x), Dawson's idealisation of the Roman Republic finds the key to its success in the fact that all public offices were elective and in such constraints against oligarchy as the 'Agrarian Law of Licinius' (45), which 'took from the patricians their usurped rights' and 'prohibited any Roman from possessing above 500 acres' (46). Dawson defends this measure against an anticipated charge of 'levelling' (47) in a way that assumes that society is always and everywhere stratified. The ruin of the Roman constitution came after the murder of the Gracchi, who had tried to renew and enforce the Agrarian Law, with the descent into despotism consequent on the 'practice of determining laws and elections by force' (64).

Dawson gives his understanding of the lesson of the history of France since the revolution in various ways:

> absolute power, even in the hands of plain men, even though formerly patriots, produces as fatal consequences as when it is in the hands of a king or a set of nobles (78).

The corruption of absolute power is exacerbated by the conditions of war, and 'Absolute power is not the less pernicious, that it emanates from the Society' (114: title of Chapter IV). Dawson's conclusion is that 'Equality of rights [is] as advantageous to the highest ranks as to the lowest' (120: title of Chapter VII). Not Agrarian Laws but 'despots...are...from pride, and for their own security, the most determined and effectual levellers' (146). Dawson thus seems concerned to maintain a balance between equality of opportunity and due recognition of individual merit and talent.

Dawson's second structural contrast, designed to illustrate the proper reposal of trust in public officers, is drawn between 'The Constitution of the American States' and 'the Constitution of the American Bank' (147). The latter is like the constitution of the Roman Republic in that the directors are able to exercise 'such powers only as...judged necessary for executing the business of the company' (153); their powers are limited to management, but 'the legislative power, and

the disposal of office remain with the proprietors' (154). Dawson's business orientation has a distinctly 'new conservative' ring.

But the concluding chapter of *Thoughts on Public Trusts* marks it as very much of its time, in a tradition of utopias of the British Enlightenment, a tradition whose terms had been fundamentally altered by the French revolution (Claeys: xxvi). Dawson's utopia is offered as 'A Sketch of a Constitution for an Extensive, Populous Country upon the Roman model' (157: title of Chapter IX). Dawson's 'ideal' constitution (158) imagines a high degree of devolution of power to provinces (+/- 1,500,000 souls), in which few inhabitants live more than 40 miles (1 day's journey) from the 'provincial meeting-place'. 40 is both the voting and the office-holding age. The elective process moves pyramidally from wards (each of 4,000 persons, hence about 300 voters). Dawson argues that his constitution 'proceeds, like that of Rome, upon the common principle of business; appointing no agents but as they become necessary, giving no unnecessary power to those that are appointed, and preserving a full control over them' (184-5). But one can sense Dawson's optimistic revision of the society of the late eighteenth-century Scottish Borders in his claim that

> men who are selected by their neighbours, as the properest persons for judging and determining their differences, are much more likely to be qualified for that trust, and also for electing senators and other great officers, than men who are selected by certain measures of property (189/90).

And 'Dawson the Improver', perhaps remembering his suspicious neighbour tenant farmers, can be heard in such a passage as this:

> How many thousand useful bridges might be built, pieces of roads made, land inclosed, and commons divided, if the people of the provinces and districts, who only are concerned, had legislative power, but which cannot be done when it costs a large sum to procure the authority of the national legislature in each case (200).

In the last year of his life William Dawson published another tract, *An Inquiry into the Causes of the General Poverty and Dependence of Mankind; including a Full Investigation of the Corn Laws*. This seems at first to be an answer to Adam Smith's *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, and harks back to the stadial model of universal history which was a recurring motif of the Scottish Enlightenment, an idea which helped shape Pringle's understanding of his South African experience. Dawson begins with a Chapter 'Of the causes of the equality of men as to rank in nations of hunters; and of the dependent situation to which the majority of the people are reduced in the shepherd state' (1). While 'common sense' suggests, despite 'the natural aversion of man to labour', that 'the shepherd state' would have been 'the original state of societies in all...countries' such as North America, there seem to have been no domestic animals there at the time of first European settlement. Yet individuals are more

independent and self-reliant in ‘nations of hunters and fishers’ (3); hence the paradox that the order which offers ‘the reliability of sheep and cows’ also requires ‘masters and servants’ and hence ‘fawning...lower classes’ and ‘high ranks...more assuming and insolent to the low’(4).

In Section I of Chapter Two Dawson deals with ‘the effects of the appropriation of land’, arguing that increase of population and the concentration of private property in land in the hands of a few individuals must force farmers to ‘give a greater part of the produce for liberty to occupy land’ and ‘labourers a greater part of their time for food’ (11). Section Two recalls Smith's critique of the law of primogeniture: in Dawson's words, it has ‘a powerful tendency to lessen the numbers of mankind’ and ‘to make them slaves’ (11). This is surely Dawson the tenant farmer speaking, observing the effects of the Napoleonic wars which had enriched both farmers and landlords.

> In these circumstances, when there is no prospect of relief from emigration, men will submit to any inconvenience or harshness of treatment; they will even sell themselves and children for slaves, rather than be banished from their native place, and run the risk of perishing for want of food and clothes, and a house to shelter them (12).

Pringle was one who did seek ‘relief from emigration’. Perhaps Dawson is thinking of the ‘bondager’ system (which Pringle must also have remembered in slave-owning South Africa), and that there was a negative side to the general progress of the age of improvement: ‘A hired hind was much less 'his own man' than his father had been. The unmarried worker often lived in conditions little better than the hovels of two hundred years before’ (Mackie and Robson: 11). Dawson argues that the law of primogeniture was a major factor in the tendency ‘to reduce all...to an abject dependence and wretchedness, except the owners of land...’ (18).

Dawson's two tracts, then, are very much documents of their time: in their frustration at the corruption and poverty persisting in apparently sophisticated and productive societies, and in their residual Enlightenment utopian vision. But it is not as a political economist that Dawson is remembered, though he deserves to be. The heritage industry of the Borders (e.g Forsyth) and academic histories of farming (e.g. Ernlé) remember him as an ‘improver’. One history of Kelso acknowledges that ‘As an author, Mr Dawson was original and ingenious. His style, however is rude and unpolished’ (Haig: 313). In 1845, Professor J.R. M'Culloch published *The Literature of Political Economy: a Classified Catalogue*, which does not mention Dawson or either of his tracts, but in 1837 M'Culloch had found space for a mention of Dawson the improver in his two-volume *A Statistical Account of the British Empire*, an early Victorian and imperial version of the enlightenment ‘Statistical Accounts’ of Scotland. M'Culloch, then, recognised Dawson as a practical improver, but not as a thinker, a contributor to political economy. Marx was to dismiss the ‘pretentious cretinism’ (416) and the ‘miserable prattle of Sycophant MacCulloch’ (679).

The anonymous 'Memoir of the late William Dawson, Esq., of Graden', which appeared in *The Farmer's Magazine* of Monday 8th May 1815, rises to a flourish which aligns Dawson with other heroes of the Borders:

> …the same remarkable district , the scene of so many bloody conflicts, -- which trained to war and tumult the turbulent heroes of Border story – the Douglases, and Homes and Scotts, -- can boast, in our own times, a host of names more beneficently illustrious. The houses of Home and Elliott have produced Lord Kames, Lord Heathfield, and Lord Minto. Of humbler origin, Leyden and Park, with all the indefatigable intrepidity of their ancestors, have persevered, and (unhappily for the world) have perished in the prosecution of far nobler enterprises, -- and the parish of Ednam, which gave birth to the poet of the Seasons, also produced the Father of Scottish Husbandry – William Dawson… (169).

