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Editorial

Despite the obstacles to research in universities imposed by circumstances since 2020, the articles in the present volume provide ample evidence of steady development in the field of Scottish ethnology. Contributions are from younger as well as more mature scholars and are wide-ranging geographically and chronologically. Considerable range and diversity is also evident in the subject matter: international representation of Scottish traditions; their impacts on world literature; vernacular song composition; emigrant traditions; the contribution of sound archives to genre description; and evidence for early cultural Gaelic-Scots contacts in traditional narrative.

From the late eighteenth century, Scotland's cultures from Macpherson's *Ossian* to Lowland ballads and European travellers' accounts have attracted wide international interest. One notable result had been wider representations during the latter half of the nineteenth century at events where 'Scottish arts and industries had already been regularly exhibited at international exhibitions overseas'. Christina Baird, in her study focussing on the Scottish contribution to the Vienna World Exhibition/*Weltausstellung* Wien, 1873, explores the scope, diversity and success of Scottish arts and industries as presented at this and previous exhibitions. Also situated within a wide cultural context is Karen Bek-Pedersen's study of the witches in Shakespeare's *Macbeth,* called 'wayward sisters' and their relation to 'weird' sisters of Scottish tradition.

The Gaelic traditions of Scotland from the perspectives of song, tales and society are prominently featured in the present issue. Ronald Black provides a detailed and informed discussion of the history and development of the fundamental Gaelic song collection *Sàr Obair nam Bàrd Gàidhealach* and the life and background if its compiler John MacKenzie. The songs of a bard featured in MacKenzie's collected work, Rob Donn MacKay from Sutherland, are the focus of a study by Ellen Beard providing a welcome perspective on long-standing questions regarding processes of vernacular Gaelic song composition, with due reference to airs. The value of sound archives in informing song classification is highlighted in Meg Hyland's work on the Gaelic song tradition of female herring gutters, making effective use of archived field recordings, and a new genre of Gaelic song is proposed from the evidence. In the area of traditional narrative, using a comparative approach drawing on written and oral sources amassed over four centuries, Emily Lyle and John Shaw examine the likely origins of a passage in the 16th century work by Gavin Douglas, *The Palice of Honour,* which, when placed within its Scots and Pan-Gaelic storytelling contexts, suggests the early existence of the international tale 'Henny-Penny' in Scotland. Further afield, the focus of Alasdair Roberts' work is on the society and religion of Highland settlers, Catholic and Presbyterian, in eastern Nova Scotia during the most active period of immigration, and the enduring friendship between the Bard MacLean and Fr Colin Grant, crossing traditional sectarian boundaries and 'reflecting a period of shared Gaelic culture when clergy were in short supply'.

In keeping with the editorial policy initiated in its tribute to the late Gaelic ethnologist John MacInnes (vol. 37), *Scottish Studies* continues to encourage the submission of articles in Scottish Gaelic.

Taking Scotland Overseas:
A study of Scottish exhibits and Scottish connections at the international exhibitions beyond British shores, with special reference to the Vienna International Exhibition/*Weltausstellung*, 1873.

CHRISTINA BAIRD

Abstract
The International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art held in Edinburgh in 1886 and the International Exhibition of Science, Art and Industry held in Glasgow in 1888, gave Scotland an opportunity to demonstrate its scope, diversity and success within its own borders. During the preceding decades, Scottish arts and industries had already been regularly exhibited at international exhibitions overseas. This study will focus on the Scottish submission to the Vienna World Exhibition/*Weltausstellung* Wien, 1873. The extent of the Scottish submission will be examined alongside the participation of Scottish individuals, whose achievements were celebrated at home and abroad. The expression of Scottish culture at the Vienna Exhibition will be compared and contrasted with the preceding international exhibitions, including the *Exposition Universelle des produits de l'Agriculture, de l'Industrie et des Beaux-Arts de Paris,* 1855 and *Exposition Universelle*, Paris, 1867, with focus being given to the Fine Art Halls. It is hoped that a picture can be presented of Scottish exhibits and Scottish connections at Vienna in 1873 and the role of Scottish exhibitors in international exhibitions preceding the 1880s. The source material draws on contemporary literature published in and around 1873 housed in the collections of the Austrian National Library, *die Österreichische Nationalbibliothek*, Vienna, and the reports from the newspaper the *Glasgow Herald*.

Introduction
During the decade following the 1873 Vienna International Exhibition[1] /*Weltausstellung* two international exhibitions were hosted in Scotland. Edinburgh held the International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art in 1886, the pavilions being located in The Meadows, and in 1888 Glasgow hosted the International Exhibition of Science, Art and Industry at Kelvingrove Park.[2] The objectives of both, broadly speaking, were to place Edinburgh and Glasgow's industries and arts on an international stage and highlight their achievements. Contemporary publications

[1] The terminology used for International Exhibitions is varied, Universal Exhibitions and World Exhibitions being familiar terms. In this essay the term International has been used throughout.

[2] Limond 2009:185

encapsulate people's attitudes and thoughts on the two exhibitions. *Pen-and-ink notes at the Glasgow Exhibition,* written by Robert Walker (c.1841-1900), the Secretary to the Fine Arts Section in the Glasgow exhibition and Acting Secretary of the Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts (1880-1900), provides some interesting observations about the Scottish international exhibition in Glasgow.[3] Walker notes that the exhibition was poorly attended by contributors from overseas, bemoaning the fact that '...foreign lands have not poured their treasures liberally into its courts...'[4] and gives thought to the various reasons for this, attributing factors such as the lack of awards being given to participants as being partially responsible. He also reasons that the limitations placed on the sale of items were equally discouraging to exhibitors, writing '...the powers that be have set their faces rigorously against the bazaar system...'[5] Walker reinforces the strengths of Scottish industry at the time noting 'Scottish shipbuilding, engineering, chemical works, the manufacture of furniture, calico and printing...'[6] as exemplary. Whilst international contributors were apparently reluctant to come to Scotland, it is relevant that during the decades preceding the international exhibitions in Glasgow and Edinburgh, substantial Scottish contributions were to be found in the major international exhibitions beyond Scottish shores. The Scottish submissions were subsumed within the category of 'British' displays and their full extent is therefore not immediately apparent from reading the catalogues.

Today our interpretation and understanding of the international, universal or world exhibitions is largely drawn from the literature produced preceding, during and directly after the exhibitions; these include personal accounts in response to the displays, guides to the exhibitions and catalogues, as well as numerous newspaper reports. This, frequently subjective, body of material is supported by a vast spectrum of more objective studies frequently written with the benefit of hindsight. In attempting to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Scottish contributions to these international exhibitions, this study examines some of these contemporary sources in order to place the Scottish international exhibitions of 1886 and 1888 within the larger context of the similar displays which preceded them in Europe. Such a study allows us to contextualise the exhibitions hosted in Scotland during 1886 and 1888, and to understand the experiences the Scottish exhibitors were building upon in hosting and participating in international exhibitions. A study of the literature produced in and around the Vienna International Exhibition of 1873, and chiefly concerning the Scottish submissions to the exhibition, makes an interesting theme for discussion and we can trace interpretations and comments surrounding the Scottish displays submitted, founded on the experiences and first-hand observations of the authors. Due to the sheer quantity of literature involved and its accessibility, this study has been confined chiefly to English language sources published at the time of the exhibitions under consideration. The source material for this essay exclusively draws on contemporary sources in the collections of the Austrian National Library, *die*

[3] Walker 1888

[4] Walker 1888:13

[5] Walker 1888:13

[6] Walker 1888:14

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, examining some of the catalogues and related publications from 1873 and comparative catalogues from the years 1855 and 1867 connected to the Paris international exhibitions. These sources provide valuable quantitative information concerning the Scottish submission which can be compared with similar publications associated with earlier international exhibitions. Another source used in this essay are the articles written by the Special Correspondent published in the *Glasgow Herald*. By drawing on this series of contemporary reports something can be understood of how aspects of the Vienna *Weltausstellung* of 1873 were reported to the public and assess something of not only the quantities involved in the Scottish submission, but also its strengths and weaknesses. An investigation of the Scottish submissions to the Industrial Halls, with particular reference to the textile submissions from Glasgow, makes an interesting case study. References can be found reflecting the role and importance of Scottish individuals, whose achievements were celebrated at home and abroad. For the purposes of this essay the achievements of John Scott Russell (1808-1882) and John Forbes Watson (1827-1892) will be discussed. The expression of Scottish culture will be examined through records pertaining to the Fine Art Halls. From these reports comparisons can be made between the exhibition in Vienna 1873 and the preceding international exhibitions in Paris; the Exposition Universelle, 1855 and *Exposition Universelle*, 1867, both of which presented commercial opportunities to British exhibitors.[7]

The legislature of the previous century shaped the character of the British submissions to international exhibitions during the latter half of the nineteenth century. In 1706 the passage of the Treaty of Union had united the kingdoms of Scotland and England into one union, Great Britain. Due to this, the Scottish contributors were entered into the European international exhibitions during the second half of the nineteenth century within the 'British' category. In some instances the terms 'British' and 'English' are used interchangeably and in others the Scottish submission entries are subsumed under the term 'English' entries. We therefore have to make allowance for the differences of nomenclature in the period in which the various sample texts were written. In seeking to isolate the nature of the submissions from Scottish contributors this study seeks to examine something that was never intended to be viewed in isolation.[8]

'These vast collections of artistic and industrial objects are becoming rather a bore...'

The Vienna Universal Exhibition or *Weltausstellung*, 1873 was the fifth in a series of major international exhibitions which followed the 1851 Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, also known as The Crystal Palace Exhibition, in London. The 1851 exhibition was followed by the *Exposition Universelle,* Paris, of 1855, the Great London Exposition, in 1862 and the *Exposition Universelle*, Paris, which welcomed its first visitors in April 1867.

The Vienna *Weltausstellung* was opened by Emperor Franz Josef on the 1st May 1873, the year which marked the 25th anniversary of his coronation. Many newspapers carried descriptions of the opening ceremony:

[7] Kaiser 2005:563–590

[8] The British submission to Vienna in 1873 is discussed in Baird 2016

'To-day at noon, with no maimed rites, but with the disadvantages attendant on bad weather and consequent on everything not being quite in its right place, the greatest Palace of Industry yet known to the world was declared open by Francis Joseph, the first Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary, in the presence of a brilliant company.[9]' The site selected for the exhibition was in a city park, the Prater. The complex of buildings and gardens set up to house the exhibition can be seen in a contemporary illustration, **Figure 1**. This was an extensive exhibition and the large temporary structures which housed the displays were removed at the end of the exhibition, with only a few exceptions. The idea of the exhibition had been broached during a period in which Vienna was enjoying prosperity and great expansion. In hosting the Vienna Exhibition the objectives were to assert Austria-Hungary's position and potential in world trade and human achievement.[10] Vienna's architecture, as is still seen today, bears testimony to the period of growth and construction work that preceded the exhibition[11] in order to project Vienna as an important European city and flourishing centre for trade: '... the older capitals, London and Paris, were to be made to see what a formidable rival they had in the metamorphosed residence of the Hapsburgs'.[12] Initially the Vienna Exhibition did not attract the amount of visitors predicted. A financial crisis, a cholera out-break as well as high prices were said to be keeping the foreign visitors away.

Figure 1. View of the Vienna *Weltausstellung,* 1873

The Vienna Exhibition[13] differed from the previous international exhibitions in both its scale and the categorisation of objects. The exhibition used a classification system of twenty-six categories which was held to be a superior system.[14] The themes were historic as well as contemporary, encompassing the the history of trades, the history of invention and the history of industrial economy. Some considered the exhibition to be an over-ambitious project.[15] The first announcements about the forthcoming exhibition reported in the British papers gave a somewhat unenthusiastic response to the prospect of another international exhibition. One report saying: 'Let us begin by frankly telling our Viennese friends that, in Western Europe, at

[9] *The Morning Post*, 5 May 1873:6

[10] Krasny 2004: 55-56

[11] Kos 2014

[12] Gindriez 1878:28

[13] *Weltausstellung* 1873

[14] *The Art Journal* 10 1873:265

[15] *The Art Journal* 10 1873:265

any rate, Exhibitions are getting to be regarded rather as a nuisance.'[16] After the Vienna Exhibition opened the same journal reported:

> The Universal Exhibition now being held there [Vienna] will not perhaps exercise a very powerful attraction upon Englishmen, to whom these vast collections of artistic and industrial objects are becoming rather a bore, but Vienna itself is worthy of a visit as one of the most interesting of European capitals.…[17]

This study will focus on the Industrial Hall and the Art Halls of the Vienna Exhibition for, although contributions from Scotland could be found in many other sections of the exhibition, the greatest contributions were to these buildings. Scotland contributed little to the Agricultural sections and although they had a representation in Machinery, they were 'all but nowhere' in Agricultural Machinery.[18] Great Britain was allocated 6,369.5 square metres of display space.[19] British 'fine arts' were represented in the *Kunsthalle* ('Fine Art Hall').[20] The *Maschinenhalle* ('Machine Hall'), *Westliche Agriculturhalle* ('Western Agricultural Hall') and *Oestliche Agriculturhalle* ('Eastern Agricultural Hall') were the other major buildings on the site, each of which had representation from Britain. A summary of all the countries participating in the Vienna exhibition and the quantities involved can be found in the **Appendix.**

Figure 2 shows a ground plan of the Vienna exhibition showing the arrangement of the British exhibition spaces. Unfortunately, records of the British sections, which would have shed some light on the impressions gained by a visitor in viewing the galleries, are not numerous.

We know from contemporary accounts, something of the arrangement of the British displays in the Industrial Hall. When approaching the British galleries from the eastern entrance, the visitor first encountered the American displays before passing into the

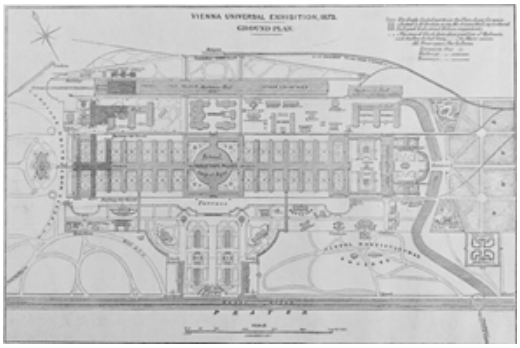

Figure 2. Ground Plan of Vienna *Weltausstellung*, 1873. British Section in shaded areas

[16] *The Graphic* 151, 19.10.1872: 2

[17] *The Graphic* 188, 5.07.1873:1

[18] *The Glasgow Herald* 6 May 1873:4

[19] The British Commission was headed by the Prince of Wales and included Sir Andrew Buchanan, the Duke of Teck, the Marquess of Ripon and Baron Rothschild, among others. The Secretary was Philip Cunliffe Owen (1828–94), who became Assistant Director of the South Kensington Museum in 1860 and had earlier been involved in the Exhibitions of 1855, 1862 and 1867.

[20] The following countries were represented by paintings and sculpture in the *Kunsthalle*: Austria, Germany, Hungary, Sweden, Belgium, Switzerland, Denmark, Russia, Norway, Italy, England, Spain, Portugal, Holland, Greece, France, China, America and Greece.

British Section. Jewellery and silversmiths' work were displayed in the main transept, as shown in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3. View of the British Section, Vienna *Weltausstellung,* 1873.

Following this, porcelains and glass commanded the intersection to the smaller side-galleries. Turning left into the side-gallery, the visitor would pass through metalwork and chemical products before reaching pottery and earthenware. In addition to these internal displays, there were uncovered and covered courtyard exhibitions. Another section featured military and naval weapons. Passing across the main transept the opposite side gallery accommodated silks and lace, cottons, woollens, leatherwork and books. The visitor would have had to return to the main transept and pass through furniture to find the Indian displays and the side-gallery to the left with displays from the colonies. The following areas were represented within this section: India, Victoria, New Zealand, Ceylon, West African Settlements [Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, Gambia and Lagos], Jamaica, Bahamas, and Trinidad.[21] The Scottish connections to the submissions from the colonies are too broad a subject to be included in this essay. The Indian displays were among the largest contributions to the British displays. The contents of this section were listed in a separate and comprehensive catalogue. The Indian section was held by many to be one of the most striking aspects of the British exhibition but by no means by all.

By 1873 the British displays had been shaped and formed by the lessons learned from several previous exhibitions; their strengths had been developed and their contents modified. The observations of the American W.P. Blake give a good example of isolating the process of modification and improvement that some exhibits underwent, the exhibitors learning from earlier attempts and subsequently refining their submissions. This can be illustrated from an examination of the developments between the British ceramics exhibited in London in 1851 and Vienna in 1873. Blake, reporting on the Vienna Exhibition for the Centennial Commission wrote: 'The Exhibition in 1851 revealed to Great Britain its manifest inferiority in artistic manufactures'.[22] Blake attributed this to poor art education - a failure which had been, in his opinion, rectified by 1873. He notes that by the time of the Vienna Exhibition over twenty years later, 'Great Britain … has risen to a commanding position in the potter's art.'[23] Blake also gives an account of the ceramic industry in the Vienna exhibition in which he details what he believed to be the strengths of the exhibition. Of the United Kingdom he wrote:

> The ceramic productions were the most salient features of the exhibition from the United Kingdom. They occupied the most favored place in the grand transept, next to the superb metal work of the Messrs. Elkington …[24]

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[21] Great Britain Royal Commission for the Vienna International Exhibition 1873:168–82

[22] Blake 1875: 10

[23] Blake 1875: 10

[24] Blake 1875: 25

'Scotland has been asleep about this exhibition...'

Such were the words reported in the *Glasgow Herald* on the sixth of May 1873, shortly after the opening of the Vienna International Exhibition. According to the Special Correspondent, who wrote regular reports from Vienna for the *Glasgow Herald,* the Scottish submission was scanty. Several sections had representation from England and nothing, or next to nothing, from Scotland: 'she [Scotland] has certainly lost a magnificent opportunity...' the Special Correspondent goes on to write; 'Should you like a list of the Scottish exhibitors? They are not, I regret to say, very numerous, and Glasgow hardly shows up to her usual mark; Greenock has nothing, Paisley is fairly represented in her great thread manufacture, but it would certainly have been worth the while of many firms who send nothing to send here...'

Scotland's apparently poor representation in Vienna was not without its reasons however; the Special Correspondent for the *Glasgow Herald* goes on to suggest that the exhibitors 'may have been frightened by the distance and the language, and difficulty in understanding the Austrian tariff on their goods...' although he explains that the Austrian tariffs have since been translated into English, along with 'all the most important official documents affecting the patent laws.'[25] On 16 December 1865 a treaty of commerce between Austria and the United Kingdom had been concluded and was to remain in place until 1877. It was of advantage to British importers:

> The reductions accorded to France by continental States have been generally extended to the United Kingdom, either under treaties containing the 'most favoured nation' clause, or by direct tariff negotiations, as in the case of Austria.[26]

In the publication *Austrian Tariff of Import Duties upon the principle articles of British produce and manufactures* itemized for 1873,[27] it can be seen that the import duty did not exceed 20 per cent after 1 January 1870. Whatever the reasons for Britain's somewhat apathetic participation in the Vienna Exhibition, the opening of the exhibition found their displays unfinished. The Special Correspondent for the *Glasgow Herald* commented that many of the exhibits were far from ready when the exhibition opened. He writes: 'Not more than one quarter of the Exhibition is ready: (but there is a great deal to see that is most interesting). Great Britain makes an interesting show.'[28]

'England is admirably represented. We [Scotland] are nowhere...'

An analysis of the submission statistics relating to the Scottish companies exhibiting throughout the exhibition buildings at Vienna, 1873 gives us a broad idea of where the Scottish arts and industries were best represented. The bar chart in **Figure 4** shows the distribution of Scottish contributing companies through the displays with one omission, that of the Art Hall, discussed below, where the collections were not quantifiable in the same way as the other sections of the Exhibition, and for this reason sections 22 to 26 are not represented in the graph. The total

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[25] *The Glasgow Herald* 6 May 1873: 4

[26] Her Majesty's Commissioners 1873 :vii

[27] Her Majesty's Commissioners 1873: 46-7

[28] *The Glasgow Herald* 2 May 1873: 5

British submissions for each section are illustrated in the graph so that the number of Scottish companies can be compared. This chart, however, has no bearing on the quantities of objects submitted but instead, represents the number of contributing companies. The bar chart also excludes the Additional Exhibitions. From **Figure 4** we can see that the largest number of contributing companies from Scotland fell into categories 3 to 5, Chemical Industry, Substances of Food as Products of Industry and Textile Industry and Clothing, whilst the greatest number of contributors from Britain, as a whole, were in Section 13, General and Agricultural Machinery. Once again, the Special Correspondent for the *Glasgow Herald* sheds a little light on these categories, saying of Textile Industry and Clothing, '...we [Scotland] are still weaker compared with England...' and of Agricultural Machinery, '...England is admirably represented. We are nowhere...'

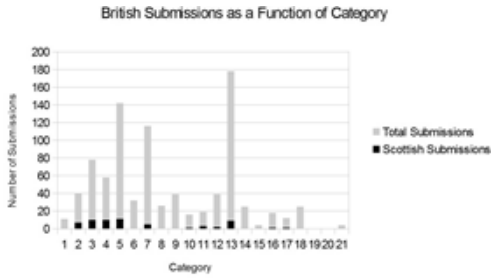

Figure 4. British submissions to the Vienna *Weltausstellung*, 1873 as a function of category (see **Appendix**).

During the 1870s, Glasgow's shipbuilding and heavy engineering industry was burgeoning. As Walker states; 'Glasgow and the Clyde are inseparable terms. The city has made the river, and, in turn, the river had helped to make the city.'[29] He tells us that at no previous exhibition had Glasgow been so well represented as it was at the 1888 exhibition. The production of screw-driven iron-hulled ships on the Clyde was increasing in the 1870s.[30] An examination of the contributors at Vienna 1873 in 'General Machinery', Section VIII, reveals the following companies from Glasgow: Crown Ironworks, Thomson & Company (Crown Ironworks), Marquis Brothers, Bergius, W.C. And Baines, W.N.,[31] although many of the firms Walker mentions as being representative of this industry were not present at Vienna.

One relevant observation that was made frequently about the Vienna Exhibition was that there were fewer British exhibitors as compared with previous exhibitions. This reduction in the number of exhibitors was noted across the entire British submission and not in specific departments. According to W.C. Aitkin's report[32]: 'The total number of British exhibitors in the Vienna exhibition was 770 as opposed to 3,609 who exhibited at the Paris exhibition of 1867'. Although the exact total reported varies, a Viennese reporter stated in the *Wiener Weltausstellungs-Zeitung* that there were 742 British exhibitors.[33] If we turn to the quantities of participating Scottish companies at Vienna we find that the same short-fall is evident. The Paris Universal Exhibition in 1855 appears to have contained an exemplary contribution from

[29] Walker 1888: 45

[30] Peebles, *The Scottish Historical Review* 69.187,1990: 26

[31] Great Britain. Royal Commission for the Vienna International Exhibition 1873

[32] Aitken 1873:17–18

[33] *Wiener Weltausstellungs-Zeitung* 142, 3.05.1873:3

Glasgow and yet, less then twenty years later, Glasgow's contribution to the Vienna Exhibition was 'not up to her usual mark'. We can question as to whether the author was comparing the Scottish contributions to the Vienna Exhibition with the earlier Scottish submissions made, for example, to the Paris international exhibitions in 1855 and 1867. A detailed analysis of each exhibition is not possible within the context of this paper, but if we take the representative Scottish submissions from Paisley, Greenock, Leith, Glasgow and Edinburgh from the Paris Exhibition,1855, and Vienna 1873 and express them in two bar charts, shown in **Figure 5**, we are able to fully appreciate the Special Correspondent's concerns. The Glasgow submission had involved seventy-nine contributing companies in 1855, as compared with nineteen in Vienna 1873. Interestingly, the contributions from Paisley, Greenock, Leith and Edinburgh were little changed in the quantity contributed to each exhibition and the reduction from a total of 112 submissions in 1855 to 58 in 1873 was largely due to Glasgow's reticence, reluctance or failure to contribute more to the Vienna Exhibition 1873. It should be noted, once again, that these statistics express the quantity of contributing exhibitors and not the quantities of items. From these graphs we are able, at a glance, to assess the decline in the number of Scottish exhibitors, specifically in this context contributors from Glasgow, compared with those contributed to a previous international exhibition, albeit one in which the Glasgow contribution was particularly prominent. However, accounting for this change is less straightforward and different authors of the day, publishing at the time of the exhibition, had different opinions on the main contributing factors.

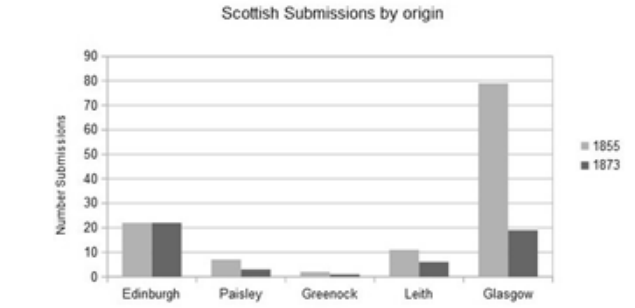

Figure 5. Scottish submissions to Vienna *Weltausstellung*, 1873 by origin.

Contemporary sources give us an insight into Glasgow's submission exhibited in the Paris Exhibition, 1855. A report gives the following description of the Glasgow display:

> From what we have learned, especially from a townsman just returned from Paris, the Glasgow portion of the exhibition will not only be ample, but extremely striking and interesting. Almost all the leading soft goods staples of this city will be magnificently represented in it, including printed goods, woven goods, shawls, muslins, harness curtains, embroideries, lace goods, Turkey reds (silk and cotton), threads, &c...[34]

The Glasgow textile department at the 1855 Paris Exhibition comprised forty-four cases containing examples of muslins, tartan shawls, 'turkey reds', ginghams, fancy dresses, damasks, and, according to the *Paisley Herald and Renfrewshire Advertiser,* could be 'pronounced one of the most perfect in the whole Exhibition'. Outstanding among the Glasgow textile exhibits were those of Messrs Brown & Donald and Wallace & Turnbull, whose cheap embroidered muslins were mentioned as being the 'greatest point of attraction'. The tartan

[34] *The Glasgow Herald* 6 April 1855: 4

shawls of Mr Cross also proved very popular and the French ladies were observed unceasingly clustering around Mr Cross's displays with 'envy and admiration'.[35] However, it appears that there was less enthusiastic clustering at the Glasgow textile displays in Vienna. Less than twenty years later than the 1855 Paris Exhibition and within five years of the Paris 1867 Exhibition, representation from Glasgow at the Vienna Exhibition was reduced to only three contributing companies in the Textile Section, V: Thomas Tapling, James Templeton and J. Lyle. There was a wide range of factors which possibly accounted for this reduction, one of which was apathy. As was mentioned above, when the Vienna Exhibition was first announced a number of the British newspapers had reported the British response was less than enthusiastic. It was perhaps not surprising that the distances involved alone should be a cause for consideration. However, Glasgow textile producers made submissions to the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876 where the distances involved were much greater and where John Clark & Co., Moir & Muir, Templeton J & JS, Templeton James & Co. made the central contributions to the Glasgow textile displays.[36]

If we accept worries concerning logistics, language and tariffs, as mentioned by the Special Correspondent of the *Glasgow Herald,* quoted earlier, we might go some way towards explaining the smaller number of participating companies at the Vienna Exhibition. We might also consider the economic factors involved. A report in the catalogue of the British Section at Paris 1867 includes a retrospective examination of previous exhibitions and goes some way to pinpointing some economic factors which may have contributed to this demonstrable decline:

> On the outbreak of the American war, the Manchester Chamber of Commerce took active measures to stimulate the cultivation of cotton in various parts of the globe, and many countries, notably British India, Egypt, Brazil, and other South American States, and even China and Japan, largely increased their cultivation of cotton, and contributed to supply the English markets during the years 1861 to 1865.

Availability of materials may have been a consideration in the reduction in some of the textile submissions. The American Civil War, 1861-1865, had led to problems in the cotton trade from America which may have had negative consequences on the fortunes of individual companies: '...if there had been no war, we should have looked to America for a supply from the crop of 1862 of 4,500,000 or 5,000,000 bales...we remember that every manufacturing country in the world, as well as England, is bare of raw material, and will have to replace its exhausted stocks.'[37] However, it would appear too simplistic to consider this in isolation. Other sources indicate that by the year 1873 much of the industry had recovered, however it is possible that the effects were still apparent in the industry and as the markets were known to be volatile and unpredictable, companies were cautious. There had been changes and advances in production such as increased mechanisation. During the 1870s Britain's textiles tended to be exported to 'less developed economies'[38] with greater demand for coarser cloth, such as India. This was due in part to the changes in industrial processes in countries Britain exported to and resulted

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[35] *Paisley Herald and Renfrewshire Advertiser*14.07.1855: 2

[36] United States Centennial Commission. International Exhibition 1876: 148 – 150

[37] *Glasgow Herald* 3 November 1862: 6

[38] Schwarzkopf 2018: page unknown

in a polarisation of production, with high quality products being exported to European markets.[39]

In the *Reports on the Vienna Universal Exhibition of 1873* the following extract from Dr Alexander Peez's report on the subject of Printed Cottons is of interest:

> Of England's incalculable produce, scarcely a specimen was sent to the Universal Exhibition, because thanks to the good development of Austrian manufacture, it finds scarcely any market in this country...Glasgow has quite recently attempted to produce the super-fine Mulhausen stuffs, and the most expensive designers of Paris are employed for the Scotch manufacture. The English and Scotch printing factories are worked altogether by machinery, and threaten not Switzerland only, but also Mulhausen itself...[40]

Probably one of the most reliable reports of the state of Glasgow's industries is their representation at the International Exhibition of Science, Art and Industry, Glasgow, 1888 and it is interesting to see which firms were operating at the time. By this time the cotton spinning and weaving industries were reported as not 'as flourishing as they once were' in part due to the fact that the production of Turkey red dying had completely altered due to the discoveries of the chemist Roubriquet[41] and was flourishing in the second-half of the nineteenth century.[42] Individual factors and changing fortunes affecting companies are also relevant to this in the case of the companies James Templeton & Co.[43] and its sister company J & J S Templeton & Co. The company is recorded as having a period of reduced profits in 1870 due to the problems and changes in production of chenille carpets.

Another contributory factor, and one not brought forward explicitly by any of the quoted contemporary sources, was the arrival of new competitors such as Japan. In 1873 the German curator Jacob Falke noted a marked increase in the quality of the Japanese and Chinese submissions.[44] The Japanese textiles were one of the outstanding features of the Vienna Exhibition and were noted in a great deal of the contemporary literature. In another source it was reported that by the end of the exhibition the Japanese had sold almost everything they had for sale on display.[45] The Japanese gallery astounded and amazed the visitors. The Japanese exhibition can be glimpsed behind a curtain in some of the gallery photographs of the exhibition and its entrance, presided over by a huge mythical animal, the *shachihoko,* which caught the attention of even the most jaded visitor. The Japanese gallery is well recorded in a series of photographs. The individual objects were also photographed, out of the context of the displays,

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[39] Schwarzkopf 2018: page unknown

[40] Blake 1873: 602

[41] Walker 1888:41

[42] Wertz in *Mitteilungen: Gesellschaft Deutscher Chemiker* 25, 2017: 308

[43] Archives Hub, *Records of James Templeton & Co Ltd, carpet manufacturers, Glasgow, Scotland* https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/search/archives/9776d156-1921-3deb-a831-5c7c3d06caab (accessed 15 May 2019)

[44] Von Falke 1873:115

[45] Gindriez 1878:30

by the Austrian photographer Michael Moser. Visitor accounts are highly informative as they record, with admiration, their impressions of walking into the Japanese section:

> The most perfect of the far eastern displays is that of Japan … With the Japanese it is scarcely too much to say that all is original, beautiful or quaint … Conspicuous in metal work, as you enter, is the monster Dolphin in brass, with his tail swaying in the air, in the very act of plunging down among the waves. Behind him is a lacquered cabinet wrought in ebony and ivory, inlaid with exquisitely minute plaques of gold and silver …[46]

Such a quote is perhaps indicative of the receptiveness of the public to what was 'beautiful' and 'original', very powerful words in such a forum for trade and commercial expansion. Detailed floor plans of the Japanese gallery show us how the material on display was distributed:

> We may loiter among the many-hued [Japanese] silks and the delicate embroidered stuffs, with their endless variety of patterns, all so marked in their local individualities …[47]

However, Japan was not alone as a source of admiration. The textiles from India were also much admired, and these are discussed in the forthcoming pages.

'There had been many prophets of woe... 'If we look beyond the numbers involved and turn to consider the numerous Scottish individuals who exhibited at the Vienna Exhibition in 1873, the most visually documented contribution was an architectural one. The sheer proportions of John Scott Russell's[48] magnificent centre-piece to the Exhibition, which can be seen in **Figure 6**, ensured that Russell's achievements in Vienna did not escape detailed scrutiny. Several Austrian newspapers carried articles on him, illustrated with portraits. The scale of Russell's Rotunda was impressive: in circumference it measured 1,080', its diameter 360' and including the exterior colonnade, 440'. Assessments of its height are variable but generally speaking it was said to be 284' high and was noted as being the largest unsupported "dome" (actually a truncated cone or frustum) in the world in its

Figure 6. The Rotunda, Vienna *Weltausstellung*, 1873

[46] Special Correspondent for The Graphic 1873:168

[47] Special Correspondent for The Graphic 1873:170

[48] John Scott Russell (1808 - 1882)

day. The British catalogue included a diagram comparing it in scale to domes such as that of the London International Exhibition of 1862 with a span of just under 160', St Peter's Rome with a span of 157' and, smaller still, St Paul's Cathedral, London with a span of 112', all theoretically fitting easily within Russell's Rotunda. Russell's obituary recorded by the Institute of Civil Engineers, tells us that the idea which later came to fruition as the Rotunda in Vienna, was originally conceived by him as early as the 1851 Great Exhibition.[49]

Russell's Rotunda had both its critics and its admirers. Some critics were uncertain whether the singular and striking building would stand:

> This fine dome is the latest triumph of Mr Scott Russell's constructive skill. There had been many prophets of woe. Engineers had proved mathematically that the great balloon of the roof must collapse; that the piers of the arches must bulge outward under the weight; that the foundations were subsiding and must subside further; that a choice of catastrophes must necessarily occur, any one of which would involve ruin to Mr Scott Russell's great conception. Heavy bets were made that the crisis, if it did not
>
> occur before, must take place on the opening day, when the roof would vibrate to the cheering and the music ... [50]

However, such sceptics were proved wrong, the building stood for the next fifty years and was only finally demolished after it suffered severe fire damage in 1937. Archive footage,[51] recording the final demolition, gives an impression of the scale and proportions of the building. The huge arena formed within the interior space of the Rotunda provided an exhibition and performance space within the exhibition as well a central hub, **Figure 7**.

At the centre of the Rotunda stood a fountain by Durenne which can now be seen in a city park in Graz. The Industrial Hall, designed by Karl von Hasenauer (1833-1894), extended from the Rotunda in an East/West orientation. Arguably, according to some of the contemporary commentaries, the interior s was not used to full advantage during the six months of the exhibition, its impact on the visitor being lost by a clutter of exhibition stands which detracted from the impression of scale.[52] The American William Blake wrote of Russell's Rotunda that it was the most striking element of the Vienna exhibition and described the building in great detail.[53] Interestingly, Blake records that

Figure 7. Interior of the Rotunda

[49] Russell's involvement in the 1851 Great Exhibition is discussed in Bonython 1995: 46

[50] *London Daily News* 5 May 1873:3

[51] www.britishpathe.com/video/final-demolition-of-viennas-rotunda (accessed 15 May 2019)

[52] *The Standard* 23 June 1873:4

[53] Blake 1873:42

J. Scott Russell's method of construction was not used by the contractor responsible for building the Rotunda.

By 1873 Russell was based in London. As was the case with several of the Scottish individuals representing British interests and industries at the 1873 exhibition, such as Thomas Faed (1826 - 1900) [54] the furniture designer Bruce James Talbert (1838 - 1881) and John Forbes Watson (1827-1892), who is discussed below. This might have made it difficult for someone outside the United Kingdom to understand that these British exhibitors were Scottish rather than English.[55] Indeed, it is debatable whether they would have understood any difference between 'British' and 'English'. It is interesting that neither Forbes Watson nor Russell emerged in the contemporary literature as representatives of Scottish achievement. Forbes Watson's association with Scotland is never, to this author's knowledge, given mention in the literature concerning the Vienna Exhibition and Russell's origins are referenced only in passing.

'One of the most attractive Courts in the Vienna Exhibition is that of India...'

John Forbes Watson[56] the curator and writer on India played a prominent role promoting India's culture and economy at the Vienna exhibition and is relevant to this study as being a Scottish individual operating within the context of the British submission. Forbes Watson, who was born and educated in Aberdeenshire, trained as a doctor and spent time in India before becoming director of the India Office, India Museum. In his catalogue for the Indian collections at Vienna,[57] Forbes Watson stated that although the space allocated for the display of some Indian contributions was inadequate, on the whole the facilities provided were better than at :revious exhibitions. He believed the Indian Section was comparable to those shown in previous world shows[58] although some branches of manufacture and groups of raw produce were ineffectively represented. Forbes Watson was no stranger to such exhibitions; his participation is recorded in several earlier exhibitions. The Descriptive Catalogue of the Dublin International Exhibition, 1865 reported on 'the beautiful Indian collection, contributed by the India Board, and arranged by Dr. J. Forbes Watson, which occupies a large space, and is most attractive, embracing most of the choicest articles of the India Museum, London, many rare and valuable articles leant by the Queen, by Lord Gough and other exhibitors.'[59]

The Indian section of the Vienna exhibition 1873 was much admired. Its delayed opening was compensated for by its arresting appearance:

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[54] Morrison 2017:42

[55] Some relevant issues are discussed in Anderson, *The Scottish Historical Review* 91(231) 2012:1–41, passim.

[56] Forbes Watson, by profession a physician and surgeon, had been director of the Indian Museum in London from 1858 until 1879. He had been director for the Indian Department at the following exhibitions: London in 1862, Paris in 1867, South Kensington in 1870 -1872 and Vienna in 1873.

[57] Watson 1873

[58] Watson 1873: Preface

[59] Parkinson, Simmonds (eds.) 1866: xxii

> The Indian pavilion is a cunning structure on columns, covered over wit[h] carpets and rugs of bright colours. Inside the apartment are all the appliances of Indian luxury, couches and carved furniture of Madras. One of the most interesting exhibitions of the Indian Court is the drawing-room of a nabob. The owner himself, a figure in gorgeous attire, is seated cross-legged in one corner, smoking his hubble-bubble. There are also some beautifully embroidered stuffs, coarse pottery, of Hindoo design, landscapes and sketches of Indian scenes, together with some curious peasant jewellery from Ceylon.[60]

The Indian Section was held by some to be one of the most visually striking displays of the Vienna exhibition. The Special Correspondent for the *Glasgow Herald* devoted column space to describe and admire the Indian displays, writing: 'One of the most attractive Courts in the Vienna Exhibition is that of India'. The space allocated, he goes on to explain, was sixty feet square in the nave with an additional 120 feet allocated in the transept. In the centre the author describes a 'very large tent-shaped glazed case carpeted with velvet and describing the central glass tent-shaped case in the main transept within which a figure of a Mahomedan nobleman is seated smoking a hookah and set about him are elaborately fashioned pieces of furniture including a rosewood carved sofa from Bombay. Surrounding this are six more glass cases in the nave filled with costly embroideries, cashmere shawls, Delhi silver work ... etc.' And all of these are in turn surrounded by 'a grand pavilion canopy of carpets'. Of note are the 'well-executed' sketches by Kipling and the trophies of Colonel Michael, including 'elephant tusks, bison and deer heads.[61]

It is relevant to examine the role John Forbes Watson had played in promoting knowledge of Indian products and designs in Scotland. During his life Forbes Watson contributed a great deal to the dissemination of knowledge of Indian Textiles.[62] In 1866 he produced an eighteen-volume work entitled *The Collections of the Textile Manufactures of India* which contained samples of Indian textile manufacture. In the *Glasgow Herald*, May 1870, we find an article relating to John Forbes Watson's request to submit eight to ten volumes showing 'fabrics, designs and workmanship...' from India with 260 framed specimens, which he proposed should be distributed throughout the various 'manufacturing towns of the country', if they were willing to pay the required sum of money.[63] As Nenadic discusses, many of these designs were reproduced by Turkey Red manufacturers and traded back to India,[64] which opens room for discussions about the long-term effects on Indian markets and both detrimental and positive consequences. The foundations of the drive and enthusiasm that led to the international exhibitions in Glasgow and Edinburgh were certainly being laid decades before, through the work of men like Forbes Watson, individual collectors, and retailers. The activities of John Forbes Watson represent one example of the influences that were being drawn into Scotland, its industry, and arts.

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[60] *The Graphic Guide to Vienna* 1873: 162–5

[61] *Glasgow Herald* 3 June 1873:3

[62] Driver, *Victorian Studies* 52 (3) 2010:353–385

[63] *Glasgow Herald* 6 May 1870:4

[64] Nenadic 2014, 34(1):83

The evolution of Scottish trade aspirations was reflected within Scotland in museums and exhibitions of the day. Forbes Watson's achievements give us some insights into the expansion and success of Scottish industries at the time and their receptiveness of international workmanship, and indeed the degree to which eclecticism was encouraged and propagated. However, shops and sales also accounted for an exposure to international goods. An example of this was the sale in Edinburgh of many goods purchased from the Vienna International Exhibition 1873. Nenadic[65] discusses these, saying that in 1875, the Polytechnic Warehouse in Edinburgh accommodated 'a great sale of Indian, Chinese and Japanese exhibition goods....the greater part purchased from the Commissioners of the London and Vienna international exhibitions.'[66]

'Scottish jewelry in gold and silver,
Highland ornaments, and precious stones found in Scotland...'