In a strangely ironic turn, William Dawson and Thomas Pringle are brought together in what follows to conclude the 'Memoir': 12 octosyllabic couplets evoking the beauty, the history and the productivity of the Scottish Borders. These lines, with some amendments, would form part of the anonymous 'Epistle to Mr. R.S.***' which James Hogg was to include in his collection of parodies, *The Poetic Mirror, or, The Living Bards of Britain*, when it was first published in London and Edinburgh the next year. When Dawson's 'Memoir' appeared, the editor of *The Farmer's Magazine* was James Cleghorn (also from a Borders farming family). The author of the 'Epistle…' was Thomas Pringle and when the poet himself first published the poem under the title *The Autumnal Excursion, or, Scenes in Teviotdale* and under his own name in 1819, he dated it 1811. In 1817 Pringle and Cleghorn were joint editors of the first issue of *Blackwood's Magazine (*Vigne 2012: 31).

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In Dialogue with the Agallamh*: Essays in Honour of Seán Ó Coileáin*. Aidan Doyle and Kevin Murray, eds. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2014. 261+xiii pp. ISBN 978-1-84682-385-5

Most of the essays in this *Festschrift* originated at a 2012 conference organised by colleagues of Seán Ó Coileáin, longtime professor of Modern Irish at University College Cork, in honour of his significant contribution to Irish scholarship and to the life of that university. The theme reflects Professor Ó Coileáin's longstanding interest in *Acallam na Senórach,* 'The Colloquy of the Ancients', a late medieval text from which much of our knowledge of Fionn Mac Cumhaill and his warrior-band derives, and which provides essential background to the study of those fenian tales and ballads that survived into the twentieth century. Indeed, two of Professor Ó Coileáin's own articles, long regarded as seminal contributions to the study of *fianaigheacht,* are reprinted in this volume.

An important point of reference for subsequent writers is Professor Ó Coileáin's 1993 article, 'Place and placename in *fianaigheacht*', reproduced here as the first essay in the collection.[1] In it he persuasively argues that the names of places mentioned in the *Acallam* be regarded as integral to the narrative – that is, that the words they contain be considered as part of the narrative setting, rather than as indicators of actual places. As he puts it, 'in the dissolving world of *fianaigheacht,* names of places and persons are reabsorbed by the poetics that created them and from which they had never really escaped to begin with' (13). Place-names in these stories are 'not so much referential as evocative' and their locations are 'everywhere and nowhere' (15-16). Further, he suggests that the evocations go beyond their manifest descriptive content to remind listeners of the wider universe of other stories and lore – 'an implied narrative that remains to some degree beyond the text compelling one to draw from other sources for its completion' (17). He concludes:

> '[T]he result is a random series of what we may call "out-tales" in whose creation we imaginatively participate, following out, as we must, the textual allusion which can sometimes amount to what reads as a brief summary supplied by way of etiological explanation. These "out-tales" function as loosely attached satellites of the larger narrative, itself the aggregate of a fixed series of self-sufficient in-tales' (17).

In the second essay, historian Anne Connon takes a more literal approach to the *Acallam*'s place- and personal-name evidence, using a number of such references to cast light upon the composition and authorship of the text itself. Building upon the work of Ann Dooley,[2] Connon suggests that references to various journeys in Connacht contained in the *Acallam* may indicate that the text originated at the Augustinian monastery of Roscommon. She supports her argument with onomastic and genealogical evidence, citing the oft-recurring references to known Connacht place-names and to personal names associated with certain families mentioned in the *Acallam* narrative, and tracing their likely derivation from personal names found in actual families known to have dominated the Roscommon area at the time of the *Acallam*'s composition. Challenging the commonly-held view that the work dates from around the turn of the twelfth century, Connon suggests that the *Acallam* was composed in Roscommon around the year 1224, and that its author was either Máel Petair Úa Cormaccáin, head of the monastic school at Roscommon who died in 1234, or (more likely, in Connon's view) Tipraite Úa Brain, abbot of Roscommon, who died in 1232. Both had strong family ties to Roscommon and to Clann Murchada, whose name and patronymics are frequently attached to characters appearing in the *Acallam* itself.

[1] Originally published in *Studia Hibernica* 27 (1993): 45-60.
[2] 'The date and purpose of *Acallam na senórach*'. *Éigse* 34 (2004): 97-126..

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In her own essay, Ann Dooley contributes to the ongoing discussion of how the *Acallam* should be seen in relation to medieval European literary romance. Her argument focuses upon what she calls 'the area of commonly-shared imagination...the complex interaction between...personally-experienced reality...and cultural memory' (61). She points out that, while much of the vitality inherent in medieval romance derives from the 'matter of Celtia', works like those of Chrétien de Troyes have been 'shaped and rendered decorous' by their ultimate dependence upon pre-existing literary sources designed for a specific courtly audience (62). By contrast, the author of the *Acallam* – surely more familiar than most with 'Celtia' itself – acknowledges no such reliance on literary sources, but has steered his own path, integrating elements of the 'real' (*i.e.* the Patrician 'present' of the frame-story, with its dialogue between the Christian incomer and his fenian interlocutors) and the imaginary, of 'this world' and 'the Otherworld', into a multivalent narrative, the audience for which was not limited to those of high social status. He has accomplished this, she argues, by exploiting not just the 'fluidity' of the stories themselves, the fact that the indeterminacy of their geographic and temporal *loci* renders them eminently 'portable', but also the mediating power of memory enhanced by musical performance: '[T]he deeds of the *fían* are recessed in a background of oral performance, with Caílte as the figure of memory, Cas Corach as the contemporary figure of oral performance, and the clerics as the scribal textual recorders' (72). This web of referents has, she says, combined to shape the power of the *Acallam* as a narrative with both presence and resonance, a lively entertainment for a winter's night, as well as a powerful record of Ireland's heroic vision of itself.

In describing the *Acallam* as 'a conversation between worlds', John Carey begins by reminding us how the author confounds expectations not only by playing with anachronism, but by distorting accepted historical accounts, by inventing genealogical records, and even by reworking the accepted narratives of *fianaigecht* attested elsewhere (77). These oddities are, however, insufficient to explain what he calls 'the "strangeness," to use Ann Dooley's term, of a story about the weight and pathos and consequences of time in which time's realities are so flamboyantly made light of' (79). Carey shows how the story's exploration of time-travel contrasts not just the prelapsarian world of the *fénnidi* with the historical world of Patrick and his followers, but also the mortal world of the *fénnidi* – the descendants of Míl – with the immortal, ever-youthful world of the Tuatha Dé Danann, whom the sons of Míl had supposedly (but not quite) displaced: thus, three worlds in all. Having been introduced to certain Otherworld characters, Patrick seemingly takes a benign and (in the case of Cas Corach) even admiring attitude towards individual members of the Tuatha Dé, but ultimately banishes their tribe 'into the slopes of hills and crags' where popular tradition had located them by the time of the *Acallam*'s composition, and where, according to the same belief-system, they continue to reside. Presumably Patrick, whose Christian teaching likewise assumed the existence of a world beyond the mortal realm, could have taken no other view. Was the contrast between the eternal Otherworld of the Tuatha Dé and the promise of eternal life contained in Patrick's Christianity (a potential fourth 'world') meant to be part of the conversation? Carey does not say so, but the question comes to mind.

For Joseph Falaky Nagy, the *Agallam*'s dialogue between the *fénnidi* and Patrick's entourage – a conversation in which strangers explore each other's temporal and cultural realities – suggests an analogue with the challenging relationship between the Phoenicians and the Greeks. According to Herodotus, the Phoenicians were 'the classical world's exponents *par excellence* of enterprise, restless exploration, exploitation and invention', people who were 'never far from resorting to trickery and piracy' in their quest for commercial and economic advantage (92). Observing that the sort of 'commercial' talents attributed to the Phoenicians are also to be found among the members of the *fían*, Nagy cites a number of instances where both Caílte and Fionn are able to discern and exploit opportunity for gain, albeit with the larger purpose of building or restoring social relationships, rather than of undoing them. In describing the *fénnid* not just as a warrior but also as an entrepreneur – a 'commercial hero' – Nagy identifies him as someone 'characterised by resilience, the ability to negotiate…with his enemies and rivals, even to the extent of merging with them, or merging his interests with theirs' (94). The possibility of such merging would have surely resonated with the

immediate audience of the *Acallam*, whose relatively recent experience of Viking and subsequently Anglo-Norman incomers (what Nagy terms their 'evolving present') would have had them nodding their heads as the story – however bewildering in its temporal details – unfolded before them.