References to Scottish themes and emblems[67] can be found in the Art Hall/*Kunsthalle* at Vienna, 1873. The Art Hall was found at the far west of the exhibition site and consisted of a large, long gallery space with smaller satellite galleries housed in independent buildings to the side and can be seen at the far right of the Industrial Hall in **Figure 2**. These satellite galleries are among the few still extant buildings from the exhibition and to see them today gives the visitor some idea as to the scale and visual impact of the exhibition buildings.[68] These two buildings, which stood facing one another at either side of an ornamental garden, are still in a good state of preservation and areused today as artists' studio spaces. One of the buildings is better preserved than the other, indeed, standing inside it allows the visitor to appreciate the quantities of art works which were involved.[69] In the art galleries the emphasis was less commercial than in the other displays, as many of the paintings were loaned from private collections and were therefore not for sale.

The artists listed as members of the Royal Scottish Academy[70] represented in the Vienna exhibition numbered only three, George Harvey (1806-1876),[71] Keeley Halswelle (1831-1891) and James Archer (1822-1904), with only one work from each being submitted. Although other artists were members of both Royal and Royal Scottish Academies, it appears that membership of the Royal Academy was given priority in the literature. Halswelle, although not born in Scotland, spent a great deal of his formative years working in Edinburgh and in 1866 he was

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[65] Nenadic 2014, 34(1):67-89

[66] *Glasgow Herald* 5 March 1875; Nenadic 2014:24

[67] There is confusion in the terminology used in the contemporary source material between 'English' and 'British'. The terms were used interchangeably, and Scottish contributors were frequently subsumed under both headings. Additionally, the Scottish submissions in the exhibitions under discussion were not categorised separately but included in the larger British submission. In this study companies and individuals listed in the catalogues as being from Scotland have been considered.

[68] *Wiener Kunst-Halle* 30 July 1873 (28): 223

[69] The author is grateful to the staff of BIG- Bundesimmobiliengesellschaft, for allowing her access to these buildings.

[70] Potter 2017: 16

[71] Holme1907: vi.

elected an associate of the Royal Scottish Academy.[72] His painting, 'Roba di Roma', was the first of a series of canvasses which established Halswelle's reputation[73] being exhibited in Burlington House in 1869, where it gained 'warm approval', and later that year it received an award as the best work exhibited in the Royal Institution in Manchester. Among the artists in the Vienna exhibition who were Scottish by birth were Erskine Nicol (RSA 1859) born in Scotland and elected to the Royal Academy in 1866, and Thomas Faed (RSA 1862) who was born in Scotland in 1826.

The British submission to the Art Halls had its critics, some feeling that it focussed on pieces for a home market and was restricted in its range by the limitations of patronage and social constraints.[74] Pictorially, Scottish themes, both Scottish landscapes and Scottish history, were well represented. The significance of a painting such as the much acclaimed 'The last Sleep of Argyll', painted by the English born Edward Matthew Ward (1816-1879), may have had much stronger associations and significance to British audiences, particularly Scottish ones, than it had on the Continent. This painting had appeared in two of the exhibitions under discussion, Paris in 1855 and Vienna 1873, and was much admired and reported on in both. The entry for the painting in the Paris 1855 catalogue of the British Section had beneath it the caption quoted from Baron Thomas Babington Macauley's *History of England*:

> ...So effectually had religious faith and hope, co-operating with natural courage and equanimity, composed his spirits, that, on the very day on which he was to die, he dined with appetite, conversed with gaiety at table, and, after his last meal, lay down, as he was wont, to take a short slumber...

The painting was equally well received at the Vienna Exhibition. The *Glasgow Herald* reporting that: 'Ward's 'Last Sleep of Argyll' is one of the finest pictures of the Exhibition.'[75]

It is relevant to turn to the earlier international exhibitions and to compare which artists were selected to represent Scotland or from Scotland. It should be borne in mind that the Paris exhibitions of 1855 and 1867 differed in many ways, including their size. Eugene Rimmel[76] recorded the overall British submission sizes in 1855 as having 28,954 exhibitors, compared with that of 1867 having 42,237 exhibitors. At the Paris Exhibition held in 1855, there were only three Scottish Academicians with paintings displayed: portrait painter Daniel Macnee (1806-1882) known for his allegorical, religious and historical subjects; the popular Scottish painter Joseph Noel Paton (1821-1901) who was invited to join the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood but declined the offer; and J. Watson Gordon (1788-1864). Works by Macnee and Paton were also displayed at the Paris Universal Exhibition in 1867 alongside other representatives of Scotland: James Archer (1822- 1904), John Ballantyne (1815-1897), John Maclaren Barclay (1811-1886), Horatio McCulloch (1805-1867), Graham Gilbert (1794-1866), Kenneth MacLeay (1802-1878) and Joseph Noel Paton's son, Waller H. Paton (1828-1895).

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[72] Dafforne *The Art Journal* 5 1879: 101–104

[73] Meynell1886: 96-103

[74] Lehmann 1873

[75] *The Glasgow Herald* 22 May 1873:4

[76] Rimmel 1868:6

From contemporary discussions of the British fine art submissions at both the 1855 and 1867 Paris exhibitions, it appears that the French response to both submissions was, at the best, lukewarm. According to the reports in the *Art-Journal* published in 1855, the British submission was not very well received by some of the French commentators; for example the *Revue des Beaux Arts* being quoted as saying: 'At times one would be led to believe that the English painted with both hands - the one artistic, the other uncouth...'[77] However, some artists were praised: 'Mr D. Macnee, R.S.A. was '...a conspicuous exhibitor, and his 'Portrait of Mr. John Pollock', No.12, a full length of 'a shrewd, sagacious Scotsman, may be classed among the best works of its class both for colour and characteristic expression'.[78] His 'Portrait of Dr Wardlaw' was similarly praised in the French publication *Presse* of July 4th for sustaining '...honourably the old and well-earned reputation of English artists...'[79] Not all the critics were French however; the English journalist George Augustus Sala (1828-1895),[80] who had trained as a graphic artist, was fairly damning about the entire British submission, writing at the end of his chapter on the fine art section of the Paris Exhibition: '...They [the English paintings] are so vilely drawn. They sin so crassly against the very first rules of mathematical truth...'[81]

The fine art displays in Vienna did not seem to provoke the same criticisms. The *Glasgow Herald* reported that:

> The Art Exhibition is admirable. The British have some 400, the best of which are well-known pictures … we [the British] are weak in water-colours, but strong in pictures … Many well-known English pictures are there. Turner's 'Thames at Walton Bridge', Peter Graham's 'Spate in the Highlands', Caldron's 'Sighing his soul into his lady's face', Faed's' 'Last of the Clan', and the 'God's Acre'. Linnell and Cope and Cooke and Horsley are well represented. Val Princep has a singular and well-known Ariadne. Vicas Cole has a beautiful sunset piece. Elsmere is well represented ... But altogether we lack a little in brilliancy of colour, though we are brighter than the Dutch.[82]

However, it was not only in the fine art exhibits that Scottish themes emerged; the industrial halls also held a number of relevant displays. *The Glasgow Herald* reported that 'Representative firms in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and indeed all over Scotland, have entered the competitive lists with specimens of Scottish manufactures and ingenious contrivances.' Among them Mr Aitchison's jewellery was selected for discussion.[83] 'The Lion Rampant, the Scottish Thistle, the St Andrew Cross, oak and ivy leaves, and other emblems of a thoroughly Scottish character, have been introduced into the different designs...'; the case, the reporter continues, 'may be taken as a worthy representation of the high state of perfection of the jeweller's art in Scotland.'

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[77] *The Art-Journal* 1855:297

[78] *The Art-Journal* 1855:155

[79] *The Art-Journal* 1855:299

[80] Blake, *Victorian Literature and Culture* 40 (2) 2012:577–597

[81] Sala 1868: 92

[82] *The Glasgow Herald* 22 May 1873:4

[83] *The Glasgow Herald* 22 May 1873:4

A few years later, America's International Centennial Exhibition in 1876, held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, recorded a substantial amount of Scottish contributing companies which were listed in the catalogue of the exhibition. Philadelphia represents an important location for the study of the Scottish diaspora, having, in the 1870s, a substantial number of Scottish and Irish immigrants with a strong sense of identity. It is interesting to question whether this had affected market demands and therefore influenced contributions to the exhibition.

> Farther north is the collection of jewelry. This is handsome in many respects, but is not such a display as was hoped for from Great Britain. One or two cases are especially noticeable. James Aitchison, of Edinburgh, has a pretty exhibit of Scottish jewelry in gold and silver, Highland ornaments, and precious stones found in Scotland...[84]

In America during this period a sense of Scottish identity was firmly established. The Scottish clearances had dispossessed large communities, beginning in the Scottish borders and later affecting the Highlands.[85] Scottish Clubs and Societies proliferated in Scottish settler communities keeping traditions alive.[86] The Americans were enthusiastic to gather information in order to apply the lessons learned to their own international exhibitions. At the same time, trade and the potential of its furtherance was a central concern. Palladino and Miller write, quoting from the *Art Journal*, Volume 1, 1888, that '...it was in 'the American trade' that Glasgow 'laid the sure foundations of her prosperity, and by degrees entered into commercial relations with nearly every part of the globe...'

'...the cream of Continental productions.'

It was noted earlier in this essay that, certainly in the Glasgow exhibition of 1888, the international submissions were somewhat limited. The author of *Pen-and-ink notes at the Glasgow Exhibition*, Robert Walker posited several theories as to why international contributors had 'not poured their treasures liberally into its courts...'[87] Similarly, the exhibition in Edinburgh, two years earlier, did not have as many international contributors as had first been hoped for:

> The character of the Exhibition afterwards came to be considered, and it was resolved that it should be open to the products and industries of all nations, and that a prominent feature should be the illustration of the material resources, manufactures and art treasures of Scotland. Communications were then opened with probable exhibitors. Foreign Governments were approached, but it was soon seen that they could give little assistance in the short time allowed them for preparation.[88]

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[84] McCabe 1876:369

[85] Devine 2018

[86] Forsyth 2016

[87] *The Glasgow Herald* 17 March 1873:13

[88] *Glasgow Herald* 6 May 1886:4

A study of the paintings submitted by the Dutch to the Edinburgh exhibition is of interest as it proved to be influential in the development of Scottish art during the subsequent years. The Dutch submitted paintings to the fine art section of The International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art held in Edinburgh in 1886.[89] This contribution of paintings is of interest in that it encapsulates a foreign country projecting itself within Scottish shores. The comments made by the special correspondent for the *Glasgow Herald* were noted earlier where it was said that 'she [Scotland] has certainly lost a magnificent opportunity...' in not submitting more to the Vienna International Exhibition of 1873. The Dutch submission to the Edinburgh exhibition gives us a good case study of what these opportunities were within the context of international shows, whereby the exhibitor and hosting country might profit from them in different ways. In a general sense, it can be said that the Dutch submission, representing chiefly the Hague School of painting, had an influence on Scottish art, but in the context of this study this cannot be focussed on as the subject of influence is far too complex an issue. However, the fact that the Dutch invested in this opportunity and were received well is indicative of their success in exhibiting in Edinburgh. The newspaper reports of the time praised the Dutch contribution to the exhibition. In the Netherlands, although the art submission was not reported in detail in the newspapers, reports of the exhibition were given column space. We know from the *Glasgow Herald* that the French and Dutch collections of paintings were considered 'the cream of Continental productions'.[90] During the same decade as the Scottish International Exhibitions, Amsterdam hosted a colonial exhibition, the *Internationale Koloniale en Uitvoerhandel Tentoonstelling* ('The International Colonial and Export Exhibition') in 1883. Indeed, during the 1870s and 1880s there was a marked increase in the number of international exhibitions and certainly in the case of Britain, the emergence of themed exhibitions, which were notable successes. The choice for exhibiting material was therefore far more open than it had been in earlier decades and this, no doubt, led to more selectivity by individual companies. In the light of Walker's remarks, introduced at the beginning of this essay, it is perhaps relevant to place the Scottish exhibitions of 1886 and 1888 within the larger context of contemporary shows. International exhibitions had evolved and changed by the 1880s and each exhibition is a reflection of the trade, demographic and political dynamics of its day. Scotland's arts and industries had made an imposing presence at the earlier international exhibitions within the context of the British Sections. This fact is certainly borne out by a study of the Vienna Exhibition of 1873. There can be no doubt that the Scottish submission, to the Vienna 1873 exhibition was significant and, in the case of John Scott Russell's centrepiece to the exhibition, both enduring and imposing.

'The great majority of those who visit an Exhibition go there to be amused rather than instructed...'

Walker made this observation towards the end of his *Pen-and-ink notes at the Glasgow Exhibition.* This statement can be applied to the literature about the exhibitions as much as the physical displays. The readers experienced, vicariously, a journey around the stands and exhibitions and sampled the diverse products of art and industry in the very same manner as they would have done if they had visited in person, the exhibition functioning an entertainment

[89] Henley 1888

[90] *The Glasgow Herald* 6 *May*1886:4

as much as a didactic experience.[91] Some written sources aimed to record the exhibition, others to inform and in some cases to celebrate achievements, whilst others' objectives were to assess and draw informative lessons from the displays.

A strong Scottish presence at international exhibitions beyond British shores can be identified between 1855 and 1873. The records relating to the Vienna Exhibition provide an interesting opportunity to interpret how the diverse strengths of Scottish art and industry were projected and received overseas at the time. In evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the Scottish submission through contemporary sources produced in and around the time of the Vienna exhibition of 1873, the nature of the Scottish submission emerges as one that was almost entirely subsumed within the larger category of the British submission. It appears that the artists and exhibitors stood as individuals and were not seeking to represent Scotland primarily but instead as contributors to the wider sphere of British/English submissions which were sometimes mistakenly referred to as being purely 'English'; an unfortunate mistake which cannot be said to have completely vanished within Europe even today. The Scottish diaspora was very great, and nomenclature used to address it is varied. We can categorise the representatives from Scotland as to the place of an individuals' birth, or where they were domiciled, and in the case of artists, their places of training can also be relevant. The individual successes of each contribution are difficult to trace, as the details of sales are infrequently recorded. In undertaking a submission, or display, in a venue such as the Vienna Exhibition, a great deal of time and money had to be invested in participation, it was therefore no light undertaking. Scotland's representation across the different categories and buildings in the exhibition shows its commitment and aspirations at the time to world trade and industrial markets.

In forming a statistical analysis of the 1873 exhibition, sources from the archives of the Austrian National Library, *die Österreichische Nationalbibliothek*, were used. A comparative study of Glasgow's 1873 textile submission and the submission to the 1855 Paris Exhibition showed that by the time Vienna hosted its exhibition, there was a marked down-turn in the quantity of Scottish exhibitors. This decline is probably accountable to various economic and political reasons, some of which are discussed above. In the other sectors there had been little change. During the period in question, it is clear that Scotland maintained a position on the world stage, actively sought new markets and produced a generation of individuals whose influence upon arts and industry is undeniable. If we can assume that Scottish presence at overseas international exhibitions reflects trade aspirations, success and entrepreneurship in Scottish participating companies, we can gain some awareness as to how the countries in which they were exhibiting would have perceived Scottish commercial strengths. We can also gain some understanding of how the exhibition hosts and visitors to the exhibitions might have viewed Scotland.

The experiences of Scottish exhibitors at international exhibitions abroad will have had an impact on the two international exhibitions hosted in Glasgow and Edinburgh during the 1880s. It is relevant to view the Scottish 1886 and 1888 exhibitions not only for their individual merits and strengths, but also within the wider context of the Scottish participation in international exhibitions overseas and thereby view them as a continuation of exchange in both

[91] Spooner 23.3, 2019: 326-344

ideas and commerce within the larger European framework. At the same time, the exhibitions displayed two kinds of Scottishness, the specific history and characteristic scenery of the country on the one hand, and the modern manufactures which were made or designed in Scotland, or by Scotsmen, but which were part of the broader enterprise of British engineering on the other. These two forms of Scottishness were both saleable in world markets, as their presence in Vienna showed.

The primary objective of this essay has been to view the scope and diversity of the Scottish submission to the Vienna International exhibition of 1873 and to identify it within the broader category of the British submission, to find the areas where Scottish identity was expressed and its strengths as a commercial exporter asserted. The Scottish presence at Vienna pervaded the exhibition without ostentation and yet individuals with Scottish connections, Scottish themes and products within the arts and industry turn up throughout the accounts of the exhibition. This reflects the dynamic, growing trade of Scotland at the time and although a quantitative analysis reflects a marked ebb and flow in some areas, such as Scottish textiles, over all, their presence was marked.

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APPENDIX

A Table showing the quantity of exhibitors from each country submitting to Vienna *Weltausstellung,* 1873.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	Total	Coll.Ex	Final
America.	36	40	40	67	32	27	58	8	19	10	17	32	150	31	7	16	8	14	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	23	640	260	900
Austria	300	1110	493	1339	2512	270	1025	478	412	576	214	512	473	243	186	9	25	309	15	17	52	0	0	0	0	828	11398	1	11399
Bahamas	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Belgium	20	12	35	31	117	27	37	23	36	2	8	23	53	15	2	20	1	20	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	74	550	0	550
Brazil	11	32	27	93	19	8	4	7	2	1	0	5	0	4	0	1	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	220	0	220
British India	15	92	30	63	81	6	65	21	22	28	2	18	13	1	9	0	3	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	480	0	480
Cape	5	5	0	11	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	33	0	33
Caucasia	3	147	51	1	30	0	22	4	11	1	0	3	0	0	4	0	0	4	0	0	9	0	0	0	1	0	291	0	291
Ceylon	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Chili	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	0	5
China	5	26	10	14	24	3	9	9	12	14	12	2	5	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	0	0	1	33	0	4	164	0	164
Denmark	4	16	22	45	67	14	21	22	19	11	8	37	27	20	6	2	8	1	0	0	114	0	0	0	0	12	476	0	476
Egypt	3	12	8	9	10	3	5	7	4	2	4	5	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	4	0	0	0	2	0	84	1	85
England	9	46	67	49	132	32	14	26	39	15	16	39	200	28	4	23	11	24	1	0	5	0	0	0	0	15	795	56	851
France	101	693	234	497	659	62	178	27	106	59	62	201	259	134	35	12	19	130	59	1	8	0	0	0	0	564	4100	0	4100
Germany	383	659	431	732	1137	259	747	275	283	398	190	298	615	282	171	39	62	162	13	2	3	0	0	0	0	226	7367	0	7367
Greece	18	87	10	45	69	7	5	5	6	1	3	10	2	1	3	2	4	12	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	4	296	0	296
Guatamala	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
Hawaii	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	7
Holland	0	65	32	65	46	9	22	10	13	3	7	28	8	16	1	7	7	9	8	0	1	0	1	0	0	11	369	0	369
Hungary	127	662	116	660	339	77	71	125	46	31	24	78	114	54	21	13	41	132	0	25	464	0	0	0	0	316	3536	0	3536
Italy	121	384	266	835	485	95	175	178	160	27	69	123	136	121	64	38	111	117	12	0	220	0	0	0	0	0	3737	0	3737
Jamaica	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Japan	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	20
Mauritius	0	2	0	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	13	0	13
Monaco	0	5	3	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	12
Morocco	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
New Zealand	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	208	211
Norway	21	24	8	19	12	5	5	5	2	6	5	5	5	2	2	1	15	1	2	2	5	0	0	0	0	7	159	0	159
Persia	2	4	0	2	4	2	3	3	0	3	0	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	0	28

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Fuinn air an inntinn: A case study in the composition of eighteenth-century Gaelic song

ELLEN L. BEARD

> *Nam b' e gibhtean mo chinn-sa, chuireadh fonn dhomh air m' inntinn.*
> If I were gifted myself, a tune would come to my mind.[1]
> Rob Donn MacKay (1714–1778)

> Even the most of the airs to which he composed are original.[2]
> Mackintosh Mackay (1829)

> The claim has sometimes been made for several of the Gaelic bards that they composed the airs of their own songs, but for this there is no evidence whatever. It is doubtful whether conscious composition ever contributed much to the development of Gaelic vocal music.[3]
> William Matheson (1970)

These three quotations illustrate the challenges of analysing musical composition in the field of Gaelic song. The bard himself tells us virtually nothing of his compositional methods. Mackintosh Mackay, his first editor, overstates his musical originality. The scholar William Matheson, in contrast, flatly dismisses the possibility that any Gaelic bards ever composed music. The only way to test the validity of such contradictory statements is through systematic empirical study, collecting and analysing a large body of songs by a single bard in order to identify their probable musical sources and assess the likelihood that particular melodies were his own. That research – into one hundred songs – shows that Rob Donn composed about a third of his melodies and borrowed the rest.[4] To explain how he did so, the first section of this article will describe his musical environment, including his musical influences and the principal sources of his borrowed tunes. The next section will outline concepts from folk-song scholarship and ethnomusicology regarding composition and traditional music. The third section will examine a number of his original song airs classified by compositional method: (1) new melodies based on metrical models; (2) new melodies adapting musical motifs; and (3) new melodies with no known sources. The underlying research was done for the author's 2016 Ph.D at the University of Edinburgh; all Rob Donn songs referenced can be found in her 2018 songbook.[5]

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[1] '*Iorram do Rùpard*' ('To Rupert') in Beard 2018: 197.

[2] Mackay 1829: xlii.

[3] Matheson 1970: 152.

[4] Beard 2016; Beard 2018.

[5] In that regard, she would like to thank her Ph.D supervisors Anja Gunderloch and Katherine Campbell, as well as her editor Christine Martin at *Taigh na Teud*. She is also grateful to the anonymous reader who provided a number of helpful comments, questions, and points of clarification on the first draft of the article.

1.0 The musical world of Rob Donn

1.1 Musical influences

Rob Donn was born into a poor family in a rural, Gaelic-speaking agricultural community in Durness Parish, northwest Sutherland. At an early age he was taken into the family of the local tacksman Iain mac Eachainn (John MacKay of Muiseal), himself a poet and patron of the arts, working initially as a herd-boy and later taking cattle from the Reay Country on the drove roads to Crieff and Falkirk.[6] During the Seven Years' War (from 1759 to 1763), he spent another four years on the road, visiting many parts of Scotland as informal regimental bard for the Sutherland Fencibles. After a brief residence at Freisgill on Whiten Head, Loch Eriboll (where he was reportedly banished for poaching deer), he ended his days working as a cattleman at Balnakeil in Durness, where he is buried with his wife Janet. [7] Because Rob Donn was not literate, he relied entirely on his own voice to communicate his poems and songs to his contemporaries. The other instruments mentioned regularly in the poems were the fiddle and the bagpipe, often in the context of wedding celebrations or dances.[8]

Rob Donn was particularly fortunate that his local manse was home to one of the most remarkable musical families in eighteenth-century Scotland.[9] Rev. Murdo MacDonald, parish minister in Durness from 1726 until his death in 1763, was 'an accomplished musician' and 'a most melodious and powerful singer' who reportedly 'composed many Gaelic airs'.[10] He also encouraged his children to pursue musical studies, especially the violin or fiddle, and two of his daughters excelled on that instrument. Flora (1736–1805), who later married Rev. John Touch, minister of St. Cuthbert's Chapel-of-Ease in Edinburgh, reportedly composed airs to several of Rob Donn's poems.[11] Another daughter, who died a Mrs Gordon in Golspie, was known locally as Fiddlag and often played reels and strathspeys for dances at the manse of Kildonan when Donald Sage was growing up there in the 1790s and early 1800s.[12]

Even more important for their legacy to Scottish music were two of Rev. MacDonald's sons, Patrick (1729–1824) and Joseph (1739–1762), widely recognised as pioneering collectors, analysts, and mediators between the oral musical traditions of the *Gàidhealtachd* and the literate, more cosmopolitan musicians resident in the Lowlands and the homes of the Highland gentry.[13] Both had studied in the Lowlands (Patrick at Aberdeen, Joseph in Edinburgh and Haddington). And while Patrick was remembered primarily as a violinist and

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[6] Tacksmen were the large tenants and middle managers on eighteenth-century Highland estates, often related to the clan chief and playing multiple roles as landlords, military recruiters and entrepreneurs, especially in the cattle trade. See, e.g., Thomson 1994: 282-83.

[7] For more detailed biographical information, see Grimble 1999; Gunn and MacFarlane 1899; Morrison 1899; Mackay 1829.

[8] See, e.g., Beard 2018: 55, 106, 107, 131, 132, 136.

[9] See Donaldson 2000: 43 (describing this family as 'leading tradition-bearers in Highland music during the second half of the eighteenth century').

[10] Scott, *Fasti* 1928, VII: 102.

[11] Morrison 1899: 20; *Fasti* VII: 102; *Fasti* I: 22.

[12] Sage 1889: 136. Sage lived from 1789 to 1869. Thomson 1994: 254. 'Fiddlag' is simply the Gaelic feminine diminutive for a fiddle player.

[13] See generally Johnson 1972. Other examples in the Highlands were Elizabeth Ross in Raasay and the Maclean Clephane sisters in Mull. See Cooke, MacLeod and Ó Baoill 2016; Sanger 2010: 23–34.

Joseph as a piper, both were excellent all-round musicians, combining familiarity with the traditional music of their own community with sufficient formal musical training to be able to transcribe what they heard into staff notation and to explain the musical principles upon which it was based. After Joseph's premature death in India, Patrick published both their collections, his own *Highland Vocal Airs* (*HVA*) in 1784, and Joseph's *Compleat Theory of the Scots Highland Bagpipe* in 1804.[14] Rob Donn knew this family well, composing an elegy and lament for the father, and a poem describing a visit to his home by Patrick.[15] It is also likely that the brothers learned a number of the song airs they collected from his singing; seven melodies in *HVA* can be readily identified as settings for Rob Donn songs, including one he composed himself.[16]

Another noteworthy local musician was Rob Donn's friend George MacLeod, official piper to Lord Reay, Chief of Clan MacKay. According to Cannon, there were three generations of MacLeod pipers in Tongue and Durness, the eldest of whom was George MacLeod, Rob Donn's contemporary. Next were Donald MacLeod, piper to Lord Reay in 1760, and his son George MacLeod, Pipe-Major of the Reay Fencibles from 1796 to 1798, who succeeded his father as piper to Lord Reay. The elder George MacLeod may well have been Joseph MacDonald's first piping teacher, and a melody in *The Angus Fraser Collection* is titled '*Seòras Leòdach* (George MacLeod the piper)'.[17]

Of course, these were far from the only musicians – good, bad, or indifferent – that Rob Donn heard. His own wife Seònaid was remembered as a fine singer, and Tongue schoolmaster Iain Thapaidh (John Sutherland) was viciously satirised as an inept one.[18] Singing was an important means of communication in a society with limited literacy and no alternatives to oral transmission, and several poems refer to this explicitly.[19] Metrical psalms were sung in church, led by a precentor, people sang working in the fields, and bards, pipers and fiddlers performed at weddings and other occasions, for listening and for dancing. Rob Donn also heard music when he was on the road, herding cattle on the drove roads and later in the Sutherland Fencibles. It seems he was always listening, and the quality of his aural memory and the variety of his musical sources can be traced in his own songs.

1.2 Borrowed tunes

Since approximately two-thirds of Rob Donn's songs reused older melodies, one way to appreciate the soundscape of his musical world is to consider the kinds of music he recycled. We begin with pipe music, easily identifiable by its distinctive nine-note scale (GABC#DEF#GA), although pipe tunes could also be played on the fiddle or sung. Rob

[14] For accessible modern editions, see Martin 2000; and Cannon 1994.

[15] Beard 2018: 31-35; Grimble 1999: 140.

[16] The composition (discussed later in this article) is his praise song for Sally Grant, identified by its refrain '*Ribhinn, aluinn, aoibhinn òig*' in *HVA*: 29, #86. The other six melodies he used – sometimes more than once – are '*Keapach 'na fàsach*' (*HVA*: 25, #61); '*Cia iad na dèe 's na dùile treun*' (*HVA*: 34, #106); '*Òran an Aoig*' (*HVA*: 48, #162); '*An Gille dubh ciar dubh*' (*HVA*: 42, #142); '*A Robaidh, tha thu gòrach*' (*HVA*: 45, #152); and '*Latha siubhail sleibh dhomh*' (*HVA*: 38, #128).

[17] Cannon 1994: 1, 109 n. 16; Martin 1996: 20.

[18] Mackay 1829*:* lviii; Beard 2017: 1–21.

[19] Beard 2018: 141; Morrison 1899: 19.

Donn composed two extended praise songs based on the *pìobaireachd* '*Fàilte a' Phrionnsa*' ('The Prince's Salute').[20] He also borrowed pipe jigs and reels from the *ceòl beag* ('light music') repertoire, several of which appear in William Gunn's 1848 pipe collection, such as '*Banis Inneradhra*' ('The Inverary Wedding' or 'The Campbells are Coming'), '*Crò nan Gobhar*' ('The Goat Pen'), '*Fhear nan Casan Caola*' ('The Man with the Skinny Legs'), '*Gillun an fhèilidh*' ('The Lads with the Kilt'), '*Nul thar nan Eilanun*' (To America we go'), and *'Tha lidh' 'san abhinn 'san allt'* ('The Inundation').[21]

The fiddle tunes in Rob Donn's repertoire can often be identified by their extended range, running passages, semitones, and the dotted strathspey rhythm that Joseph MacDonald called a 'violin reel'.[22] These tunes – reels, jigs and strathspeys – were often (but not exclusively) used as dance music, and could also be sung, typically as settings for satires and humour. In this group, some of Rob Donn's favourites included 'Flowers of Edinburgh', 'Highland Donald kiss'd Kitty', 'John Roy Stewart', 'Johnny's grey breeks', and 'Roy's wife of Aldivalloch'.[23] But singing a fiddle tune was no mean feat, requiring both agility and a considerable range, up to two octaves in one case.[24] This suggests that Rob Donn's own voice was highly versatile, as he had no reason to compose a song he could not communicate to others by singing himself.

The bard's song repertoire was even more varied, including melodies from the Gaelic, Scots, Irish and English traditions. Beginning with Gaelic *òrain mhòra* ('big songs'), he seems to have known '*Alasdair à Gleanna Garadh*' ('Alastair of Glen Garry') by Sìleas na Ceapaich, '*Latha siubhail slèibhe dhomh*' ('One day travelling the hillside') by Lachlan MacKinnon, and classic laments such as '*Cia iad na dèe*' ('Where are the gods?'), '*Ceapach na fàsach*' ('Keppoch a wasteland') by Iain Lom, and '*Murt Ghlinne Comhann*' (The Massacre of Glencoe').[25] Rob Donn used each of these melodies in its original form at least once, and employed some as metrical models for new tunes as well (discussed below).

Another important category of Gaelic melodies is waulking songs: women's work songs identifiable by their strong beat, repetitive structure and vocables. John MacInnes has suggested that the melodies and vocables of these songs are often older than their words, and that the genre was once common throughout the *Gàidhealtachd*.[26] In this case, two of the waulking songs Rob Donn borrowed were widely known – '*Hè an clò dubh*' ('Hey, the dark cloth', a Jacobite song by Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair), and '*Dhèanainn sùgradh ris an nighinn duibh*' ('I would sport with the black-haired lass', a praise song for a boat).[27] The other two are probably local, as they do not appear in the Campbell and Collinson collection from the Western Isles.[28] And while they could have been composed by the bard, it seems

[20] Beard 2018.: 172–78.

[21] Gunn 1886: 76, 20, 52, 84, 10, 59 [Gunn's spelling].

[22] Cannon 1994: 86.

[23] Beard 2018: 116, 70, 147, 55, 153.

[24] *op. cit.*: 55.

[25] *op. cit.*: 52, 60, 179, 28, 22.

[26] MacInnes 2007: 412-26.

[27] Beard 2018: 160, 97.

[28] Campbell and Collinson 1969–1981.

more likely that he followed the general pattern of adding new words to the tunes he heard sung by his own industrious wife and daughters.[29]

Rob Donn also heard (and composed) *puirt-à-beul* ('mouth music') although the term itself was not current in the eighteenth century.[30] Such borrowed tunes offered ease of composition for the bard and intertextual references for listeners who knew the originals. One handy model was '*Robaidh dona gòrach*' ('Poor foolish Robby'), convenient for insulting anyone with a two-syllable name who did something particularly stupid.[31] Another was '*Màiri mhìn mheallshuileach dhubh*' ('Fine Mary of the bewitching dark eyes'), handy for satirising a young lady unable to decide which of two men she would marry.[32]

The last group of borrowed Gaelic song tunes is comprised of slow sad melodies. Two of these are well-known love songs, '*An gille dubh, ciar-dhubh*' ('The dark, black-haired lad') and '*Faillirinn, illirinn*'.[33] Others include '*Ged is socrach mo leapaidh*' ('Although my bed is comfortable'), '*Moch sa mhadainn 's mi làn airtneil*' ('Early in the morning I am full of melancholy'), and '*Throid mo bhean*' ('My wife scolded').[34] These tunes were all suitable for sad songs, although Rob Donn was perfectly capable of using them for satires as well.

Turning to song melodies from non-Gaelic traditions, the largest group – as might be expected – is Scots songs. Several of these he used more than once – 'Barbara Allan', 'Lochaber no more/Lord Ronald my son', 'Logan Water', 'Over the water to Charlie', and 'There's nae luck about the house'.[35] Others include 'Andrew and his cutty gun', 'O as I was kist yestreen', 'Through the wood, laddie', 'Wha'll be King but Charlie', and 'Woo'd and married an a''.[36] These tunes were all popular enough to cross the language barrier without difficulty, and Scots versions can be found readily in large eighteenth-century collections such as *The Caledonian Pocket Companion* and *The Scots Musical Museum*.[37]

At least two of Rob Donn's borrowed melodies have strong Irish connections. One is the lovely '*Tha mi nam chadal*' ('I am sleeping'), which he probably learned indirectly from Sìleas na Ceapaich; another is 'The pearl of the Irish nation', which he may have learned indirectly from a song by John MacCodrum.[38] 'The jolly miller' may have an English origin.[39] The key point is that many tunes crossed language and national boundaries on multiple occasions, and a traditional bard or singer would happily adapt a good tune for his or her own purposes, regardless of origin, just as composers of art music often did.

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[29] Beard 2018: 101, 68.

[30] Lamb 2012: 22.

[31] Beard 2018: 157.

[32] *op. cit.*: 133.

[33] *op. cit.*: 122, 48.

[34] *op. cit.*: 92, 140, 112.

[35] *op. cit.*: 50, 198; 98, 187, 191; 118, 145; 138, 196; 143, 144.

[36] *op. cit.*: 161, 120, 191, 124, 114.

[37] See Purser 2006–2007; Pittock 2018.

[38] Beard 2018: 56, 24. For the originals, see '*Do dh'Arm Rìgh Sheumais*' ('To King James' Army') in Ó Baoill 1972: 234; 'Òran na h-Aoise' ('Song of Age') in Matheson 1938: 325.

[39] Beard 2018: 141.

In short, Rob Donn recycled melodies from Gaelic, Scots, Irish, and English songs, as well as traditional Scottish bagpipe and fiddle tunes. But his borrowing did have some limits. I found no evidence that he used psalm tunes – even for elegies or laments for the dead – despite the fact that he heard and sang them every Sunday he attended church. This implies that he and his community made a strict separation between sacred and secular music, so that melodies sung in church were not considered appropriate elsewhere. Nor is there any evidence that he was influenced by the music of the Italian Baroque, unlike residents, students and visitors in Lowland cities like the MacDonald brothers.[40] While traditional music filtered up the social scale, imported art music did not filter down (or north) as far as Rob Donn and his typical audience in rural Sutherland.

2.0 Composition and traditional music

This brings us to the topic of musical composition, which has attracted surprisingly little analysis from Gaelic scholars despite the general recognition that most Gaelic poetry from the seventeenth century into the twentieth was actually song. As William Gillies noted in 2006, 'there is very little criticism that is expert in musicological and literary terms at the same time.'[41] This can be explained on several grounds, the simplest perhaps being the nature of the profession. Most Gaelic academics and commentators are word people more than music people, with interests and training primarily in language and literature, and several – such as Derick Thomson, Donald MacAulay, Donald Meek and Meg Bateman – have been published poets as well.

Another possible factor is the Gaelic language itself, which has no term equivalent to 'compose' in the sense of creating a piece of music. In standard English to Gaelic dictionaries, 'compose' is translated as *dèan* ('make'), *cuir ri chèile* ('put together'), and *sgrìobh* ('write'), but none of these terms distinguishes between words and music.[42] The term *òran* ('song') is equally ambiguous, as Gaels attributing authorship to song-poetry (including those writing in English) rarely explain whether they mean the words only, the tune only, or both. For instance, Rob Donn's editor Hew Morrison generally used the term 'song' to mean words, but at least once used it to mean music but not words.[43] Evidence also exists that many traditional Gaelic poets, song-makers and singers made no conceptual distinction between the words and music of a song.[44] But others did, such as Rob Donn's patron and friend Iain mac Eachainn, who said, comparing his own work to that of his protegé:

> *Tha m' obair-sa air dol gu làr;*
> *Thèid i bàs do dhìth nam fonn.*
> *Ach leis gach britheamh dan eòl dàn*
> *Bidh cuimhne gu bràth air Rob Donn.*
>
> My work has fallen to the ground;
> It will perish for want of airs.

[40] See Johnson 1972 for the Lowlands in general, and Donaldson 2000: 29-62 for the MacDonald brothers in particular.

[41] Gillies, William 2006: 22.

[42] Robertson and MacDonald 2015: 143; Watson 2005: 74; Thomson 2003: 34.

[43] Morrison 1899: xliii, lv, 408.

[44] Lamb 2013: 66-102 (72).

> But with every judge who has a knowledge of poetry
> Rob Donn will be remembered forever.[45]

The main problem in my view, however, is that no one (including Matheson) has previously attempted to apply basic ethnomusicological principles to the composition of Gaelic song. As a result, unstated assumptions and undefined terms abound, lurking in the underbrush as traps for the unwary. For that reason, a brief theoretical detour into the two principal twentieth-century approaches to understanding composition in traditional music may be in order before we return to Rob Donn.

2.1 Folk-song scholarship

In the first half of the twentieth century, the dominant model in Anglo-American folk-song scholarship was the evolutionary approach articulated by Cecil Sharp in 1907, with its three formative principles of continuity, variation, and selection. Although Sharp acknowledged some role for individual invention in creating new variants of old tunes, he did not emphasize individual creativity or formulate a theory of oral composition.[46] This was still the consensus in 1954, when the following definition was adopted by the International Folk Music Council:

> Folk music is the product of a musical tradition that has been evolved through the process of oral transmission. The factors that shape the tradition are: (i) continuity which links the present with the past; (ii) variation which springs from the creative impulse of the individual or the group; and (iii) selection by the community, which determines the form or forms in which the music survives.[47]

While Gaelic scholars do not typically cite Sharp, they have sometimes expressed similar views regarding continuity and selection: 'The transmission and survival of the verse, primarily within the oral context of song, depended on its acceptability within the community.'[48] But this statement (by Donald Meek) does not address the sources of musical variation; that is, are they individual or communal, conscious or unconscious, and when should they be treated as composition?

While Sharp himself was later criticised for shortcomings such as disregard of individual creativity and overstating the musical isolation of the rural peasantry, he is also credited with establishing an important tradition of 'analysis and classification' in Anglo-American folk song studies.[49] That tradition led to the work of later folk-song scholars such as Samuel Bayard and Bertrand Bronson on melodic classification and tune families, as well as major publication projects such as Bronson's collection of tunes for the Child ballads, the Greig-Duncan collection from northeast Scotland, and the Campbell and Collinson collection from the Hebrides.[50] It also developed concepts for analysing the components of and

[45] Grimble 1999: 107–108.

[46] Sharp 1972: 24–41.

[47] *op. cit.*: xvi–xvii.

[48] Meek 2007: 95-116 (p. 96).

[49] See Porter 1991: 113–30 (114).

[50] Bronson 1959–1972; Shuldham-Shaw and Lyle 1981–2002; Campbell and Collinson 1969-1981.

relationships among folk melodies, including (from smallest to largest) the motif, the phrase, the strain, the melody, the variant and the tune family, as well as scale types based on the number of tones (pentatonic, hexatonic, or heptatonic), modes (the sequence of semitones and tones in a scale), and melodic contour (the shape of rising and falling pitches within a phrase).[51]

In 1984, James Cowdery proposed a new twist on the tune family concept, based on his fieldwork in Ireland, identifying three principles to analyse the relationships among tunes in a particular repertoire.[52] Tunes grouped by the 'outlining' principle show similarities in overall melodic contour. Tunes grouped by the 'conjoining' principle have sections in common, while other sections differ. The 'recombining' principle highlights the fact that smaller melodic segments or motifs can be combined or recombined in many ways, so that two tunes may contain common elements although their overall melodic contours and sections do not correspond.[53] He also suggests convincingly that recombining is how traditional musicians actually compose, drawing from a 'melodic pool' of motifs to 'make new melodies which still conform to the traditional sound.'[54]

Before leaving this topic, two further points should be noted. First, the analytical methods outlined above have been applied only sporadically to Scottish Gaelic melodic material. The earliest example is probably Annie G. Gilchrist's 'Note on the Modal System of Gaelic Tunes' in a foreword to Frances Tolmie's 1911 collection of Skye songs.[55] Fifty years later, Francis Collinson utilized a similar approach in his wide-ranging survey of Scottish traditional music and the three-volume collection of Hebridean waulking songs he co-edited with John Lorne Campbell.[56] More recently, Peter Cooke applied similar methodological tools in analysing the melodies in the 1812 Elizabeth Ross collection from Raasay.[57]

Second, this tradition of Anglo-American folk-song scholarship (while very useful to the present author) largely ceased being productive in ethnomusicology and related fields by the late twentieth century. For instance, a book-length 2014 survey titled *Theory and Methodology in Historical Ethnomusicology* does not even mention it.[58] Nonetheless, its potential in the Scottish Gaelic context is far from exhausted, and the work of Collinson and Cooke shows that it is well-suited to comparing, e.g., Highland and Lowland melodies, tunes for voice, bagpipe and fiddle, and traditional melodies from different parts of the *Gàidhealtachd*, such as Sutherland and the Western Isles.

2.2 Ethnomusicology

In distinct contrast to Sharp and some of his successors is the approach to composition adopted by scholars of traditional music in the later twentieth century. Ethnomusicologists now generally take the position that there is no essential difference between composition in a

[51] See, e.g., Bronson 1946: 37–49; Bayard 1950: 1–44; Adams 1976: 179–215.

[52] Cowdery 1984: 495–504.

[53] *op. cit.*: 496–98.

[54] *op. cit.*: 499, 502.

[55] Gilchrist 1997: 150-53.

[56] Collinson 1966; Campbell and Collinson 1969-1981.

[57] Cooke 2013: 103-21.

[58] McCollum and Hebert 2014.

literate and an oral context, and that notation, while permitting the development of more extended musical structures, merely reflects musical ideas after the fact.[59] Bruno Nettl describes several continuums that apply to all composition, written and oral: (1) inspiration and perspiration; (2) composition and improvisation; and (3) the three stages of precomposition, composition, and revision.[60] This analysis largely parallels one in a standard mid-twentieth-century textbook on musicology, which describes composition as a three-stage process involving preparation, inspiration and revision.[61]

It is also instructive in this context to consider the views of Leo Treitler, a leading scholar of medieval chant, another musical tradition (like eighteenth-century Gaelic song) that developed in a transition zone between orality and literacy:

> Like the practitioners of any traditional music the singers of chant composed their melodies following overall formal models and patterns and calling on specific formulaic units of melody at appropriate points, all of these having emerged from the practice itself, and all as native and natural to the singers as their mother tongues. [...] In any case uniqueness and originality seems not to have been singled out by them as a special value, as it has been in other cultures. Many of the melodies cluster in types marked by common features. [...] Differences between individual melodies of a type can very often be recognized as responses to details of the words they were made to intone. The makers of chant followed quite specific principles in adapting melodies to words, paying attention to all parameters of language — semantic, syntactic, and phonetic.[62]

Treitler's description of chant as 'sung language' matches very closely the aesthetic of traditional Gaelic singers; it also resembles Cowdery's description of folk composition as the recombining of musical motifs to create something new that still sounds traditional.[63]

In other words, what Sharp called 'variation', Nettl would call 'composition'. On this topic, it seems clear that Matheson's views are closer to Sharp's than to Nettl's, as one might expect for a scholar of his generation. That is, Matheson assumed (in the quotation at the beginning of this article) that only 'conscious' composition counts as real composition or creative endeavour. This cannot be correct; among other things, it unjustifiably privileges composers trained in a written tradition who can articulate verbally or illustrate in staff notation how they have constructed a piece of music. Nettl argued instead that all musical composition involves both unconscious inspiration and conscious craftsmanship.

> To some extent, music is inspired, in the sense that we cannot analyze the way in which it finds itself into the thinking of a musician, but perhaps more important, it is also the result of manipulation and

[59] Nettl 2015: 49-62; Blacking, 1973: xi; Merriam 1964: 165–66.

[60] Nettl 2015: 51-53.

[61] Haydon 1941: 104–05.

[62] Treitler 2007, Chapter 6: 2 of 67 (www.oxfordscholarship.com).

[63] See, e.g., Gillies, Anne Lorne 2010: xxvii; Cowdery 1984: 499.

> rearrangement of the units of a given vocabulary, of hard work and concentration.[64]

That is, every composer works with an existing set of musical materials, modifying them in various ways according to individual ability and inclination as well as the rules of musical grammar or norms of musical style available within the culture. What is 'given' and what is 'added' depends on the culture; in traditional music, the 'given' is larger than the 'new.'[65] In our case study, Rob Donn was recognised as a creative musician by his contemporaries, but the content and enduring popularity of his musical corpus show that he never strayed outside the cultural boundaries (previously discussed) considered acceptable by his audience.

3.0 Compositional methods

Given this background, we now consider three compositional methods used by Rob Donn, with several detailed examples of each. They are: (1) new melodies based on metrical models; (2) new melodies adapting musical motifs; and (3) new melodies with no known sources.

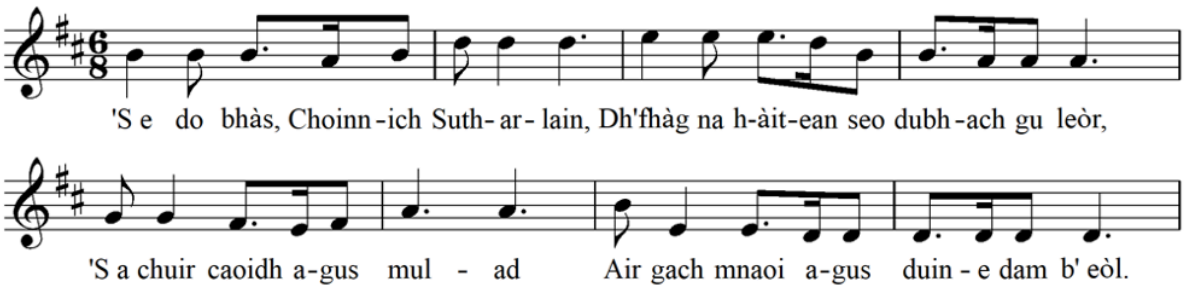
3.1 New melodies based on metrical models

Rob Donn used this compositional technique repeatedly for his serious elegies, in each case borrowing a well-known melody for one and using its metrical model for others. His three models were '*Murt Ghlinne Comhann*' ('The Massacre of Glencoe'), '*Ceapach na fàsach*' ('Keppoch a wasteland'), and '*Latha siubhail slèibhe dhomh*' ('One day travelling the hillside').[66] The first two are laments for notorious seventeenth-century murders and the last an early eighteenth-century *òran mòr* ('big song'); what they share is powerful melodies with widely-recognised associations in the *Gàidhealtachd*, making them intentional and culturally appropriate choices for a bard working in that tradition.

3.1.1 First metrical model – *Murt Ghlinne Comhann*

Rob Donn borrowed this melody for one elegy and used its metrical model in another four. The original melody is shown here in two forms, first in 6/8 time as a setting for his elegy to the factor Kenneth Sutherland, and then rewritten in 4/4 time to illustrate its use as a metrical model.

Marbhrann do Choinneach Sutharlain/Elegy for Kenneth Sutherland[67]

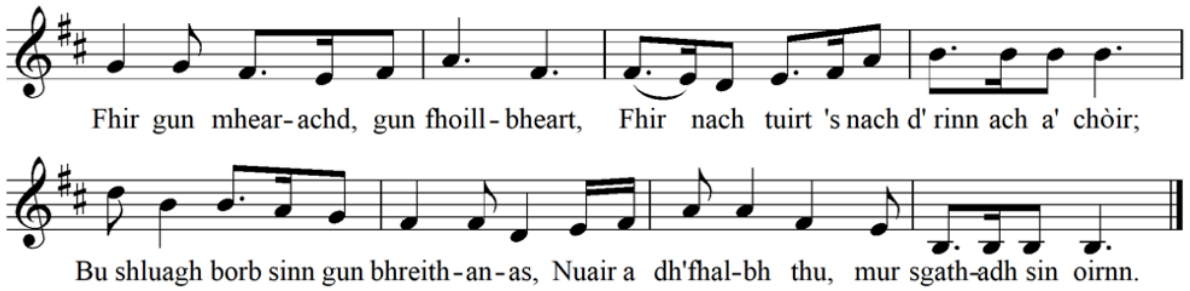


[64] Nettl 2015: 51.

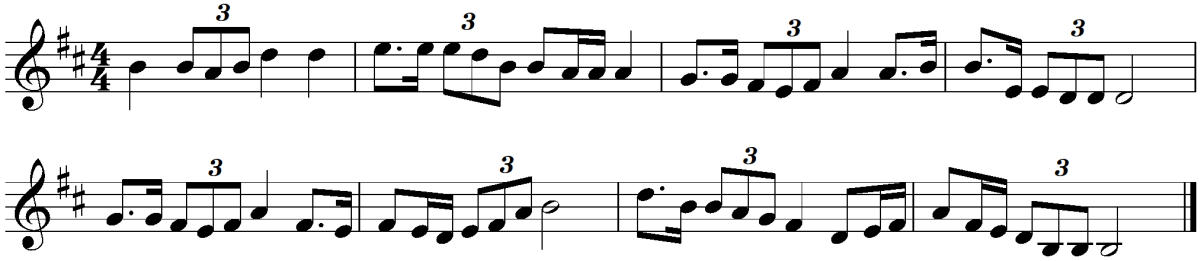
[65] Blacking 1973: 106; Nettl 2015: 54-57.

[66] The original poems can be found, respectively, in Ó Baoill 1994: 190–99; MacKenzie, Annie M. 1964: 82–93; and Black 2001: 28–37.

[67] Beard 2018: 22.

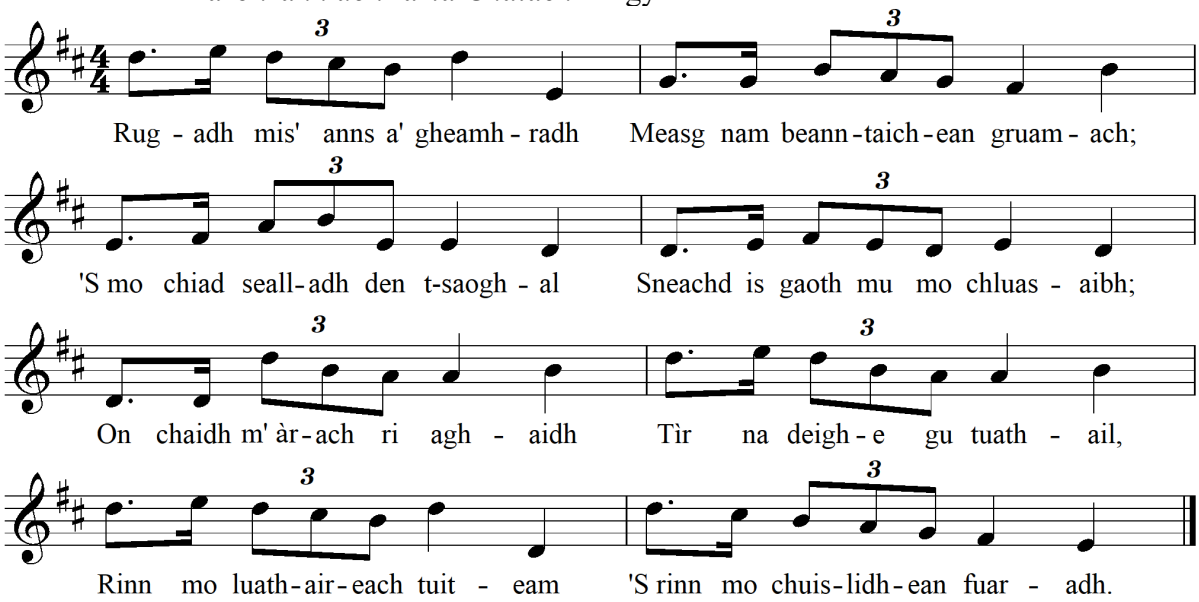


Massacre of Glencoe/Elegy for Kenneth Suthlerland in 4/4 Time



This particular rhythm is so distinctive and recurs so often in Rob Donn's elegies that I labelled it his funeral march rhythm before I identified its source. Musically, the most interesting of the related elegies is the following:

Marbhrann don Iarla Chatach/Elegy for the Earl of Sutherland[68]

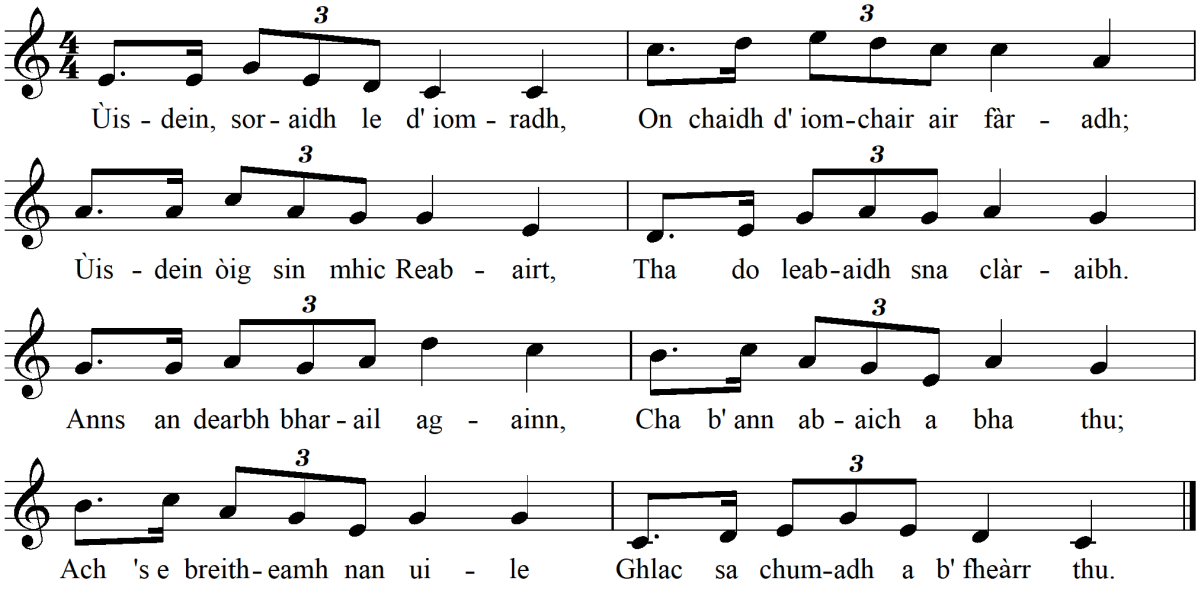


[68] *op.cit.*: 36.

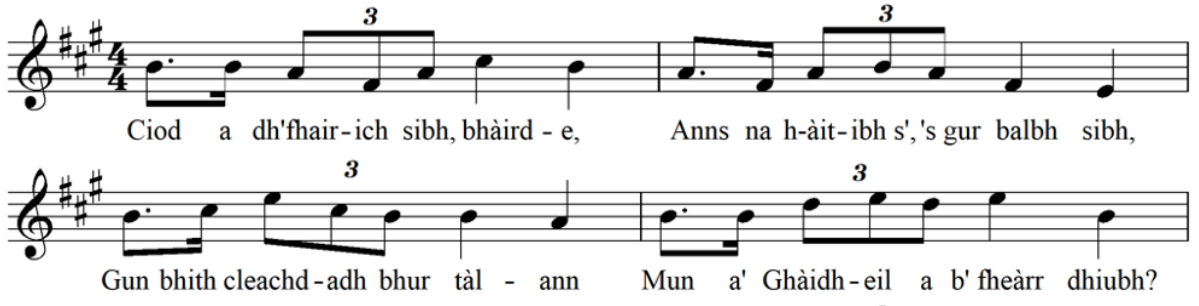
The internal evidence for composition is the word painting in the last two lines of this verse, which is autobiographical and unrelated to the Earl.[69] The melodic line echoes the text by placing an ascending octave leap between the words *chaidh* and *m' àrach* ('I grew up' or 'was raised') and a corresponding descending octave in the middle of the word *tuiteam* ('declined' or 'fell'). This cannot be accidental; in a sense it is Rob Donn's own swan song, with a striking and haunting melody to match its words.

The other three elegies are reproduced below. All four share the same rhythm, but their pitch sequences and tonality differ. The elegy to the Earl (shown above) uses a full heptatonic major scale; the elegy to Hugh MacKay, son of a local tacksman, is pentatonic with a major tonality. The next, to a Major MacLean who died in the Seven Years' War, is hexatonic with a missing third and a minor seventh; while the last, to Ewen, is heptatonic in the Dorian mode (minor third, major sixth and minor seventh). Musically, then, their only obvious commonality is their metre.

Marbhrann Ùisdein MhicAoidh/Elegy for Hugh MacKay[70]



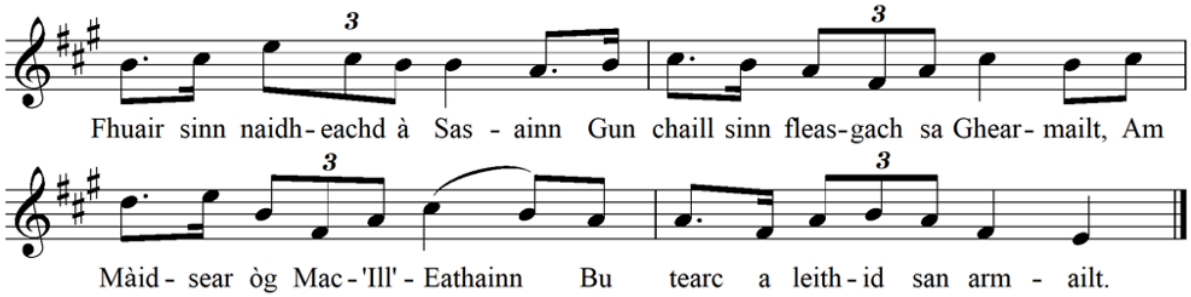
Marbhrann air Màidsear Mac'Ill'Eathainn/Elegy for Major MacLean[71]



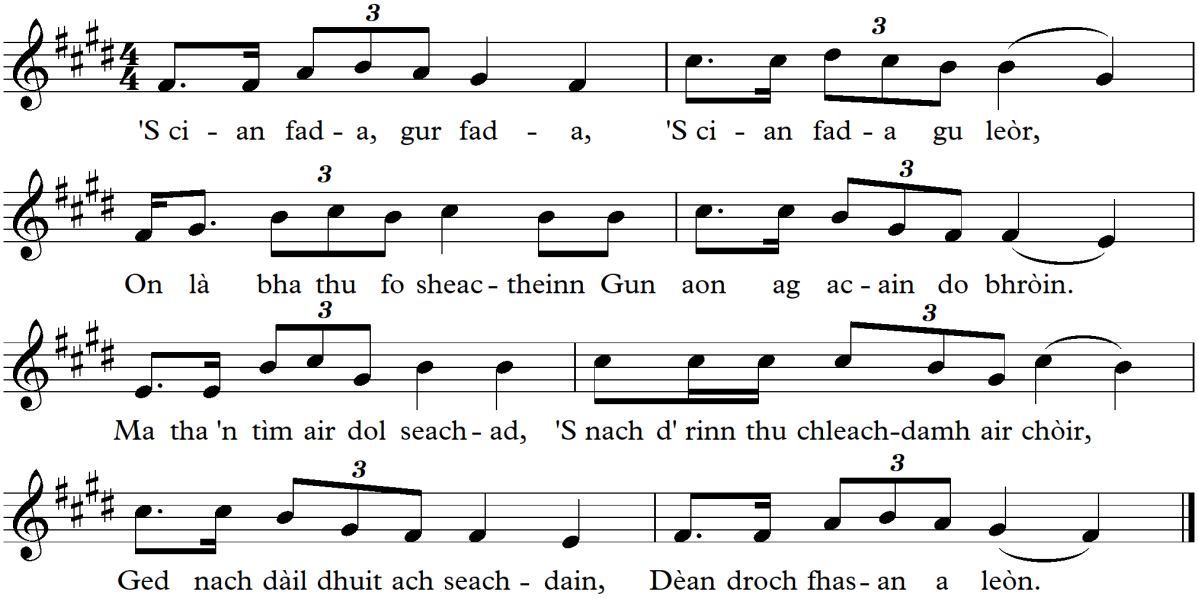
[69] Word painting is 'The expression through music of the ideas presented or suggested by the words of a song or other vocal piece'. Apfel 1972: 928.

[70] Beard 2018: 14.

[71] *op. cit.*: 20.



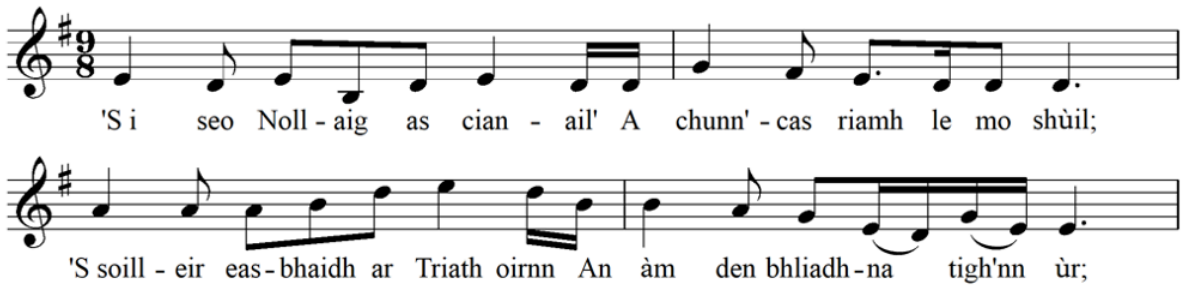
Marbhrann Eòghainn/Elegy for Ewen[72]



3.1.2 Second metrical model – *Ceapach na fàsach*

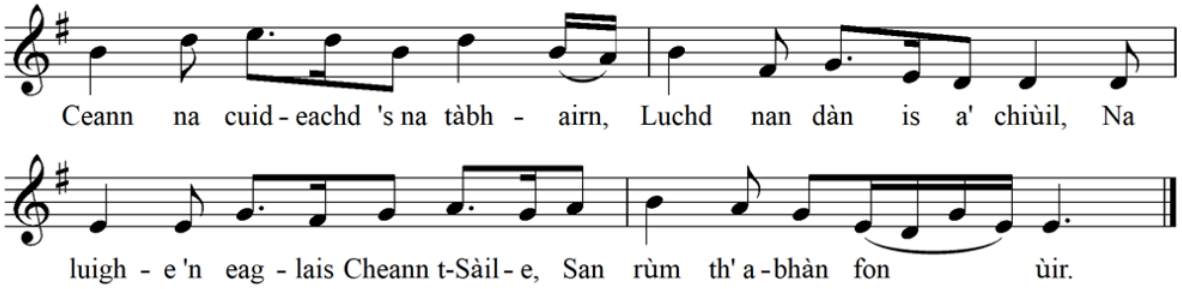
Rob Donn set his 1761 elegy for Donald, Lord Reay, to the melody of Iain Lom's song on the Keppoch murders of 1663. This setting shows the continuing strength of Gaelic oral tradition in this domain, as both are laments for clan chiefs, and Rob Donn must have chosen the tune at least in part for that reason.

Marbhrann do Dhòmhnall, Morair MacAoidh/Elegy for Donald, Lord Reay[73]



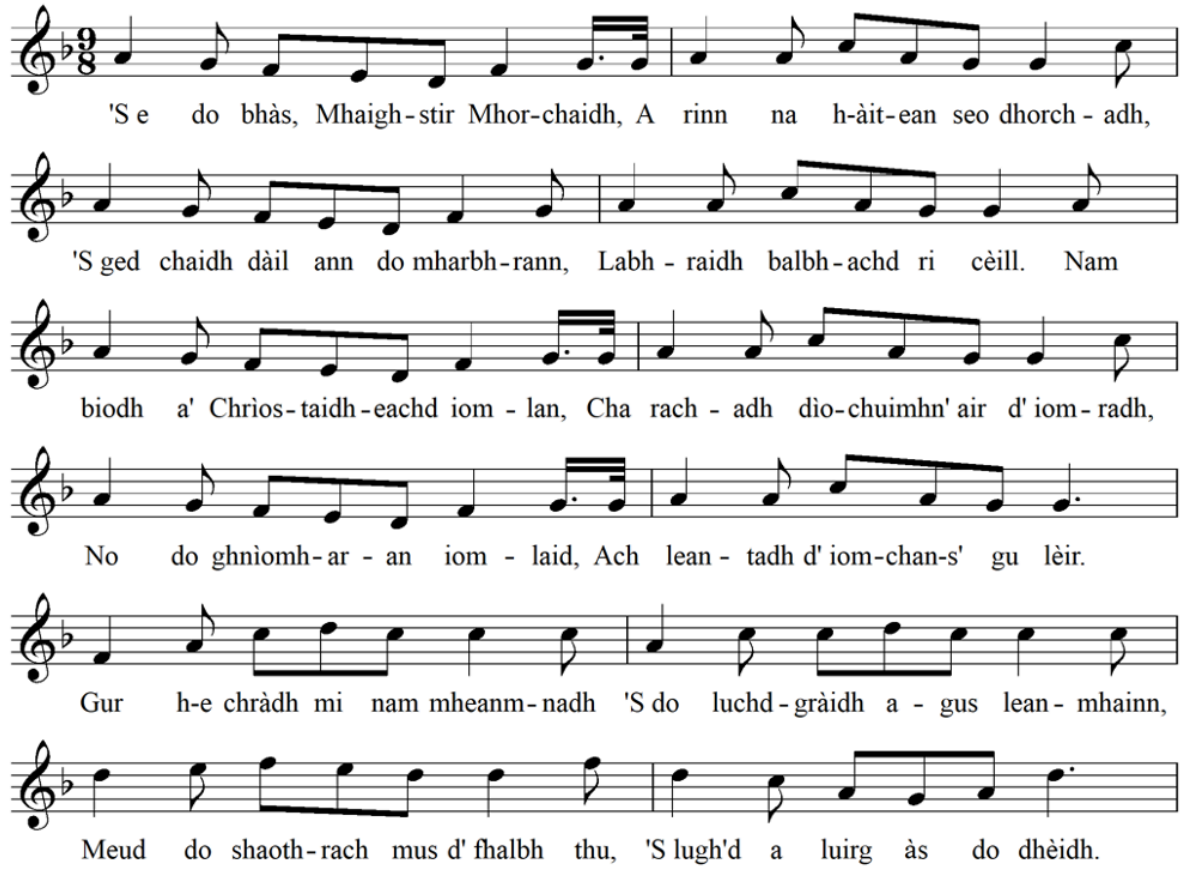
[72] *op. cit.*: 39.

[73] *op. cit.*: 28.

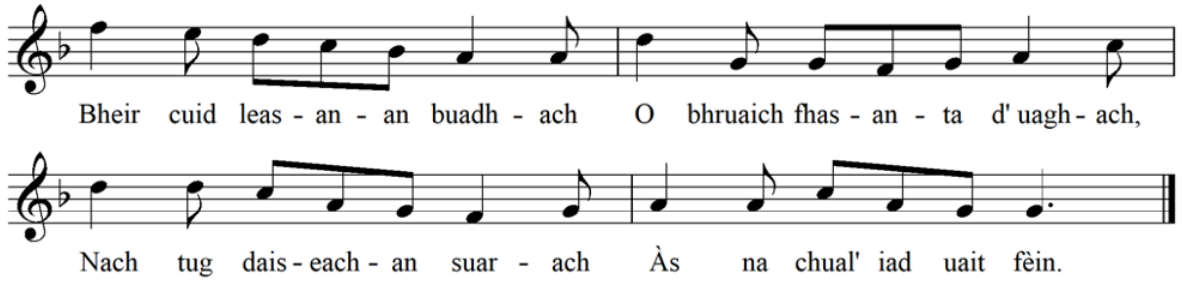


The 9/8 metre of this melody is unusual in Rob Donn's corpus; it appears only four times, including the two elegies under discussion here. The next example is Rob Donn's most extended composition in this genre, the elegy for his minister Rev. MacDonald, which extends the eight bars of its model to sixteen and uses a series of descending musical phrases to emphasize the weight of the bard's grief.

Marbhrann do Mhaighstir Morchadh/Elegy for Rev. Murdo MacDonald[74]



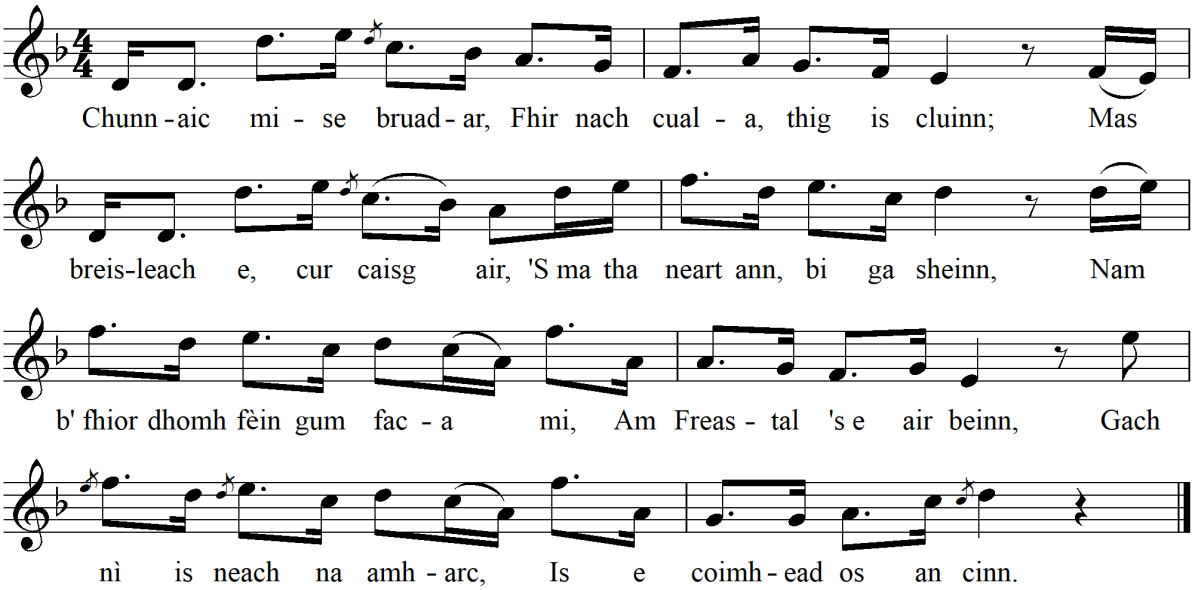
[74] *op. cit.*: 31.



3.1.3 Third metrical model – *Latha siubhail slèibhe dhomh*

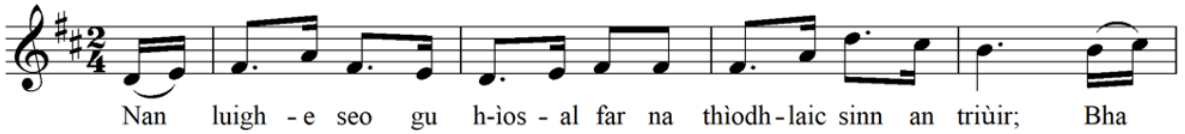
The metrical model for the last two songs is the *òran mòr* '*Latha siubhail slèibhe dhomh*' by Lachlan MacKinnon. Unlike the previous examples, this poem is not an elegy, and Rob Donn used its tune for an extended satire, '*Am bruadar*'('The dream'), shown below:

Am Bruadar/The Dream[75]



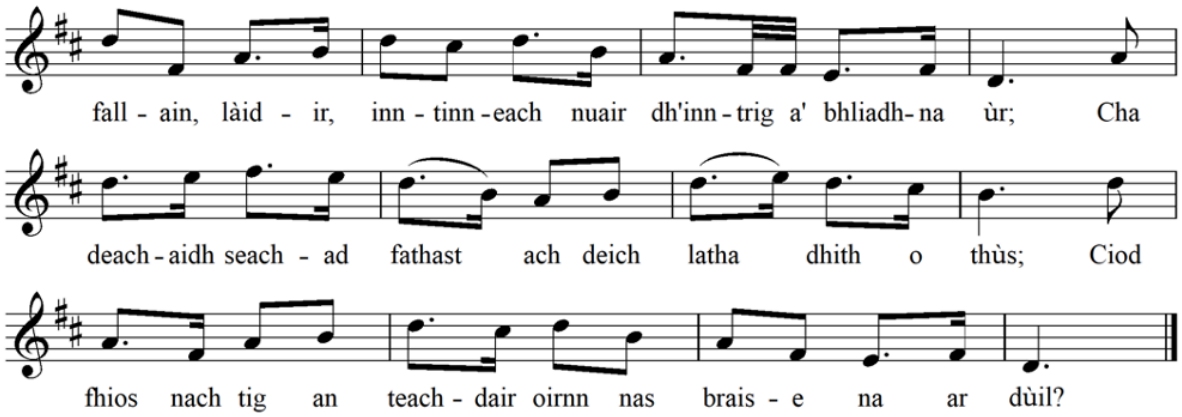
But he also used the metrical model for another song, his frequently-anthologised satirical elegy for the Rispond misers:

Marbhrann do Chloinn Fhir Taigh Ruspainn/Elegy for the Rispond Misers[76]



[75] *op. cit.*: 60.

[76] *op. cit.*: 41.



Again, the metre is virtually identical, and one source indicates that the second poem was sung to the first tune.[77] But the tunes are actually quite different, in melodic line and tonality (the former minor and the latter major). In addition, the elegy for the misers seems to contain two more instances of deliberate word painting: the word *ìosal* ('low') in the first line on the lowest note of the melody, and the word *fallain* ('healthy') on a descending sixth in the second line, probably a bilingual musical pun on the English word 'fallen'. Bilingual puns and word painting of this sort were among Rob Donn's favourite gestures, demonstrating his ability to move deftly between Gaelic, English and music as means of communication with his audience.

3.2.0 New melodies adapting musical motifs

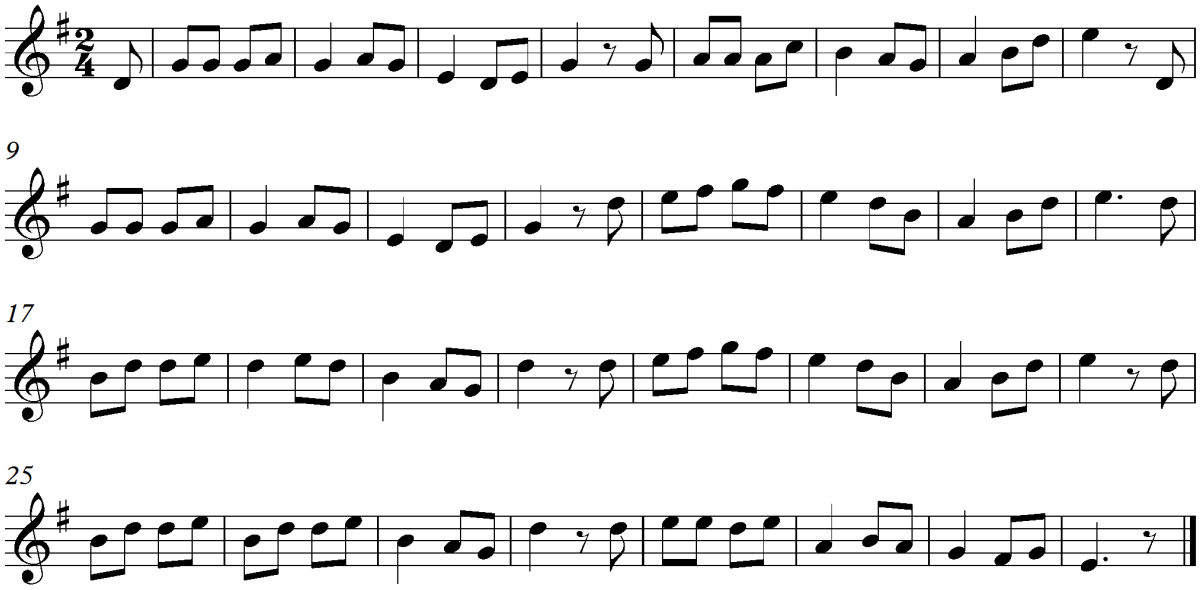
This compositional method is more complex, involving considerable rearrangement and change to pitch sequences as well as rhythm, reassembling musical motifs and elements of the traditional soundscape to create new song airs. Four examples will be examined, each comprised of a possible source followed by Rob Donn's tune. Some resemblances are more obvious than others, but all are explained to the extent possible so the reader may consider to what extent Rob Donn's melodies are derivative or should be classified as variants. In these examples – unlike the elegies – I take no position on the degree to which his borrowings were conscious or unconscious, nor do I consider the question particularly important. All I can offer is circumstantial evidence that (1) the models predated his songs, (2) he could have heard them, and (3) each pair of melodies has demonstrable common elements.

3.2.1 *A' chiad Diluain den ràithe/'S trom leam an àirigh*

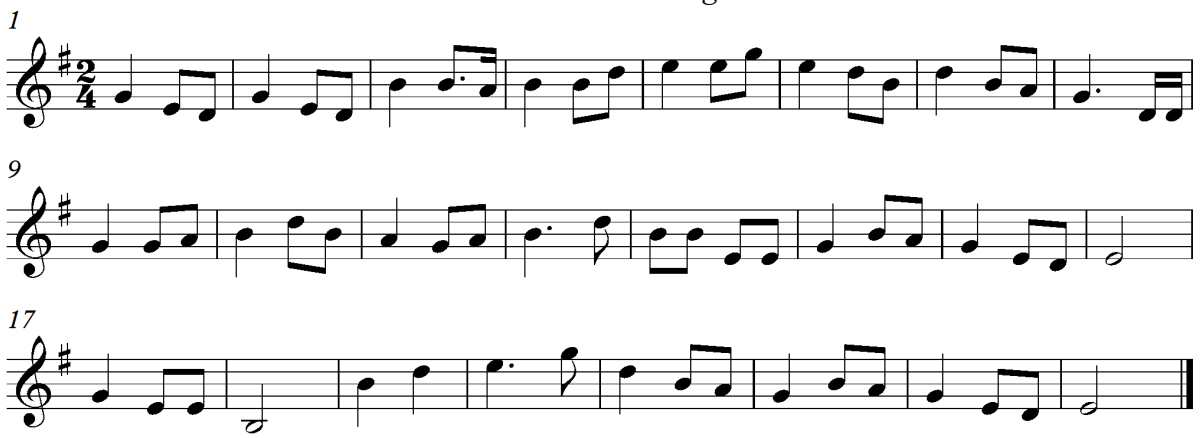
This example explores Matheson's contention that the tune for Rob Donn's well-known love song '*'S trom leam an àirigh*' ('Sad is the shieling') is a variant of the air for An Clàrsair Dall's song '*A' chiad Diluain den ràithe*' ('The first Monday of the season').[78] Their temporal relationship is not at issue, as An Clàrsair Dall ('The Blind Harper', Rory Morrison) is thought to have died in 1714, the year of Rob Donn's birth, and the latter probably knew the earlier song. The best way to evaluate the claim is by a direct comparison of the two melodies (using Matheson's source) in the same key:

[77] MacKenzie, John 1841: 212.
[78] Matheson 1970: 158–59.

A' chiad Diluain den ràithe[79]



'S trom leam an àirigh[80]



There is no question that these melodies have features in common, perhaps enough to place them in a single tune family. Both are essentially pentatonic, constructed on the notes E, G, A, B and D (although '*A' chiad Diluain*' also has an F# in bars 13, 21 and 31). They share a double tonic in E minor and D major with most principal cadences on E and frequent use of G (the minor third) on downbeats. Both are in 2/4 time with a large range, although Rob Donn's is larger. Two short melodic motifs also occur in both: a similar descending pattern from B to E at the end of each tune, and frequent use of the ascending pattern BDE.

On the other hand, the overall structure of the two melodies is distinct and they contain no identical bars or phrases. They also differ in length: '*A' chiad Diluain*' has four 8-bar phrases (32 bars total) while '*'S trom leam*' has only three such phrases (24 bars total). The earlier melody is comprised largely of quavers and stepwise motion with few large leaps,

[79] Martin 1996: 58.

[80] Beard 2018: 94.

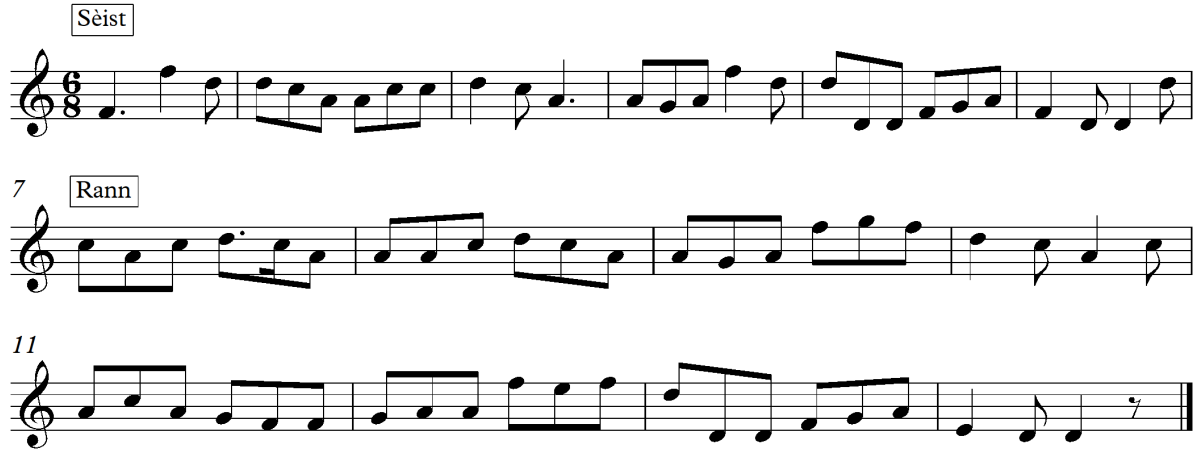
while Rob Donn uses more descending patterns, longer notes and larger leaps, especially the dramatic sequence in bars 17-20 that brings all motion to a complete halt on the low B, followed by an octave leap and rapid ascent to the high G two bars later. In Simon Fraser's words, this passage 'is avowedly Rob Donn's [...] imitating a sneering laugh at his own folly, for trusting so much to the faith of womankind, if a preferable match offers.'[81] This is word painting with a vengeance, and there is nothing remotely comparable in the other tune.