In her exploration of the narrative voice in the *Acallam*, Geraldine Parsons examines the role played by the narrator in presenting and elucidating the points-of-view required for comprehension of the *Acallam*'s complex of temporal realities and its mixture of storytelling, onomastic lore, and historically-sanctioned nostalgia. Reflecting the work of earlier scholars – Poppe, Tristram, Ó Cathasaigh and others – Parsons describes the narrator as, on the one hand, a person whose comprehensive command of *dindsenchas* and other oral tradition renders him deeply authoritative, and, on the other, as one who understands that the oral medium is no longer sufficient to preserve the knowledge consigned within it. This dual awareness is reflected in the narrator's presentation of the story. As Parsons puts it, 'in his handling of a complex frame-tale – his demarcation of episodes, including using terms which are used to categorise tales elsewhere, and other explicit acknowledgements of the narrative's structure – the narrator functions in a manner which is reminiscent of contemporary scholarly engagement with written textual culture' (124).

Stiofán Ó Cadhla approaches the *Acallam* from the perspective of ethnology, citing as justification the work's presentation as a 'dialogue, conversation or survey' (129). As he is careful to observe, such an approach to the study of the past is hardly a novel one: the profusion of medieval annals, chronicles of, and histories in manuscripts dating back to the sixth century (and no doubt reflecting earlier practice in the oral realm) provide ample testimony that a question-and-answer methodology was considered essential to the understanding of earlier times, and that the result of such an approach was often recorded as a list: 'The *Acallam* and many of the *laoithe*, although later, have a penchant for lists of things. *Aides mémoire,* fragments of evidence, relics, souvenirs, monuments, symbols and stories are central. Many of the two hundred or so stories appropriate and consecrate the artefacts and monuments, mounds and cairns of the ancestors. *Fian*-warriors are like "Tomb Raider" archaeologists, searching for the monuments or graves of the heroes' (130). In an appendix, Ó Cadhla reconstructs the ethnological methodology as it might have applied to the *Acallam* by listing the questions asked in the course of the narrative, and identifying the questioners. In so doing he not only reminds readers of Patrick's professional expertise as a catechist, but elicits comparison with the methodology advocated by such works as Seán Ó Súilleabháin's *Handbook of Irish Folklore.* In its timing, its method and its content, Ó Cadhla argues, the *Acallam* is 'an archaic survey, a vernacular exegesis of Christian and non-Christian in which valuable knowledge is abstracted, generalised, streamlined, recontextualised and integrated into the personal memories of Caílte and Oisín' (138).

Drawing upon paleographic as well as stylistic evidence, Pádraig Ó Macháin accounts for the peculiar two-fold occurrence of the *Agallamh Bheag* (*AB*) in the fifteenth-century Cork manuscript, the Book of Lismore (*LLM*). In a quire largely devoted to kings, kingship, pre-history, and the early history of the Gael in Ireland, the beginning of *AB* is included, only to be broken off after fifty-two lines. Ó Macháin explores why the principal scribes of *LLM* – the unnamed principal scribe of the manuscript as a whole, and the scribe of *AB,* Aonghus Ó Callanáin – at first appear to have decided that *AB* should be grouped with the king stories, before changing their minds and repositioning the tale – including the section already given – later in the manuscript as a *réamhscéal* to the *Acallam* itself, which follows immediately after and fills the remainder of the manuscript. Written in Irish, Ó Macháin's article is a fascinating detective study, revealing the scribes' understanding not just of the tales that they were committing to vellum and their significance for the readers they had in mind, but also of the evolving notion of an Irish literary catalogue, and of the part played by various historical, thematic and stylistic considerations in its development.

The *Agallamh Bheag* also functions, among older elements, as a crucial source for the much longer Reeves *Agallamh* (RIA 24 P 5), a late 17th-century manuscript surveyed here by Joseph J. Flahive. Modern scholarship agrees that the Reeves text was probably composed in the 14th or 15th century, while earlier attestation and/or linguistic criteria confirm the prior history of much of the

verse embedded within it (169). In addition, the manuscript features 'long narrative lays of a sort not found in the earlier *Acallam*. Many of these contain lore, lists, and learning, which form a narrative that reduplicates in both prose and verse with linguistic concord of many phrases found in both' (168). Flahive concludes that Reeves is 'a prosimetrum *Agallamh* of a wholly different type from the earlier *Acallam*: a prose romance, punctuated by the texts whence the material was mined. The new text is a polished and fashionably ornamented tale with source-poems included as a scholarly apparatus, rather than the original programme of introduction and recitation in which the verse speaks for itself. … [T]he prose has become a full rewrite in the literary form of a later age' (183). Containing a wealth of detail, this article provides a welcome guide to the complexities of the text, especially so in light of the recent reissue of Nessa Ní Shéaghdha's semi-diplomatic edition of the Reeves *Agallamh,* long out of print, by the Irish Texts Society.

Writing in Irish, Síle Ní Mhurchú assesses the manuscript tradition of *An tAgallamh Nua*, the late version of the *Acallam*, attested in manscripts from the late seventeenth to the late nineteenth centuries. The four earliest of these are for the most part the source of the later versions:

- Trinity College H.5.4, compiled by Eoghan Ó Caoimh (1699-1702).
- National Library of Ireland G114, compiled by Uilliam Mac Cairteáin (1700-03).
- RIA 23 C 30, compiled by Aindrias Mac Cruitin (c. 1733).
- University College Cork 107, compiled by Seán Cúndún (1738-39).

The author traces the genealogical relationships between these manuscripts and earlier versions of the *Acallam*, as well as the descent from them of later ones in the *Agallamh Nua* tradition. She observes that the popularity of this text may well reflect its thematic emphasis upon the importance of heritage, continuity and the preservation of culture at a time in Ireland when widespread political and social upheaval threatened the destruction of those very values (217). The article provides a useful guide to understanding the evolution of this important text.

Lastly, Seán Ó Coileáin's second article in this volume returns to the theme touched on in his earlier essay: the function and interpretation of place-names in *fianaigheacht*.[3] Here the launch-point for his argument is James Carney's discussion of *Géisid cúan*, a much-edited and anthologised poem from the *Acallam* that, according to its traditionally-accepted prose context, represents the lament of a wife for her drowned husband.[4] Challenging Carney's disestablishment of the link between the poem and this prose context (especially as Carney is unable to come up with an historically-validated alternative), Ó Coileáin reiterates his argument that, in attempting to locate place-names mentioned in the *Acallam* on a physical map of Ireland, scholars and editors are on a hiding to nothing, because 'place has become text' (224). The 'transparency' of such names – the fact that they create a mental image, that they have meaning in and of themselves – strongly indicates that they are likely to have been invented by the author for the purpose of intensifying the meaning of the story he is telling. While elements given in the text as place-names must at least resemble place-names – 'there must be the appearance of recognition to counterbalance the elusiveness of place' (225) – there can be no doubt that 'language takes priority over location; the catalogue of names is essentially mesmeric rather than directional' (226). In similar vein, Ó Coileáin rejects Carney's argument that a reference to a cross being raised at the head of Cael's grave reduces the likelihood of the poem having originated in the context of the *Acallam*, where the prose context would locate it in the pre-Christian past. Ó Coileáin asserts that, in a time-warping text such as the *Acallam*, anachronism was inevitable. But did it matter? Ó Coileáin believes that 'for both language and literature the rule must be that something is not a problem unless it is felt to be a problem, and for the author of the *Acallam* and his audience…this clearly was not' (227). For Ó Coileáin, the 'literal' interpretation of elements in the

[3] Originally published in Carey *et al.* (eds), *Cin Chille Cúile: texts, saints and places. Essays in honour of Pádraig Ó Riain* (Aberystwyth, 2004): 234-48.