The question is whether the similarities in the tunes outweigh the differences sufficiently to deprive Rob Donn of the honour of composing the melody of his most famous love song. In the version of An Clàrsair Dall's melody in the Patrick MacDonald collection, the kinship to Rob Donn's melody is more evident than in Angus Fraser's version.[82] This suggests that Matheson was arguably correct in treating the two tunes as variants. On the other hand, as the overall shape of Rob Donn's melody is uniquely memorable and closely wedded to its text, I would probably classify it as composition using Cowdery's principle of recombining.

3.2.2 *Briogais mhic Ruaraidh* ('MacRory's Breeks')

The next example – also suggested initially by Matheson – poses more difficult questions of priority because Rob Donn's song was composed for a 1747 wedding in Sutherland and the alleged variant was transcribed by Elizabeth Ross in Raasay in 1812. A further complication is that Rob Donn's song requires sixteen bars, and the Ross tune has only fourteen. Nevertheless, Ross's editors raise the question: 'Could this tune be a version of some older song with the same title, which survived in Raasay for decades despite the likely popularity of Rob Donn's song?'[83] This is certainly possible, although the opposite sequence (that the Raasay tune incorporated part of Rob Donn's original) seems more likely given their respective dates. Again, both are set out below in comparable form.

Elizabeth Ross Melody[84]



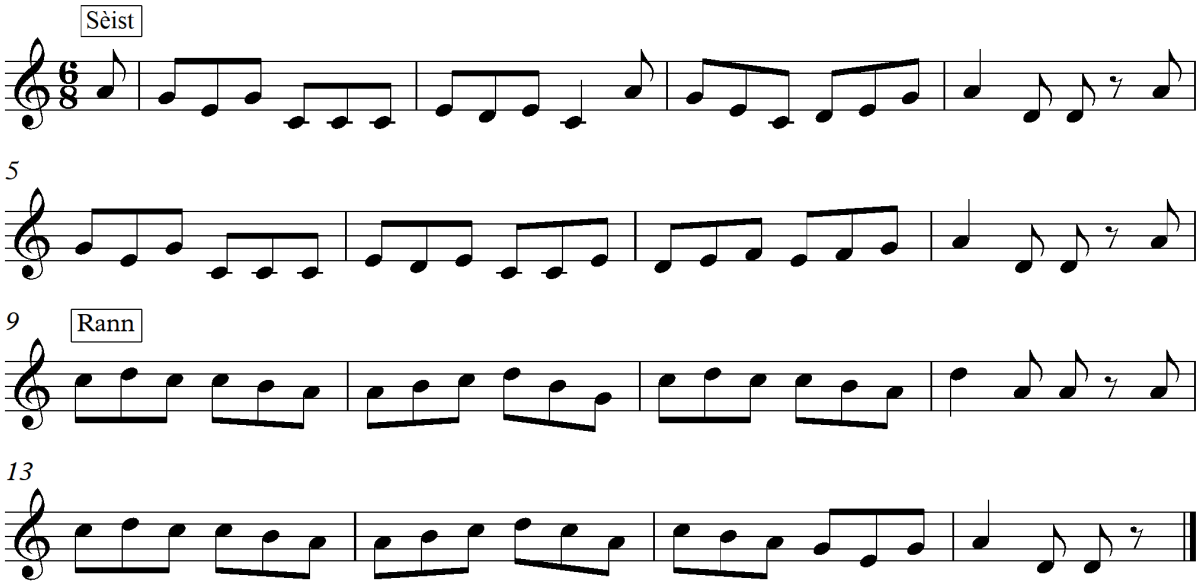
[81] Cranford 1982: 101, #24. This comment refers specifically to the words 'Ha, ha, ha!' in bars 17-18 in verse 4, although two other verses also contain interjections at this point. See Beard 2018: 94-95.

[82] Martin 2000: 49, #166.

[83] Cooke, MacLeod and Ó Baoill 2016: 34–35.

[84] *op. cit.*: 93 (#20).

Briogais mhic Ruaraidh[85]



Comparing the two melodies, both are 6/8 jigs, but no two bars are identical, and the two choruses seem quite unrelated. The Ross tune has a larger range (an eleventh compared to Rob Donn's ninth, the bagpipe range), and larger leaps (four octaves and three sixths), compared to Rob Donn's mostly stepwise motion, plus thirds and fifths. The tonality also differs, as Rob Donn's tune is firmly structured on a double tonic in C major and D minor (in the key shown), while the other tune has a predominant feel of F major. Another oddity is that the Ross melody is marked 'slow' while the Rob Donn tune is marked '*Gu h-aighearach*' ('merry') and is typically sung rapidly in *puirt-à-beul* style. On the other hand, the *rann* ('verse') melodies are closer than the *sèist* ('chorus'), and the existence of a musical model of some kind can probably be inferred from the circumstances of Rob Donn's composition, eleven verses and a chorus during a short walk between Bad na h-Achlais and Muiseal on his way to the wedding. Perhaps the precursor was different from both and the tunes diverged in opposite directions. Using Cowdery's terms, the later composer (whether Rob Donn or a resident of Raasay) employed both conjoining (of dissimilar choruses and similar verses) and recombining (of elements within the older verse) to create a distinct melody. In any case, it is Rob Donn's song that has survived, a good example of Sharp's principle of selection.

3.2.3 O'er the hills and far away/*An rìbhinn àlainn, èibhinn, òg*

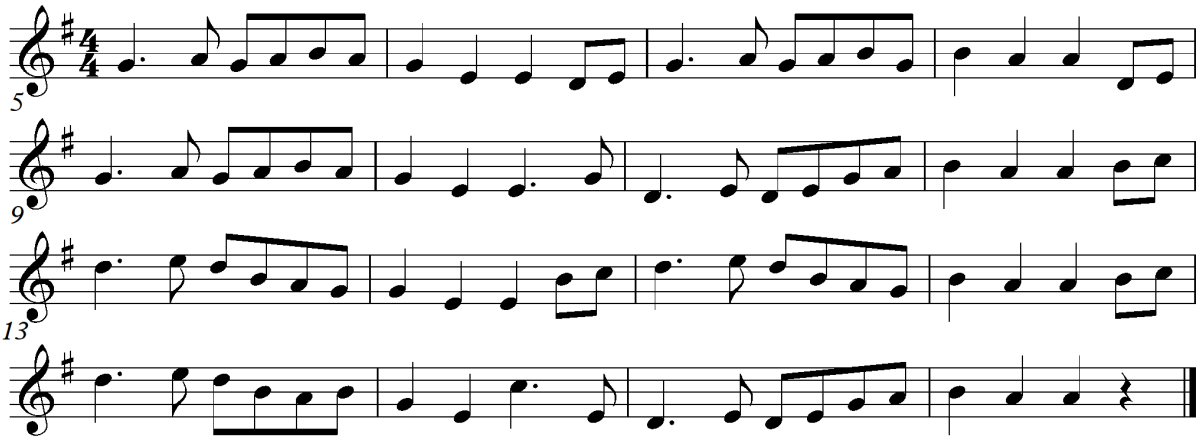
In this example and the next, both identified by the author, Rob Donn used a popular tune in both its original and a substantially revised form. 'O'er the hills and far away' is a jaunty tune with a long pedigree that appeared in the Atkinson manuscript of 1694-95 and in a song called 'The Recruiting Officer' published in 1706.[86] Rob Donn liked it well enough to use it twice with his own words, both times in satires. Later, he extracted and recombined elements of the melody to compose a new song praising a young lady named Sally Grant, who was the

[85] Beard 2018: 127.

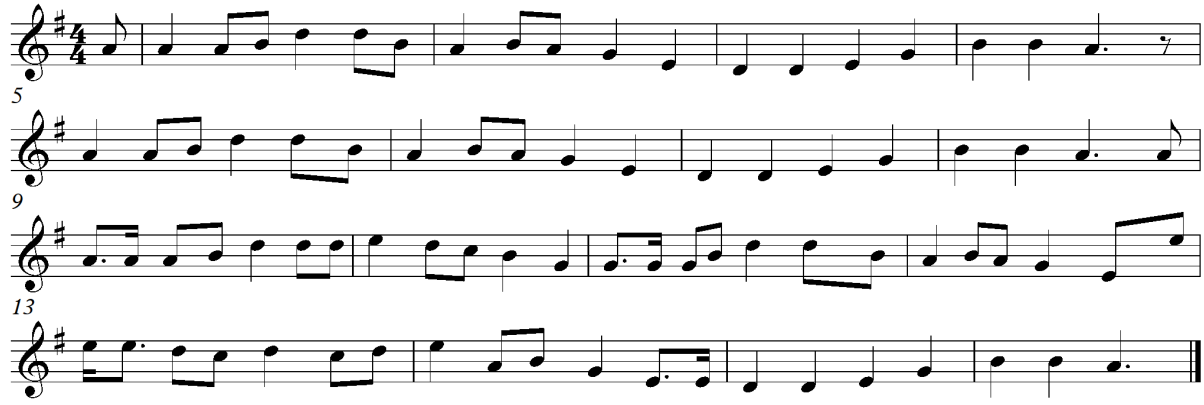
[86] Purser 2006-07, VII: 23, notes.

toast of the Sutherland Fencibles in Inverness. The best way to see the resemblance is to compare versions in the same key, without words, the first from *The Scots Musical Museum* and the second from Rob Donn.

O'er the hills and far away'[87]



An rìbhinn àlainn, èibhinn, òg/To Sally Grant[88]



What Rob Donn did here to create a new melody was actually quite sophisticated — he changed the placement as well as the notes of the two-bar phrases, so that only the fourth phrase of the original verse and chorus has strong parallels to his refrain '*An rìbhinn, àlainn, èibhinn, òg*' at the ends of lines 1, 2, and 4. Specifically, the identical bars 7-8 and 15-16 in 'O'er the hills' are transformed into the identical bars 3-4, 7-8, and 15-16 in 'Sally Grant' by removing the quavers but leaving the sequence of crotchets intact. Elsewhere the transmutations are greater. That is, Rob Donn extends the melodic arc in bars 1-2 and 5-6 to D rather than stopping at B, and he varies his bars 9-14 more than the comparable bars in 'O'er the hills'. But the tonality (major, almost pentatonic, with no seventh and an occasional fourth), the melodic contours of the phrases, and even the circular ending on the second are the same in both, so it seems fair to treat 'O'er the hills' as his model for 'Sally Grant'.

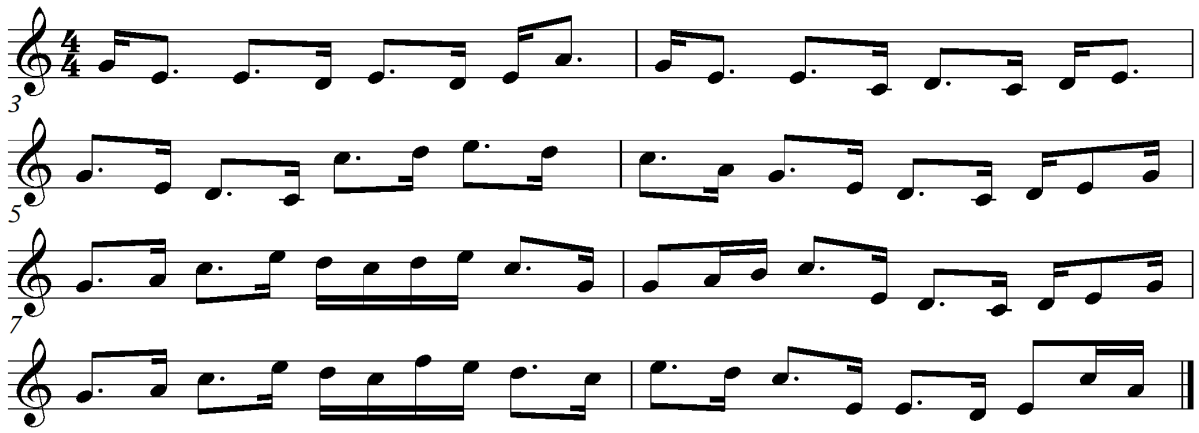
[87] Pittock 2018, II: 108-109, #62.

[88] Beard 2018: 183.

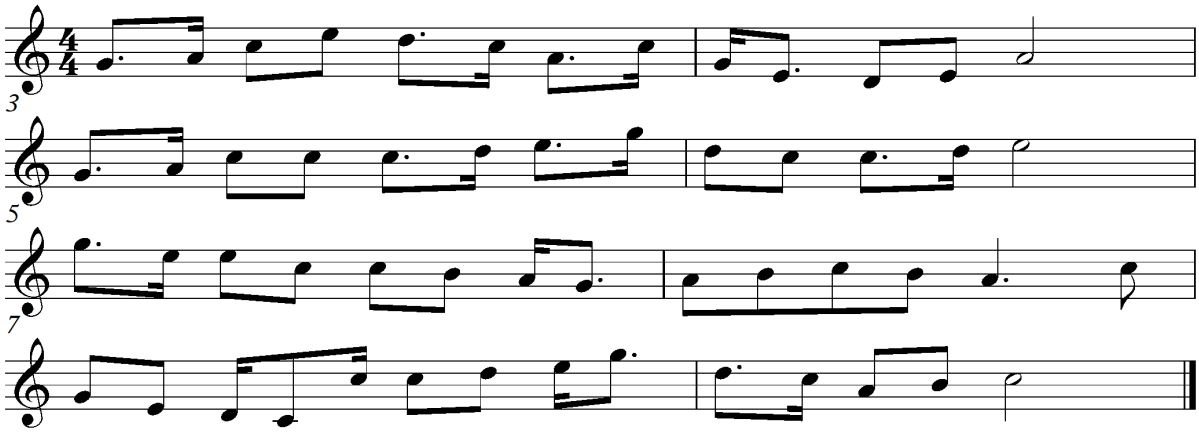
3.2.4 Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch/Mary and Isabel

In this case, like the last, Rob Donn used a popular melody in both its original and a substantially revised form, although here his revision seems to have come first. The borrowed tune is the jaunty strathspey 'Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch', which the bard used for a satire about a schoolmaster who moonlighted as a Peeping Tom.[89] The newly composed melody accompanies an earlier song, a charming dialogue between the two young daughters of Iain mac Eachainn praising and dispraising life at the shielings. This is another intriguing case of folk composition because it seems the bard composed the tune by consciously or unconsciously manipulating the melody of 'Roy's Wife' to create a distinct but recognizable variant. To facilitate comparison, 'Roy's Wife' and 'Mary and Isabel' are printed here in the same key and time signature:

Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch[90]



Màiri agus Iseabail/Mary and Isabel[91]



[89] *op. cit.*: 153.

[90] Pittock 2018: II: 419, #342.

[91] Beard 2018: 189.

The resemblances between these two melodies appear mainly at the level of the individual bar or half-bar. Specifically, Rob Donn's bars 1 and 3 are similar to Roy's bars 5 and 7, while Rob Donn's bars 5 and 7 correspond to Roy's bars 1 and 3. The even-numbered bars share only motifs and contours: the descending pattern at the beginning of bar 2, the sequence DCDE in bar 4 (an octave higher in Rob Donn), the ascending pattern at the beginning of bar 6, and the pattern that first descends and then ascends in bar 8 to end (more or less) on a C. Other parallels also exist, such as the fact that every odd-numbered bar begins on a G. But the differences are also typical, as Rob Donn extended the range twice to high G and placed most of his cadences on higher notes than 'Roy's Wife', creating a more expansive melody that shows once again his large vocal range. This is another example of the compositional technique Cowdery calls 'recombining'.[92]

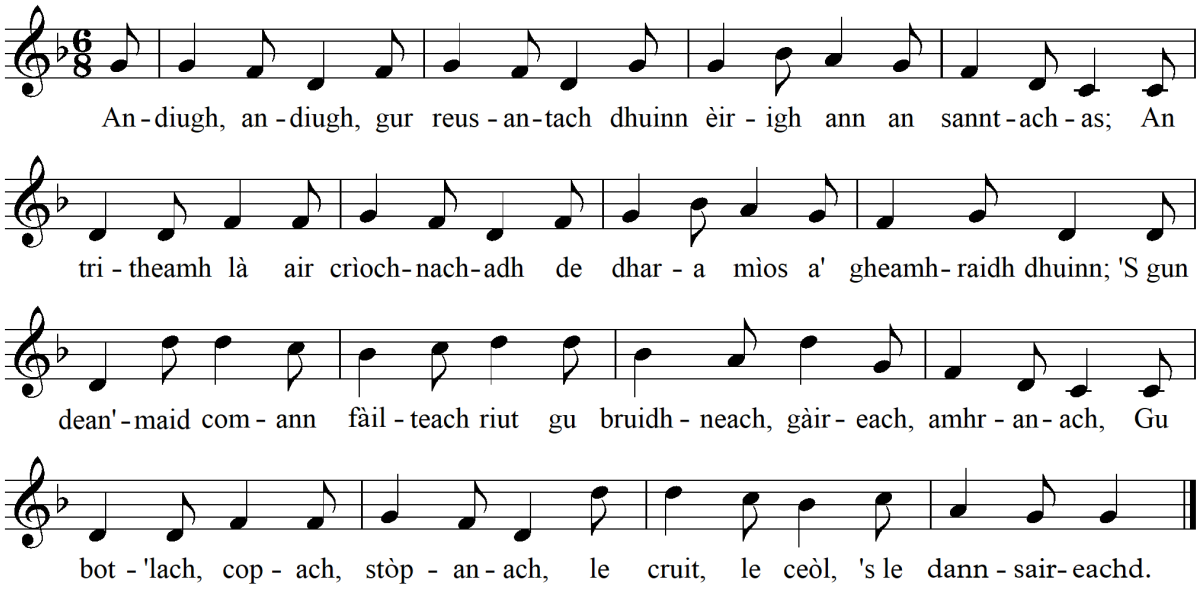
3.3.0 New melodies with no known sources

Finally, there are several examples of melodies with no obvious antecedents that are uniformly attributed to Rob Donn. In each case the melody and first verse of the song are reproduced; the complete texts and translations are available elsewhere.

3.3.1 *Do Phrionnsa Teàrlach*/To Prince Charles

The first example is Rob Donn's song welcoming Prince Charles Edward Stewart to Scotland in 1745. Although not his only Jacobite song, it is the only one that may have an original melody.

Do Phrionnsa Teàrlach/To Prince Charles[93]



This melody was transcribed by John Munro in MacKay Country in the mid-nineteenth century, printed by Gunn and MacFarlane in 1899, and reproduced by John Lorne Campbell in *Highland Songs of the Forty-Five* in 1933; no other tune is known. The tune itself is hexatonic and minor, with a double tonic in G minor and F major, and the range of a ninth. The marking in the first edition is '*Gu smearail*' ('vigorous'), and the octave leap in the

[92] Cowdery 1984: 498–502.

[93] Beard 2018: 46.

middle of the word *dèanamaid* (‘let’s do it!’) strongly emphasizes the feeling of a *brosnachadh* (‘incitement’).

3.3.2 *Am Boc Glas*/The Grey Buck

This example is a pipe jig credited to the bard by John Mackenzie and Hew Morrison. According to Mackenzie:

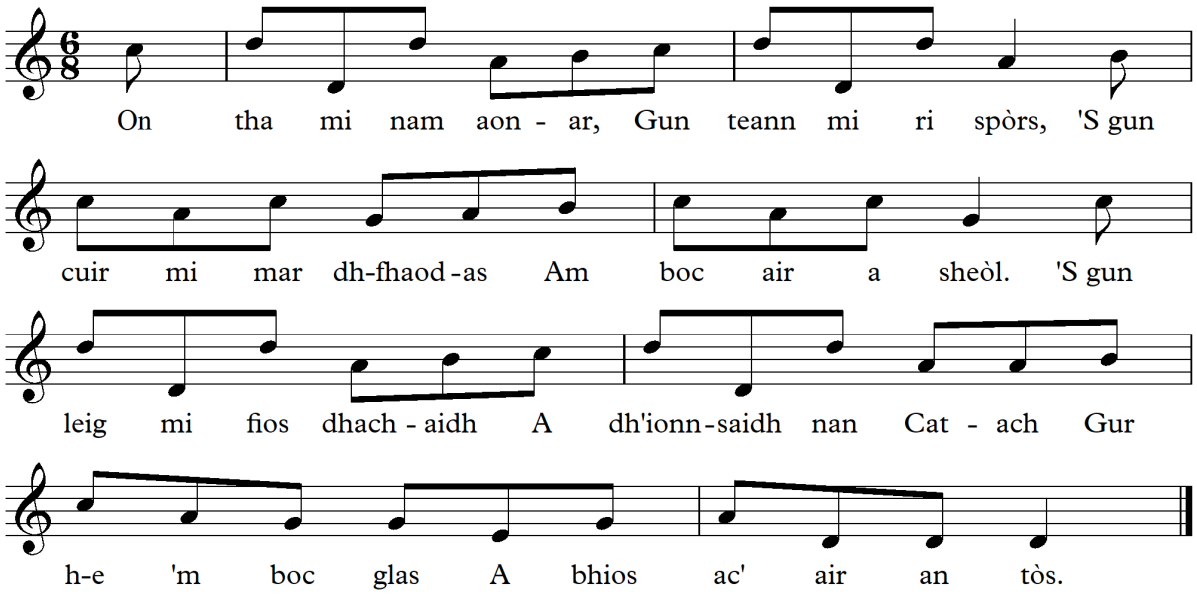
> The tune is excellent and may justly be entitled the first of the Sutherlandshire pipe jigs. It was the poet’s own composition.[94]

Morrison takes the position that Rob Donn composed the tune but not the words:

> This poem, although ascribed to Rob Donn in Mackenzie’s *Beauties of Gaelic Poetry*, is not usually reckoned as his. Many of the people of the bard’s native district aver it is not Rob’s. There can be little doubt, however, that the song is Rob Donn’s, and one of the very latest of his productions.[95]

If this piece of oral tradition is correct, it may be the only song in Rob Donn’s corpus where someone else composed the words. Their target, however, is well-documented in the records of the Kirk Session; he was a serial fornicator named Donald MacKay who sailed for the West Indies in 1778 after being accused of fornication with six different women over a four-year period. As that was the year of Rob Donn’s death, it could well be among the last of his compositions.

Am Boc Glas/The Grey Buck[96]



[94] MacKenzie, John 1841: 208.

[95] Morrison 1899: 408.

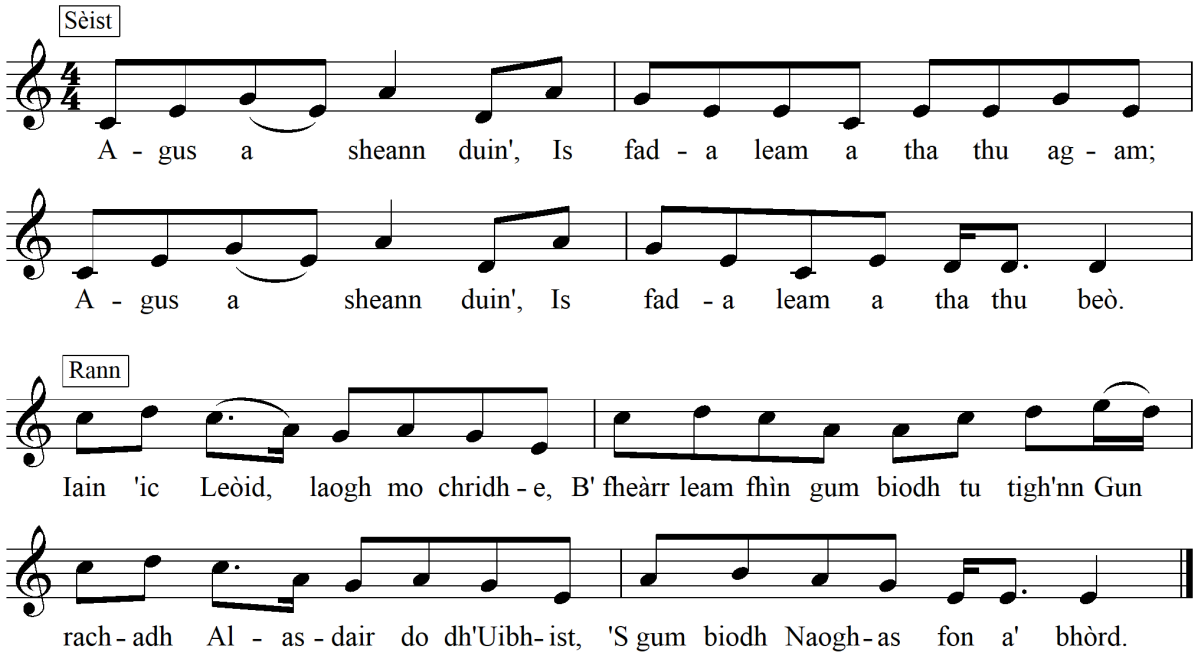
[96] Beard 2018: 155.

The tune is in 6/8 time, the range an octave, and the scale hexatonic in D, with a double tonic in D minor and C major; if transposed, it would fit the pipe scale with double tonic in A minor (since the third is absent) and G major. With Rob Donn's signature octave leaps, it could have been composed initially as an instrumental piece for one of the MacLeod pipers, or perhaps as a collaborative effort at the time of the events described in the text. It has remained in the piping repertoire; in 2002, Cannon identified 'The Shaggy Grey Buck' as an old pipe jig that is still 'highly regarded' but was 'extensively reset in the twentieth century', though the connection with Rob Donn seems to have been lost.[97]

3.3.3 *Do Iain MacLeòid*/To John MacLeod/*Agus a sheann duin'*

This is another humorous song in the form of a pipe reel. The evidence for Rob Donn's composition is primarily the publication history. Gunn and MacFarlane (1899) took the tune from William Gunn (1848) where it is called '*Fire fara a sheann Duine, 's fhada leam a tha thu agum*. My old man is long a-dying'.[98] Significantly, it appeared with the same title, 'The auld Man is long a dying', in a more elaborate fiddle arrangement published by MacGlashan in 1778.[99] Since that was the year of Rob Donn's death, the fact that the tune was known so early and consistently thereafter in both Scots and Gaelic by a title based on his poem provides some reason to believe that he composed its melody. The setting below (from Gunn) has the range of a tenth, a hexatonic scale (without a fourth) in C major, and a double tonic in D minor and C major; if transposed (and the highest passing note omitted), it would fit the pipe scale in A minor and G major.

Do Iain MacLeòid/To John MacLeod/*Agus a sheann duin'*[100]



[97] Cannon 2002: 146.

[98] Gunn, William 2003: 37.

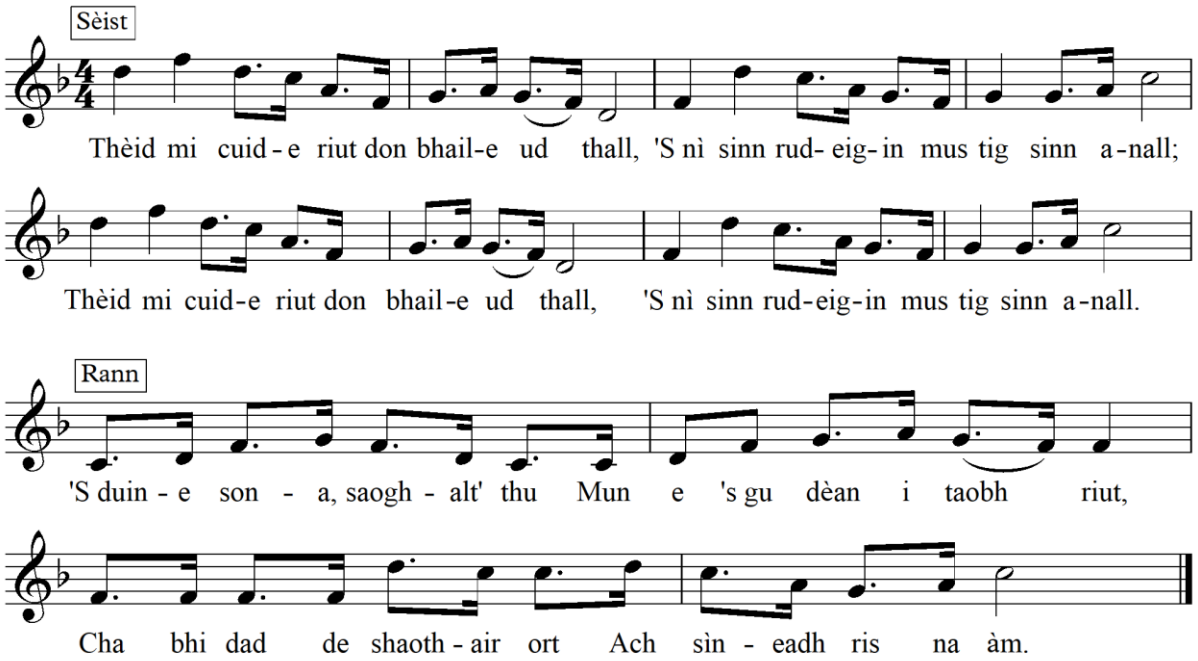
[99] MacGlashan 1778: 34.

[100] Beard 2018: 165.

3.3.4 *Am Fleasgach is a' Bhanntrach*/The Young Man and the Widow

We began our examples with a serious elegy and we end with a bawdy courtship song, featuring Rob Donn in the role of witty older friend accompanying a poor, shy young bachelor to court a propertied widow. This seems to reflect the custom of the *rèiteach* ('marriage contract negotiation') where a certain amount of sexual innuendo was tolerated if not expected.[101] There is no particular evidence that Rob Donn composed the melody, except that it sounds just like him, with its cheery ascending thirds and sixths in the chorus as the two men set out on a brisk walk over the mountains to the widow's home. The melody is pentatonic with a range of an octave and a fourth.

Am Fleasgach is a' Bhanntrach/The Young Man and the Widow[102]



The result of the courtship is unknown, but we do know the song was once sung at the Mòd in an arrangement for four-part male chorus.[103]

[101] See Martin, Neill 2006: 77–158 (81–83, 124–26).

[102] Beard 2018: 110.

[103] An Comunn Gàidhealeach 1953: 4.

4.0 Conclusion

Rob Donn himself told us very little about how he composed or selected music for his songs. While the quotation that introduces this article suggests a relatively unconscious process, another song suggests that he first chose a topic and then searched his memory for a suitable melody (or the ideas to construct one):

'S ait leam gun thuit mi air tèis	I am glad I fell upon an air
Aoibhinn le subhachas,	That is pleasant and cheerful,
Gur h-urrainn domh chur an cèill	So that I could express
Beus Churstaidh Sutharlain.	The virtues of Kirsty Sutherland.[104]

No doubt – like other musicians – the bard's creative processes included both unconscious and conscious aspects, and varied from song to song. Unfortunately, we cannot ask him, as we 'cannot do fieldwork in the past.'[105] All we can do is analyse the results and make the best inferences we can.

What we do know is that Rob Donn exercised considerable creativity within the framework of his own cultural tradition. In Nettl's words:

> What is 'given' to the creator of music is the building blocks and the rules of what may be done with them; innovation consists of how the options are exercised.[106]

As this article has shown, Rob Donn utilized the building blocks available to him to create a large corpus of songs in a variety of musical styles suitable to their respective subject matter. Often, like other Gaelic bards, he set his poems to existing tunes. But frequently he composed his own, using building blocks such as metrical models, musical motifs, or merely background principles of organization and tonality that came to him naturally from a sound world familiar to him and his listeners. This musical creativity was recognised in his own lifetime and by his early editors but forgotten in the twentieth century as Gaelic poetry and music began to drift apart.

Two further points should be added. Matheson was clearly wrong – at least for Rob Donn – when he claimed there was 'no evidence whatever' for musical composition by any Gaelic bard. He also opined that it was 'doubtful whether conscious composition ever contributed much to the development of Gaelic vocal music.'[107] This merits two responses. First, composition need not be 'conscious' to be considered composition. To account for variation and innovation within an oral tradition, the test must be objective rather than subjective, i.e., does a substantially new melody result? Second, the evidence adduced in this article (including repeated instances of deliberate word painting and systematic melodic variation on metrical models) suggests that, at least sometimes, Rob Donn composed music for his songs in a very 'conscious' fashion. This was one of his important skills as a bard and song-maker, contributing to the effectiveness of the finished product by unifying the message of the words and the music.

My final comment is to urge other scholars to conduct similar research into the music of other Gaelic song-poets. Until that occurs, it is impossible to know to what extent Rob Donn

[104] Morrison 1899: 266 (my translation).

[105] Widdess 1992: 219-31 (p. 219).

[106] Nettl 2015: 56.

[107] Matheson 1970: 152.

was unique or unusual among his peers. Even knowing the sources of borrowed tunes for major eighteenth-century poets would provide a fascinating insight into their degree of acculturation, the kinds of music they heard, and which types they considered appropriate for various genres of poetry. This would add greatly to our understanding of their mental worlds, and perhaps enrich our repertoire as well.

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Macbeth and the 'Weird Sisters' – on Fates and Witches

KAREN BEK-PEDERSEN

It is said that good things come to those who wait. To an academic, good things include answers to questions asked a long time ago, and it is such an answer I propose to present here. One rainy afternoon in a small house on a Norwegian hillside a while back, I was reminded of a brief investigation into *Macbeth* that I had made while working on my PhD. It turned out to be a curious cul-de-sac, but in the present article, I revisit that cul-de-sac because I believe I have now found a plausible way out of it.

My PhD focused on the supernatural female beings called the norns, who represent the concept of fate in Old Norse mythology, and Shakespeare's *Macbeth* had some relevance because of a detail, which I knew to be included, but which turned out to be different from anticipated. That, at least, was the conclusion I came to at the time and since the issue was not central to my thesis, I did not pursue it very far.[1] Shakespeare's play was first performed probably in 1606 (Muir 1984: xvii-xx) and the text of the play was published in the so-called First Folio of Shakespeare's plays in 1623, while my research focused on pre-Christian and early medieval world-views in the Nordic area, and the chronological and cultural gap between these two contexts rendered *Macbeth* marginal to my exploration of the Old Norse concept and personifications of fate. I now note that a decade of oblivion and a rainy day in Norway has rekindled my interest in the issue.

As is well known, Macbeth has his own dealings with fate and with three female figures, who present him with enticing notions of what the future holds for him. In the play's list of characters, these three females are described as 'witches', while most people know them as 'the weird sisters'. Yet, these females are not referred to in *Macbeth* as 'the weird sisters'; the description simply does not occur in editions of the text that are based on the First Folio from 1623 – here, they are described as the 'weyward / weyard sisters' – although editions that follow Lewis Theobald's emendations from 1733 refer to them as the 'weird sisters'.[2] The adjective 'weyward / weyard' is used six times about the witches, all instances occurring as part of the spoken dialogue; in the stage directions they are consistently referred to as 'witches'.

The term 'wayward', of which 'weyward' and 'weyard' are probably variants, has quite a different meaning from 'weird'[3] – the former means 'unruly' or 'obstinate',

[1] It took up footnote 144 of my thesis (Bek-Pedersen 2007: 72; note 16 of ch. 3 in my subsequent book on the norns, 2011: 116).

[2] See Theobald 1733: 392–3; Furness 1963: 37–38; Muir 1984: 14.

[3] The oldest senses of 'wayward' listed in *OED*, with references from the late 1300s and 1500s, are: a) disposed to go against the wishes or advice of others or what is proper or reasonable,

the latter means 'peculiar' in modern English, but previously meant 'fateful' or 'having to do with fate' – and this discrepancy is really quite substantial. I think it unlikely that a man of Shakespeare's linguistic sensibilities would accidentally use the wrong word and simply write 'wayward' if he intended 'weird'. It therefore seems more plausible to me that there is another explanation. Perhaps an intended *double entendre* might be in play, an attempt to invoke the meanings of both 'wayward' and 'weird' at the same time. Alternatively, using a word with vaguely similar sonorous qualities could be an intended attempt at creating a mock version – you think the witches are going to call themselves 'the weird sisters', but it comes out as 'the wayward sisters'. Such an intended double meaning could explain how witches and personifications of fate apparently come together in the same characters, since fate and sorcery are normally quite separate things.[4] However, there could also be entirely different things in play, as I will discuss below.

A number of sources tell of the historical Macbeth, who was king of the Scots *c*. 1040 until his death in 1057, but for the present purposes I will only consider those that include the episode with the 'weird sisters'.[5] I am aware of six such accounts and intend to consider them closely here in order to establish what each of them has to say about these figures.

The earliest is Andrew of Wyntoun's *Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland*, written *c*. 1420.[6] In many respects, this differs markedly from all known subsequent accounts and I will therefore treat it in some detail here. Wyntoun's work is political in that it aims to glorify the Canmore-dynasty and one of the ways in which this is achieved is by comparing Macbeth unfavourably to his successor, Malcolm Canmore.[7] In this process, Macbeth is portrayed not only as an illegitimate bastard, but in fact as the biological son of the Devil himself and, moreover, as a man prone to believing in dreams, marvels and prophecies. Wyntoun is not the first to portray Macbeth in a negative light, since this happens already in John of Fordun's chronicle from *c*. 1360

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intractable, self-willed, perverse; and b) of judgement: perverse, wrong, unjust (*OED* s.v. 'wayward'). 'Weyward' is listed as one of several variant spellings.

[4] See Simpson 1995: 11 and Bek-Pedersen 2011: 145–7. For a brief discussion of the scholarly debate on witches vs. 'weird sisters', see Wentersdorf 1980: 431–2. When compared to personifications of fate, such as the norns from Old Norse tradition, there can be no doubt that the witches in *Macbeth* are, indeed, witches and not 'weird sisters' (*cf*. Bek-Pedersen 2011: 61–6).

[5] The earliest accounts that I have been able to consult are the so-called *Verse Chronicle* from the early 1200s (Anderson 1936: xxiv) and the *Chronicle of Melrose*, *c*. 1270. These describe Macbeth's reign as a period of fertility and note that Malcolm gave him a cruel death (Anderson: xxv and 220). The earliest account to draw a negative portrait of Macbeth is, I believe, John of Fordun's *Chronica Gentis Scottorum* (*Chronicle of the Scottish Nation*), Book 4, ch. 44 to Book 5, ch. 7 (Skene 1872: 180–92), written *c*. 1360, which portrays Macbeth (in Latin the name is rendered Machabeus) unfavorably and as a usurper, but makes no mention of anything supernatural relating to his career. Walter Bower's work *Scotichronicon* from *c*. 1445, which is an expanded reworking of John of Fordun's work, echoes Fordun's account of Macbeth's ascension to the throne very closely in Book 4, ch. 51, without any mention of supernatural aspects at all (*Scotichronicon II* 1989: 426–7), nor do any such details appear in the account of Macbeth's subsequent death (*Scotichronicon III* 1995: 16–19).

[6] Earlier accounts are all in Latin; Wyntoun's is the first in the vernacular.

[7] For a detailed discussion of these comparisons, see Purdie 2016.

(see footnote 5 above), but he may be responsible for first incorporating into the Macbeth story supernatural elements that seem to have their origins in oral traditions.[8] It is these supernatural motifs that are of interest here, especially when considered in relation to how Shakespeare portrays them in his play.

In Book 6, Chapter 118 (or 18) of Andrew of Wyntoun's work, Macbeth sees in a dream three strange women who appear to predict his future by attaching to him titles, which he does not yet hold.[9] As in the later play, this happens early on in Macbeth's career and becomes the catalyst for his ambition to be king. In this narrative, the women are entirely part of Macbeth's dream-vision and he is alone in knowing what they say to him.[10] Andrew of Wyntoun's work, which is composed in poetic metre, is extant in several manuscripts, but there are no significant differences in the renditions of the passage concerning the dream.

> Book 6, Chapter 118 of the Wemyss manuscript, lines 1895–1908, reads:[11]
> A nycht him thocht in his dremyng
> That he wes sittand neire the king,
> At a seit in hunting sua,
> And in a lesche had grewhundis twa.
> Him thocht, till he wes sa sittand,
> He saw thre women by gangand,
> And þai thre women þan thocht he
> Thre werd sisteris like to be.
> The first he herd say gangand by:
> "Lo, yonder þe thayne of Crumbaghty!"
> The toþer sister said agane:
> "Off Murray yonder I see þe thayne."
> The thrid said: "Yonder I se þe king."
> All þis herd he in his dremyng. (Amours 1906: 272 and 274)

This is clearly a portrayal of fate, albeit fate experienced in a dream. Interestingly, the 'weird sisters' are given no introduction at all, so the reader must be expected to know who they are. They are in no way accosted by Macbeth and carry out no special actions at all, but as they walk past him and look at him, they volunteer the information about what they see – the first referring to him as Thane of Cromarty, the second as Thane of Moray and the third as king. Nothing is said about them or their appearance, they require no aids, but act much like people with second sight; what they see is obvious to

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[8] See Purdie: 55–6 and Chadwick 1949: 191–2.

[9] It is made clear in the *Orygynale Cronykil* that, at the time of having this dream, Macbeth does not possess any of the titles, but that he acquires the two titles of thane very soon after. Lines 1909–10 read: "Sone efter þat, in his youth heid, // Off þai thayndomes þe thayne wes maid" (Amours 1906: 274).

[10] In the overall frame of Wyntoun's work, the women should probably be regarded as conjured by his own imagination rather than as real beings who visit him in his dreams, but that is a minor point in the present exploration.

[11] I cite Wyntoun from the Wemyss ms.; Amours' edition also contains the text of the Cottonian ms, which in the relevant passages differs mainly in orthography and only slightly in wording (Amours 1906; see also Laing 1872).

them, although it is in no way obvious to Macbeth himself However, once the words are spoken, the future thus predicted appears to be settled and events progress accordingly.[12]

Regarding the prophecies that concern Macbeth's death, Wyntoun's story deviates markedly from subsequent accounts (discussed below). Lines 1940–87 (Amours 1906: 276–81) present a flashback to before Macbeth was born and tell of how Macbeth's mother went to the woods where one day she met a stranger, whom she thought the most handsome man she had ever seen and whom she fell in love with. She became pregnant by this man, who then told her that their son could not be killed by a man born to a woman: "And na man suld be borne of wif // Off power to reif him his lif" (lines 1967–8; Amours 1906: 278). He also tells her of other events that will happen in the future, but no details regarding these are presented. This stranger is later referred to as the *deuill*, 'devil', (line 1963), making it very clear what we are meant to think of him as well as his offspring.[13] The fact that Wyntoun chooses this story about Macbeth's birth from among other stories is evident in the comment he adds immediately after: "As of him sum story sais; // Bot quheþer is sa were or oþer ways, // As to be gottin naturaly, // As oþer men ar generaly" (Amours 1906: 278–81), thus revealing that there were other stories, which told of more ordinary birth circumstances.[14]

The first prediction thus made regarding Macbeth's apparent invulnerability is the same as the one occurring in subsequent accounts, but the circumstances of how it is made and the nature as well as gender of the character who utters the prediction are details that vary significantly between this and later sources.

The second invulnerability prediction is entirely separate from the first in Wyntoun's account. When, much later, Macduff comes to kill Macbeth, he employs the trick of making it look as if Birnam Woods are moving towards Dunsinane, lines 2267–84 (Amours 1906: 298), and it is only at this point made clear that Macbeth is watching a prophecy coming true: "At he trowit neuer for to be // Discomfit till at he mycht se // The wod be brocht of þe Brynnane // To þe hill of Dunsinnane" (lines 2271–4). Wyntoun presents it as part of the 'fantasy' that Macbeth has put his faith in, and we are probably to understand it as one of the events foreseen and related to his mother by the stranger from the woods.

The next two accounts of the Macbeth story to include the 'weird sisters' are Hector Boece's[15] *Historia Gentis Scotorum*, written in 1527, and its translation into Scots by John Bellenden in *c*. 1536 with the title *Hystory and Croniklis of Scotland*. I

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[12] See e.g. Bek-Pedersen 2011: 186–91 for the relationship between fate, prophecy and speech.

[13] Incidentally, Andrew of Wyntoun manages to include a remarkable amount of information about all the good deeds that Macbeth carried out during his reign, but these are overshadowed by the negatives highlighted (*cf*. Purdie: 56–7).

[14] Andrew of Wyntoun was prior of St. Serf's Inch Priory in Lochleven from *c*. 1393, and Macbeth and his wife, Gruoch, were documented benefactors of St. Serf's (Lawrie 1905: 5–6, no. 5; *cf*. Chadwick 1949: 197–8 and Purdie: 57). This may explain how Wyntoun knew of potential oral traditions about Macbeth then in circulation locally. St. Serf's Inch was home of a Culdee Monastery that was later absorbed into the Augustinian priory founded there in *c*. 1123, and Wyntoun's ill-will towards Macbeth may stem from differences between the two ecclesiastical bodies (Chadwick 1950: 25).

[15] The name is sometimes Latinized as Hector Boethius.

consider these two as separate accounts because of the linguistic discrepancy – Boece writing in Latin and Bellenden in Scots – and because it shows that Bellenden's translation was somewhat free. With these two accounts, the Macbeth story made famous by Shakespeare becomes recognizable and all three prophecies mentioned by Andrew of Wyntoun – Macbeth's future titles foretold by the 'weird sisters' and the two prophecies regarding his death foretold by someone else – are present also in Boece and Bellenden, but they are contextualized in ways so different that Wyntoun cannot have been the immediate source of either.[16]

Although Boece's work is obviously the earlier one, I will look at the translation first since Scots is more readily comparable to the other accounts than Latin. In Book 12, Chapter 3, Bellenden describes the encounter that Macbeth and Banquo have with the 'weird sisters', and immediately the major differences from Wyntoun's account are apparent: Macbeth is no longer alone and he is no longer dreaming; what he sees is also seen by his companion. The women are thus part of the same reality as the two men.

The relevant passage of Book 12, Chapter 3, reads:

> Nocht lang eftir, hapnit ane uncouth and wonderfull thing, be quhilk followit, sone, ane gret alteration in the realme. Be aventure, Makbeth and Banquho wer passand to Forres, quhair King Duncane hapnit to be for the time, and met be the gait thre wemen, clothit in elrage and uncouth weid. Thay wer jugit, be the pepill, to be weird sisteris. The first of thaim said to Makbeth, "Hale, Thane of Glammis!" the secound said, "Hale, Thane of Cawder!" and the third said, "Hale, King of Scotland!"[17]
>
> …
>
> [On being questioned by Banquo, the women then also prophesy for him in exactly the same way as they do in Shakespeare's play.]
>
> …
>
> Yit, becaus al thingis succeedit as thir wemen devinit, the pepill traistit and jugit thame to be weird sisteris.
> (*Bell. Boece* 1821: 259)

We see that they are first presented as simply 'thre wemen' strangely dressed, who are then retrospectively deemed to have been the 'weird sisters.' Not long after, Macbeth is made Thane of Cawdor, still in Chapter 3:

> Than said Banquho, "Thow hes gottin all that the first two weird sisteris hecht. Restis nocht bot the croun, quhilk wes hecht be the third sister."

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[16] The discrepancies may be explained by various oral traditions being in circulation (*cf.* Chadwick 1949: 202); however, since the material is so sparsely recorded, this explanation remains speculative.

[17] In this account, Thane of Glamis is Macbeth's inherited title, as is evident from Ch. 1 of the same book (*Bell. Boece* 1821: 252); Thane of Cawdor is the title bestowed upon him immediately after this prediction, while king is a title he will acquire sometime in the future. In this sense, the three titles describe his past, present and future, and the 'weird sisters' can be seen to represent these three time periods – an extremely common notion attached to the three female figures. On the complex relationship between fate and time, see Bek-Pedersen 2011: 88–91 and Winterbourne 2004: 17–18.

> Makbeth, revolving all thingis as thay wer said be thir weird sisteris, began to covat the croun; and yit he concluded to abide quhil he saw the time ganand thairto, fermelie beleving that the third weird suld cum, as the first two did afore.
>
> In the mene time, King Duncane maid his son Malcolme Prince of Cumbir, to signify that he suld regne eftir him. Quhilk wes gret displeseir to Makbeth: for it maid plane derogatioun to the third weird, promittit afore to him be thir weird sisteris.
> (*Bell. Boece* 1821: 260)

In this passage, the description 'weird sisters' is consistent. The scene (and, indeed, plot) made famous by Shakespeare is now entirely recognizable.[18] But the three females nonetheless still act as harbingers of fate, who as they pass by along the road simply state what is to come, rather than as witches, who perform magic in order to discover the future.

An interesting further detail to note is that, later, in Chapter 6, where Macbeth has come to regard Macduff as a serious threat to him, mention is made of a second prophecy, but this time using different terminology. Macbeth would have killed Macduff were it not for a certain witch:

> wer nocht ane wiche, in quhom he had gret confidence, said, to put him out of all feir, That he suld nevir be slane with man that wes borne of wife, nor vincust, quhill the wod of Birnane wer cum to the castell of Dunsinane.
>
> (*Bell. Boece* 1821: 269)

There is no handsome stranger and no 'weird sisters' involved at this point. This is a different woman altogether, there is only one woman making this second prophecy and she is referred to as a *wiche*, 'witch'. It is quite clear that, as in Wyntoun's account, we are dealing with two separate instances involving two distinct types of female figures; the 'weird sisters', who foretell future events, and a 'witch', who leads Macbeth to believe he cannot be killed by describing seemingly impossible events. These events, however, turn out to be illusions that can be and, indeed, are circumvented by reality. In Chapter 7, where Macbeth is watching Macduff making Birnam Woods move, the witch is mentioned once again:

> Makbeth, seing him cum in this gise, understude the prophecy was completit that the wiche schew to him.
> (*Bell. Boece* 1821: 273)

This involvement of a 'witch' subsequent to the appearance of the 'weird sisters' is extremely noteworthy. And Bellenden's translation in this respect remains true to Boece's Latin work.

Hector Boece's *Historia Gentis Scotorum* describes the same plotline, albeit with fewer embellishments. The encounter with the 'weird sisters', who salute Macbeth with titles he does not yet possess, occurs in Book 12, Chapter 9, where they are

[18] Other embellishments on the story also appear in Bellenden's work, such as the ambitious Lady Macbeth (who is in one place described thus: *impacient of lang tary, as all wemen ar*, *Bell. Boece* 1821: 269); however, for the purposes of this article these other aspects are not relevant.

described as: *tres apparuere muliebri specie* ("three apparitions of a womanly appearance"); Bellenden here has *thre wemen* (*Boece* 2010). At the end of the same chapter, it is said that people thought of them as: *Parcas aut nymphas aliquas fatidicas* ("the Fates or some prophetic nymphs"); Bellenden has *weird sisteris* (*Boece* 2010). In Chapter 10, Banquo, addressing Macbeth, refers to them as: *illae sorores* ("those sisters"), and later in the same chapter they are termed: *illas deas* ("those goddesses"); in both instances Bellenden has *weird sisteris* (*Boece* 2010). These 'apparitions' are not mentioned again in Boece's Latin work. But in Chapter 19, a new character is introduced on whom Bellenden clearly models his *wiche*: *muliercula praescia* ("a certain old prophetic dame") who tells Macbeth that he cannot be killed until Birnam Woods come to Dunsinane, nor by a man born of a woman (*Boece* 2010). When Macbeth is killed in Chapter 26, however, Boece mentions no female figures, while Bellenden here includes a reference to the *wiche*.

Although Bellenden can be accused of producing an embellished translation, he does not invent this discrepancy between the three 'weird sisters' who appear first and foretell the future and the single witch whom Macbeth consults subsequently and who describes to him the seemingly impossible circumstances surrounding his death. Also in Boece's work, this fourth female character is quite separate from the first three, and that difference is reflected in the vocabulary.

The chronologically fourth source is English, namely *Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* from 1577, which is generally considered to be one of Shakespeare's main sources for his dramatized Macbeth story (Muir 1984: xxxvi–xli; Furness 1963: 379–95; Boswell 1907: ix–xv; Bullough 1973: 478). *Holinshed's Chronicles* contain the account of Macbeth's reign and how he came to be king, and according to this, Macbeth and Banquo are journeying towards Forres where they are to meet King Duncan when they go off together without companions. While thus by themselves, the two men experience the strange encounter:

> [T]here met them thrée women in strange and wild apparel, resembling creatures of elder world, whome when they attentiuelie beheld, wondering much at the sight, the first of them spake and said; "All haile Makbeth, thane of Glammis" (for he had latelie entered into that dignitie and office by the death of his father Sinell.) The second of them said; "Haile Makbeth thane of Cawder." But the third said; "All haile Makbeth that hereafter shalt be king of Scotland.
> (Holinshed 1808: 268)

After also communicating to the men that, although Macbeth will become king, he will come to an unlucky end, while Banquo will become the ancestor of many kings of Scotland, these women vanish and, in due course, events progress much in the way that previously Bellenden and subsequently Shakespeare have them.

Here, the women are described as being of strange and wild appearance and as resembling creatures of ancient times, but no specific designation is used about them; they are simply 'women'. A little later, they are mentioned again and this time they are – as in Bellenden and Boece – described differently:

> [T]he common opinion was, that these women were either the weird sisters, that is (as ye would say) the goddesses of destinie, or else some nymphs or feiries, indued with knowledge of prophesie by their necromanticall science, because euerie thing came to passé as they had spoken.
> (Holinshed 1808: 269)

Holinshed's terminology, however, is confused. They are described not only as supernatural (goddesses, nymphs or fairies), which in itself would account for their abilities to see into the future, but they are also engaging in activities relating to witchcraft, such as necromancy. Although the women are not referred to as 'witches', this seems thus implied. Holinshed, in applying this whole range of designations to them, appears somewhat at a loss in trying to understand what these women are, and his confusion is striking when compared to the Scottish sources (see above and below), which in contrast introduce them with great simplicity as 'the weird sisters' – a designation that apparently needs no introduction at all (*cf*. Simpson 1995: 11). This is interesting, because it is only with Holinshed's descriptions that the three females who foretell the future acquire witch-like qualities instead of simply being the Fates.

Furthermore, Holinshed – like Bellenden and Boece – involves an entirely different prophetess in connection with Macbeth's death:

> [H]e had learned of certeine wizzards, in whose words he put great confidence (for that the prophesie had happened so right, which the three fairies or weird sister had declared vnto him) how that he ought to take héed of Makduffe, who in time to come should seeke to destroie him. And suerlie herevpon had he put Makduffe to death, but that a certeine witch, whome he had in great trust, had told him that he should neuer be slaine with man borne of anie woman…
> (Holinshed 1808: 274)

In this case, there are both wizards and a witch. It is not entirely clear who the wizards are, but they appear to be distinct from the 'weird sisters' as well as from the subsequently mentioned witch. Holinshed thus presents a whole array of supernaturally engaged characters while employing a bungled terminology in relation to specifically the 'weird sisters'. If *Holinshed's Chronicles* are, indeed, Shakespeare's primary source for the involvement of supernatural agency in the story, it is no surprise that he presents them as 'witches' – witches, after all, were a hot topic in Shakespeare's time.

When Birnam Woods come to Dunsinane Castell, Macduff mentions to Macbeth the unusual circumstances of his birth:

> I am euen he that thy wizzards haue told thee of, who was neuer borne of my mother, but ripped out of her wombe.
> (Holinshed 1808: 277)

The description 'wizards' in this instance refers to the characters who have informed Macbeth about the impossible circumstances surrounding his death and thus led him to believe that he cannot be killed. Strictly speaking, this information was said earlier to come from the witch, whereas the wizards were said to warn him about Macduff, and there seems to be some conflation of the terms if not the characters.

Next is George Buchanan's *History of Scotland*, originally in Latin: *Rerum Scoticarum Historia*, which was written shortly before his death in 1582.[19] Book 7,

[19] John Leslie's history of Scotland, *De Origine, Moribus et Rebus Gestis Scotorum,* from 1578 is sometimes said also to include the scene with the 'weird sisters' (Muir 1984: xl), but this appears not to be so. In Book 5, ch. 84 of this work, the story of how Macbeth treacherously killed Duncan and usurped the crown is told, but it is simply said that: *spiritus ita Machabeo inflauit inanis* (Leslæo: 205), which in James Dalrymple's translation of the work into Scots

Chapter 84, Section 4 gives a detailed portrait of Macbeth's personality, describing him as: "a man of penetrating genius, a high spirit, unbounded ambition, and, if he had possessed moderation, was worthy of any command however great" (Buchanan 1827: 328). Later, in Section 8, the prophecy is mentioned:

> Macbeth … cherished secretly the hope of seizing the throne, in which he is said to have been confirmed by a dream. On a certain night, when he was far distant from the king, three women appeared to him of more than human stature[20], of whom one hailed him thane of Angus, another, thane of Moray, and the third saluted him king.
> (Buchanan 1827: 331)

Interestingly, Buchanan's description reverts all the way back to Wyntoun, who also describes the prophecy as part of a dream. A little later in the same section, the three women are referred to as "his nocturnal visitors" (*ibid.*),[21] but – which is probably very telling – in Chapter 85, Section 13, where Macbeth is killed by Macduff, there is no mention at all of any further prophecies. Buchanan simply notes – as if foreshadowing theatre yet to be written – that: "Here some of our writers relate a number of fables more adapted for theatrical representation, or Milesian romance, than history, I therefore omit them" (Buchanan 1827: 336). In all likelihood, this refers to the information that makes Macbeth believe himself invulnerable, namely the circumstances of Macduff's birth and Birnam Woods moving towards Dunsinane. But it also reveals Buchanan as a very rational chronicler who does not include any old tale, but only what seems to him to be sound, historical facts. Arguably, he manages to both have his cake and eat it here, since he says that such tales are known, but then refuses to include them. By putting the 'weird sisters' back into a dream, Buchanan may be said to present them as part of his detailed, psychological portrait of Macbeth, his personality, temperament, merits and, not least, shortcomings. In other words, by combining Wyntoun's dream-vision and his own rational thinking, Buchanan comes up with a fairly realistic and plausible historical version of Macbeth's encounter with the 'weird sisters'.[22]

Finally, there is the English poet William Warner's *A Continuance of Albion's England* from 1606.[23] This comprises additional material on the history of England and, in Book XV, chapter 94, it tells the story of Banquo's son, Fleance, and his beloved Paragon, who is the daughter of King Gruffyths. She asks Fleance to tell her whether "the Storie of Fairies that foretold thy Father's fate" (Bullough 1973: 473) is true, to which he replies: Three Fairies in a private walke to them appeared, who

> Saluted Makbeth King, and gave him other Titles too:
> To whom my father, laughing, said they dealt unequall dole,

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from 1596, *History of Scotland*, is rendered as: *Machabie inspirit with sum ill spirit* (Cody 1888: 305).

[20] In the Latin original, they are described as: *tres feminas forma augustiore quim humana* (*RHS* 1727: 174).

[21] Here, the Latin original has: *visum nocturnum* (*RHS* 1727: 175).

[22] Buchanan's work is held by some to be one of Shakespeare's major sources for his play, which is particularly likely with regards to Macbeth's psyche (Muir 1984: xl).

[23] As the title says, this is a follow-up to his earlier *Albion's England*, which is a verse-history of England first published in 1586 and subsequently in various expanded versions until 1602.

> Behighting nought thereof to him, bot to his Friend the whole.
> When of the Weird-Elfes one of them, replying, said that he
> Should not be king, but of his Streen a many Kings should be.
> So vanish they: and what they said of Makbeth now we see.
> (Bullough 1973: 473)

We recognize the scene where Banquo and Macbeth encounter the three women, who are said here to have appeared to them. In Warner, the impression is that the terms are jumbled much in the same way as in Holinshed, whom Warner echoes rather closely in his designations for the women. Especially the compound 'Weird-Elfes' attracts attention because it includes the element 'weird', which appears otherwise to be reserved for Scottish versions. However, the additional descriptions of 'fairies' and 'elves' may serve to clarify what sort of beings these are – something that appears unnecessary in the Scottish texts. Strictly speaking, it is not mentioned that these are female figures, nor is this revealed elsewhere in the text, but we may assume that this is how Warner conceived of them.

It is uncertain whether Warner's work can have inspired Shakespeare's play in the same way as the five other texts discussed above, since it was only published in 1606, which is the year when *Macbeth* is thought to have been first performed. But it does predate the First Folio edition of 1623.[24]

Thus the sources, which precede Shakespeare, and which may to a greater or lesser extent have inspired his portrayal of the three witches in *Macbeth*. The witch-like aspects of the 'weird sisters' are perhaps first introduced by Holinshed, who nonetheless retains the description 'weird sisters' when they are first mentioned, thus echoing both Andrew of Wyntoun and John Bellenden. All the more interesting that this is exactly where Shakespeare digresses from all preceding sources.

The 'weird sisters' were known in England prior to *Holinshed's Chronicles*, as is evident from the mention of them in the *Catholicum Anglicum*, dated 1483, an English-Latin dictionary containing this entry: "Wyrde systres – *parce*" (1881: 420).[25] It must be assumed that the vernacular phrase was known, although we cannot know how common it was; indeed, the indications are that it was a Scottish rather than an English phrase. English writers from the seventeenth century refer to it as a Scots phrase (see below), but the Scottishness of it is also evident from other contemporary and earlier Scottish and English sources that mention the 'weird sisters'.

Arguably, this shows also in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. I am not aware that the *Oxford English Dictionary* claims to be exhaustive in terms of referring to all known examples, but it is striking that of the six references to usages of the adjective 'weird' occurring prior to Shakespeare, only two point to English while four point to Scottish

[24] Another contemporary mention of the meeting with three strange women appears in Matthew Gwinn's poem *Vertumnus Sive Annus Recurrens* from 1607 (Bullough 1973: 470-1), but this will not be discussed here. Partly because it is in Latin (the women are referred to as *Sibyllae*, 'sibyls', *Sorores*, 'sisters', and *fata*, 'fates'), and partly because they are said here to foretell only Banquo's future, while Macbeth is not even mentioned (Bullough 1973: 470-1).

[25] References listed in *OED* as earlier than the 1400s do not employ 'weird' as an adjective, but only as a noun referring to the abstract power of fate as such; instances of the Old English noun 'wyrd' are found in Boethius, *Seafarer* and *Beowulf* (*OED* s.v. weird n.).

works.[26] There is, in other words, a preponderance of Scottish in comparison to English references.[27] Moreover, the description 'the weird sisters', in various orthographic renditions, appears in a whole range of Scottish sources from the 1500s and one from the 1400s. Not all of these are equally relevant here, but I have decided to include all of them for the sake of completion. Apart from the references specifically to Macbeth discussed above, *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* lists a further nine references to the 'weird sisters', six of which refer to the Classical Fates, while three refer to folk tradition.[28] Chronologically listed, these additional Scottish examples are:

The so-called *Scottish Troy Book* from *c*. 1400, a Scottish version of Guido delle Colonne's *Historia Destructionis Troiae* (Caddick 2014: 36), recorded by the fourteenth-century Scottish poet John Barbour.[29] In this rendition of the Trojan War, lines 2803–18 describe the wife of King Menone:

> Now tellis þis story successive
> That þis king Menone had a wyf
> Richt faire, and scho come opinly
> To Menonis graif and apertly
> Gart opyne It and furth has tone
> Kyng Menonis bones euerilkone
> And in one weschell of gold fyne
> Thame put, and, all folk seand syne,
> With þe weschell and þe bones
> From þare sicht wanyst all-attones
> Richt as one cloude, and (n)euir syne seyne.
> For quhiche sume sayis þat sche but weyne
> Was wplifted as one goddes,
> Or þane one goddeß douchtere wes,
> And vþeris said sche was, I trow,
> A werde-sistere – I wait neuir how.
> (Barbour 1882: 298)

The term 'a werde-sistere' appears in line 2818. The description of this woman's actions recalls Holinshed's reference to necromancy: She opens her late husband's grave to take out his bones and put them into some sort of golden container upon which the bones apparently vanish in a great cloud of smoke. For this, it is said, some believed her to be a goddess, the daughter of a goddess or one of the 'weird sisters'. The *Scottish*

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[26] For sources prior to Shakespeare, *OED* lists: the *Scottish Troy Book* (under the name of the "Scottish Trojan War"), Wyntoun's *Cronikyl*, the *Catholicum Anglicum*, Douglas' *Eneados* (under the name of *Æneid*), the *Complaynt of Scotlande*, and *Holinshed's Chronicles.*

[27] Six is admittedly a small amount to base any statistics on, but if there are abundant English references, then it seems odd that *OED* lists so proportionately many Scottish sources.

[28] Of the total of twelve references to the 'weird sisters' listed in *DOST*, the *OED* concurs in only two (*Eneados* by Douglas and *The Complaynt of Scotlande* by Wedderburn). However, it is of course not necessarily the task of an English dictionary to list all relevant Scottish examples.

[29] This *Scottish Troy Book* survives only in fragmentary form in two mss: Cambridge, University Library Kk.5.30 and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 148 (Caddick 2014: 36). The cited passage is found only in Douce 148.

Troy Book thus presents just one woman, who is strongly linked to Classical tradition because she figures in a story about Troy.[30] The boundaries between human witch and supernatural representative of fate are somewhat blurred, possibly due to the difficulties of distinguishing between legendary human beings and divine beings.

Interestingly, the very next lines, 2819–20, say: "Bot leif we now suche fantasy // And torne we to þe trewe story". It seems the unknown poet of the *Scottish Troy Book* concurs with Buchanan in taking a rational approach to historical details, although he has just included a tale he apparently considers to be fantasy.

Also *Eneados*, Gawin Douglas' translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* into Scots from 1513, clearly refers to Classical material. In Book 5, Chapter 13, Venus makes her requests of Neptune for her son, Aeneas. The lines containing the reference read:

> Admit myne asking, gif so the fatis gydis,
> Or gif that my desyre may grantit be,
> Or yit werd sisteris lift geif thaim that cuntre.
> (*Eneados* 1839: 291, lines 18–20).

This brief mention clearly equates the 'weird sisters' with the Fates and refers to their ability to determine future events.

The *Asloan Manuscript* from 1513, a compilation of Scots prose and poetry, contains a section headed 'The Sex Werkdayis and Agis' (*Asloan* 1923: 299–330), which is a parallel between the biblical six days of creation and the six ages of the world.[31] The brief reference to the 'weird sisters' occurs in the section pertaining to the fifth day with its corresponding ages and seems to form part of a long list of Classical deities and legendary figures. It stands out as the only part of this passage given in both Scots and Latin:

> [T]hre sisteris fatall callit cloto latis & antropus thre werd sisteris *versus*
> Cloto colum baiulat latiß trahit antropus occat Hec tres fatales fatum duxere sorores.
> (*Asloan* 1923: 324–5).

There is no doubt in this case either that ancient Greek tradition is invoked, given the names Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos, and the passage shows that a direct parallel was perceived between the Classical and local versions of these three female figures.

The *Complaynt of Scotlande*, by Robert Wedderburn, 1549, mentions among a whole number of tales from Classical tradition also "the tail of the thre veird systirs" (Leyden 1801: 99). No further details are given to elucidate what the tale thus mentioned concerned, but Classical tradition is again cited.

John Rolland's poem *Court of Venus* from 1575 likewise refers to Classical tradition. "The central action [of the poem] concerns the trial of Desperance, an allegorical protagonist who offends the goddess of love by the vehemence of his attack

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[30] By 'Classical tradition' I mean to refer to both ancient Roman and ancient Greek tradition. I am aware that there are significant differences between these two and that it is in many ways false to regard them as one (Morales 2007: 3–4 *et passim*), but for the purposes of the present exploration, I do not consider these differences central.

[31] Incidentally, the Asloan Manuscript also contains a section headed 'The Scottis Cronikle', chapters 56–58 of which tell of the reign of Macbeth (*Asloan* 1923: 259–60); it calls him a 'traitor' and describes how he killed Duncan to obtain the crown. The account is very brief and contains no supernatural aspects.

on Esperance" (Lyall 2005: 111). In the Secund Buik, Desperance in despair approaches Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos in order for them to tell him whether good or evil awaits him. The relevant passage reads:

> Chan he but baid into thair sicht did go.
> …
> Vnto thir thre, kneilling downe to the eird:
> Quhilk for to Name the first is callit Clothe
> Lachesis uirt: and syne efter thir two,
> Atropos third: thir thre sa weill ar leird.
> To Ilk man geuis in warld his fatall wen
> Quhidder it be to weill wappit or wo
> …
> He tuik gude nicht ar thir weird sisteris than …
> (*Court of Venus*)

It is interesting that Desperance intentionally seeks out the Fates in order to consult them. Their ability to foretell and determine the future for human beings is clearly portrayed.

John Arbuthnot's poem "A General Lament", extant in the Maitland Folio Manuscript from sometime during the period 1570–1586, portrays a sense of being hard done by in life. Stanza 1, lines 4–6 read:

> O ewill aspect in my natiuitie
> O weird sisteris quhat alis yow at me
> That all dois wirk this contrair my intent.
> (*Maitland* 1919: 49)

This reference is to the forces of fate personified by female beings who have attended the narrator's birth and at that time determined what his life would be like; it is clear that he is not very happy with what he has been allotted. The reference invokes an understanding of the Fates, which is extremely common in much folklore and persists in popular traditions known today, namely that when the 'weird sisters' make their pronouncements, evil can be expected, although they are equally capable of granting good things (*cf*. Bek-Pedersen 2011: 34, 40–1). It seems correct to consider this a reference to popular folk traditions rather than to the Classical Fates as such, although the distinction is not unequivocal.

In George Buchanan's work from *c*. 1566-70, *Commentary on Virgil's Eclogues, Georgics and Aeneid,* the Latin term *Parcas* is glossed as 'weird sisters' (Finlayson 1957: 281). The gloss, which refers to *Aeneid* I, 22, adds little to the picture already established, but simply confirms it. It corresponds exactly to the gloss in *Catholicum Anglicum*, only in the reverse direction: from Latin into the vernacular.

A reference very similar to Arbuthnot's is found in *The Flyting of Montgomerie and Polwart* from *c*. 1580, composed by Alexander Montgomerie in connection with his successful attempt to outdo Patrick Home of Polwarth and become court poet for King James VI of Scotland (Meikle 2014: 334). In this very popular poem, Montgomerie ridicules Polwart, among other things describing how he was visited by the 'weird sisters' shortly after his birth and how they foretold the future for this

extremely ugly infant.[32] The full prediction takes up lines 287–381, but I cite only the very first and the very last lines (lines 281–4 and 385–6):[33]

> The wird sisteris wandering, as they wer wont than,
> Saw revinis ruge at þis rat be ane rone-ruite.
> They musit at þis mandrak mismaid lyk ane man;
> Ane beist bund with ane bunwyd in ane auld bute.
> …
> Fra þe weird sisteris saw the schaip of that schit,
> "Littill luk be thy lot," quod they, "quhair þow lyis."
> …
> (Stevenson 1910: 150, 158)

In this entertaining passage, the 'weird sisters' are appalled by the ugliness of the baby they come across and grant it a whole range of negative gifts, bordering on outright curses. They themselves are not described at all, but (as in Wyntoun's *Cronykil*) simply walk by the person for whom they prophesy. It is especially interesting that Montgomerie makes a very sharp distinction between the 'weird sisters', who arrive first and determine the future, and the witches, led by the enigmatically named Nikniven, who arrive subsequently and carry out all sorts of witchcraft rituals with the infant.[34] This distinction recalls the equally separate characters involved in Macbeth's career according to the pre-Shakespeare sources.

Lastly, a reference in the same vein as Arbuthnot's and Montgomerie's is found in the medieval romance *Clariodus*, extant in a manuscript from *c*. 1550, although the work itself appears to be somewhat earlier and "may at least be referred to the close of the preceding century" (Piper 1830: ii). This is a Scottish translation and versification of a fifteenth-century French prose romance known as *Cleriadus and Meladice*, which tells the story of the hero Cleriadus, who is the son of the count of Asturias, and his beloved Meladice, daughter of the king of England (Piper 1830: iv–ix; Caddick 2014: 43). The reference appears in The First Buik of Clariodus, where the hero fights and kills a lion with his sword after which a knight appears and expresses his profound gratitude to Clariodus for lifting the awful curse that had turned him into an animal. Lines 1023–7 read:

> My father was of Portingall ane knicht
> And eke my mother was ane lady bricht
> To Wairdis then was given grite credence,
> Thairfore my mother gart with diligence
> The Waird Sisteris wait quhen I was borne

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[32] This reference was first brought to my attention by Dr. Neil Martin from the University of Edinburgh, who was the internal examiner at my Ph.D viva in December 2007. At the time, Dr. Martin questioned me about the relevance of Montgomerie's 'weird sisters' to my research on the Old Norse norns; more than a decade on, I believe I now have an answer to his question.

[33] This is from the Tullibardine ms, which uses the heading 'The Secund Invective' for this section (Stevenson 1910: 150); the edition cited here also contains the version extant in the Harleian ms.

[34] The name Nikniven may originally stem from an historical woman condemned as a witch (*cf*. Simpson 1995: 11–17), but it appears to have become part of Scottish folklore traditions about witches.

To heir quhat waird thay sould lay me beforne.
(Piper 1830: 33).

This reference reflects exactly the same popular belief as do Arbuthnot's and Montgomerie's respective poems, namely that the 'weird sisters' determine the course of a newborn child's life by granting it a number of positive and/or negative gifts and that the emphasis is usually on the 'negative gifts' or curses.[35]

The impression thus gained from the Scottish sources is that the 'weird sisters' were well known under that epithet in Scottish folk tradition. The wealth of Scottish material combined with the consistent Scottish no-frills approach to introducing the 'weird sisters' on the one hand and the relative dearth of English material combined with Warner and Holinshed's confusion about what these 'weird sisters' actually are on the other hand justifies the opinion that a high degree of Scottishness was attached to the 'weird sisters' in the overall sixteenth and seventeenth century British context. This finds support in the fact that, apart from Holinshed and Warner, one other English source near-contemporary with Shakespeare – writing after the play was composed – describes the story of Macbeth including his encounter with the 'weird sisters', but not under that name: Peter Heylyn in his *Mikrokosmos, A Little Description of the Great World* from 1633, drawing on Holinshed, states that Macbeth and Banquo "were met by three Fairies, Witches (*Weirds* the *Scots* call them)" (Heylyn 1633: 507). Heylyn's comment suggests that the label and phenomenon the 'weird sisters' had especial currency in Scotland, as does Theobald's remark that it is a "Scotch Term" (Theobald 1733: 393). The English playwright Thomas Heywood in his poem *Hierarchie of the Blessed Angells* from 1635 refers to the story, stating that Mackbeth and Banco "Riding alone, encountered on the way (In a darke Groue) three Virgins wondrous faire, As well in habit as in feature rare" (Heywood 1635: 508), which seems a far cry from the hags of Shakespeare's play, although not unsuitable for the Fates.[36]

Moreover, the argument for Scottishness may find further corroboration in the fact that some English authors of the seventeenth century, such as the playwrights Heywood and Brome (in their co-authored play *The Late Lancashire Witches* from 1634) and Tate (in the libretto for Henry Purcell's opera *Dido and Aeneas* from *c*. 1688),[37] opt for the phrase 'wayward sisters' rather than 'weird sisters', probably inspired by Shakespeare's wording, but possibly also oblivious of any alternatives.[38] Both these drama-related English examples, incidentally, use the phrase in the context of witchcraft – like Shakespeare – and Heywood and Brome even refer directly to a Scottish link: "You look like one o' the Scottish wayward sisters" (*Brome*). If

[35] Regarding this emphasis on the negative aspects, see also Bek-Pedersen 2011: 34, 40–1.

[36] Heywood's reference, incidentally, appears among other descriptions of spirits that govern water (Heywood 1635: 507–8).

[37] Nahum Tate was Irish, born in Dublin in 1652, but he later moved to London and worked there, becoming poet laureate in 1692 (*DNB*: 379–80).

[38] *The Late Lancashire Witches*, Act I, line 439: "Is this a fit habite for a handsome young gentlewoman's mother, as I hope to be a lady, you look like one o' the Scottish wayward sisters" (*Brome*). This looks more like a reference to Shakespeare's *Macbeth* than anything else. *Dido and Aeneas*, Act II, Scene 1, set in the sorceress' cave, opens with the sorceress addressing the witches thus: "Wayward sisters, you that fright // The lonely traveller by night // Who, like dismal ravens crying, // Beat the windows of the dying, // Appear! Appear at my call, and share in the fame // Of a mischief shall make all Carthage flame. // Appear!" (*Dido and Aeneas*). Both these works are likely inspired by Shakespeare's choice of words.

Holinshed's uncertainty regarding the nature of the 'weird sisters' reflects, as seems plausible, more than just a personal puzzlement, it likely contributes to explaining the complete merging of 'weird sisters' with 'witches' in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: they were not as well known in England as in Scotland. Ironically, the designation 'the weird sisters' has nonetheless become firmly and specifically associated with this play.[39]

The question of Shakespeare's use of, understanding of and intention behind 'weyward'/'weyard' versus 'weird' is by no means new. In order to enter into this part of the discussion, it is necessary to consider exactly what happens in the six instances in *Macbeth* where the terms 'weyward' and 'weyard' are used.

Act I, scene 3; the three witches speak to and about themselves in connection with a charm they are creating as Macbeth approaches:

> The weyward Sisters, hand in hand,
> Posters of the Sea and Land,
> Thus doe go, about, about,
> Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
> And thrice againe, to make vp nine.
> Peace, the Charme's wound vp.
> (Furness 1963: 36–8)

There is clearly some sort of ritualistic behaviour going on here, which reveals that the women are witches; were they representatives of fate, such behaviour would be wholly unnecessary. Alongside their witchlike antics and their descriptions of bawdy and evil actions they have carried out, the term 'witch' is used in the immediately preceding lines where one of the witches cites a sailor's wife telling her to go away: "Aroynt thee, Witch!" (Furness 1963: 31). Furthermore, Theobald commented on 'wayward' that: "This word, in general, signifies *perverse*, *froward*, *moody*, *obstinate, intractable* etc. and is everywhere so used by our Shakespeare" (Theobald 1733: 392). Contrary to what Theobald seems to think, I find these to be rather precise descriptions of the three witches; indeed, what Shakespeare portrays on the very first introduction of the witches seems to be exactly "the characteristic topsyturviness of witch behaviour" (Simpson 1995: 14). Their utterances and manners are entirely comparable to being 'wayward' in the senses listed by Theobald: perverse, forward and moody. On the basis of this, my suggestion therefore is that it is, in fact, the witchlike aspect that is pushed to the fore when the audience first see these females on stage. It even seems quite possible that 'weyward' is intended to underline their status as witches.

Act I, scene 5; Lady Macbeth is reading aloud to herself a letter from her husband in which he describes his and Banquo's strange encounter with the women:

> They met me in the day of successe: and I haue learn'd by the perfect'st report, they haue more in them, then mortall knowledge. When I burnt in desire to question them further, they made themselues Ayre, into which they vanish'd. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came Missiues from the King, who all-hail'd me Thane of Cawdor, by which Title before, these weyward Sisters saluted me, and referr'd me to the comming on of time, with haile King that shalt be."

[39] On searching for 'the weird sisters' on the internet, all references that come up point either to Shakespeare's play or to fictional characters that have in all likelihood been inspired by Shakespeare's play.

(Furness 1963: 69–70)

This passage mentions neither behaviour nor looks, Macbeth is simply repeating the women's description of themselves and the gist of what they have foretold for him. In his letter, he uses the same term as the witches used about themselves: 'weyward'.

Act II, scene 1; during a late-night conversation when they are alone, Banquo says to Macbeth: "I dreamt last Night of the weyward Sisters: // To you they haue shew'd some truth" (Furness 1963: 117). Again, this is simply a repetition of how the women referred to themselves. Macbeth responds that he does not think about them, but the conversation is immediately followed by his vision of a dagger after Banquo leaves him and he is alone. Clearly, the prophecy, as he and Banquo now both understand the women's statements to be, is preying on his mind.

The orthographic shift comes in Act III, scene 1. At the very opening of this scene, Banquo is speaking to himself, saying:

> Thou hast it now, King, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
> As the weyard Women promis'd, and I feare
> Thou playd'st most fowly for't: yet it was saide
> It should not stand in thy Posterity,
> But that my selfe should be the Roote, and Father
> Of many Kings. If there come truth from them,
> As vpon thee Macbeth, their Speeches shine,
> Why by the verities on thee made good,
> May they not be my Oracles as well,
> And set me vp in hope.
> (Furness 1963: 173)

Banquo is wondering about the prophecies, about the way in which they have come true for Macbeth and about whether they will come true for himself, too. One difference here is the changed orthography, 'weyard', another difference is that the women are referred to as 'women' rather than 'sisters'. It is the only one of the six references that does not use the term 'sisters'.

Act III, scene 4; Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are talking, he is deeply troubled by the murders he has committed and worried about where he is heading. He says to his wife:

> I will to morrow
> (And betimes I will) to the weyard Sisters.
> More shall they speake: for now I am bent to know
> By the worst meanes, the worst, for mine owne good,
> All causes shall giue way."
> (Furness 1963: 230)

Macbeth, thus, decides to approach the three women of his own free will in order that they may tell him more. This corresponds to the historical accounts where Macbeth consults the witch, except in the play there are three witches and they are exactly the same characters as those who initially prophesied about his future. This is a striking digression from the historical accounts.

Act IV, scene 1; the scene opens with the witches accompanied by Hecate preparing for Macbeth's arrival upon which he requests information and they show him a whole range of apparitions, the last of which resembles the murdered Banquo. Macbeth is horrified. When the witches vanish, Lennox enters and Macbeth asks him:

"Saw you the Weyard Sisters?" (Furness 1963: 265). Lennox denies and communicates instead the news that Macduff has fled to England.

This appearance of Hecate arguably corresponds to the single witch, whom Macbeth consults in the historical accounts. She has a similar cameo appearance in Act III, Scene 5, where she instructs the witches in their evil deceptions of Macbeth as a sort of 'chief witch' (Furness 1963: 232–6 and 253–4).[40] In Classical tradition, Hecate was a chthonic goddess associated with the night, death and fertility, but she was also a goddess of magic, witchcraft and necromancy (Grant and Hazel: 151–2; *Theoi*) and it is in this capacity she appears among Shakespeare's witches (*cf*. Simpson 1995: 14–18). She is not one of the 'weird sisters'.