[4] 'Two poems from Acallam na senórach' in J. Carney and D. Greene (eds), *Celtic Studies* (1968): 22-32.

Acallam must be tempered by the understanding that the text is, first and foremost, a work of literature in which authorial license is both permissible and expected.

If the inclusion of two articles by Professor Ó Coileáin himself have provided a thoroughly suitable frame for this volume, the breadth and diversity of viewpoints collected within it amount to a 'colloquy' that reflects the extraordinary richness of the Acallam itself, and of its continuing fascination for scholars. For all of their efforts, Professor Ó Coileáin, the editors, and the contributors to this volume deserve our thanks and congratulations.

V. S. BLANKENHORN

The Irish Folklore Commission 1935-1970: History, Ideology, Methodology. Mícheál Briody. Helsinki: Studia Fennica Folkloristica, 2007. 535 pp. ISBN 78-951-746-947-0. €32.

Mícheál Briody's *The Irish Folk Commission, 1935-1970: History, Ideology, Methodology* is the first comprehensive historical assessment and contemporary critique of the thirty-five-year comet-like trajectory, both in its brevity and impact, of an organisation whose unique mandate was the gathering and, in most cases, the salvaging of Ireland's oral traditions. Founded at a time of tremendous linguistic, cultural, social and political change, the Irish Folklore Commission (1935-1971) was the first national body dedicated solely to the collection and documentation of folklore in Europe. Its undertakings resulted in one of the largest repositories of its kind in the world (the largest in Europe), currently housed as Cnuasach Bhéaloideas Éireann / The National Folklore Collection at University College, Dublin. Briody's publication heralded the first in what has proven to be a distinguished cohort of relevant works presenting, commemorating and delving deeper into the Commission's work and legacy which appeared between 2007 and 2010. These include Director of the National Folklore Collection Ríonach uí Ógáin's attractive annotated edition of the official IFC field dairies made by Séamus Ennis (1919-1982), *Mise an Fear Ceoil: Séamus Ennis—Dialann Taistil 1942-1946* (Cló Iar-Chonnachta, 2007), and her subsequent English translation *Going to the Well for Water: The Séamus Ennis Field Diary 1942-1946* (University College Cork 2009), affording detailed contextual insights concerning one of the Commission's most celebrated fieldworkers; Séamus Ó Cathain's *Formation of a Folklorist* (Comhairle Bhéaloideas Éireann, 2008) detailing five foundational months spent by James Hamilton Delargy (*Séamus Ó Duilearga*, 1899-1980)—then *The Folklore of Ireland Society*'s Librarian and editor of its flagship journal *Béaloideas*—in Scandinavia, Estonia and Germany during 1928, during a determinative decade that preceded his role as the Commission's first and only Director; and finally *Seoda as Cnuasach Bhéaloideas Éireann ~ Treasures of the National Folklore Collection* (Comhairle Béaloideas Éirinn, 2010) a multilingual (Modern Irish, Scottish Gaelic and English) and handsomely illustrated anthology of essays in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Commission's establishment. Briody's work here is also recommended as a definitive subject-specific companion to Diarmuid Ó Giolláin's *Locating Irish Folklore: Tradition, Modernity, Identity* (2000). Ó Giolláin, as Briody notes in his Preface (13), was instrumental in encouraging and inspiring him to undertake the current study.

Briody's ambitiously thorough and extensive presentation of the Commission's history and its various ideologies and methodologies is accomplished through contextualizing the cultural, linguistic, political and social movements that led to the Commission's establishment, its founding and evolving mandate, its dedicated fieldworkers' collecting and resulting collections, and its administration. He aptly concludes with a much needed contemporary critique of the Commission's legacy and calls for its long-term protection at a time when its future seemed uncertain.[5] Ultimately,

[5] On the last point, it is notable to add that in the decade following the appearance of Briody's work the Republic of Ireland officially ratified UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible

Briody provides the reader with an informative, accessible account—and, it should be added, a frequently entertaining front-row seat—concerning not only the incredible achievements of the Commission but also its inner mechanics, by delicately untangling various threads concerning competing objectives, conflicting philosophies, and the unfolding dramas, struggles and uncertainties that resulted (in particular the events detailed in chapter VI, "The Seeds of Discontent"), culminating in the infamous *Cogadh na gCarad* (The War of the Friends).

Briody's engagement with and contextualisation of primary-source materials are sensitively achieved with level-headed fairness and reflexivity, although now that all the protagonists involved are long deceased, this challenging task is an easier one to accomplish with success. The primary sources he engages include both governmental and administrative documents held in the National Archives of Ireland (NAI) pertaining to the IFC's official engagement with its overseers and funders within the Departments of Finance, Education and the *Taoiseach* (official departmental correspondence, sub-committee minutes, administrative reports, etc.). He successfully fleshes out a dynamic and multi-vocal narrative through his careful curation of bureaucratic paper-trails alongside relevant personal correspondence from James Delargy and other IFC staff, most notably Kevin Danaher (Caoimhín Ó Danachair, 1913-2002) and Sean O' Suillivan (Seán Ó Súilleabháin, 1903-1996), along with several of their international colleagues, namely, Maarti Haavio, Kaarle Krohn, Carl Wilhelm von Sydow, Oskar Loorits, and Åke Campbell, Stith Thompson and Richard Dorson. Briody provides the important caveat that he did not have access to the official files of the IFC (with the exception of microfilm copies of official field diaries and notebooks of full-time collectors available elsewhere) nor Delargy's private papers, all held by the Department of Irish Folklore, UCD. He also notes that most of the surviving members of the Commission were at too advanced an age to be interviewed when he began research towards the current work in 2000. In spite of this, Briody felt 'justified in presenting results' (28) due to the inherent overlap between such materials and his ability to draw upon and, indeed, bring both the achievements and struggles of the IFC to vivid life through his own expert intertextual analysis of these select official documents and personal correspondence.

The remainder of Briody's sources include published accounts, official collectors' diaries, personally-designed questionnaires, and most intriguingly his personal experiences as a student in the Department of Irish Folklore at UCD in the 1980s. In retrospection, his time in the Department well-served his approach through what can be considered foundational immersive and observational fieldwork towards contextualising the current work. These experiences provide a valuable reflexive underpinning towards capturing the underexplored folklife of folklorists, themselves rooted in the often-legendary aetiologies and unofficial hagiographies of founding members that emerge and circulate among multiple generations of staff, faculty and students. As Briody recalls of his single meeting with Delargy a year prior to the founding director's death:

> He who had listened to so many stories, had also a story to tell, and I was an eager listener and conscious that I was savouring a moment in time. Some of what he told us that cold wintry afternoon I recall quite vividly; much I do not, alas. Some of these personal memories I have used in this study, some I recollect too poorly to use, and some I reserve for another day. (29).