Regarding the orthographic shift from 'weyward' in the first part of the play to 'weyard' in the latter part, there is scholarly agreement that this is a discrepancy between Compositor A, who typeset the former part of the play, and Compositor B, who typeset the latter part of the play in the First Folio edition.[41] Moreover, the argument has been made that the spelling 'weyard' actually represents a dialectal pronunciation that has the same sonorous quality as the modern English 'weird'.[42] This may be so, but I nonetheless find the explanation unsatisfactory; it seems a short-sighted solution to rely on a pronunciation local to a completely different place from the setting of the play's action. Moreover, if Shakespeare intended the witches to be termed 'the weird sisters', then why did he not write 'weird'? Why use a different word?[43]

Shakespeare's use of the description 'weyward sisters' has, according to Theobald, arisen as the result of some copyist's error; 'weird' was, to Theobald's mind, the intended word (Theobald 1733: 393). Were this the case, this mistake by the typesetter(s) would seem to support my argument that the 'weird sisters' were not so well known in England, although I am not convinced the error argument holds. Instead, I would like to entertain the idea that Shakespeare either intentionally used 'wayward' instead of 'weird' or that his intention was for the two terms to seem to merge. After all, the theme of ambiguity is laid out right from the very opening of the play – Act I, Scene 1: "faire is foule, and foule is faire" (Furness 1963: 12) – and the perverse aspect of 'wayward' is blatantly exemplified by the bawdiness of the witches in Act I, Scene 3 – behaviour that completely undermines the dignity and mystery of the 'weird sisters', whom the witches arguably aspire to be mistaken for. As I understand the character of Shakespeare's Macbeth, this potential for mistaking the witches for the 'real weird sisters' may even fuel his ambition in the sense that he wants them to be harbingers of fate and therefore does not recognize them for what they really are, namely mere dabblers in magic and illusion.

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[40] It is thought by some that the two brief scenes featuring Hecate are later interpolations not authored by Shakespeare (Muir 1984: xxxii–xxxv). This, however, does not change the fact that Hecate is the appropriate figure from Classical tradition to associate with the witches in *Macbeth*.

[41] See Braunmuller 2008: 255–6 and Muir 1984: 14.

[42] See Braunmuller 2008: 256 and Urmson 1981: 245.

[43] This brings us to the metrical argument, regarding which there is no consensus. Some hold that a disyllabic word was required in order for the diction to come out right (Braunmuller 2008: 256), while others hold the exact opposite: that a disyllabic word is detrimental to the verse (Furness: 37–8).

In support of this, it is Macbeth who believes the witches, whereas Banquo initially seeks to explain them and their prophecies away by rational means, questioning whether he and Macbeth have even seen what they believe they have seen and referring to the witches as the "Instruments of Darknesse" (Furness 1963: 44–52; *cf*. Simpson 1995: 17). One might say that Macbeth has more reason to believe the witches' prophecy since he is the one who is immediately touched by it, becoming Thane of Cawdor virtually the moment the witches vanish, but his willingness to be so taken by their utterances also reveals an important aspect of his psyche.

The 'weird sisters' were already firmly attached to the historical figure of Macbeth and the fact that they were regarded as beings of some dignity is reflected also in the illustration from the 1577 edition of *Holinshed's Chronicles* of their meeting with Macbeth and Banquo, which I have found reproduced in Schoenbaum (1981: 12–13). Here, two gentlemen on horseback meet three equally gentle women in fine dress and with their hair elaborately arranged. These women carry no accoutrements at all and there is nothing about their appearance that can justifiably be associated with witches, although they might possibly pass as nymphs, which is one of the terms by which Holinshed describes them.

Shakespeare breaks with this tradition by conflating the 'weird sisters' from the early part of the historical accounts of Macbeth entirely with the 'witch' from the latter part of these accounts – and by pushing the witchiness so clearly to the foreground. I believe this is reflected in his choice of words, calling his witches the 'weyward sisters'. As regards Theobald's emendation to 'weird' from 1733, I believe it to be influenced by that self-same tradition, which Shakespeare breaks with, and I think it is essentially misunderstood. Had Shakespeare intended to portray the unyielding, supernatural forces of fate, then he missed every opportunity to do so in a manner even remotely convincing. Theobald may in one sense revert the picture back to the Scottish tradition of the 'weird sisters' by substituting 'weyward' with 'weird', but in doing so he bypasses Shakespeare altogether.

By depicting only witches, Shakespeare presents in his version of the Macbeth story a man who is not so much an unfortunate victim of superhuman fate as he is a zealous man blinded by fantastic illusions. Witches must have been extremely topical, since *Macbeth* was written during the period of the great witch hunts and witch trials. Shakespeare is thought to have been well acquainted with King James VI and I's work on witchcraft, *Daemonologie* from 1597, allegedly inspired by the king's personal involvement in the North Berwick witch trials of 1590 and by the Earl of Bothwell's witchcraft-induced attempt at King James' life earlier that same year (*cf*. Wentersdorf 1980: 434–5; Simpson 1995: 17–18) – a high-profile Scottish case that must have been well known around the time Shakespeare wrote his play.[44] Even so, witches were above all human beings, who were able by magical means to unveil the future (*cf*. Wentersdorf 1980: 433); they were not themselves supernatural beings.

Macbeth, as Shakespeare portrays him, is not a victim of the unyielding forces of fate, nor of his unfortunate descent from a supernatural woodsman of dubious nature, but is instead the victim of his own equally uncompromising, yet all too human, desire and ambition. The inspiration for the play's warped and 'wayward' version of the 'weird sisters' known from Scottish tradition may in my opinion have come from a

[44] The North Berwick witch trials thus involved a Scottish nobleman, who was a successful soldier and had some measure of royal blood in his veins (which gave him hope of succeeding to the throne if James died), and who allied himself with witches in an attempt to get rid of his royal cousin. It is not unlikely that this case provided some inspiration for *Macbeth*.

variety of places or, indeed, from all of them: the witch traditionally associated with the seemingly impossible circumstances surrounding Macbeth's death, Holinshed's uncertain description of the 'weird sisters', a misunderstanding of a group of beings known within contemporary Scottish but not English folk tradition, or a wish to portray the anti-hero of the so-called 'Scottish Play' in solely human terms.

ABBREVIATIONS

Asloan	*The Asloan Manuscript: A miscellany in prose and verse, written by John Asloan in the reign of James the Fifth*. Scottish Text Society, New Series 14, 16. 1923. W.A. Craigie, ed. Edinburgh and London.
Bell. Boece	*The History and Chronicles of Scotland; written in Latin by Hector Boece and translated by John Bellenden, Archdean of Moray*. Vol. II. Bellenden, John and Boece, Hector. 1821. Edinburgh.
Boece	Hector Boece. *Historia Gentis Scotorum*. 2010. Dana F. Sutton, ed. Online: http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/boece/
Brome	Ostovich, H., ed. *The Late Lancashire Witches by Thom. Heywood and Richard Broome*. 1634. London. Online: https://www.hrionline.ac.uk/brome/viewTranscripts.jsp?play=LW&act=1&type=BOTH
Catholicum Anglicum	*Catholicum Anglicum. An English-Latin Wordbook dated 1483*. 1881. Early English Text Society. Sidney J.H. Herrtage, ed. London.
Court of Venus	*Court of Venus: Ane treatise callit the court of Venus deuidit into four buikis newlie comylit be Iohne Rolland in Dalkeith*. John Rolland. 1575. Ann Arbor. 2007. Oxford. Text Creation Partnership. http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A10989.0001.001/1:4?rgn=div1;view=toc
Dido and Aeneas	Dido and Aeneas. Online: http://opera.stanford.edu/iu/libretti/dido.html
DNB	*Dictionary of National Biography*. Vol. 55. 1898. "Tate, Nahum" 379–80. ed. Sidney Lee. London.
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The Ear of the Beholder: John Mackenzie of *The Beauties*

RONALD BLACK

The primary purpose of this article is to present what is known of the life of the celebrated Gaelic anthologist John Mackenzie (1806–48). Within each section of the life, the opportunity is taken to assess the nature and importance of the work produced in that period. The section 'Gairloch and Skye: birth, early years and character' provides the basis for certain judgements relating to Mackenzie's personality that arise from his works. The last section of the article proper is devoted to his legacy, including the American edition of *Sàr Obair*. Following this is an appendix in which Mackenzie's thirty-three publications are listed.

Sar-Obair nam Bàrd Gaelach; or The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry, and Lives of the Highland Bards, first published in 1841, is probably the most influential secular work ever printed in Gaelic. Singers adjusted their songs to match its texts, storytellers their stories to match its 'lives' (Bennett 1989: 60; Gillies 2000: 55). It is ironic, then, that the life of the man so often referred to as 'John Mackenzie of *The Beauties*' is much less well known. He is not seen as another *Caraid nan Gaidheal* ('Friend of the Gael'), even though he helped bring before the public the work of the man upon whom that most honourable of nicknames was bestowed. Despite the unique nature of his contribution he is not mentioned in the same breath as those other towering Victorian pioneers, John Francis Campbell and Alexander Carmichael. In fact, although he was born and died in the nineteenth century and *Sàr Obair* was first published four years after Queen Victoria came to the throne, he is scarcely thought of as a nineteenth-century figure at all.

There are, I think, two reasons for this. One is that his life was cut short – instead of living to become a patriarch of Gaelic scholarship in the era of the Crofters' War and the campaign for the Celtic Chair, in the way that Carmichael became the doyen of Edinburgh Gaels in the years around 1900, Mackenzie died rather miserably at the age of 42. The other is that he was an individualist and a rebel. He never subscribed to what became the archetypal Victorian ideals of Bible-based morality, imperialism, thrift and free trade. The only Victorian virtue to which he laid claim was hard work, and it killed him. On the other hand, as a believer in Jacobitism and liberal values, he would have been at home in the eighteenth century, and as a man who took enormous pride in Gaelic literature he would have been at home in the twentieth.

The biographer of John Mackenzie has two main sources. One is his own publications – far from being a man of one book, he was a man of thirty – and also therefore those works, notably Maclean 1915 and Ferguson and Matheson 1984, through which his publications may be accessed. The other is a substantial memoir published in 1877 by a relative of his own, the redoubtable Alexander Mackenzie (1838–98), historian and genealogist, editor and printer of *The Celtic Magazine*. As our memorialist shared a common surname with his subject I will refer to him, and to his memoir, as Clach (short for Clachnacuddin), the nickname by which he was universally known in Inverness. A corrected version of the first half of the memoir was published thirteen years after Clach's death, presumably having been found among his papers (Mackenzie 1911); it

was followed in due course by a Gaelic version of the entire piece (MacLeòid 1934–35), then by a more thoughtful Gaelic reassessment in which some significant new material was introduced (Murchison 1947–48). There is also an English summary of this (Murchison 1956). Where no source is cited in what follows, however, it is to be understood that my information comes from Clach – Mackenzie 1877, occasionally as corrected in Mackenzie 1911.

Gairloch and Skye: birth, early years and character

John Mackenzie, Iain Alastair Òig, was born 17 July 1806 at Mellon Charles (*Meallan Theàrlaich*) in the parish of Gairloch. He was *Iain, mac Alastair Òig, mhic Iain Òig, mhic Iain Mhóir, mhic Alastair, mhic Alastair Chaim, mhic Alastair Bhric Tighearna Gheàrrloch*. His great-great-great-grandfather, Alastair Cam, was fourth son of Alexander, fifth Mackenzie of Gairloch. Of Alastair Cam, who received his epithet from having lost an eye fighting for King Charles at Worcester in 1651, Alexander Mackenzie tells us in his *History of the Clan Mackenzie* (1879: 329):

> His descendants are still well known in Gairloch as "Sliochd Alastair Chàim," or the descendants of Alexander the One-eyed, one of them being the late John Mackenzie of the "Beauties of Gaelic Poetry," who was fifth in legitimate male descent; as also the Author of this History, who is, both on the male and female side, sixth in succession.

John's mother was Margaret, daughter of Alexander Mackenzie of Badachro by his wife Janet, who was a daughter of the Rev. James Robertson of Lochbroom (*c*.1701–76) by his wife Mary (or Janet), who was a daughter of Murdoch Mackenzie of Letterewe (Mackenzie 1879: 358; Mackenzie 1911: 162). The Badachro family were also a near offshoot of the Mackenzies of Gairloch, so Clach was able to say of John as of himself (p. 201) that he 'was as closely connected with the parent tree on the one side as on the other'.

John's grandfather Iain Òg was one of seven brothers known as *Clann Iain Mhóir*, described by Clach as 'the most powerful men in Gairloch in their day' (Mackenzie 1879: end-paper). He had a tack of all the lands on the north side of Loch Ewe that belonged to the lairds of Gairloch, but appears to have spent a good deal of his time on one of his remotest farms, Loch a Druing. As a drover, he bought cattle between Poolewe and Little Loch Broom for sale at the Crieff and Falkirk markets. John's brother James recalled him as 'an old Hielan'man, with his blue bonnet and old Hielan' coat' (Dixon 1886: 206). Of his wife Janet (Jessie), a daughter of Miles Macrae, Osgood Mackenzie tells the following story (1980: 186–87):

> The best-known Gairloch fairy of modern times went by the name of the Gille Dubh of Loch a Druing. How often did I hear of him when I was a boy! His haunts were in the birch-woods that still cluster round the southern end of that loch and extend up the sides of the high ridge to the west. There are grassy glades, dense thickets, and rocky fastnesses in these woods that look just the very place for fairies. Loch a Druing is on the north point, about two miles from the present Rudha Reidh lighthouse.
>
> The Gille Dubh was so named from the black colour of his hair. His dress, if dress it could be called, was merely leaves of trees and green moss. He was seen by very many people and on many occasions during a period of more than forty years in the

> latter half of the eighteenth century. He was, in fact, well known to the people, and was generally regarded as a beneficent fairy.
>
> He never spoke to anyone except to a little girl called Jessie Macrae, whose home was at Loch a Druing. She was lost in the woods one summer night. The Gille Dubh came to her, treated her with great kindness, and took her safely home again next morning. When Jessie grew up she became the wife of John Mackenzie, tenant of Loch a Druing farm, and grandfather of the famous John Mackenzie who collected and edited the *Beauties of Gaelic Poetry*.
>
> It was after this that Sir Hector Mackenzie of Gairloch invited Sir George Mackenzie of Coul, Mackenzie of Dundonnell, Mackenzie of Letterewe, and Mackenzie of Kernsary, to join him in an expedition to repress the Gille Dubh. These five lairds repaired to Loch a Druing armed with guns, with which they hoped to shoot the fairy. Most of them wore the Highland dress, with dirks at their side.
>
> They were hospitably entertained by John Mackenzie, the tenant. An ample supper was served in the house. It included both beef and mutton, and they had to use their dirks for knives and forks, as such things were very uncommon in Gairloch in those days. They spent the night at Loch a Druing, and slept in John Mackenzie's barn, where couches of heather were prepared for them. They went all through the woods, but they saw nothing of the Gille Dubh!

Recent research suggests that the Gille Dubh is likely to have been an unfortunate human being suffering from certain mental and physical disabilities – some such condition as PKU, homocystinuria, progeria, dwarfism, or, most likely of all perhaps, one of the mucopolysaccharidosis syndromes – who had been left to fend for himself in the wild (Eberly 1997: 239–45, see Black 2005: liii–liv). Further detail is to be found in Campbell of Islay's manuscripts. His father was said to have been a man from Assynt called Mac an Air, and the circumstances in which Jessie encountered him were as follows. Her father, who lived in Sand (*Sannda*), took his cattle every summer to the shielings around Loch a Druing. One of the cows went missing, and his wife went to look for it. There was no sign of her coming back, so a servant girl nicknamed *an Coisiche Mór* ('the Big Walker') took off after her. Being left alone, little Jessie promptly went to look for them both. Soon she was lost in the woods (Campbell 1940: 480):

> Thachair an Gille Dubh rithe le currachd mór chóinntich, air a ceangal le crios luachrach mu a cheann. Lìon e a h-uchd làn de lusan, agus thuirt e rithe gun robh a màthair agus an Coisiche air dol dachaidh leis a' bhoin. An sin chuir e air an rathad dachaidh i gu sàbhailt.
>
> ("She met the Gille Dubh wearing a great headdress of moss tied around his head with a belt of rushes. He filled her lap full of plants, and told her that her mother and the 'Walker' had gone home with the cow. Then he set her safely on her way home.")

Alastair Òg inherited his father's tack. As was the custom, he sub-let some of the best farming ground, *Meallan Theàrlaich*, in small crofts. Although he had the lion's share of the land, all he

himself paid in rent was fourpence, exacted by Sir Hector Mackenzie for the sole purpose of preserving his rights of superiority, the vast bulk of the rent being paid direct by the crofters to the laird. Despite this huge advantage, as Clach expressed it (p. 202), 'Alastair Og's unbounded hospitality, and the style of living then fashionable among the better class of tenants, reduced him in circumstances so much, and the land was so neglected, that the laird was ultimately obliged to take the latter into his own hands, with the exception of a small portion which was left in the possession of Mackenzie, free of any rent in future, on condition that he would pay up some trifling arrears'.

Judging from the 'Genealogy of the Author' tipped in at the end of the *History of the Clan Mackenzie*, Alastair Òg and his wife Margaret had two sons, James and John (in that order), and several daughters. The impression conveyed by the table that James was older than John is contradicted both by Clach himself, who says (p. 201) that John, born 1806, was the eldest son, and by J. H. Dixon (see below). We know the name of only one of their sisters, Mary; James and Mary survived at least to 1886, for both were still living when Dixon published his classic work *Gairloch* in that year. Dixon devotes an entire chapter to James's stories (in English only), introducing him like this (1886: 201):

> The following stories have been related to me by James Mackenzie of Kirkton, along with many traditions and facts embodied in other parts of this book. James Mackenzie is an enthusiastic lover of family history and local folk-lore, and whilst disowning superstitious fancies is quite alive to the charms of romance . . .
>
> James Mackenzie was born in 1808, and consequently remembers several of the bards and pipers already mentioned. His elder brother was John Mackenzie, so celebrated amongst Gaelic speakers as the compiler of the "Beauties of Gaelic Poetry," and James shared with his brother the fund of old stories which, in the days of their youth, they loved to listen to at the "ceilidh," or social meetings, then so generally held during the long winter nights.
>
> James Mackenzie, who is a direct descendant in the sixth generation from Alastair Breac, fifth laird of Gairloch, has been a sailor during much of his life, and still affects the blue neckerchief and dark serge clothes of the sea-faring man, topped with a Highland bonnet of the Prince Charlie type. He is short in stature, and has very expressive features. He has the true Highland *esprit*, combined with refined courtesy and faithful attachment to his chief,—qualities which many think are destined soon to become extinct.

When education in the Highlands consisted in equal parts of a good ceilidh-house and a good school it was superb. In the brothers' case it was arguably better still, for there were three elements – while Dixon speaks of the ceilidh-house, Clach speaks (p. 202) of not only school but tutors. Alastair Òg was so anxious for his children to be educated that he got the services first of a young man called William Falconer, son of the gardener at Brahan Castle, and then of Donald Dunbar, from Tain, as family tutors. When they were a little older John and James were sent to school at Isle of Ewe, and finally to the parish school of Gairloch – eighteen miles from home, but 'then, as now, a well conducted school'.

Magnus Maclean claimed (1902: 356), wrongly in T. M. Murchison's opinion (1947–48: 126), that John went on to Tain Academy. One way or the other, the result was a mind filled with the matter of the ceilidh-house and supplied with the means to process it into the written word. Almost from childhood he took a great delight in reading everything within his reach, and he himself tells us (Mackenzie 1841: iii*):

> I had frequent opportunities of witnessing the influence of poetry over the mind, and uniformly found, that cheerfulness and song, music and morality, walked almost always, hand in hand. Thus nurtured, and thus tutored, the intrinsic excellence of the poetry which I was accustomed to hear in my younger days, made such an impression on my mind, that neither time, distance, nor circumstances, have been able to obliterate. I was therefore bred with an enthusiasm which impelled me, as I advanced in life, to dig deeper and deeper into the invaluable mine.

He had a good ear for more than language and poetry. As a boy he showed an extraordinary aptitude for music, and made musical instruments, as well as all sorts of wooden ornaments and utensils, with no other tool than his pocket-knife. When still a child he made himself a fiddle, and later produced a set of bagpipes, on which Clach says he became 'an excellent performer', correcting this later (Mackenzie 1911: 163) to 'a fairly good performer'. He could also play the flute and several other musical instruments. Murchison claims (1947–48: 126) that he could play the piano, and Clach adds (p. 202): 'He collected and wrote down several popular Highland airs, as yet unpublished, but of which the manuscript is still extant.'

Noticing his talent for woodworking, John's parents got him apprenticed to an itinerant joiner called William Ross. If Magnus Maclean is to be believed (1902: 356), his workshop was in Dingwall. Travelling around the countryside gave John a perfect opportunity for noting down Gaelic songs and tales, which he found more congenial than acquiring the humdrum skills of his trade.

In the summer or autumn of 1823, when seventeen years old, John was one of a number of artisans and labourers building an extension to Gairloch manse (Murchison 1947–48: 126). The minister at the time was the Rev. James Russell (Dixon 1886: 68, 70–71). Among the masons was none other than Hugh Miller from Cromarty, four years John's senior, who in 1854 published an account of his sojourn (1993: 236–78). It is unfortunate that Miller chose to make no mention of the young carpenter's apprentice or of the event which would change his life so utterly – John fell off a wall that was being built and sustained a blow on the head which left him unable to work. After a while he recovered and went to Conon Bridge to complete his apprenticeship with a joiner there, but it turned out, says Clach (p. 203), that the injury 'was of such a permanent nature as quite unfitted him to follow the profession any further'.

With few regrets, Iain Alastair Òig laid aside his hammer and saw forever. Of the precise medical grounds for his inability to function as a tradesman we know nothing. Did the injury affect his eyesight? His balance? His personality? That he behaved strangely or aggressively at times is not in doubt, and I consulted a medical friend, Dr Christopher Cameron, Kelso, on this point. He replied that by far the most common sequel to head injury is not personality change but (secondary) post-traumatic epilepsy, which he has seen several times. However, he pointed out

that eyesight can be damaged, either by frontal/facial injury or by trauma to the occipital lobes at the back of the brain, where the visual cortex is situated; balance can also be disturbed. In addition he states (e-mail, 28 February 2003):

> I have sounded out a psychiatric ex-colleague on the question of the possible relationship of personality/character change to preceding head-injury . . . My colleague confirms that the site of head-injury most likely to cause emotional and personality change is one or other of the two frontal lobes of the brain – about whose role in brain activity little is known save that it seems to be involved particularly in imparting qualities of 'human-ness' to the field of human relationships, particularly qualities like empathy and understanding of the emotions of others . . . The frontal lobes are . . . the 'quiet' areas of the brain, whose functions are only hinted at when damaged.

Clach offers two anecdotes (pp. 208–10) which demonstrate that John's personality was a curious mixture of the clever and the peculiar.

> John, when only nineteen years of age, played a trick on a half simpleton of the name of John Fraser, which will illustrate his good-natured, mischievous disposition. A man, by name Macrae, borrowed a horse from Patrick Morrison, Kernsary, for the purpose of sending oysters from Poolewe to the south, and while returning home with the animal, it died at the end of Inverewe barn. The boys in the district teased poor Fraser, and charged him with having eaten part of the horse. At the time, Macleod of Macleod, of Dunvegan Castle, and his son, were fishing on the River Ewe, and Fraser, who was an inveterate snuffer, thought that he might get a few coppers from these gentlemen to buy snuff with, if he could secure a good introduction to them. With this object he called on Mackenzie, who was even then considered, in his own peculiar way, a very clever young man, who could do anything in the way of writing. He at once consented, and wrote out the following introduction to Macleod, with which the simple Fraser went away perfectly delighted:—
>
> *I am the beast that ate the horse—*
> *Excuse me if you can—*
> *I ate it all except a bit*
> *I left to make a ham.*
>
> *Macleod, he promised me a groat*
> *If I would go to Skye,*
> *With the carcase of the brute,*
> *To make the rooks to cry.*
>
> Macleod perused the document, laughed heartily, asked Fraser to give him the precious production, and handed him half-a-crown.

That must have happened in or around 1825. Our other 'clever but peculiar' anecdote dates from about five years later, presumably the period 1830–33 when John's *Òrain Ghàëlach, le Uilleam Rŏs* (see Appendix, no. 1) was written but he had not yet moved to Glasgow. James told Clach that John was travelling through the islands at the time as the representative of the *Inverness Courier*, collecting sums of money owed to the paper and gathering material for *Sàr Obair*. He called at one of the banks in Portree to deposit the cash in his employers' account, and the banker hospitably invited him to spend the night in his house.

Following a good meal and some liquid refreshment John took a stroll down to the pier. We may visualise him for ourselves now that he has reached manhood. 'Slenderly built, fair-haired, sharp featured, with a sallow, delicate-looking complexion', he was wearing a long surtout which nearly reached his heels, and whatever else was necessary to emphasise the dignity of his occupation – top hat, silk cravat and a pair of shiny boots, I dare say. We know that he could afford to buy such things, because Clach tells us (p. 201) that when he decided to publish Ross's poems, Sir Francis Alexander Mackenzie, the young laird of Gairloch, not only gave him substantial help in his efforts to collect them, but guaranteed the expenses of publication and 'generously presented him with the portmanteau and other necessary articles to fit him out for his journey'.

John now began what Clach candidly called 'his usual eccentric performances' – looking up to the heavens and other antics which suggested anything but great wisdom in the eye of the beholder. Then he spotted a female figurehead on a ship lying along the quay. He proceeded to stare at it with such intensity that the captain, happening to be on deck, remarked to him conversationally: "Is she not really a very beautiful woman?"

"Oh, yes! I wish you would sell her to me."

"You had better buy the ship!" said the captain.

"Oh, I cannot," says John. "It's not every man who could buy the ship, and it's her figurehead I want."

The captain had taken him for a simpleton as soon as he saw his peculiar stare. Eying the long surtout, he said, "I have seen many a man with a shorter coat than yours who could buy her."

"Well, if she's cheap," said John, "I would like to buy her for the figurehead. Have you any cargo in her?"

"Yes, I have five hundred bolls of meal in her, and, what do you say? You shall have the whole for £300."

John jumped aboard, handed the skipper a five-pound note on account, and said, "The ship is mine as she stands, cargo and all. Come up to the bank at twelve o'clock tomorrow and you shall have the money."

It was only now that the captain realised what kind of man he was dealing with – that, as Clach puts it, the simplicity and apparent foolishness were put on. Not surprisingly, a little knot of sailors had gathered on deck to watch their future being bartered, and the agonised skipper asked if they thought the man could pay for the ship. "You may rest assured," said one who had sailed the seven seas, "that if he could not, he would not have left you his five pound note."

John went straight back to the banker and told him what had happened. He had bought the ship for £300, he said, and left a deposit. "We must watch, so that the captain will not get away with the ship and the five pounds."

The banker asked him if he had any money of his own. “No,” says John, “but she is a good bargain. The cargo alone is worth much more than I gave for her.”

Enquiries were made, and the banker agreed that he would pay for the ship, take her over himself, and make John a substantial payment for his part in the bargain. Later that evening they went back to the captain and offered him the money. By now he was in great distress and begged to be released from the agreement which he had so unwisely made. Finally, he offered John sixty pounds for himself if he would give up his right to the ship. “This sum,” says Clach (p. 209), “he very foolishly, we think, but most magnanimously, declined.”

John asked for his five-pound note, and on receiving it gave up his rights to the ship. He advised the captain in no uncertain terms to be more careful in future, and not to tease a person who had no intention of interfering with his person or his property. “Above all,” he concluded, “do not ever judge a man by his appearance, or by the length or cut of his coat.”

I have to say at this point that I am a little bit suspicious as to the origins of this story and to the real identity of its hero. Even if these suspicions are correct, however, it speaks volumes as to how John was regarded in his own community. The most famous of all Highland fools, Gilleasbaig Aotrom (Archibald Matheson), is well known to have flourished during the incumbency of the Rev. John MacGregor Souter as minister of Duirinish, 1814–39. This is the period of John’s alleged visit to Portree. Gilleasbaig’s scathing wit made him so popular – and so feared – that although he spent his days wandering around the countryside, he never lacked good clothes or a meal. Neil MacLeod described him (MacLeòid 1975: 237) as wearing *ad àrd, deise dhubh, agus léine gheal* – ‘a tall hat, a black suit, and a white shirt’.

One of the many stories about Gilleasbaig tells how, at a cattle market in Portree, he bumped into a gentleman who had often shown him kindness. The gentleman remarked to him that he wanted to buy a particular horse, but that the seller, a stranger, was asking more than he was willing to give. “How much are you willing to pay?” says Gilleasbaig.

“I would go the length of twenty pounds.”

“Give me fifteen,” says Gilleasbaig, “and I’ll get the horse for you.”

The gentleman thought he might risk it, and handed over the money. Gilleasbaig went along to the seller and asked him how much he wanted for the animal. Perhaps the question was accompanied by ‘eccentric performances’, because the stranger appears to have taken him for the wrong sort of fool, and retorted: “How much will you give?”

“I’ll give you thirteen pounds,” said Gilleasbaig.

The stranger thought he would give the crowd around the horse some fun and cried out: “Down with the money then and he’s yours.”

“Done then, in the presence of witnesses,” said Gilleasbaig. He counted out the money, took possession of the horse, and rode it up to his friend’s house in triumph. In a familiar-sounding touch, J. G. Mackay concludes his telling of the anecdote (1919–22: 171): “Though offered it, the remaining £2 he would not take on any account.”

Neil MacLeod tells another story about Gilleasbaig (MacLeòid 1975: 234–35) which portrays him in exactly the same way that James Mackenzie was to portray his own brother John – taking a stroll down to the shore at Portree. The vessel that caught Gilleasbaig’s eye, however, was a fishing-boat. She had just come in with a good catch, and the crew had gone straight up to the village for a dram, so, with no one looking, Gilleasbaig helped himself to a prize cod.

He went straight up to a particular gentleman's house and rang the bell. Who appeared but the gentleman himself. *An ceannaich sibh trosg math?* says Gilleasbaig. "Will you buy a fine cod?"

Ceannaichidh, replies the gentleman, *agus taing air son fhaotainn. Ciod a' phrìs a tha thu ag iarraidh air?* "Yes, and thank you for obtaining it. How much do you want for it?"

Tha, says Gilleasbaig, *tastan agus gloine uisge-beatha.* "A shilling and a glass of whisky."

Gheibh thu sin, ma-tà, says the man. "That you will have, then."

When Gilleasbaig had been paid in full he put down the glass and remarked, *Nis, bho nach eil a bheag agam fhéin ri dhèanamh, théid mi chun an uillt agus glanaidh mi dhuibh e.* "Now, since I don't have much to do, I'll go to the burn and clean it for you."

Ro mhath, said the man. "Excellent."

Gilleasbaig went off with the cod and sold it in seven other houses for the same price. Then he brought it back down to the boat, where he found the crew busy cleaning their catch. He threw the cod down among the other fish, saying: *Siud agaibh, a ghillean còir, bhur trosg, agus ma phàigheas e sibhse cho math 's a phàigh e mise, is math am beathach e.* "There, my fine lads, is your cod, and if it pays you as well as it has paid me, it's a fine beast."

These three Portree stories clearly have much in common. They demonstrate a little more, I think, than the obvious fact that John's brother James – a seaman himself, we should remember, and therefore more than usually exposed to the stories seamen told – was, in Dixon's words, 'quite alive to the charms of romance'. They show that Gilleasbaig Aotrom was seen as close to being a wise man, and that the learned editor of *Sar-Obair nam Bàrd Gaelach* was seen as close to being a fool. This is how Clach deals with the issue (p. 208).

> Mackenzie . . . was, from his youth upwards, considered quite a character in his native district. The very idea of a man going through the country, enduring much fatigue, and, as far as the would-be-considered-wise people of the district could see, with no apparent useful or sensible object, collecting old songs and foolish stories, was enough to stamp him as one who was not altogether wise, and his manner of answering questions, and his peculiar sayings, only strengthened this idea of the ignorant regarding him.

As one of many possible instances of his mannerisms of speech, Clach cites the following (p. 208). John was spending the evening in a particular house when one of the womenfolk came in with a bucket of water from the well. The man of the house asked her: *An do thuit an oidhche, a Cheat?* "Did the night fall, Kate?"

Thuit, tha i dìreach an déidh tuiteam. "It fell, it's just after falling."

Hearing this, John looked amazed, pretended to be terrified, and exclaimed, *Gun gléidh an sealbh sinne! Gu dé dh'éireas dhuinn? Càit an do thuit i?* "Providence preserve us! What will happen to us? Where did it fall?"

It would be good to have some more examples, because an 'agenda' is coming across here which we can recognise today. John cared about the Gaelic language, and, as a Wester Ross man, knew it at its best. In Easter Ross, on the other hand, it was in decline. He had a satirical turn of mind and was not afraid to offend. The idea of night 'falling' has no place in good Gaelic, so John chose to make a linguistic point by ridiculing it. The point was perhaps lost on his hosts that night; it may even have been lost on Clach. One is reminded of Professor Watson's story from Easter

Ross (1925–27: 316) of the father who went to the door at night, and, seeing a fine display of stars, called to his little son, "Geordie *m' eudail*, come oot till ye see the *ronnags*."

His wife, who, says Watson, was a bit of a purist in matters of language, reproved him, saying: "Don't be learning bad English to the bairn. Could ye no say, Geordie *m' eudail*, come oot till ye see the stairs?"

Wick: adventures in love and orthography

John appears to have spent the years 1830 and 1831 in Wick, presumably acting as the *Inverness Courier* agent for Caithness. One of the reasons we know this, I am happy to say, is that he fell in love. The young lady, as Clach helpfully tells us (p. 207), was Mary Sudge, daughter of an innkeeper in the town. It is fair to guess that his was the inn in which John had his lodgings, because we can be pretty sure that had he not been staying there when he met her, he would have quickly taken advantage of her father's profession to change his abode. He made a song for her which, eight years later, he chose to include in his collection of Highland love-songs *An Cruiteara Gàëlach* (App., no. 8) with a little footnote: "The above song was composed by the Editor on Miss Mary S——, in the Town of Wick, Caithness-shire, A.D. 1830." I reprint it exactly as it stands, along with my attempt at a translation.

Oran Sugraidh.

Hoireann o gur mi tha tursach,
Thriall mo mharan, dh' fhag mo lùgh mi
Cha 'n eil cail agam gu sugradh,
Gus a faic mi ruin mo chéille.

'S truagh nach robh mo chaileag ghreannar,
Mar rium fein fo' sgeith na 'm beanntan;
Far am biodh a chuthag Shamhraidh,
Seinn sa' ghleann an am dhuinn eiridh.
Hoireann o, &c.

Laidhinn oidhch' sa' choill ri ceo leat,
Far nach cluinneadh Goill ar comhradh
Barrach nan crann ga nar codach,
Gus an eireadh deo na grein' oir
Hoireann o, &c

Bheirinn ruaig a bhuainn nan cno' leat,
(A ghuanag a ghluasaid mhodhair)
Far am bidh coileach na smeoraich,
Cuir failt' air an lo 'sna géugan,
Hoireann o, &c.

Tha do ghruaidh mar shnuadh nan rosan,
Cha chuir sin ort uaill no mor-chuis,
Ged' is gil' thu Luaidh, no 'n t-oinean,
'Sna canach nan lon sa'chéitean.
Hoireann o, &c.

A Courting Song.

Hoireann o it's I who am sorry,
My joy has gone and my strength has left me,
I cannot have the desire for amusement
Until I can see the one whom I love.

O what a shame that my beautiful lass
Was not with me in the shade of the mountains
Where the summertime cuckoo would sing
In the valley when we were arising.
Hoireann o, &c.

I would lie with you for a night in the woods
Where Lowlanders could not hear us talking
With nothing but branches of trees to cover us
Till the gleam of the sun would arise upon us.
Hoireann o, &c.

I'd forage with you to harvest the nuts,
O my fun-loving girl who's gentle in movement,
In the place in which the cock of the song-thrush
Will bid the day welcome amongst the branches.
Hoireann o, &c.

Upon your cheek is the colour of roses —
That does not make you vain or conceited,
Although you are whiter, my love, than the daisy
And than the bog-cotton of meadows in May.
Hoireann o, &c.

B'e mo mhiann a's trian de m'aileas,
Teannadh dian ri bial do mharain,
Cha n'eil ciall, no rian, nach fag mi.
Mar a tar mi bho na Chléir thu.
Hoireann o, &c.

It's my desire and a third of my wishes
To be thrusting against your flirtatious mouth —
I will take leave of my senses and faculties
If I cannot get the Clergy to marry us.
Hoireann o, &c.

Tha thu aoidheil, caoimhneil, cairdeil;
Gu'n ghiomh, gun uabhar, gun ardan,
Ged do fhuair mi'measg na graisg thu,
Bhiodh san t-saile tarruinn eisg as.
Hoireann o, &c.

You are welcoming, kind and friendly,
Without fault or vainglory or surfeit of pride,
Although I found you amongst the rabble
Who spent their time pulling fish from the sea.
Hoireann o, &c.

Gu'n dh' *fhuadaich* iad mi 's tu araig,
Gu cosan nan creug mar ardach;
'S bu cheol duinn fuaim nan tonn gaireach,
Ruith gu traigh gu cair-gheal, béucach!
Hoireann o, &c.

They drove us away from them, you and me, darling,
To take to the holes in the rocks as a dwelling,
With the sound of the murmuring waves as our music,
Running foam-white and roaring upon the strand.
Hoireann o, &c.

'S trom mo chridh' an diugh ga t-fhàgail
Aig na Gallaich b'e mo chàs e,
'S nach earbainn thu ri mo bhrathair,
Ga h-é mac mo mhathar féin e.
Hoireann o, &c.

My heart is heavy today to be leaving you
With the Caithness men — it was painful for me,
As I would not trust you to be with my brother
Although he is my own mother's son.
Hoireann o, &c.

Ge do thar mi nise triall bh'uat,
Air m'fhacal cha be mo mhiann e,
B'fhearr leam thu no nighean Iarla,
Gu'n dad ga do dhion ach leine!
Hoireann o, &c.

Although I have now been obliged to leave you,
Upon my word it's not what I wanted —
I'd rather have you than an earl's daughter
With nothing protecting you but a shirt!
Hoireann o, &c.

Ach a ruin cha doir mi fuath dhut,
A dhain'ein na their an sluagh rium,
Ge do thogadh iad ort tuaileas,
Their mise gur buaitheam bréig e.
Hoireann o, &c

But, my love, I can never despise you
Despite all that people have said to me —
No matter how much they may try to miscall you,
I'll say that it's nothing but blustering lies.
Hoireann o, &c

We do not know what became of the relationship. Perhaps, like William Ross's infatuation with Mór Ros of Stornoway, it was one-sided. Perhaps, as is hinted in the last verse, Mary simply had a good relationship with all her father's customers. The third-last verse has a ring of truth about it – it sounds as if John's 22-year-old seafaring brother was in Wick with the herring fleet. Certainly John never married. With regard to the song, Clach remarks (p. 207) that it 'is not without considerable merit as an original composition, but it owes its popularity probably more to the air, which was well known and exceedingly popular in the Highlands long before John Mackenzie was born'.

It appears to have been while John was at Wick that he wrote a spirited essay called 'Defence of the Orthography of the Gaelic Language' (Mackenzie 1876–77). It was found among his papers, presumably by James, and given to Clach, who published it in *The Celtic Magazine*. It is possible to deduce its genesis from internal evidence, and the story that emerges is amusing. An

advertisement appeared in the newspapers for a competition run by the Glasgow Celtic Society in which prizes were offered for 'the four best essays on the Orthography of the Gaelic Language'. As his topic, John chose to attack a scheme for a proposed new system of Gaelic spelling which had appeared in a circular written by a certain 'Gathelus'. He set about his task with enthusiasm. Occasionally he reveals his youth: "I have been taught to make a distinction . . ." He shows personal modesty and common sense: "If 'Gathelus' should again complain that I do not touch upon the orthography of Gaelic, my explanation is, that I do not consider myself competent to amend it, that I consider him also incompetent, and that therefore, in the absence of a better advocate, I will defend it."

As he builds up towards his climax he displays no mean satiric skills. He mocks Gathelus, who had unwisely complained that 'though I have studied the Gaelic with considerable attention for more than twelve years, yet I cannot boast of being able to read the Testament fluently', with a little piece of verse written according to the proposed new system and duly footnoted '*Auctore*, Mr J. M——':

> Nach sserrv sso ri essdachg, na leuhudh, a *Ghateluss*?
> Ssiv dda vliahna dhiag, er lliahudh 'sa scoil agginn,
> Snach ddug ssiv luiv a Ghalig, ha passddun a ttogail leo!
> Bi aggiv calll, is nnaire, erson, ssiv vi co ddana,
> 'S gun churr ssiv ssivhen, arrdd, a varr er an "Tteachgara."
> Cidd ∧n nni is danurr', na b∧ghara gun Ghalig,
> Vi ttegusg dh∧n' is ferr na e fenn ann e *spelligudh*?

I suppose this could be translated:

> Isn't this bitter to be hearing or reading, O Gathelus?
> That you spent twelve years turning grey in our academy
> And took away with you no Gaelic, though children do it easily!
> You will suffer loss and shame for being so importunate
> As to raise yourself on high above *An Teachdaire Gaidhealach*.
> What is more presumptuous than for an idiot with no Gaelic
> To be preaching to his betters on matters of orthography?

Then he lets rip with a passage which makes one wonder what young Iain Alastair Òig had been reading – it occurs to me to point out that Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* had appeared when he was twelve.

> We are told that "it would be desirable to have the Gaelic lying in state, with a more pleasing expression of countenance than distinguished it in life." This, at least, is contrary to the natural course of things. Death does change the countenance, certainly, but seldom for the better. It is certain that the agonies of death would not so much distort the features of the Gaelic as the orthography at present forced upon it. And if it be true that the Gaelic is already in a galloping consumption, should we not account it a useless waste of trouble and expense to put our most eminent mantua-makers and knights of

> the needle in requisition to fit out the corpse of our mother-tongue in a more fashionable attire than she ever wore in the days of her pride, when she stood before kings, and was "a mouth" to kings' councillors!