Of particular interest to readers of *Scottish Studies* are the sections detailing the work of the IFC in the Isle of Man and Gaelic Scotland in section 6 of chapter IV. Relying on the Department of Education files, specifically its IFC subcommittee minutes, Briody details the results of a meeting on the Isle of Man in July of 1947 between *Taoiseach* Éamon de Valera, Basil Megaw and Ned Maddrell. Megaw was then Director of the Manx Museum (and in a few short years was to become the founding Director of the School of Scottish Studies), and the well-known first-language Manx speaker Ned Maddrell was then serving as curator of the open-air Manx Folk Museum in Cregneash. What is not fully detailed by Briody is that their meeting was part of a

Cultural Heritage in 2016 and added the Irish Folklore Commission Collection to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register in 2017.

notable impromptu unofficial itinerary by de Valera to the Southern Hebrides and Man aboard a retrofitted former Royal Navy fisheries vessel renamed *Macha*, remarkably his first visit out of the Republic since the onset of World War II[6], a consideration that advances Briody's later discussions on de Valera's Celtic Vision (307-09). As a result of de Valera's spontaneous visit and his discovery that no systematic recording was then being undertaken to document the few remaining first-language speakers of Manx, he made the ambitious assurance that the IFC would bring its mobile recording unit to Man to carry out such work. Little did de Valera know that in consulting Delargy upon his return to Ireland, he would discover that the IFC was not in possession of such a mobile recording studio and so de Valera ordered its procurement in the form of a new gramophone and retrofitted van. By the time Kevin Danaher arrived in Douglas with the mobile recording studio via cattle boat from Dublin on 22 April 1948[7] to complete the field recordings as a collaboration between the IFC and Manx Museum, de Valera had become leader of the opposition, an anecdote emblematic of the unpredictable fits and starts that advanced so much of the IFC's work.

Such unforeseen and harried advances made by the IFC in Man are fittingly presented by Briody alongside succeeding subsections detailing Delargy's negotiations towards achieving his long-desired expansion of the Commission's collecting mandate into Scotland's *Gàidhealtachd*, installing Calum Maclean as a permanent fieldworker there, and their central roles in paving the way for the founding of the School of Scottish Studies. The crux of Delargy's argument was, quite rightly, that without such an expansion into Gaelic Scotland, the work of the IFC and the contextualisation of Irish oral tradition in Ireland would be left '*gan saothrú*' or 'uncultivated' (300) in Delargy's own words. This was a grand scheme that highlighted Delargy's skill in both delicate diplomacy and, most importantly, dogged perseverance, as evident in the considerable persuasion required in his official communications with various gate-keeping bureaucrats at the Departments of Education and Finance, who nurtured varying degrees of support and interest for the proposal stemming from differing visions of the IFC's mandate (300-04). Ultimately, Delargy was able to skilfully navigate the various hurdles, and received official consent to hire Maclean as 'a part-time cataloguer' of existing Scottish Gaelic recordings held in the IFC's collection (303), especially those compiled after a successful test run in whci Maclean had been sent home by the IFC the previous year to do collecting in Raasay. Yet, in a masterful tactic of bait-and-switch that Delargy had planned all along, he presumptively sent Maclean to the Outer Hebrides to collect permanently in June of 1946 prior to receiving official sanction (304). Thanks to Maclean's own, if reluctant, willingness to undertake the work with a smaller salary and less funding than his Irish colleagues, this arrangement proved a considerable personal investment in advancing fieldwork in Scotland's *Gàidhealtachd* on Maclean's behalf and indeed, as Briody puts it, a 'gamble' (307) on Delargy's that was ultimately, if not improbably, met with success. With the founding of the School of Scottish Studies in 1951, Delargy's efforts in Scotland, as he expressed himself, 'would bear fruit, for the Gaelic population of both countries in addition to that of the cultured world' (quoted. 307).

Through Briody's skilled engagement with his chosen corpus of textual sources, we are afforded much-needed contextualisation regarding the complex web of associations fuelled, ultimately, by both the personal willpower and individual passion that led to such achievements. Similar to the cohort of publications that have appeared in the last decade concerning the work of the IFC, its role in the foundation of the School of Scottish Studies and the work of Calum Maclean have been given increased attention based on relevant letters and papers held within the School of Scottish Studies Archives, Ireland's National Folklore Collection, the National Library of Scotland, National

[6] For further details of de Valera's trip, see the 1948 correspondence from Delargy to Megaw quoted. in *Skeealyn Vannin ~ Stories of Mann: The Complete collection of Manx Language Recordings made by the Irish Folklore Commission in 1948* (Manx National Heritage 2003, p. 6).

[7] See the entertaining excerpt of Danaher's description of the voyage quoted. in *Skeealyn Vannin* (p. 6).

Trust for Scotland's Canna House and other repositories.[8] Briody's work is seminal in that it provides what can be considered the first word in what has already sparked further worthwhile conversations on the role of these individuals and their networks in advancing the study of folklore and ethnology in Ireland and beyond in the twentieth century. As Stiofan Ó Cadhla notes in an earlier appraisal of Briody's work in *The Irish Review*: 'We have had the *Handbook of Irish Folklore* since 1942, but now we have the handbook of the Irish Folklore Commission' (No. 40/41, Winter 2009, p. 201). Perhaps, most importantly, just as Ó Suilleabháin's *Handbook* has aided over four generations of ethnographic fieldworkers, Briody's *Irish Folklore Commission* provides those of us working in the fields of folklore and ethnology with a tried-and-true playbook that will better inform us of how to best navigate our disciplines' uncertain future and advance their careful cultivation in the face of our own twenty-first-century challenges.

TIBER F.M. FALZETT

Reading the Gaelic Landscape – Leughadh Aghaidh na Tìre. John Stewart-Murray. Whittles Publishing, 2014. 240 pp. ISBN 978-18495-100-5.

The author of this work, Dr. John Murray (or John Stewart-Murray or Iain Moireach as he is also known), is a Gaelic speaker and Director of Landscape Architecture at the University of Edinburgh. Murray has previously published relevant work as *Differentiating the Gaelic Landscape of the Perthshire Highlands*,[1] some of which material is included in this book.

The work claims to be 'a comprehensive field guide to the Gaelic landscape'. It is also stated that the 'book is intended to appeal to serious enthusiasts who seek a deeper understanding of what they study and enjoy in the Highlands of Scotland' (p. 3). The names come from a variety of sources: maps, personal research and Gaelic poetry.

Visually the book is stimulating enough, with numerous colour and monochrome photos taken by John Murray on his many trips round the Highlands. Accompanying this are many illustrations and sketches, of which more below. That said, in various places (such as p. 125), the spacing justification is wrong. More seriously – and though not the fault of the author - the binding itself was found wanting, as a number of pages fell out in the course of reading the book.

The introduction sets out the questions (p. 2) which the book explores. These chiefly involve the relationship between a Gaelic place-name and the environment in which it exists. The second to fourth chapters after the introduction ground the reader in the context of the Gaelic Highlands, should he or she need it. The second chapter offers a 'Brief History of Gaelic in Scotland'. The third chapter comprises a background to the history of mapping of the Highlands, and the issues surrounding the Ordnance Survey's (OS) (mis)treatment of Gaelic names.

Chapter four is a brief guide to Gaelic grammar and pronunciation. I understand the author's reluctance to use the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) 'which many find obscure' (p.28), but that of course raises its own problems. For instance, is the pronunciation 'vake' on p. 30 for Gaelic *bheag*, meant to represent a word rhyming with 'bake' or is the -e on the end of the word supposed

[8] See for example Wiseman's 'The people never seem to lose their charm': Calum Iain Maclean in Clonmel,' *Tipperary Historical Journal* (2012): 112–32 and 'Fear Beag a' Chridhe Mhòir: The Life and Legacy of Calum Iain Maclean (1915–1960),' in Kenneth E. Nilsen (ed.), *Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 5: Fifth Scottish Gaelic Research Conference* (Sydney, N.S.: Cape Breton University Press, 2010): 280–98; as well as Ríonach uí Ógáin's 'Irish Links and Perspectives' in Bob Chambers (ed.) *The Carrying Stream Flows On: Celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of the School of Scottish Studies* (Kershader, Lewis: Island Books Trust 2013): 177-98.

[1] Stewart-Murray 2006.

to be pronounced? Of course, anyone with a passing knowledge of Gaelic will know the first pronunciation is intended, but one wonders whether the usage of a simple IPA would not be preferable in the longer term.

The fifth chapter – 'Place-name Classifications – Revealing Layers in the Landscape', is where the book really offers an original contribution to the field of toponymy. It utilises a system based on the practice of Meto Vroom, 'a Dutch academic'. Here, landscape is divided into three layers: the abiotic or non-living bottom (i.e. geological features); the biotic or living layer (i.e. flora and fauna); and the occupation or cultural layer at the top (i.e. human activity). The field of toponymy has long had a problem agreeing on a unified system of semantic categories, so it might be tempting to encourage adoption of this system across the field.

Part two, starting with chapter six, comprises a number of chapters which each cover a different aspect of the environment: Landform and Hydrology; Landcover and Ecology; Land Use; Climate, Season, Sound and Time and The Cultural Landscape. Throughout, evidence is taken from a variety of sources to discuss elements from the Gaelic language and how they fit into the landscape.

Throughout are a series of excellent monochrome diagrammatic illustrations. For example, on p. 43 there is a sketch graph of the different sizes and forms of the main Gaelic elements for hills and mountains. This portrays the differences between elements in a way that only a great number of photos could do. Likewise, the 'Generic diagram summarising coastal toponymic terms' on p. 79 constructively shows a 'platonic form' of the coastal landscape providing a solid 'best example' of each element, as portrayed from above.

At the end of each chapter are tables of linguistic elements discussed, giving nominative, genitive and plural forms, gender, pronunciation, meaning and an example or two. These tables flesh out the topics included in the discussion, containing mainly various semantic categories such as flora, fauna, anatomy, land use and so on. These lists give the elements as they apply to place-names rather than just the general lexicon, which is useful since general Gaelic dictionaries often ignore so-called 'obsolete' meanings which are preserved only in the 'toponymicon'.

These names are partially cross-referenced by an 'Index of Generic Nouns' on p. 221 and an 'Index of Adjectives and Adjectival Nouns' on p. 231. The cross referencing is not complete however, as, for example the element *baile* on p. 160 is not in the index on p. 221. Of course, with any compilation or list, one could query the inclusion of absence of certain terms, and one wonders if map names have taken precedence. For instance, *beum,* 'stream, torrent, gap' (p. 92) is included as it appears five times on maps, but absent from the list is *àban*, 'backwater', which does not appear in Gaelic form on maps despite appearing several times in the Highlands. The element is discussed by Watson and MacLean.[2]

The table on p. 60 (taken from his earlier work: Murray 2006) gives the number, average elevation and average ruggedness for the main Gaelic elements for hills. This approach, using hard data, is to be applauded and quantifies place-name information better than woolly statements used by scholars previously.

Ample use of Gaelic poetry is made throughout, not just as evidence for place-names but also as a way of putting the names in the context of their environment. For instance pp. 108-111 discusses for instance how Sorley MacLean in his poem *Hallaig* employs place-names on Raasay as part of a 'psychogeographic itinerary', suggesting 'a reweaving of the past with the present'.

The bibliography and 'Further Reading' section will be useful for those wishing to take their studies further. In the general text, however, with the exception of longer sections of text – usually poetry – (such as W. J. Watson on p. 89 or Ó Murchú on p. 182) explicit references are absent, so that the sources for any given name cannot be not known. Given that the majority of the names given in the book derive from secondary sources, this is a fairly major drawback if the book is to be treated

[2] Watson 2002: 155, 230; MacLean 2004:56, 62

as a launch board to further studies. Nonetheless grid coordinates are given throughout for the majority of names; this is extremely useful and is a feature lacking in many place-name publications.

Though perhaps a matter of interpretation, some of the Gaelic forms of names might have borne closer scrutiny. For example, "*Baile Chùirn*, 'Township of **a** Cairn'" (p. 110), (although this is the form Sorley MacLean uses), would better be interpreted as reflecting *Baile a' Chùirn*, 'township of **the** cairn'. Likewise, *Cìoch na Maighdean* (p. 191) is better rendered *Cìoch na Maighdinn* or *nam Maighdeann.*

As with name forms, so with translations. On p. 134 is *Loch na h-Innis Fraoich,* although it is also given as *Loch na h-Innse Fraoich* in the title of plate 26 on the same page. This is translated as 'Loch of the Heather Meadow'. This is true, but a better translation would be 'loch of (the place-name known as) Innis Fraoich'. *Innis Fraoich* (as per OS maps) is a place situated by the side of this loch. *Innis Fraoich* itself (better *An Innis Fraoch*) means 'the heather meadow'.

The treatment of the nominative article in noun plus adjective name formations was also found wanting. When the OS mapped Britain, they decided, for reasons of length, to exclude the nominative article in non-simplex names. For example, *Dubh Loch* as seen on the OS map is really *An Dubh Loch* in spoken Gaelic. Throughout the book the author often refers to such names without the article, for example: *Eilean Molach* p. 39 (better *An t-Eilean Molach*); *Àirigh Bheag* and *Àirigh Mhòr* p. 9 (better *An Àirigh Bheag* and *An Àirigh Mhòr*). In other instances, the article is included correctly, such as *An Caolas Cumhang* p. 71, although on the same page is *An Cumhang Lànaigh* 'the pass of Leny' which should not have an article at all. A book focussing so heavily on the Gaelic forms of names should be consistent in this respect.

It should be made clear that this is not seeking to be a book about Scottish place-names in general, or even, it should be said, about Highland place-names. The vast majority of the place-names in this book are names coined in Gaelic and which still exist in Gaelic orthography. Names of Pictish, Norse or Scots origin are largely absent from this book, unless one counts the treatment of names which derive from Norse loan words such as *acarsaid* ('anchorage' from ON *akkar-sæti*) or *geodha* ('rocky inlet' from ON *gjó¸*) on page 80. Accordingly, names from much of the Western Isles, which are largely of Norse origin, are excluded.

On the very first page the author says of OS maps of the Gàidhealtachd that 'on these sheets most place-names are recorded in a reasonably correct and contemporary spelling with a recognisable and fairly consistent grammar. They are easy, therefore, to translate without recourse to complex toponymic or etymological research' (p. 1). Whilst this is indeed true of many of the names, there are indeed some names for which this does not hold, and the non-specialist speaker of Gaelic may not understand this. For instance, Glen Tarken (p. 141) has not been offered as a Gaelic form, and one wonders if this is because the form (*Gleann Tearcan*) is not transparently understandable in modern Gaelic (it likely derives from the Pictish personal name *Talorgán*).[3] Indeed, one has the sense that names containing elements of non-Gaelic origin - whether as place-names or as lexemes - have been deliberately avoided.

Despite the descriptions of Scottish Gaelic pronunciation this is not a book about linguistics. Nor is it a book about history *per se*, except from the point of view of folklore. There are no early forms or discussion of names now extinct but surviving in charters. In this sense the book is largely synchronic in approach. This is primarily a book which combines the disciplines of geography and toponymy within a Scottish Gaelic context. It is this approach that is the book's main strength, but greater use of historic and linguistic analysis would have undoubtedly strengthened its arguments.

This is an ambitious, wide-ranging book, and in places this approach works and in other places one could wish for more detail on a given topic or approach. As ever, this review has spent longer in criticism than in praise, and despite the shortcomings mentioned above, I would still recommend this

[3] Cf Watson 1926: 298.

book for those whose interest in Gaelic place-names has surpassed the level of Nicolaisen's *Scottish Place-names* or Watson's *The Celtic Place-names of Scotland* but may not be able, for whatever reason, to spend the time to familiarise themselves more fully with the more detailed literature on the subject.

(The reviewer saw an early draft of the book).

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JACOB KING

Gaelic Grace Notes. The Musical Expedition of Ole Mørk Sandvik to Ireland and Scotland. Séamas Ó Catháin. Oslo: The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture. Novus Press, 2014. 280 pp. ISBN 978-82-7099-773-2.