It was a splendid effort, but it did not win a prize, for as he ruefully remarked in a fresh preamble, he found out after he had written it that the live-wire in the Glasgow Celtic Society who was offering the prizes was none other than Gathelus himself.

By now John was involved in an exchange of letters with Gathelus in the correspondence columns of a Glasgow newspaper called *The Scots Times*. He therefore turned his essay into a response to a letter from Gathelus published on 24 August 1830 which merely consisted, as John put it, of 'a second and revised edition of the famous circular'. The fact that the manuscript was found by James amongst his papers after his death suggests that he had received it back with a rejection-slip. At six thousand words, it is a little too long for a reader's letter.

The evidence for the date of the essay lies in John's references to *An Teachdaire Gaidhealach*, which ran from 1829 to 1831, and to MacLeod and Dewar's dictionary, which was published in 1831: "We believe that the enthusiasm that could move an individual or two to compile a dictionary, and one of them to commence, and carry on with no ordinary spirit, a periodical work in a despised, disused, and almost dead language, shall neither be damped nor extinguished by the spittings of envy." As for the place, John writes (Mackenzie 1876–77: 334–35):

> As great men have the privilege of coining not only letters, but also syllables and words, "Gathelus" applies to me the elegant epithet *anserous*, from *anser*, a goose. Query, of the Caithness species? I have seen, of the same species with myself, whole flocks of goslings, some of them not exceeding seven, nay six, years of age, who could read the Gaelic Testament more fluently, and fully as correctly, as they could speak the language.

Inverness: William Ross's poems and *An Leobhar Liath*

John appears to have been gathering Ross's poems during the years from 1826 to 1830, when between 20 and 24 years old. As we have seen, his patron was Sir Francis Alexander Mackenzie of Gairloch (1799–1843), who succeeded to the estate at his father's death on 26 April 1826 (Mackenzie 1879: 350). Clach claimed (p. 203) that John spent twenty-one nights taking down the poems from the recitation of Ross's close friend Alastair Buidhe MacIamhair or Campbell; as this statement has been much repeated, it is worth placing on record that John never said so himself. I do not doubt that they spent twenty-one evenings in each other's company, but in that amount of time John will have got from him the makings of several of his other books as well.

It is difficult to get to the bottom of the story of the publication of *Òrain Ghàëlach, le Uilleam Rŏs* (App., no. 1). According to the title-page it was 'printed by R. Carruthers, for Lewis Grant, and D. Macculloch, booksellers, 1830', but according to the Rev. Donald Maclean (1915: 334) 'circumstances seem to indicate that the work was printed in 1833 and not in 1830'. Typically, Maclean does not indicate what these circumstances were. Perhaps all he really means is that Clach wrote of John (p. 203): "In 1833 he left his native parish, and in the same year appeared 'The Poems of William Ross, the Gairloch Bard,' with 'The History of mac-Cruislig, a Highland Tale,' in one volume; and several other works of minor importance."

I would like to suggest that all of these facts may be interconnected. The publication of Ross's poems may have been held up from 1830 to 1833 by arguments about the inclusion of certain items. There was already a history of this sort of thing in Gaelic publishing. Duncan Ban Macintyre, as is well known, disagreed with his adviser and friend the Rev. Donald MacNicol of Lismore about the proposed inclusion in his book of 'Òran don Tàillear', and this held up publication for over a year until 1768 (MacLeod 1952: 455–56; Black 2001: 396). Similarly we should note the experience of the Perth publisher John Gillies. In 1780 he included a comical but rather slanderous satire called 'Baran Supair' (for which see Black 2001: 408–09) in a work called *The History of the Feuds and Conflicts among the Clans . . . To which is added a Collection of Curious Songs in the Gallic Language*. Maclean comments (1915: 135–36):

> A perfect copy is worth about two guineas. Copies are often met with lacking the Title-leaf, but otherwise clean and complete. Possibly the publisher discovered the nature of the Gaelic poetry appended to the English text before the impression was sold out, and to conceal his connexion with the work had the Titles cut out . . . John Gillies knew no Gaelic.

The first edition of Ross's poems is described by Maclean (1915: 334) as 'very rare'. Ferguson and Matheson (1984, no. 2484) list extant copies in five locations (EUL, AUL, Inverness Public Library, the British Library and the National Library of Wales), to which we may now add Mat. 172 in NLS, formerly the property of Angus Matheson. Perhaps when Carruthers discovered what he was printing he stopped his presses. If so, the objections would have been to 'Òran do dh'Fhear-Turais', 'Òran do Chailin Àraidh' and 'Òran don Chailin Cheudna', possibly also to 'Òran air Cupid', 'Òran do Dhuine Àraidh', 'Òran mar gun Deanadh Seòladair Deasach E' (for which see Black 1993: 76–80) and 'Cailleach-Milleadh-nan-Dàn' (for which see Thomson 1993: 161–67). Most of these were omitted or shortened in Calder's expurgated edition of 1937. It is also significant, I am sure, that pp. 91–94 of the AUL copy – the pages containing 'Òran do dh'Fhear-Turais' – are missing. What is more, I have before me a copy of the 1834 edition (EUL O.S. .891631 Ros) from which the title-page has been removed, just as Gillies did to his *Feuds and Conflicts*.

The 1830 edition has no preface. There is instead a 'Life of William Ross', subscribed: "John Mackenzie. / Gairloch, May 30, 1830." John begins (p. 3):

> In presenting to the public the Songs of William Ross, the Publisher is happy in the conviction, that he can, with confidence, recommend them as being correct, assuring them that they have been faithfully printed, as collected from intelligent persons who had received them from the Author; and that the greatest care has been bestowed on the work to render it worthy of the public attention.
>
> As these Songs may come into the hands of many who may wish to know something of their author, we beg leave to offer to the public a brief sketch of his Life, which has been sent to us by a respectable gentleman with whom our Bard had lived in habits of intimacy and friendship, that terminated but with life.

The 'respectable gentleman' is John's relative James Robertson, Collector of Customs at Stornoway. Having been born in 1756, he was six years older than the poet, and well placed to know a thing or two about his infatuation with Mór Ros. More importantly, however, John's statement that the songs were 'collected from intelligent persons who had received them from the Author' is disingenuous. The book contains thirty-one poems, of which only fourteen are entirely new. Fifteen had previously appeared in the Stewarts' collection of 1804, and two ('Òran Cumhaidh' and 'Comhairle a' Bhàird do Mhaighdeannan Òga') in Donald MacLeod's collection (Macleoid 1811). Two of the Stewarts' fifteen ('Òran anns am bheil am Bàrd a' Moladh a Leannain agus a Dhùthcha Fhéin' and 'Feasgar Luain') had also appeared in the Inverness Collection (Anon. 1806), one ('Òran air Cupid') in MacLeod's, and another two ('Moladh an Uisge-Bheatha' and 'Moladh na h-Òighe Gaidhealaich') in Peter MacFarlane's (Macpharlain 1813). In other words, the majority of the poems had been published in some form before, five of them more than once.

A comparison between Stewart 1804 and John's editions of 1830 and 1834 shows over and over that the same verses are presented in the same spelling and in the same order. Some notable instances are *chàsairean* (1804: 161) > *chasairean* (1830: 21) > *chàsairean* (1834: 32), *dhaisig* (1804: 328; 1830: 39; 1834: 62), *duthachanan* (1804: 156; 1830: 14; 1834: 21), *luasgans'* (1804: 162; 1830: 68; 1834: 106), *Leat na choirean so shuas* (1804: 166; 1830: 71; 1834: 111), *ag tighinn* (1804: 184) > *ag tighn'* (1830: 48) > *ag tigh'n* (1834: 75), *o na bhàs domh* (1804: 185; 1830: 49; 1834: 77), *Dh' ionnsaidh m' eibhneis ann sna gleannaibh. / E ho rò, &c. / Ge do tharladh dhomh bhi 'n taobh-sa* (1804: 186) > *Dh' ionnsaidh m' eibhneis ann sna gleannaibh. / E ho rò, &c. / Ge do tharladh dhomh bhi' 'n taobh-sa* (1834: 49–50) > *Dh' ionnsaidh m' eibhneis ann sna gleannaibh. / E ho rò, &c. / Ge do tharladh dhomh bhi 'n taobh-sa* (1834: 78).

John makes many substantial orthographic improvements, e.g. *co-luath* (1804: 328) > *cò'ladh* (1830: 39; 1834: 63), but only occasionally does one come across a case where words (as opposed to spellings and punctuations) vary, e.g. *cartair* (1804: 182) > *cantair* (1830: 61) > *canntair* (1834: 95), *Leis an doirteadh fuil sa bhlàr* (1804: 155) > *A dhoirteadh fuil sa bhlàr* (1830: 13; 1834: 19), *an dlùthas* (1804: 156) > *an taobhs'* (1830: 14) > *an taobh-s'* (1834: 22), *'s le spréidh* (1804: 165) > *a's sprèidh* (1830: 71; 1834: 111), *shocair / Nach dochuineadh* (1804: 175) > *shocrach, / Nach doich'neadh* (1830: 23; 1834: 37), *bla-shuil* (1804: 185) > *tlà'-shuil* (1830: 48) > *tlà-shuil* (1834: 76), *cian* (1804: 404) > *sior* (1830: 29) > *sìor* (1834: 47), *Gun bhi* (1804: 479) > *Le bhi* (1830: 9; 1834: 14), *chàil* (1804: 480) > *chaìl* (1830: 10) > *dhàil* (1834: 14), *magh-shluagh* (1804: 480) > *mal-shluagh* (1830: 10) > *màl-shluagh* (1834: 14), *o bha mi* (1804: 480) > *bha mise* (1830: 10; 1834: 15).

The Stewarts' *'S dortadh fial gu làr aca* (1804: 158) actually makes better sense than John's *A dortadh fial gu lar aca* (1830: 19) > *A dortadh fial gu làr aca* (1834: 28); similarly, their *còmhdachadh* (1804: 159) is a much better reading than John's *cnodachadh* (1830: 20; 1834: 30), and their *lughad* (1804: 333) is a better reading than John's *laoid* (1830: 87; 1834: 140). In one case there is a couplet in Stewart (1804: 483) which John omits in both editions – probably out of sheer carelessness (1830: 37; 1834: 61):

Cha'n eil sta dhuinn bhi ga iondran,
Ge bu Phriunnsa còir e.

It occurs towards the end of 'Òran air Aiseag an Fhearainn do na Cinn-Fheadhna'.

In ‘Moladh an Uisge-Bheatha’ (1830: 51–55; 1834: 80–86) John abandons the Stewarts, who offer eighteen quatrains and a chorus (1804: 187–90), to follow MacFarlane, who offers a radically different version consisting of nineteen quatrains and a chorus (Macpharlain 1813: 144–47). Just as he had done with Stewart, we see him picking his way through MacFarlane with an editorial eye, seldom leaving a line untouched, usually making minor orthographic changes, once or twice emending a little more radically to improve the sense, e.g. *Gu eiridh gu frogail, sa cheigeis, / Sgeig air an t-sean aois* (1813: 146) > *Gu èiridh gu frogail, sa cheigeil, / Ri sgeig air an t-shean aois* (1830: 54; 1834: 85). In the case of ‘Moladh na h-Òighe Gaidhealaich’ (1830: 59–61; 1834: 92–96), by contrast, it can be demonstrated that MacFarlane (1813: 148–50) had been following Stewart (1804: 180–83) in the first place, and that a very gentle process of emendation was carried out through the three versions, e.g. *’S na mìn bhás sneachda-gheal* (1804: 180) > *’S na mìn bhás sneachda-gheal* (1813: 148) > *’S na mìn bhăs sneachda-gheal* (1830: 59; 1834: 92), *Readh dheud còmhnard* (1804: 181) > *Reidh dheud chòmhnard* (1813: 149) > *Reidh dheud chomhnard* (1830: 60) > *Rèidh dheud chomhnard* (1834: 94). As *deud* is masculine, it may be seen that not all the emendations were happy ones!

The versions of ‘Feasgar Luain’ and ‘Òran anns am bheil am Bàrd a’ Moladh a Leannain agus a Dhùthcha Fhéin’ in the Inverness Collection (Anon. 1806: 90–92, 104–05) were taken from Stewart with minimal alteration. It is quite easy to tell, however, that John had access to the Inverness Collection, for the title of the latter song stands correctly in Stewart as ‘Oran leis a Bhard cheudna, ann am bheil e ag Moladh a leannain, agus a dhuthacha fein’, but in the Inverness Collection (Anon. 1806: 104) as ‘Oran le Uilliam Ros, ann am bheil e ag moladh a leannain, agus a dhuthaich fein’, while in John’s hands this becomes: “Oran anns am bheil am Bard ag Moladh a Leannain agus a Dhuthaich Fein’ (1830: 48). As is often the case, however, John’s information on the tune is new: ‘Air FONN,—“O’er the muir among the heather.”’ In the small number of other instances where Inverness differs from Stewart, John sometimes prefers the former, sometimes the latter: *teugbhail* (1804: 330) > *eugbhail* (1806: 91) > *eugail* (1830: 41) > *èugail* (1834: 65), *an cailin* (1804: 184) > *a chailin* (1806: 104) > *an cailin* (1830: 48; 1834: 75), *’n t soghraidh* (1804: 186) > *’n soghraidh* (1806: 105) > *’n t-soraidh* (1830: 49; 1834: 78).

It is not quite so easy to show that John was influenced by MacLeod’s collection, however. MacLeod (Macleoid 1811: 213–15) had taken ‘Òran air Cupid’ from Stewart (1804: 336–38), as did John (1830: 65–67; 1834: 102–05). MacLeod’s version of the magnificent ‘Òran Cumhaidh’, which he calls ‘Luinnag Ghaoil’ and which is not in Stewart, has only eight stanzas and chorus; John’s (1830: 103–08; 1834: 162–70) is very different, having fifteen stanzas (in a different order) and no chorus. Where the text happens to correspond, it looks as if John has taken the spelling of certain words from MacLeod, e.g. the latter’s ‘àmhailtin Chupid’ becomes John’s ‘amhailtin *Chupid*’ (1830: 103; 1834: 162), giving the impression that in italicising the second word John has forgotten to normalise the plural of the first one. Finally, John’s version of the macaronic ‘Comhairle Bhàird do Mhaighdeannan Òga’ (1830: 90–91; 1834: 144–46), which again is not in Stewart, corresponds closely to MacLeod’s but displays as many orthographic differences as there are similarities; there are, in addition, two substantive textual changes which convince me that, as in the case of the ‘Òran Cumhaidh’, John had an independent version of his own whose orthography he collated with MacLeod’s. These changes are: “Therefore don’t tarry ach marry gu luath, / ’S biodh Caileanan truagh dol am buar mar is ail” (1811: 103) > “*Therefore, don’t tarry,*

but marry gu luath, / Ma's biodh sibh gu truagh, dol am buar mar is ail" (1830: 90) > "*Therefore, don't tarry, but marry* gu luath, / Ma's biodh sibh gu truagh, dol am buar mar is àil" (1834: 144) and "Though she whine and repine, cha bhi loin tuilidh dhi, / Not a kiss a gheibh ise, she'll be meas cummanta" > "*When she'll whine and repine*, cha bhi loinn tuille dh'i, / *Not a kiss* a gheobh ise' *she'll be* meas cummanta" (1830: 91; 1834: 145).

Readers of Ross's poems tend to be struck by the unexpected use of archaic or Irish turns of speech. Calder says of him (1937: xxv):

> In addition to his duties as schoolmaster he acted as precentor in the Parish Church . . . In his regular attendance for this duty he would hear the scriptures read Sabbath by Sabbath from the Irish version by Bedel (Dr Johnson in his *Journey* discovered that Bedel was read), and thus the poet became so familiar with Irish words and idioms that he introduced some of them into his poems, *e.g.* do bhi, gu'n tì, nochdadair.

Whether *nochdadair* should be regarded as 'Irish' is a moot point, but we will let it pass. What Calder meant by 'Bedel' was Kirk's transliteration of it, a work which, *faute de mieux*, served speakers of Scottish Gaelic for a hundred years as their highest written register. This caused Johnson much confusion during his visit to the Highlands and Islands in 1773 (Chapman 1970: 107).

> We were a while told, that they had an old translation of the scriptures; and told it till it would appear obstinacy to inquire again. Yet by continued accumulation of questions we found, that the translation meant, if any meaning there were, was nothing else than the *Irish* Bible.

Murchison points out (1947–48: 127) that as Kirk's was the only Gaelic Bible the people had, it was held by many in great esteem. John was remembered as having a copy, he says, adding (*ibid.*: 127–28):

> 'S e mo bheachd fhéin gur math a dh'fhaodadh leth-bhreac de Bhìobull Chiorc a bhith aig Uilleam Ros, mar a bha aig Iain MacCoinnich, no eadhon gur e peann MhicChoinnich a chuir na gnàthasan is an litreachadh Eireannach ann an òrain an Rosaich.
>
> ("My own opinion is that William Ross may well have had a copy of Kirk's Bible, just as John Mackenzie did, or that it may even have been Mackenzie's pen that put the Irish expressions and orthography into Ross's songs.")

This is such an interesting idea that it deserves to be tested. If it can be shown that the principal Hibernicisms in the text are in the poems first printed by John, he may be regarded as the source; if in those first printed by the Stewarts, they must be the source; if evenly spread, they will have come from Ross himself. A search of John's 1834 text reveals the following words or phrases that may reasonably be called Irish: *chùaidh* (p. 14, 'Còmhradh eadar am Bàrd agus Blàbheinn'), *ni'm b' ioghna' leinn* (p. 19, 'Òran do Shir Eachann Gheàrrloch'), *talla ban . . . / An robh do shinnsear'* (p. 22, 'Òran do Shir Eachann Gheàrrloch'), *lò* (p. 28, 'Òran an t-Samhraidh'), *Do bhi* (p. 35,

'Òran air Gaol na h-Òighe do Chailean'), *Gu'n tì* (p. 71, 'Moladh a' Bhàird air a Thìr Fhéin', cf. Black 2001: 306), *Gur ìoc-shlaint choir am b'eil buaidh è* and *ro-mhòid* (p. 82, 'Moladh an Uisge-Bheatha'), and *nochdadair* (p. 165, 'Òran Cumhaidh'). Of these nine readings, five come from Stewart (1804, *ni 'm b' iongna leinn* 154, *talla bàn / An robh do shinsir* 157, *lò* 158, *do bhi* 173, *chuaidh* 480), two from MacFarlane (1813, *am bheil* 145, *ro-mhoid* 145) and two from John himself (1830, *gu'n ti* 44, *nochdadair* 105), *nochdadair* not being in the eight stanzas of the 'Òran Cumhaidh' published by MacLeod. This analysis shows that John may quickly be discounted as the source of the Hibernicisms, and the appearance of MacFarlane in the list shows that the Stewarts may be discounted as well. Clearly the perpetrator is Ross himself.

As a check on this result I have looked at a less significant but more widespread category, the Irish-influenced spellings which appear *passim* in the text: *ta* for *tha*, *ni's* for *nas*, *d' fhios* for *dh'fhios*, *ge do* for *ged a.* Briefly stated, the result is similar: the source of these is the Stewarts and John in a proportion of three to one. If one finally throws in an intermediate category, archaisms (*feud*, *feutainn*, *eudann*, *cia fàth*, *teachd*, *dearc*, *deachd*, *do ghnà* and the *-s* preterite), the proportion coming from the Stewarts goes up even further; equally, however, *na's*, *faod* and *a ghnà* may also be found in the Stewarts' texts, and since most occurrences of *feud*, *feutainn* and *eudann* (twelve out of sixteen, by my calculation) are fixed by rhyme, it remains clear that the perpetrator of the archaisms is Ross himself.

As to Clach's claim that the poems were bound in 1833 with *Eachdraidh Mhic-Cruislig* (App., no. 7) in one volume, I have no other evidence for it. I know of three extant original copies of *Eachdraidh Mhic-Cruislig* (in New College, the Signet Library and the British Library), and to the best of my knowledge they were all published in 1836: *Glascho: / Clo-bhuailte airson an udair le Bell agus Bain / Aireamh 85, Sraid na Bann-Righ. / 1836.* ("Glasgow: / Printed for the author by Bell and Bain / No. 85, Queen Street. / 1836.") In other words, John, now living in Glasgow, had a stock of them privately printed by the same company which, in the same year, printed the third edition of Ross's poems (App., no. 6). None of this evidence necessarily contradicts Clach's statement that Ross's poems and *Eachdraidh Mhic-Cruislig* had appeared in one volume in 1833, however, for we cannot prove that Clach, writing in Inverness as he was, did not have such a volume lying in front of him as he wrote.

We must also ask what could possibly be the identity of the 'several other works of minor importance' which Clach mentions as being published by John in that same year, 1833, when, at the age of 27, he 'left his native parish'. To the best of my knowledge there is only one candidate, *An Leobhar Liath* (App., no. 2), the four poems in which I have now reprinted with translations (Black 2001: 18–21, 78–81, 264–67, 352–53), along with some remarks on the source (372–73). Each of these poems contains obscene elements of one kind or another. *An Leobhar Liath* does not have John Mackenzie's name on it, but Maclean says (1915: 247): "The editorship of this very free poetical work is attributed to John Mackenzie, notwithstanding the difference in orthography." What he means by 'the difference in orthography' I am not sure; I have hazarded the guess (Black 2001: 373) that it had to do with *leabhar* being spelt *leobhar*. The title-page informs us that it was printed in *Baile nam Breabadairean*, 'The Weavers' Town', to be sold privately by itinerant booksellers; Maclean says that this is Paisley, but I think it is more likely to be Tradeston, a new suburb begun in the 1790s which, being on the south side of the Clyde, was not then considered part of Glasgow. The date is given as 1801; to this Maclean responds (1915:

247): "The year of publication is of course ante-dated. It was printed in Glasgow about 1845. *Excessively rare.* Only one copy known."

What are we to make of this? Firstly, it would be foolish to discard Maclean's statements as guesswork. Although he seldom states his sources, it is clear from a perusal of his work in general that he had access to a great deal of information (often of a very detailed nature, such as print runs) which is unavailable to us now. Having been born in 1869, he would have been personally acquainted with individuals of John's generation. With regard to place of publication, the idea of falsifying this is not unique. If Maclean's own evidence (1915: 189) is to be believed – and it seems very credible, for various reasons – one of the most celebrated Gaelic books ever published, Alexander MacDonald's *Ais-Eiridh na Sean Chánoin Albannaich* of 1751, which contains material both seditious and obscene, is likely to have been published not in Edinburgh where the title-page says, but in Glasgow. Moreover, it could be claimed that *Baile nam Breabadairean* is not a falsification, merely an obfuscation, given that any town with weavers in it could lay claim to the name. On the other hand, it seems perfectly possible that the book really was printed in Paisley – according to Maclean (1915: 28), the firm of Alexander Gardner, which became celebrated for Gaelic publishing later in the nineteenth century, published a Gaelic translation of Boston's *Gospel Compulsion* at 14 Moss Street, Paisley, in 1830.

The print quality of *An Leobhar Liath* suggests to me a date of publication in the second rather than the first quarter of the nineteenth century; nor would I like it to be thought that I am convinced that all four poems in it were necessarily made in the eighteenth. I believe that the two middle items ('An Oba Nodha' and 'Dòmhnallan Dubh') certainly belong to the eighteenth century, but that the first and last ('An Seudagan' and 'Eachann an Slaoightear') may belong equally to the eighteenth or nineteenth. I therefore included them in *An Lasair* on two grounds: (1) John Mackenzie, if he indeed it was who collected and published them, clearly did not expect his little deception to be uncovered through any of the poems being revealed to be nineteenth-century compositions; (2) these poems belong to an important genre already too long subject to suppression, and I felt that editors of anthologies of nineteenth-century Gaelic verse were unlikely to take up the option of reprinting them.

I believe, therefore, that John Mackenzie was indeed the editor of *An Leobhar Liath*, in which case it could not of course have appeared in 1801. I believe that Maclean's date for it of 'about 1845' fails (quite forgiveably) to take into account the changing nature of John's career. I believe that it is one of 'several other works of minor importance' published by John in 1833 in Inverness, Glasgow, Paisley or even all three, the purpose of which, I imagine, is summarised by the title-page of *An Leobhar Liath*. John may have hired or bought the plates, and they would have been printed as required 'to be sold privately by itinerant booksellers', of whom, until 1836, John was one.

Glasgow: Mac Mhaighstir Alastair and Mac-Crùislig

It will have become obvious by now why John 'left his native parish' in 1833 and made his home in Glasgow. He had found an occupation more congenial to him than that of carpenter. It involved peddling publications, however, which might have caught a censor's eye in any age. More importantly, the nature of these publications ran counter to a swelling tide of religious fundamentalism which was filling pulpits and preaching-stations all over the Highlands, nowhere

more so than in the parishes between Inverness and Gairloch, where inspired divines like MacDonald of Ferintosh, Kennedy of Killearnan, Mackintosh of Tain and Forbes of Tarbat were at the height of their powers, staunchly supported by powerful sessions full of men close to sainthood (Kennedy 1979: 68–72, 128–98). It was the unstoppable movement that led in ten years' time to the Disruption, and the reason why it was prospering was that a minority activity of the old had become a passion amongst the young.

There was little place any more for John's old-fashioned, eighteenth-century liberalism. The heroic clan model, by which gentlemen and tacksmen caroused at the same table while loyal sub-tenants looked on, and women fantasised at waulkings about sleeping with a king's son on a bed of linen, was becoming a thing of the past. The climate John had to struggle with in the north was the one which he describes in an anecdote (*Sàr Obair*: 316) about the Rev. Dr James MacGregor of Pictou, Nova Scotia (1759–1828).

> Towards the close of this excellent man's life, he conceived the idea of clothing the doctrines of the gospel in versification, that he might unite the best and most wholesome instructions with the sweetest and most fascinating melodies. When entering upon the task, he wrote to a friend of his at Lochearn-side for a copy of Duncan McIntyre's and McDonald's Poems. His mind had been so occupied with the various studies necessary to the full and efficient discharge of his ministerial duties, that the airs, to which he wished to sing his contemplated hymns or songs, had escaped his memory. The desiderated volumes were sent; but, through the officiousness of some of his domestics, the fact of their being in the minister's possession became known, and a most unwarrantable, unjust and ungenerous construction was put upon the circumstance. How short-sighted, illiberal, and fanatical it was, to edge out insinuations against the genuineness of Mr McGregor's religious principles, simply because the productions of the two most brilliant stars of his native country were on the table of his study in a foreign land! How pitiful, that fanaticism which shrouds itself under the garb of piety – broad, expansive, benevolent piety!

We have enough evidence, in the form of the alleged delays in the printing of Ross's poems, to be able to guess that John's departure for Glasgow resulted from ecclesiastical pressure upon his printers and publishers in Inverness; whether such pressure was applied in a more personal way upon himself and his family in Gairloch we have no way of knowing.

John Mackenzie was no atheist but, in the mould of eighteenth-century poets like Alastair Mac Mhaighstir Alastair, believed passionately in the prime Christian virtues of toleration and forgiveness. Indeed, he quietly provided a service which ministers (like Russell of Gairloch and Souter of Duirinish) who were, in Clach's words (p. 206), 'ignorant of the language in which they were paid for preaching to their congregations', must have found invaluable – he wrote original Gaelic sermons for sale. Had he been alive today, he would have been in line for an HIE 'Young Entrepreneur of the Year' award. Says Clach (p. 210):

> That John Mackenzie was a man who thought for himself, not only on Celtic questions and Gaelic orthography, but on the all-important question of the religious belief and teaching of the age in which he lived, and that his views did not run exactly in the strict

> Calvinistic groove, and were not in perfect agreement with the standard of orthodoxy prevalent in his day, and indeed in our own, may be gathered from his MS. sermons in our possession; but at present we will not dwell further on this mental characteristic trait of our subject, than to relate an incident which will fully demonstrate his hatred of those who preached the thunderings of the Law at the expense of the Gospel. On a certain occasion, when attending one of the large sacramental gatherings so common throughout the Highlands, he expressed his perfect horror at what he called "the outpourings of damnation," which were invariably heard proceeding from reverend lips. Such fiery utterances found no response in his young, gentle, and loving bosom. "I look," he said, "upon these declamations as nothing short of blasphemy against my Heavenly Father. What a tyrant they make *their* God. *My* God is a God of love and summer. Such a God as *they* paint would be *my* devil."

It seems likely that John's move to Glasgow was nothing more at first than a change of base, provoked by the need to find new publishers and printers for his work – the second edition of Ross's poems (App., no. 3) duly appeared in 1834, published by John Reid & Co. of Glasgow in association with Oliver & Boyd of Edinburgh and Whittaker, Arnott & Co. of London. John had made a number of changes. There was now a 'Preface', dated Glasgow, 20 August 1834, in which John, far from apologising to his readers for misleading them with regard to his sources, audaciously compounded the lie (pp. iii–iv).

> Previous to the publication of the first edition of Ross's Songs, the only record of their existence was their floating through the district on the memories of the people, and the only method of their publication was by the lips of fair maidens and fond admirers. To rescue the songs of "the secluded unhappy bard" from "the tooth of time and rasure of oblivion," was the sole object of the Editor in publishing the previous edition; and in proof that he was successful, he has only to say that the book was out of print within the short period of twelve months. This was sufficient encouragement to him to renewed diligence. Accordingly, several new pieces have been added to this edition, together with three poems by the bard's grandfather, the celebrated *Pìobaire Dall* of Gairloch.

In pondering why it is that John appears to have made so many enemies and encountered so many difficulties in life, we need look no further than this passage. He was a liar. And when cornered, he lied again.

To the 'Life' John added fragments of two of the poems, a 'Song to the Seasons' and 'Trod Dhaormuinn ma Bhrat Armuinn', which Ross had burned a few days before his death, along with fresh material on Ross's musical accomplishments, personal appearance, death and burial; he also embroidered the story of Mór Ros and embellished his summary of Ross's poetic achievement. In the poems, he improved his text in two places (*ùr-chosgar* > *ùr thosgair* p. 23, *Eilig* > *eilid* pp. 135–36), disimproved it in one place (*Mhac-Cruisleig* > *Mhac-Gruisleig* p. 150), added an extra prose introduction (p. 34), tinkered with a footnote ('crazy' > 'mad' pp. 163–64), added a stanza to 'Òran air Gaol na h-Òighe do Chailean' (p. 41), added two lines to 'Achmhasan an Déididh'

(p. 178), and, above all, put in two new poems – 'Cuachag nan Craobh' (pp. 112–16) and the 'Òran Eile' (pp. 171–74).

John printed 'Cuachag nan Craobh' without comment, but it was a controversial addition. It was generally understood to have been composed much earlier in the eighteenth century by Alexander MacDonald, 4th of Dalness in Glen Etive (Macdonald 1900–01; Booth 1990); versions of it had been published by Turner (Mac-an-Tuairneir 1813: 298–301) and MacCallum (1821: 131–42), while yet another, the earliest of all, survived in the papers of the Rev. James MacLagan – now GUL MacLagan MS 164 – dated 7 February 1764 (Calder 1937: 184–91). Many years ago I subjected them all to detailed textual analysis (Black 1968: 19–28) after noticing that the version in John's book (which I called M) was subtly different from the rest; I reached the following conclusion.

> It seems extremely likely that, even if "Cuachag nan Craobh" was not already known in Gairloch in William Ross's day, he would have heard the song during his travels in Argyll. He would also have heard the story of Mac Fir Dhail an Easa and he would have noticed the parallels between it and his own affair with Marion Ross. Certainly he seems to have taken the poem over, improved its imperfections, repaired its corruptions, and virtually made it his own, so that in the version found in M we now have a brightly polished restoration of a tarnished antique. This process can be shown, even to the extent of pinpointing Ross's actual alterations, by correlating the four versions . . . One can calculate that Ross's contribution to "Cuachag nan Craobh" is 36% of the whole.

Better still, in the 'Òran Eile' John had unearthed one of the most perfect gems in all Gaelic literature. Had he done nothing else, his life would have been worth while.

He did far from nothing else. From now on there was scarcely a year in his life in which he did not publish some new book or other. Before 1834 was out he had produced a new edition of his next favourite poet, Alastair mac Mhaighstir Alastair. It included three previously unpublished songs which he appears to have got from a manuscript in the poet's own handwriting in the possession of his grandson, Allan MacDonald of Laig in Eigg: 'Òran do'n Phrionnsa', beg. *'S eibhinn leam fhein tha e tighinn* (pp. 83–84), 'Òran Eile do'n Phriunnsa', beg. *Moch 'sa mhadainn 's mi dùsgadh* (pp. 85–88), and 'Di-Moladh Chabair Feidh', beg. *Gu bheil mi air mo bhoradh* (pp. 139–48). 'Màrai Shugaideach', beg. *A Mharai shugaideach 's ròsach riùteach thu* (pp. 96–97), is in a different category: a popular song which John had from some other source, and which he now published under the poet's name for the first time.

Unlike Ross's poems (which had been subsidised by Sir Francis Alexander Mackenzie) but like *An Leobhar Liath*, the book was published by John himself 'to be sold by all booksellers'. The first impression (App., no. 4a) appears to have been printed in a hurry in 1834, but the second included John's dedication to the Ossianic Society of Glasgow, dated 10 December 1834, and was – not surprisingly – published in 1835 (App., no. 4b).

John's edition of Mac Mhaighstir Alastair may be seen in the context of his change of residence, which had opened up new territory for his activities – Perthshire and Argyll. It was a long time now since James Robertson had suggested to him the idea of publishing an anthology containing examples of all the best poetry extant in Gaelic, from Ossian down to his own time,

with biographical introductions in English; according to Clach (p. 203), John spent twelve years travelling the Highlands, north, south and west, gathering materials and putting together a large list of subscribers not only for his *magnum opus* but for other intended publications as well. The years in question were those from 1824 to 1836, when he was between eighteen and thirty.

The first direct result was a 'trial' anthology, *Co'-Chruinneachadh de dh' Oranan Taoghta*, published by Duncan Macvean in Glasgow in 1836 (App., no. 5). John's name does not appear in the book, perhaps because of his known character, but some years ago he was stated unequivocally to have been the compiler (Blankenhorn 1978: 50; cf. Blankenhorn 2019: 372), and it is an opinion with which I am in complete agreement. The 'Preface' (pp. 3–4), subscribed 'Glasgow, / *Sept.* 21, 1835', bears some of John's hallmarks – scathing criticism of 'ignorant' collectors; specific mention of 'the eminent poetess, Mary McLeod', of Mac Mhaighstir Alastair's poem 'A' Bhanarach Dhonn', and of his grandson 'the late Allan Macdonald of Laig, in the isle of Eigg'; the writer's statement that he has collected 'some notices of the Highland bards' which 'cannot be inserted in a short preface'; a whiff of scandal concerning Kenneth Mackenzie, Strath-na-sealg, who wrote 'two songs . . . on the same girl, who was his own servant'; and an obvious delight in a type of community activity which was anathema to the evangelicals of his day, the enactment of 'Raghal agus Caristine' by two travelling packmen, 'one of them performing the part of Carastine, in women's clothes, to the great delight of the audience'. The text consists of forty-five poems, of which about thirteen appear to be of Ross-shire origin.

The *Co'-Chruinneachadh* must have sold well, because Duncan Macvean now purchased from John the remaining stock of Ross's poems and reissued the book in 1836 with a fresh title-page (App., no. 6). Also published in 1836 was the edition of *Eachdraidh Mhic-Cruislig* which survives today (App., no. 7), printed for John by Bell & Bain (who had also printed Ross's poems and the *Co'-Chruinneachadh*). I am sure that Clach was right in thinking that he had seen a book dated 1833 consisting of Ross's poems and *Eachdraidh Mhic-Cruislig* in one volume. That does not mean, however, that the latter was published in 1833; it could have been brought together in 1836 with unbound copies of the 1833 edition of Ross's poems. As the 'Preface' to *Eachdraidh Mhic-Cruislig* is of great interest, here it is in full.

> The following tale has been long known, and often related in the Isle of Skye. It is mentioned by Boswell, who visited that island with Dr. Johnson in 1773. It is one of those tales which amused our forefathers during the long winter evenings, as they sat in a circle round the fire placed in the middle of the floor;—a fashion which is now declining fast, and will in all probability, soon disappear entirely.
>
> The tales of the Highlanders are generally of a wild and romantic character; full of wonderful and surprising adventures, and supernatural exploits. We are sorry that many of them have not been collected and published before they are totally lost. We cannot forget the pleasure we derived from them in childhood, and, after a lapse of many years, we still retain some faint traces of the wonderful exploits of the hero who passed over the bridge of one hair, with the sword of light in his hand.
>
> The tale of "*Corra-chriostag agus Plocan an Ruadhair*," or the History of the Thriftless Wife, is very interesting.
>
> Mac Cruislig may be called *The Highland Rogue*; his pranks are amusing, but they

> cannot be called harmless. His tricks upon his master are both mischievous and wicked; but there is a sort of poetical justice in the punishment of the priest. His adventures in the island remind us of the exploits of Jack the Giant Killer.
>
> J. McK.
>
> GLASGOW, *August 8th*, 1836.

A few comments on this are necessary. Firstly, Boswell's reference to the tale is indirect. One of his (and Johnson's) fellow-guests in Raasay House in 1773 was Alexander MacLeod of Muiravenside, who had long been in exile on account of the part he had played in the '45 (Chapman 1970: 267): "Sandie Macleod, who has at times an excessive flow of spirits, and had it now, was, in his days of absconding, known by the name of *McCruslick*, which it seems was the designation of a kind of wild man in the Highlands, something between Proteus and Don Quixotte; and so he was called here. He made much jovial noise."

Secondly, John's reference to the need to collect and publish Gaelic tales was timely. The Grimms had published their *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* in 1812–15. Thomas Keightley's *The Fairy Mythology* had appeared in 1828, with a chapter on the Scottish Highlands. John rightly chose to publish the story in all its earthy richness, very much (I imagine) as he had heard it; it was, I think, the first Gaelic tale ever to be published in the original and in full.

Thirdly, what John calls 'Corra-chriostag agus Plocan an Ruadhair' is indeed an interesting tale, but it has been collected, published and discussed elsewhere – GUL MS Gen. 1090 (28): 1–5 (Fr Allan McDonald); Campbell 1940: 104–07; Carmichael 1971: 50–51; MacilleDhuibh 2002; Black 2002: 414. The tale to be told here, in order to assess John's tastes and those of his customers, and to consider if his comments upon it are justified, is John's 'Eachdraidh Mhic-Crùislig' itself.

For the name Mac-Crùislig and its antiquity see Black 2005: 446. Mac-Crùislig and his brother Prăbrŏsg, says John, are sons of a well-to-do farmer and his wife who are so hospitable and generous that they die of cold in *Bliadhna an t-Sneachda Bhuidhe*. (This touch may be an echo of the famine year 1783, cf. MacilleDhuibh 1997.) Prăbrŏsg ('Rheumy Eye', 'Bleary Eye') is simply a foil for his brother, who by implication is singularly smart, clear-sighted and well-focused. Mac-Crùislig cheats Prăbrŏsg of his inheritance, and gets him a job as a *sgalag* (farm-servant) with *tuathanach machrach a bha dlù dhoibh* – a neighbouring Lowland farmer. The work is so hard and the food so poor that Prăbrŏsg only lasts a week, so Mac-Crùislig (sportingly enough, one would have thought) takes his place (p. 5).

> Thog Mac-cruislig air gu taigh an tuathanaich; ri taobh sruthain ro'n dorus thachair nighean an tuathanaich ris agus i ri glanadh mhărag, dh'fheōraich i "cia as da, is cāite a bha e dol?" Thuird gu'm b'esan brathair Phrăbrŭisg a bha gu bhi na sgalaig aig a h-athair gu latha-buidhe Bealltainn. Dh' fharaid i brath ainme; thubhaird e gur e mărag a b'ainm da riabh. "Gum meal thu d'ainm a sheoid," ars ise; thug e sin an taigh air, ach mas gann a shuidh e, dh' fharraid bean an tuathanaich:—"Brath t-ainm a Dhiulaich?" "'S b' ainm dhomh riabh P**, a bhean an taighe, thugaibh sibhse an t-ainm as miann leibh fein orm," arsa Mac-cruislig.

Ma thuiteam na h-ōidhche chruinnich an teaghlach cruinn agus ghabh iad an suipeir, gu math de lŭban-dubha, de mhăragan, agus de dh' isbeanan, agus chaidh gach neach a laidhe gu seasgair na leabaidh fein, ach lochd chadail cha d'rinn Mac-cruislig. Gus na leig se e-fein na shineadh ri taobh nighean fir an taighe. Leig an nighean chōir glaodh bais aisde ri h-athair airson teasraiginn, ŏr bha Mac-cruislig ri cruaidh fharach gaoil oirre. "A Dhuinne! Dhuine! thigibh grad tha, măr ag air mo mhārbhadh!" chan eisdeadh a h-athair ri gearan ach fhreagair e mar so:—"Ma tha a mhôsag ith thusa ni's lugha rithisd." Lean an nighean air glaoghaich, "Măr ag air mo mharbhadh," gus fadheireadh gun dh' éirich a māthair suas le solus cainnle ga h-amharc, agus faigheadar Mac-cruislig ann an āite mi-theisteil, air chôr agus gun ghlaogh i mar chruathas guth curaidh:—"P** ann an gobhal mo nighinn, 'fhir an taighe, éirich." "Mo chead aice," ars an tuathanach, is e fās bodhar ri glaodh, "mas e sin fath a gearain is beag mo thruas rithe." 'Nuair thainig a mhadainn mhinich bean-an-taigh d'a fear earachdas na h-ōidhche, air chôr is gur beag nach do dh' aontaich e na h-iallan a thoirt as, agus Mac-crūislig a leigeadh fa sgaoil, "ach," ars esan, "mas dian mi sin bheir mi dūlan fathasd da."