Since the first decade of the 20th century Norwegians have made major contributions to several areas of Celtic Studies. These include the work of Sophus Bugge on Celtic-Nordic cultural relations; comprehensive and still useful works on language by Marstrander, Borgstrøm and Oftedal,, and Reidar Th. Christiansen's folklore publications on Gaelic and Norse traditional narrative. Recently an important addition from Norway, this time in the field of Gaelic song, has now been made available by the Irish folklorist Séamas Ó Catháin in a thorough and readable account of the 1927 visit of the Norwegian musicologist Ole Mørk Sandvik (1875-1976) to research song traditions among the Gaels of Ireland and Scotland, and their possible affinities to the folk traditions of Norway. The book is presented as 'marking a new milestone in the ongoing chronicle of cultural relations between Norway and Ireland', and reveals again how active and fruitful these relations have been. Sandvik, when he embarked on his innovative expedition to collect field recordings and printed sources, was at the midpoint of a long life and by no means a novice as a field worker and ethnomusicologist. He had carried out extensive fieldwork in his native country, and had produced a large and varied group of publications. The results of his energetic and focused collecting during the summer of 1927, consisting of 22 surviving wax cylinder recordings (45 items), musical transcriptions, diary materials, reports, radio scripts and photos, are stored in the Sandvik Irish Collection at the Norwegian National

Library. These primary sources for the book are supplemented by relevant correspondence held by the UCD Delargy Centre for Irish Folklore in Dublin.

As indicated in his application for funding to the Norwegian State Research Fund, Sandvik's original research proposal was comparative in nature, with the aim of embarking on 'the investigation of folk music and musical mementos of the British Isles [that] has never been undertaken from a Norwegian perspective'. He drew on evidence from his fellow Norwegian scholars of linguistic and cultural contacts between their country and Ireland, and suggested that a study of the musical and song traditions of the British Isles would lead to 'an understanding of the extent to which materials of importance for Norwegian music existed' where the field researcher would identify 'potentially related phenomena'. As a researcher, Sandvik was well versed in the Nordic side of a question still worthy of research to this day, involving the sort of search for origins by means of comparisons in folklore that has been with us since the beginning. A further approach identified in the application and destined to play a central role in his treatment of the recorded materials was the adherence to 'modern principles' in carrying out the investigation, effectively promoting detailed and accurate representations of materials over the earlier practices of altering them to gain wider popular approval.

One of the sources of advice and support mentioned by Sandvik in his application was his countryman Reidar Th. Christiansen, and it turned out to be a fortunate choice. Christiansen, who in his correspondence revealed a surprisingly wide knowledge of Irish musical traditions for a non-specialist, contacted his long-time Irish friend and colleague James Delargy in Dublin, requesting the latter's help and advice in locating Irish language courses, since Sandvik did not know Irish. Once in Ireland, toward the end of July Sandvik enrolled in the 'summer college' language course in Ballingeary, Co. Cork, where he experienced his first direct exposure to Irish song and became aware of the country's language issues. During this time he began to note down songs, which he then checked against the wax cylinder recordings he had made at the sessions. His introduction to the 'flamboyant' father O' Flynn of Cork led to a more detailed appreciation of technique and delivery, particularly the Gaelic grace notes of the present work's title. His remarks from their various meetings over the summer are of interest: the observation that 'at certain junctures in the melody grace notes are sung around a single consonant, a peculiarity I have not met with elsewhere, not at any rate, so remotely pronounced. The charm with which the melody is thereby bestowed consists of something free and independent, as if the mood is amplified, and the note acquires an augmented inexpressible effect by this lingering on the consonant'. He observed that collectors have underrated such ornamentations' importance, and had failed to represent them accurately in their transcriptions.

Following the introductory weeks in Ballingeary, Sandvik took the opportunity in late August to explore West Cork and Kerry, eventually arriving at the home of the renowned storyteller Seán Ó Conaill, in Cill Rialaig. There he rendezvoused with Delargy, who together with local collectors initiated him into folklore fieldwork among Irish Gaels. It was an experience that made a deep impression, not only in terms of his collecting mission, but equally for the warmth with which assistance and support were extended. Ó Catháin observes that had Sandvik been successful in obtaining additional support from his funders, it would have brought major benefits to Norse–Celtic folklore collaborations. Again with the help of Delargy, Sandvik was able to make the acquaintance of some of the central folklore scholars and singers in Dublin, including Máirín Ní Ghuairim of Cárna, whose description of the *caoine* ('keening') tradition is provided along with a transcription of the words.

Of primary interest to Scottish readers will be the chapter titled 'Caledonia Calling' covering Sandvik's visit to Scotland in late September. His original intention had been to stop in Edinburgh to visit Marjory Kennedy–Fraser, famed for her collections of Hebridean songs, but once in Glasgow his plans changed, and he set out for the Isle of Barra in the Outer Hebrides, a decision that was perhaps more in keeping with his recent experiences in the west of Ireland. There, provided with an introduction from Delargy, he sought out the local schoolteacher Annie Johnstone ('Anna Aonghuis Chaluim'), a remarkable carrier of her island's traditions. Annie, who proved to be an invaluable

source for fieldworkers over the following decades, was a second stroke of good fortune for Sandvik: over a very few days (23-26 September) of intensive recording, together they noted down over 20 songs. Her intelligence, generosity and dedication are apparent from the diary entries, earning Sandvik's enduring respect. He arrived back in Norway via London on 19 October. The account of the project at all stages is generously supplied with photographs, many taken by Sandvik himself.

Following the sections on fieldwork and contacts is a chapter 'A Final Reckoning', with a detailed listing of the results of Sandvik's three-month expedition. Given here are the titles of songs and instrumental tunes, some accompanied by notations; a catalogue of notebooks with their Irish and Scottish contents; and a list of songs, tunes, and one story 'supposedly contained in 27 wax cylinder recordings'. In so far as possible, the items are carefully described, with the Gaelic spelling normalised and the Norwegian translated.

The final chapter consists of follow-up correspondence with Delargy, or further items relating to Sandvik's work, all of which bears evidence of the goodwill generated over that summer. Also provided are excerpts from the final report to his funders, mentioning the materials collected and their importance. Of interest here is a summary of the overall results concerning the original mission to describe cultural and historical links between the traditions of Norway and Gaeldom, in which he singles out the shared musical characteristics he regards as being 'either due to Norseman coming under the influence of Gaelic music, or mean[ing] that they relate to a common musical basis older than the known contacts between the two nations' (131). Further observations were shared through popular articles and radio broadcasts. The appendices contain Norwegian texts and English translations of the original funding application and a later one from 1931; materials concerning the 1927 trip, including the final report; two radio lectures; a newspaper article; and a scholarly article with an engaging discussion of early musical contacts between the two cultural areas.

JOHN SHAW

Gaelic Cape Breton Step-dancing. An Historical and Ethnographic Perspective. John G. Gibson. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017. 464 pp. ISBN 978-0-7735-5059-9.

In traditional dance circles in Scotland, Cape Breton step–dancing, now enthusiastically received by audiences, was virtually unknown before the 1980s, giving rise to doubts as to its Scottish origins. For people in Scotland the underlying issues have not always been easy to contemplate: if Cape Breton's lively Gaelic-based dance did originate in the Highlands (or arguably more widely in Scotland), what had happened to bring about such a thorough and pervasive decline and cultural eradication of that tradition in Scotland from around the time of emigration? By 'the placing of the music and dance/step-dance that persists unselfconsciously today in Gaelic Northeast Nova Scotia, particularly in Cape Breton, into the broad (European) Scotch Gaelic cultural world perspective', John Gibson's detailed and comprehensive investigation into what is still a fraught topic sets out to provide an answer through an examination of the traditions of the *Gàidhealtachds* on both sides of the Atlantic.

A major difficulty for researchers has been the absence of surviving detailed descriptions of popular Gaelic dance in Scotland from 1745 to 1845, notably accurate notations of technique, that would correspond in their specifics to the style and steps employed by Cape Breton step-dancers. However, a very similar set of limitations could be said to apply to any investigation of the Highland origins of Cape Breton traditional singing or fiddle styles, which seem to have generated less scepticism. Thus, it is no surprise that the work has a large historical component, and one where religious divides have exercised a substantial influence on local culture. Gibson's views on this and other matters, often trenchantly expressed, are supported by an impressive amount of research from the two *Gàidhealtachds*, drawing on public records; travellers' accounts; parish and society records;

contemporary published sources; descriptions in Gaelic songs, personal correspondence and the author's own fieldwork. Such diverse sources are carefully and perceptively evaluated with a view to bringing to light the crucial events in the history of Gaelic dance from the time of the Clearances down to the present.

The opening chapter is an instructive account of one of the major historical frameworks: the background importance of issues of religion from the mid-18th to the mid-19th century as they have related to community dance traditions in Scotland. This included campaigns by Protestant clergy to suppress and eliminate Gaelic Catholicism, often through the roles of various organizations in the Highlands such as the SSPCK and the Royal Bounty that were to lay the groundwork for much of the clergy's policies regarding dance in the Gaelic world.

Following this, the book is arranged into two main sections: the first dealing with the emigrant communities in Cape Breton, followed by chapters reviewing and interpreting the evidence of Gaelic dance in the Scottish *Gàidhealtachd.*

The Gaelic settlement of Cape Breton took place primarily during the first half of the 19th century, from which time numerous rural communities, Presbyterian and Catholic, have co-existed over generations. The historical written sources receive detailed treatment, and once again we can see the effects of religion on step-dance in some districts, not least its effect on matters of 'body-contact dancing and liquor'. Never the less, we are left with the general and lasting impression that step-dance was persistent and pervasive - at least until recently - throughout nearly all of the island's Gaelic areas; as a form of cultural expression it was uniformly supported in Catholic communities, with women making an important contribution to its transmission (57).

The Cape Breton section is greatly enhanced by the author's own field research, carried out primarily in Inverness County from the 1970s. The interviews were conducted through English with no recording device used; initial sessions being noted down later; then 'when the teacher-student bond had been formed, I could put paper on the table'. Whatever questions there may be in the 21st century regarding field recording technique, to anyone directly familiar with collecting from Cape Breton oral sources, the results are undeniably accurate and valuable. Use is made of genealogies extending as far back as the first generation of settlers, some drawn from families well known in the Highlands, complemented by orally collected information from Catholic parishes where step-dance is still transmitted, such as Judique, Glendale, Mabou, and the Margarees. The geographical and cultural orientation is toward Inverness County, but accounts from Boisdale (Cape Breton County; mainly a South Uist settlement) from as early as 1907 by a visiting Scottish priest ('never expressed surprise at the sort of setting – step-dancing he saw'), are combined with local accounts of step-dance musicians.

Despite the ostensible issues among the clergy remarked on above, historical research and fieldwork reveal the much less widely appreciated evidence for the strong lines of dance transmission that have existed from the earliest settlements in many Presbyterian areas as well, particularly those settled by Gaels from the Inner Hebrides, where dancing was the norm. They include River Denys and the settlements around Lake Ainslie, where one informant assured the author that 'his family had not learned music and step dancing as some novelty in Cape Breton – instead, it was the music and dance in Presbyterian Mull in the immigration times' (125). The universality of step-dance throughout the whole Gaelic speaking area would suggest that from the time of the first arrivals it was nearly as endemic as the language itself. Observations from the field are supported by written historical sources, Presbyterian and Catholic e.g. the Gaelic newspaper *Mac-Talla*, and the records of the Scottish Catholic Society of Canada.

In contrast to Northeast Nova Scotia, in researching the history of Gaelic dance tradition in Scotland and the possible presence of step-dance, the emphasis by necessity is on written sources rather than fieldwork. Unfortunately, as Gibson points out, such sources are notoriously difficult to draw on as detailed proof, since they are sadly limited with regards to content (which is invariably vague regarding technique), and perspective. To be sure, travellers' accounts from the 1770s to the

1830s record a marked preference for 'reels', travelling steps, a beating or shuffling of the feet to keep exact time, and the lack of arm movements (termed 'graces'), all of which will be familiar to Cape Bretoners. The description of 'Highland dancing' by Col. Thomas Thornton from Dalmally in 1784 is particularly suggestive. Yet the perspective in which accounts are routinely set is the dominant Presbyterian one, often as not emanating from rural clergy, with little recorded of active and enthusiastic Catholic exponents. Such matters of perspective in official and scholarly portrayals of Highland cultural and political history are nothing new, as the introduction to John Lorne Campbell's *Highland Songs of the Forty-Five* written in the 1930s makes clear. Records from the time of emigration (1798 – 1845) indeed reveal an active 'antipathy to dancing' on the part of Presbyterian clergy in some areas,and cover the Outer Isles; Skye; the 'moderate Presbyterian Gaelic parishes' on the western mainland; Strathspey; and north-western Perthshire. Although some accounts from 19th century Argyllshire and Strathspey indicate active participation, and often promotion, of traditional dance by members of the rural middle class, the infrequency of references in written records to a central form of cultural expression is compounded by a remarkable lack of interest in Gaelic dance traditions on the part of the most celebrated fieldworkers in the Highlands during the 19th and early 20th centuries. A notable exception is the 19th century Scottish collector Alexander Carmichael, who from his time in Harris describes the Kintail-born octogenarian Mary MacRae, who 'danced at her leisure … dancing to her own shadow when nothing better was available'.[1] Significantly for Gibson's argument, one of the most evocative dance descriptions to survive from the Highlands is of the same Mary MacRae in a song composed by Rev. Allan MacLean, a native of Arisaig, who was later to serve in a parish in Cape Breton where he is remembered to this day in local tradition. As for dance descriptions in Gaelic song, which are examined in detail and evaluated, many if not most give as much information on the social context of dance as they do on substance and technique. The section on the development of dance in the Highlands in the second half of the 19th century reviews evidence that by the late 1870s, dance in Gaelic Scotland had undergone significant – if not fundamental - changes.

Questions of Gaelic dance in the home country were consigned to the cultural margins for over a century, to be reawakened by the visit - now over 30 years ago - of the Cape Breton step–dancer Mary Janet MacDonald. As the author foresaw at the time, claims that this tradition of dance was an inherited one, arriving from the Highlands, were met with polite incredulity from most observers. The exception was one Farquhar MacNeil, a teacher of traditional dance from Barra, who revealed in a series of informative letters to the author his memories from his youth of forms of dance that corresponded closely with what he witnessed from Cape Breton. MacNeil's testimony and the related evidence reviewed above present a compelling and thoroughly researched case for the origins of Cape Breton dance, and the nature of Gaelic dance in the Highlands, which is difficult to challenge; in their content and range, the sources over more than two centuries lend weight and resonance to Gibson's declared view that the proper focus ('there is no plausible alternative') for studying the history and technique of this popular Gaelic tradition is not the Scottish Highlands, but the island of Cape Breton. This is the most complete and authoritative study of the history of Scottish Gaelic dance known to the reviewer and is destined to take its place beside Gibson's widely recognised earlier books on Highland and Cape Breton piping traditions: *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping: 1745-1945* (1998) and *Old and New World Highland Bagpiping* (2002).

Materials concerning the Royal Bounty, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (1725), and the Napier Commission are contained in the appendices, and maps, genealogies and photos of dancers and musicians are featured in the front matter.

JOHN SHAW

[1] *Carmina Gadelica* 1: 4-5; noted down in 1866.