("Mac-Crùislig carried on to the farmer's house, and encountered the farmer's daughter, who was busy cleaning puddings at a stream in front of the door. She asked him where he'd come from and where he was going. He said he was Bleary-Eye's brother, who was to be working for her father as a farm labourer until Yellow Beltane Day. She enquired as to his name, and he said he'd always been called Pudding. 'What a nice name, dearie,' she said. Then he went into the house. But he'd hardly sat down when the farmer's wife asked, 'What's your name, my lad?' 'I've always been called C—t, goodwife, but you can call me whatever you like,' said Mac-Crùislig.

"In the evening the family gathered round and had a fine supper of black puddings, blood puddings and sausages, then everyone went to his own cosy bed. But Mac-Crùislig didn't sleep a wink, then in due course he got into bed beside the goodman's daughter. The darling girl cried out like the dickens to her father for help, for Mac-Crùislig was making love to her very energetically. 'Dad! Dad! Come quick! A bit of Pudding has murdered me!' Her father wouldn't listen to her complaints, and simply replied, 'In that case, you daft lassie, don't eat so much next time.' The girl carried on wailing, 'A bit of Pudding has murdered me,' until at last her mother got up by candle-light to come and see her, and found Mac-Crùislig in an improper place, so that she cried out in a great warrior-like voice, 'There's a bit of C—t in my daughter's crotch! Goodman, get up!' 'I can't say I object,' said the farmer, growing deaf to her shouting. 'If that's all she's complaining about, she'll have no sympathy from me.' When morning came, the goodwife explained the night-time drama to her husband, so that he nearly agreed to have the thongs taken out of him, and to let Mac-Crùislig go. 'But,' said he, 'before I do that, I'll set him a challenge.'")

The trick played by Mac-Crùislig is a variant of one commonly played by women in traditional stories who suffer the unwelcome advances of some otherworld creature such as an *ùraisg*. The creature asks the woman's name, and she replies – as a girl might well do in such a situation – *Mi fhìn*. "Myself." At the first opportunity she spills scalding water over him, and he runs off to the

protection of his fellow-creatures, who demand to know who has done this to him. *Mi fhìn*, he says. "Oh, in that case," they say, "there's nothing to be done. If it had been someone else, we would have killed them and burned their house around their ears" – or words to that effect. (See for example Campbell 1890, vol. 2: 206, and MacDougall and Calder 1910: 298–301.) As to the nature of the *iallan* 'thongs' mentioned at the end, this is made clear in a version published by Campbell (1890, vol. 2: 319, 333), according to which one of the terms of Mac-Crùislig's engagement was that if either party came to rue the bargain, according to law 'a thong shall be taken out of his skin, from the back of his head to his heel'. The motif is equally prominent in a short and censored-looking version of the tale (NLS MS Adv. 50.1.10, ff. 340–41) sent to Campbell by A. McRae, Diabaig, who had taken it down from Norman Mackenzie, Diabaig, who had learned it from Murdoch Mackenzie, Diabaig. It begins: *Bha ann o shean an Alba duine da b' ainm Macruslaig, agus air dha bhi na dhuine og gun obair aige, ghabh e muinntearas aig tuathanach fearuinn, agus daighean anns a chordadh, be a peanas bha gu bhi air a leagail air an neach a bhristeadh a mhuinntearas, gu robh gu a thighean ăs iall dhromadh, iall tharadh, agus iall theanachadh nan iall.* ("Long ago in Scotland there was a man named Macruslaig, and having been an unemployed young man, he engaged with a farmer, and set firmly in the agreement, the punishment to be brought down upon whichever party broke his engagement was that there were to come out of him a back thong, a belly thong, and a thong to tighten the thongs.") See also 'The Farmer Who Went Back on His Agreement', Bruford and MacDonald 1994: 202–04, 456–57.

The farmer in John's version now sets Mac-Crùislig a series of four challenges, one at a time, each ending with the farmer declaring: *Cha mhor nach do gheill mi gu na h-iallan a thoirt asam, ach 'mas dian mi sin bheir mi dubhlan eile dhut.* "I've nearly consented to the thongs being taken out of me, but before I do that I'll set you another challenge." Each rebounds upon him, resulting in Mac-Crùislig (1) enjoying his wife and daughter, (2) pulling apart his new barn, (3) sadistically destroying his flock of sheep, (4) gouging the eyes out of his oxen and setting fire to his stacks of oats, barley, rye, pease and hay. This has a contemporary feel. A Jacobinical sense of social and economic resentment was being expressed at the way Lowland farmers had enriched themselves since 1783 at the expense of the Highland people.

With the farmer put in his place, the target shifts. Each of the next three paragraphs begins with Mac-Crùislig and the farmer ploughing together in spring on *Iomaire-Mhic-Bharais*, a name which can only have been chosen because it belongs to Moidart and therefore to Catholicism (cf. *Mac Mharais*, Bruford and MacDonald 1994: 109, 450, and *Àirigh mhic Mharoich*, Black 2005: 187, 438–39). In each case the plough breaks, and when Mac-Crùislig is sent to fetch something to repair it he finds the farmer's wife or daughter enjoying themselves with *Sagard an Teampuill*. This may be translated 'the priest of the local Pre-Reformation church'. On the first occasion Mac-Crùislig notices 'bord soghail air cuir tharais leis gach mirean as diaran a b 'fhearr no chéile, sgaoilte fan comhair "*ri cŭir ann doibh fein agus âs do chach*"' – 'a sumptuous table overflowing with the best of all food and drink, spread in front of them "*to give to them and take from others*"'. The italics are John's, and we must note that since it is ploughing time, this is taking place during the season of greatest annual hardship to the Highland people, not to mention Lent.

The first of the three episodes ends with Mac-Crùislig selling the priest the farmer's *ciste-mhine* (meal-chest) for two hundred merks (*da-chiad marg*), of which he gives the farmer fifty. The farmer is pleased. The second ends with Mac-Crùislig selling him the farmer's *cliabh-clĭs* or

rather *cliabh-cleith* (which John explains in a Gaelic footnote is a cheese basket woven from hazel wands) for another two hundred merks, of which he gives the farmer a hundred. The farmer is delighted. On the third occasion he finds the priest with the farmer's daughter, her mother being away. He chases him and catches up with him in the confessional (p. 10).

> "Chuir mo bhanna-mhaighstir mise gu do spŏth," arsa Mac-cruislig, "agus tha mi gu do bhuill uaisle thoirt da h-ionnsaidh, airson an cuir d'on Roimh thun a Phāpa, gu fianais a thogail na d' aghaidh." Rinn Mac-cruislig mar gheall e, ghearr e bacan an t-sagairt bho sgathan, agus thug e'n taigh air.
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> ("'My mistress has sent me to castrate you,' said Mac-Crùislig, 'and I have to bring her your *buill uaisle* ("noble members") to send to the Pope in Rome in order to serve as evidence against you.' Mac-Crùislig did as he had promised – he cut the priest's front door off its hinges, and went home.")

John here treats us to a Gaelic footnote on the rare word *bacan*, which appears from the context to mean 'penis', though I have preferred the euphemism 'front door'. Next day, after Mac-Crùislig and the farmer have been out hunting, word comes that the priest, not surprisingly, is on his death-bed, and the farmer sends Mac-Crùislig to the priest with a *crŏgan* (bowl) of his wife's best venison broth, *on tha sibh cho mor aig a cheile* – 'since you are on such good terms with each other'. Mac-Crùislig goes only as far as the back of the dyke, where he substitutes the priest's privates for the venison, then comes back saying: *Cha chreideadh an săgard gur sibh a chuir da iunnsaidh an t-eanaraich, is uime sin cha ghabhadh e bh'uams' e.* "The priest wouldn't believe that it was yourself who sent him the broth, so he wouldn't take it from me."

Off goes the farmer's wife with the broth, and what ensues is told with great relish (p. 11).

> "Tha so gu math, math, a bhean-an-taighe." "Ged a biodh e ni' b' fhearr' fhir mo ghráidh," ars is, "B'e nur beatha-sa d'a ionnsaidh, tha e math, gun teagamh, ach se'n t-iochdar as fearr non t-uachdar." Cha b' fhada bha 'n sagard a 'g-òl as a chrŏgan, nuair a thog e anns an spain a chuid bacanan fein . . .
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> ("'This is really excellent, goodwife.' 'Even if it were better still, my love,' said she, 'you're welcome to it. It's good all right, but what's down below is better than what's on top.' The priest hadn't been supping out of the bowl for long before he'd picked up his own privates in the spoon . . .")

In revenge, the priest demands what we would call a 'French kiss' and when the farmer's wife puts her tongue in his mouth he bites it off. She comes home gibbering *blă-là-là-là-lâe*. The farmer asks Mac-Crùislig what she is saying. He explains that it is Latin which the priest has taught her. She is telling them, he says, that she will be dead by midnight, and that they are to break open her secret chest in which she has been putting by all manner of fine food and drink for a wake.

Both the farmer's wife and the priest die that night, but unfortunately for Mac-Crùislig the priest's *cléireach* (clerk) hears his last confession and goes straight to the farmer to tell him everything that has happened. Mac-Crùislig having been the sole cause of his ruin, the farmer's friends advise him to send him with a herd of pigs to *eilean Fomhair mor nan seachd ceann, nan*

seachd meall, agus nan seachd muineal (the isle of the great giant of the seven heads, the seven humps and the seven necks), on the assumption that he will never return.

The arrival of Mac-Crùislig's pigs in the island causes a fight for possession of them in which *fomhair nan ceann, nam meall, 's nam muineal* is slain by *fomhair buidhe uamh an oir*, "the yellow-haired giant of the cave of gold". Mac-Crùislig is terrified, but the yellow-haired giant's wife is kind to him and hides him *fo bhial dacha bha staigh* – in a big vat she had in the house. That evening when the giant comes home he declares (p. 13): "*Fiū fàu fomhagraich* tha mi faotainn fàileadh an fhàrbhalaich an so." ("Fee fi fo fum, I smell a stranger here.")

So Mac-Crùislig is caught, but his luck being what it is, instead of slaughtering him there and then the giant decides to fatten him up first. This leads to four contests, each of which Mac-Crùislig wins by trickery. Following the fourth contest – to see which of them could eat the most – he slays the giant with his own *claidhe-soluis* ('sword of light'). After taking a fond farewell (*soraidh ghraidh*) of the giant's wife he sets sail for home in the giant's *biorlainn-luingeanachd* ("sailing galley"). There is a traditional 'run' to emphasise his triumph over adversity (p. 15): *thog e na siūil bhreaca bhaidealach an aghaidh nan crann fada feudanacha, fulangacha . . .* "He hoisted the speckled billowing sails upon the tall straight long-enduring masts . . ."

It is hardly a story that could end on a heroic note, however. The jaws of the farmer and his household drop when they see him coming back. He promptly plays a practical joke on them with pig's tails in the sand, and the story ends (p. 16) with the words, *na'n biodh na h-earbuill ni bu righne, bhiodh an sgialachd ni' b'fhaide* - "If the tails had been tougher, the tale would have been longer."

John has chosen to make available to his customers a story which, though it ends with a version of 'Jack the Giant-Killer', is Jacobinical in content. Its targets are the landowning class and the Catholic Church, which, in the popular mindset of the time, were one and the same. The middle section is exactly in line with the poem 'Dòmhnallan Dubh' which he had published in *An Leobhar Liath* (Black 2001: 78–81), even down to the use of merks as currency, an eighteenth-century feature. John's verdict on Mac-Crùislig in his preface that 'his tricks upon his master are both mischievous and wicked; but there is a sort of poetical justice in the punishment of the priest' shows that in the 1830s the Catholic Church was still a soft target, and the landowning class a dangerous one.

A quarter of a century later J. F. Campbell published his *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, duly taken down by his team of collectors according to his golden rule: "Write down exactly what you hear." Nevertheless, 'Sgeulachd Mhac a Rusgaich' (the version of 'Eachdraidh Mhic-Crùislig' collected for him by John Dewar) was put through the mill of Victorian prudery. As printed, it consists of the 'farmer' and 'giant' sections, the 'priest' section having disappeared, and while it remains choc-full of violence and cruelty to animals, there is no sex. Campbell explains this as follows (1890, vol. 2: 342):

> Mr. Dewar writes:—"Tradition says that Gille Neumh Mac Rusgaich disguised himself in woman's apparel, went to Iona, passed for a nun, and caused some of the sisters to become frail sisters. There is a long tale about him and his sister. She would get into service to attend ladies, and Mac-a-Rusgaich would disguise himself in his sister's clothes—but that part of the sgeulachd was so unbecoming that I did not write it. I heard

> the part which I did write as early as 1810, from an old man of the name of Alexander Dewar in Arrochar."
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> The story of MacRuslaig, as it is sometimes called, is very widely spread, and, as Dewar says, part of it is "unbecoming." I believe it is printed in Gaelic, but I have been unable hitherto to see the book.—J. F. C.
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> A very similar story is known in Sutherland.

This Iona story, sometimes associated with *Eilean nam Bannaomh* (Priory Island) in Loch Tay, gave rise to the proverb cited by Nicolson (1951: 80) as *Cha b'ann mar a fhuair Mac-Rùslain na mnathan* – 'Not as MacRuslan got the women' (see also Watson 1926: 210–11).

The Diabaig version whose beginning I quoted above consists merely of the farmer's four tasks. As in John's version, each rebounds upon him, resulting this time in Mac-Crùislig (1) gouging the eyes out of his oxen, (2) sadistically destroying his flock of sheep, and (3) murdering his mother. The fourth task concludes the story. On the evidence of John's version it should result, I think, in Mac-Crùislig enjoying the farmer's daughters. I can make little sense of it, however, which is why I believe it has been censored, perhaps by A. McRae who took it down for J. F. Campbell. Here it is without further comment (NLS MS Adv. 50.1.10, f. 341v).

> *An ath latha chuir e e a dh'iarruidh braidean nan each, is iad a dol a threabhadh, dh'fhalbh e agus thubhairt e ri dithis nighean an tuathanach [sic] gun robh ordugh aigesan bhon n'athair orra, cha robh iad ga chreidsin, ach chaidh aon dhiubh mach maille ris dh'fhaicinn, dh'eigh e, Co an té dhiu? Thubairt an tuathanach le cheille iad; agus air dha teachd dhachaidh bha e cho diombach is gun do leig e a cheud [sic] le Macruslaig, aig an ām an deidh a pheanas fhaotuinn.*
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> ("Next day he sent for the horse collars, as they were going to be ploughing. He went off and told the farmer's two daughters that he had orders for them from their father. They didn't believe him, but one of them went out with him to see. He shouted, 'Which one of the pair?' The farmer replied, 'Both of them.' And when he came home he was so annoyed that he let Mac-Crùislig go as soon as he'd been punished.")

Eachdraidh Mhic-Cruislig marked John's swan-song as an itinerant bookseller. Perhaps the survival of three copies (in New College, the Signet Library and the British Library) is an indication of unsold stock, for in the year of its publication, 1836, he obtained a situaion as book-keeper at the Glasgow University printing office in Dunlop Street. He was now under the eagle eye of an employer – Edward Khull, founding partner of Khull, Blackie & Co., now Printer to the University – for the first time since he had been an apprentice carpenter at Conon Bridge twelve long years before (Moore 1996: 60).

With his next book, therefore, he trod carefully. There was nothing intrinsically controversial about *An Cruiteara Gàëlach: The Gaelic Melodist, being a Selection of the Most Popular Highland Love Songs* (App., no. 8), and he was able proudly to designate himself on the title-page as 'Honorary Member of the Glasgow Ossianic Society; Editor of the Songs of Ross'. It was a tiny book which could be kept in waistcoat pocket or in sporran, ready for the call to sing a song – a sign of urban decadence, no doubt, in the eyes of those for whom Gaelic tradition was an oral

one maintained by memory alone. It was the first of John's books to be published in Edinburgh, where D. R. Collie & Son, the publishers, appear to have spotted a gap in the market for a book still smaller than the *Co'-Chruinneachadh*.

Duncan Macvean's response was to commission from John a 'Memoir' of the life of Alastair Mac Mhaighstir Alastair and to preface it to a new (fifth) edition of the *Aiseiridh*. In one respect this edition was 'cauld kale het up', since the basic text of the poems was unchanged, and indeed Maclean remarked (1915: 191) that it 'seems to be what was left unsold of the impression of 1834'. In another respect Macvean allowed John to be true to himself and to the man whom he unequivocally described in his 'Memoir' as the greatest Gaelic poet who had ever lived – a number of copies of a supplement were printed, containing eight poems more or less indecent in nature which had not been published since 1764. Curiously these included the 'Òran d'a Chéile Nuadh-Phòsta', which contains subtle phallic imagery and evokes the 'Song of Solomon', as has been shown by Sarah Fraser (2002), but it is not conventionally regarded as an indecent poem: the reason may very well be that John's nineteenth-century Gaelic readership was much more alive to subtleties of all kinds than the twentieth-century one.

Sàr Obair

John was now anxious to publish *Sàr Obair* as soon as possible. He had collected many subscriptions for it, but his list of subscribers was falling out of date. Not that his travels were entirely at an end: at some point during the years 1835–41 – probably in 1835–36, I would guess, before he was tied down by his job in Khull's office – he had made a prolonged stay in Liverpool, 'taking the names of subscribers for his famous collection of the works and lives of the Gaelic bards' (Mackenzie 1891: 146). On the title-page of *Sàr Obair* he describes himself as an honorary member of the Gaelic Society of London, so he must have spent some time in that city also, and made the acquaintance of prominent members of the society such as James Logan, who in due course provided him with an introduction for *Sàr Obair*.

It was to be many times the size of any of John's previous books, and, financially and otherwise, he was unable to publish it on his own account. According to Clach (p. 203) he sold the copyright 'for a mere trifle' to Macgregor, Polson, & Co. of 75 Argyle Street, Glasgow, at the same time engaging to see it through the press. This was such tiring work that his constitution, never very robust, was undermined to an extent from which it never recovered.

There is, however, another reason for John's being under a great deal of stress at this time. "It is not generally known," says Clach (p. 206), "but his brother informs us, that Mackenzie was also sub-editor of the *Cuairtear nan Gleann*, with 'Tormod Og,' who could write Gaelic phonetically, and who carried on the correspondence with his contributors and the outside world, while John did the actual work of editor."

This is a statement of no small importance to Gaelic literature. 'Tormod Og' was a *nom-de-plume* of the Rev. Dr Norman MacLeod (1783–1862). He was already 57 years old in 1840, but by the time the potato blight of 1846 had taken its toll he had earned himself a new and lasting nickname, *Caraid nan Gaidheal*, bestowed on him for efforts far beyond the call of duty on behalf of the suffering crofters and cottars of the Highlands. Minister of St Columba's in Glasgow since 1835, he had been trying desperately since the 1820s to provide Gaelic speakers with reading-matter in their own language. His ground-breaking periodical *An Teachdaire Gaelach* had run for

three years, from 1829 to 1831, and in 1831 he and the Rev. Dr Daniel Dewar had published a dictionary.

Now, apparently with John's help, he was trying again. And since he towers over all other Gaelic literary figures in the nineteenth century and is seen as the founding father of Gaelic prose, it is fascinating to be told – conspiratorially as it were – by John's seafaring brother that he 'could write Gaelic phonetically', and that John did 'the actual work of editor'. The implication is that, in John's view at least, this celebrated writer and lexicographer had never learned to write the language properly and depended on others to correct his work. It is an allegation which may have more to do with bad handwriting than with actual ignorance, and must be tested against documentary evidence; for present purposes I would simply say that John was clearly in an awkward situation. *Cuairtear nan Gleann* (App., no. 11) came out every month for three years, from March 1840 to June 1843; if John sub-edited every one of its forty issues, we can understand the strain he was under while *Sàr Obair* was going through the press. It was worthwhile, however. The *Cuairtear* served a public desperate for reading-matter and was eagerly read in ceilidh-house and pulpit alike. Maclean Sinclair (1898) had fond recollections of reading it in his schooldays in Nova Scotia: "My real text-book in history was not Chambers' British Empire, but Norman Macleod's Cuairtear nan Gleann, a most valuable and attractive work."

Sàr Obair (App., no. 12) duly appeared in 1841 in two parts, and it is of biographical interest, I suspect, that MacLeod noticed the first one (in the April 1841 issue of the *Cuairtear*: vol. 2, p. 60), but not the second.

> *So leabhar ùr do dh-òrain thaghte bha air an cruinneachadh le Mr Iain Mac Coinnich air feadh na Gàidhealtachd. Tha a' cheud earrann a mach, agus ann an ùine ghoirid bidh an earrann eile deas airson a cur a mach mar an ceudna . . . Cha d' thainig riabh as a' chlò leabhar Gàilig a's sgiolta 's a's eireachdala tha air a chur a mach na an leabhar so . . . Tha seòrsa do eachdraidh aithghearr air a toirt seachad le Mr. Mac-Coinnich air gach aon do na bàird ainmeil so; agus da-rìribh rinn esan a chuid féin gu gléusda: 's airidh e air mór-chliù. 'N uair thig an earrann eile 'mach bheir sinn cùnntas ni's faide air a' chùis.*
>
> ("This is a new book of choice songs which have been collected by Mr John Mackenzie throughout the Highlands. The first part is out, and in a short time the other part will also be ready for publication . . . No Gaelic book has ever been printed which has been more skilfully and beautifully produced than this book . . . Mr Mackenzie has provided a sort of brief history for each of these famous poets; and indeed he has carried out his particular task with efficiency: he deserves great acclaim. When the other part comes out we will provide a longer account of the matter.")

We can only speculate as to why MacLeod chose the words he chose, and why he neglected to fulfil his promise. Did the contents of the second half of *Sàr Obair* confirm his evident apprehensions about the 'sort of brief history' that John so enjoyed telling? Did he dislike the choice of poems? Or was it more personal than that? Did John leave his service under a cloud between the appearance of the two parts in the summer of 1841? If so, was *Sàr Obair* the reason? Did John's persistent mining of a rich underground seam in Gaelic literary tradition threaten to

destabilise his grand vision of a new social contract for the Highland people by which, in return for unquestioning loyalty to their landlords, to the Crown and to the Established Church of Scotland, they were to be allowed to practise a suitably codified form of their language, their songs, their sports, their customs?

I am reminded of a chilling passage in MacLeod's celebrated essay on *Oidhche Challainn*, first published in December 1829, in which Eòghan Bàn the ground-officer comes around to tell the people to have their shinty-sticks ready, because 'the family' wish them to celebrate New Year in the traditional manner. The people take great pleasure in the invitation, says MacLeod (1829–30: 165; cf. Clerk 1910: 396), the only people left out that year being *Calum dubh nan gabhar* ('black Calum of the goats') and *clann Eoghainn mhòir nan cluas* ('the children of Big Hugh of the ears'). *Cha b'ann gun aobhar a rinneadh so, ach o'n oidhche sin bha'm binn a mach san dùthaich, agus b'éiginn doibh iad fein a thoirt as.* "This was not done without reason; but from that night on their sentence was known all over the district, and they had to make themselves scarce."

Did our John share the fate of Calum Dubh nan Gabhar and Clann Eoghainn Mhòir nan Cluas?

My own opinion is that what happened was this. As a busy man is likely to do, MacLeod admired the cover, glanced at the poems here and there, read John's foreword, then put the book aside to read it later. In the foreword he saw the quaint but reassuring words (p. vii*):

> Where spurious verses and monastic interpolations had intruded themselves, they have, of course, been thrown out. The same system of ejectment has been carried to indecent phrases and objectionable passages; and, while nothing of the fire, or grandeur, or general beauty has been lost, the utmost vigilance has been exercised that nothing should be allowed to creep in, which could offend the most delicate, or afford ground of complaint to the most fastidious.

There are places where this has been observed to the letter in a very obtrusive way. A glance at p. 210 of *Sàr Obair* and p. 284 of *An Lasair* will show that John withheld the last four stanzas of Rob Donn's 'Turas Dhàibhidh do dh'Arcaibh', which contain ribald remarks relating to a series of named women including a minister's wife. Curiously, these had been published in 1829 by the Rev. Dr Mackintosh MacKay, a future Free Church moderator, but John printed four rows of asterisks instead. (I suppose there is a hierarchy about these things.) When Caraid nan Gaidheal settled down in his armchair to read the book properly, however, he would have begun to suspect that the ringing statement in John's foreword and the equally clamorous rows of asterisks had been put in to get the book past its non-Gaelic-speaking publishers and censors. Suffice to say that at pp. 67, 74, 86, 95, 202, 203, 205, 209, 212, 215, 253, 291 and 364 we find very distinct reflections of the taste of the man who had published *An Leobhar Liath*, *Eachdraidh Mhic-Cruislig*, Ross's 'Òran do dh'Fhear-Turais' and Mac Mhaighstir Alastair's 'Mìomholadh Móraig'. (Needless to say, the concentration at pp. 202–15 is in the work of Rob Donn himself.) What is more, John has a way of practising self-censorship through innuendo which can sail close to libel. With regard to John Roy Stewart he says (p. 265): "We do not mean to ascribe to poetic or military genius all the recklessness which a sober-plodding world compliments it with; and we, therefore, suppress a gossiping story in which our warrior-poet figures with the Lady of the Lord Provost of Glasgow."

On the other hand, one wonders what MacLeod would have thought of the fact that John omitted eight stanzas of 'Òran Mór MhicLeòid' on the stated grounds (p. 93) that 'we think their insertion would be an outrage on our readers' sense of propriety'. The missing stanzas survive today – not eight, in fact, but fifteen. They are not obscene, nor are they seditious, nor are they satirical in the Gaelic sense, but they are objectively and scathingly critical of the spendthrift behaviour of Ruairi Òg, chief of the MacLeods from 1693 to 1699. The issue was discussed by the Rev. William Matheson (1970: 132–35), who remarked that 'in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century there was a certain fear of giving offence, not only to the MacLeods, but also to others who betrayed their trust as chiefs and ruined themselves by behaving in the manner so scathingly described in the verses omitted'. Matheson weighs in the balance an anecdote of John's concerning the same poem (*Sàr Obair*, p. 93):

> This song was a favourite with Sir Alexander McKenzie, of Gairloch, who paid a person to sing it to him every Christmas night. One of Sir Alexander's tenants went to him one day to seek a lease of a certain farm. The laird desired him to sit down and sing *Oran Mòr Mhic-Leòid* till he should write the document. The tenant remarked that he certainly set great value on that song. "Yes," was his reply, "and I am sorry that every Highland laird has not the same regard for it."

Matheson suggests (1970: 133) that 'perhaps Sir Alexander MacKenzie of Gairloch was allowed to hear only an expurgated version after all', but I do not think that is what John is telling us. Matheson might equally have pointed to John's extreme sensitivity in the matter of Ruairi Òg's cultural identity. After telling us that Ruairi neglected Dunvegan Castle and dispensed with the services of his father's bard, harper, piper and fool 'to make room for grooms, gamekeepers, factors, dogs, and the various *et ceteras* of a fashionable English establishment', John hastens to add (*Sàr Obair*, p. 93): "We here beg the reader to note, that we have not said Rory was an English gentleman, but only hinted that he aped the manners of one." The Highland people had set up a select few of their own relatives to lead them in war and peace, judge them in court, patronise their arts and serve as role models to their young; the idea that, thanks to exogamy, some chiefs had totally ceased to do any of these things was too painful to bear. I think, or rather feel, that John's omission of the stanzas was not done out of fear, as Matheson supposed, but out of self-censorship – the same act of denial that Màiri Mhór nan Òran was still practising fifty years later when she blamed *na Sasannaich* for all the woes of Skye.

I believe that John's respect for the distinguished editor of *Cuairtear nan Gleann* was another factor in his decision. Anglicised landlords were unlikely to take exception to stanzas in old poems which they were unable to read. John knew that 'Tormod Òg' was trying to tread a fine line of compromise between landlords and people, and would have agreed with the strictures expressed in the song. But Tormod Òg was a MacLeod. Sir Alexander Mackenzie prided himself on not letting his people down, but Sir Alexander's pride was the MacLeods' shame, and the current chief of the MacLeods was Norman, a decent man who was to beggar himself in the famine years of 1846–48 by working with his namesake to alleviate distress on his estate.

In John's treatment of Lachlan MacPherson of Strathmashie – a man entirely in John's mould, one would have thought – there is a curious equivocation of judgement (pp. 260–63). John prints 'A' Bhriogais Lachdann', with its memorable jibe at *a' bhriogais leibideach / Nach deanadh anns*

na preasan clann (‘the clumsy breeches / Which could make no children in the bushes’), but suppresses one of my own personal favourites, ‘Aoir nan Luch’ (Black 2001: 218–23), which, he says, ‘although not destitute of merit, is not much to our liking’. I like ‘Aoir nan Luch’ because it is full of innocent good humour. Is it possible that John disliked it, or rather feared it, because some of that humour was at the expense of the Duke of Atholl, a very powerful man?

Sàr Obair was a showcase product of John’s office in Glasgow. It is the only one of his many books in which he subscribes his preface ‘University Printing Office, / Glasgow’. His boss’s name appears twice: “Glasgow: / Edward Khull, printer to the University, Dunlop Street.” And: “Glasgow:—Printed at the University Press, by Edward Khull.”

It begins, naturally, with a title-page. The wording of this in the first edition varies, depending upon whether Logan’s introduction is bound in. Next – as frontispiece to the preface – comes an illustration on art paper: ‘The Aged Bard’ by B. Clayton, showing a white-robed, white-bearded old man reclining beside a stream with a young goat nestling in the crook of his arm. Clearly it was drawn to illustrate verse 7 of ‘Miann a’ Bhàird Aosda’; perhaps it was chosen by the publisher for the simple reason that he could understand it, being one of the few poems in the book for which John provided an English translation (in the form of an extended footnote). The verse is given underneath in Gaelic and English, taken from pp. 14 and 15, followed by: “Published by Macgregor, Polson. Sutherland & Co. Dublin.” Clach tells us (p. 207), no doubt echoing a little piece of Gairloch folklore, that the old man is ‘said to be a likeness’ of the Gairloch poet Alexander Grant, *Bàrd Mór an t-Slagain* (1742–*c.*1820), and Dixon, who was perhaps not very familiar with the picture, turned the joke into a statement of fact (1886: 188): “A portrait of him, which they say was an excellent likeness, appeared in the first edition of John Mackenzie’s ‘Beauties of Gaelic Poetry’.” One of Grant’s poems, ‘Fàilte na Cuthaig’, appears in John’s *Co’-Chruinneachadh* (App., no. 5), pp. 8–10.

There follows John’s foreword in six pages, subscribed ‘University Printing Office, / Glasgow, *April* 1, 1841’. Due to some kind of mix-up – probably Logan’s introduction, pp. iii–lxi, was printed off before anyone thought to tell the printers that there was to be a foreword as well – it is paginated iii*–viii*. This curious blemish was maintained through several editions.

In these six pages John says more of interest, and says it better, than Logan in fifty-nine. Beginning with an explanation of the book’s name, he moves on to speak of the childhood influences which inspired him to compile it, then of the inadequacies of existing collections, remarking that ‘it was not until I had completely traversed the Highlands, and secured a variety of old manuscripts, that I ascertained the nature of the labour I had imposed upon myself’. The emphasis on acquiring old manuscripts rather than taking accurate field-notes is interesting – despite having opportunities that twentieth-century folklorists would have killed for, and having broken new ground with *Eachdraidh Mhic-Cruislig*, in methodological theory John appears to have felt a need to remain loyal to the memory of James Macpherson. It is startling to think that J. F. Campbell’s scientifically noted *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* was only twenty years down the line.

Seldom in defensive mode for long, John goes on to speak darkly (p. iv*) of ‘the aspersions and insinuations which have been levelled at me’ and of ‘a class of men, whose assistance I had a right to expect in so national an undertaking,—I mean our clergymen and schoolmasters’. His complaint was echoed in due course by both J. F. Campbell (1890, vol. 1: vii, xxiii) and Alexander

Carmichael (1928: xxv–xxvii, xxx–xxxii). Clearly there were many who regarded the secular riches of the Gaelic language as an obstacle to be overcome rather than a treasure to be safeguarded. But John goes on to praise the Rev. Dr Norman MacLeod 'for his unwearied efforts to enlighten his countrymen, and to exalt them to a higher status of moral and intellectual excellence', and to thank those clergymen and schoolmasters who had proved to be an exception to the rule.

After some remarks on grammar and orthography, he turns to the content of the book, saying that 'the lives of the Bards form, perhaps, the most interesting part of the work'. This sort of thing is normally said as a compliment to the editor, and it is characteristic of Iain Alastair Òig that he gets in first and says it himself. He was, however, capable of being as generous as he was insecure, and he goes on (after referring to the chronological arrangement of the book, and some other matters) to devote more than half a page to thanking four specific individuals for their help, kindness and encouragement; as these people must therefore be seen as the principal influences on his life and work to date, I will try to say what I can about each of them in turn.

John's great-uncle, James Robertson, Collector of Customs, Stornoway (1756–1840), initially suggested to him the idea of *Sàr Obair*. A 'gentleman of high poetic talent', he had much information about the poets, and possessed several written documents which John was able to use as a source for his anecdotes. He was a son of the Rev. James Robertson of Lochbroom (Mackenzie 1877–78a: 268; cf. Henderson 1905: 165–66, 231–51).

Sgt Donald MacPherson was born in Laggan *c.* 1788, and served for fourteen years in the 75th Regiment, but spent the rest of his life working as a bookseller at 54 Upper Ebury Street, Pimlico. He was Gaelic secretary to the Highland Society of London while Logan was English secretary (Mac a' pharsuinn 1977: 207–08). A poet and amateur historian, in 1824 he had published *Melodies from the Gaelic*. At p. 370 of *Sàr Obair* John prints a translation MacPherson had made of 'Màiri Laghach', one of the poems in the 'Aireamh Taghta'. His surviving papers are NLS MSS 14890–95. What he lacked in talent he made up for in enthusiasm. He it was, says John, who encouraged him to persevere with the work at a point when he had collected all his materials but had lost hope of ever being able to publish them. He explains that MacPherson 'entered into my projects, and, by his warmly exercised influence, put me into a position in which I soon enjoyed the pleasing assurance of being able to carry my intentions into execution'. I think this means that MacPherson had used his clout as a bookseller to find him a publisher.

Archibald McNeil, WS, Edinburgh (1803–70), was fifth son of John McNeil of Colonsay, and therefore a member of the same talented family which produced Lord Colonsay, judge of the Court of Session, Sir John MacNeill, first chairman of the Board of Supervision for Poor Relief, and Sir Malcolm MacNeill, secretary of the Napier Commission and head of the Local Government Board (MacPhail 1989: 71). As Director in Chancery 1843–58 and Principal Clerk of Session 1858–70 (Will 1983: 209), he was Mackenzie's most distinguished patron, and his special contribution to *Sàr Obair* lay in 'urging others to give the work their support' – in other words, obtaining wealthy subscribers in Edinburgh and amongst the landed classes. He was the author of *Notes on the Authenticity of Ossian's Poems* (Edinburgh, 1868).

Lachlan Maclean (1798–1848), a native of the island of Coll, ran a hosiery business in Glasgow. A maker of hymns and an outstanding writer of Gaelic prose (Thomson 1994: 181), in 1835–36 he edited the short-lived *An Teachdaire Ùr Gaidhealach*. He published *A Historical*

Account of Iona (1833), *Adhamh agus Eubh, no Craobh-Sheanachais nan Gaël*, which put the academic case for Gaelic as the language of the Garden of Eden (1837), *The History of the Celtic Language* (1840), *Maighistir na' Modhannan: no Leabhar-Pòc a Ghaeil Òig*, a book of etiquette (1845), *Da Laoidh Nuadh* (1851), and other works. He had two nicknames, *Lachann nam Mogan* and *Lachainn na Gàidhlig*, presumably deriving from his business and his hobby. Kenneth MacDonald has pointed out (1990–92: 400–02) that in the late 1830s his shop at 23 Argyle Street was a favourite meeting place for Glasgow's 'Gaelic literati', the most prominent of whom, other than Maclean himself, were the Rev. Norman MacLeod, Evan MacColl and John himself. Maclean gave him the use of his library and helped him 'enlist public sympathy and support' – presumably by obtaining subscribers in Glasgow.

John goes out, as was his wont, with a bang. As a writer of English prose he was second to none; as a writer of Gaelic prose he was every bit as good, as we will see. The following are not quite the last words of his introduction, but they are the best.

> Time was, when the hours which are now so assiduously devoted to the propagation of gossip, to circumvention, scandal and chicanery, were spent in singing songs, and reciting legends in the innocent comfort and simplicity of unsophisticated manners. But the Bards have ceased to lash the backbiter, the drunkard, and the moral delinquent; and as snails shoot out their horns in a calm, so the human owlets of our country have multiplied in a fearful degree!

There now follows the 'Introduction' in fifty-nine pages (pp. iii–lxi, p. lxii being blank) by James Logan, FSAS (*c.*1794–1872), author of *The Scottish Gael* and a fellow-eccentric of John's. It is possible to come across copies of the first edition in which this is missing for some reason. I have one before me: the pagination runs i–ii, iii*–viii*, lxiii–lxvi, 1–376. Logan did his best, but beside John's his work is boring. Its content is summarised on the title-page: 'an historical introduction containing an account of the manners, habits, etc., of the ancient Caledonians'. It is self-consciously academic, steeped in Ossianism, and written – mainly in the past tense – by one who has clearly made a profession of peering in at the Celtic world from outside. To modern users of *Sàr Obair* its main function is to help us understand the difficult intellectual climate in which John was operating. It was widely assumed that any book which tried to bridge the gap between Gaelic and English must be antiquarian in nature. The heroes of the past were considered a suitable subject for study, but the lives and thoughts of the ordinary people of recent times (and of the present day) were not: whatever their songs were, they were not literature. That is why their poets were not called poets in English but bards; that is why John insisted on calling them poets, and shouted this from the rooftops by putting the word *Poetry* in his title.

This, then, was the climate in which John felt obliged to lay more stress on manuscripts than on field-notes. It was a climate in which all previous Gaelic-speaking writers except Martin Martin had retreated into antiquarianism, archaeology and philological speculation, no matter how well placed they were to collect the lives and works of the Gaelic poets. I am thinking for example of the Rev. Dr John Macpherson of Sleat, author of the tedious *Critical Dissertations on the Origin, Antiquities, Language, Government, Manners, and Religion, of the Ancient Caledonians, their Posterity the Picts, and the British and Irish Scots* (London, 1768), of which Dr Johnson, himself

the future author of a *Lives of the Poets*, rightly said in 1773 (Chapman 1970: 296): "You might read half an hour, and ask yourself what you had been reading: there were so many words to so little matter, that there was no getting through the book." Had Dr Macpherson published 'The Lives of the Gaelic Poets' instead, Johnson would have been infinitely better informed about the Highlands than he was; but then, since it is the way of intellectual climates to perpetuate prejudices rather than to undermine them, such a book, even if written, would not have been published. That the prejudice still existed in 1841 is proved, I think, by the unfortunate result of issuing *Sàr Obair* in two parts – the first part, says Maclean (1915: 247), 'was more in demand than the second, so that it was sold out, leaving a stock of the second volume in the hands of the publishers'. The result, when the parts were bound, was the confusion of missing bits and pieces which is still with us today.

We cannot know precisely the relationship between John and Logan, but I think it likely to have been close, for they had much in common. Born a merchant's son in Aberdeen, Logan was destined for a career in the law, but while a student at Marischal College he received an accidental blow on the head which appears to have fractured his skull. One account (Stewart 1876: x) has it that it happened during a game of quoits in the college quadrangle; according to a more circumstantial one (*ibid.*: x–xi, cf. MacInnes 1988: 253), he had gone to the links to watch an athletic competition amongst the officers and men of a Highland regiment.

> One of the officers, when throwing the hammer, most unfortunately sent it in a direction where Logan was standing; and the hammer, striking the young lad with great force on the head, nearly killed him. Through the eminent skill, however, of Dr. Charles Skene, the broken bones were removed from Logan's head, and we understand are still to be seen in the museum of Marischal College.

Logan's subsequent career foreshadowed John's by ten years to quite a startling degree, with one difference: money. He left college, became an avid reader of books on history and antiquities, showed promise in art, was sent to study at the Royal Academy in London, gave it up, became an architect's clerk, gave it up, took to wandering about Scotland, published his magnum opus (*The Scottish Gaël*, 1831), and spent the rest of his life in London as a jobbing littérateur and periodical writer. An unnamed correspondent in that city told Stewart (1876: xix):

> My own opinion is, that the accident to his head in early life sometimes affected his mind. At all events, I can recollect many odd sayings and doings of his not to be accounted for except on some such supposition of partial mental derangement, if not of actual insanity. He was very liberal and kind-hearted. I have known him give his last sixpence to a beggar man or woman that did not too loudly or pertinaciously importune him. Latterly, his eyesight was bad. This seemed to annoy him much. "Give me my eyesight as it once was," I have heard him say, "and take away this terrible pain in my temples."

Feeling that the detail of Logan's trauma might shed some light on John's, I showed these passages to my medical friend Dr Cameron. He agreed (e-mail, 28 February 2003) that the

removal of bone fragments may have prevented subsequent penetration of vital brain tissue and thus saved Logan from death or disability, but was less comfortable with the opinion that he was deranged or insane, pointing out that the Royal Edinburgh Hospital has a unit devoted to the examination and care of patients who have developed personality change after head-injury – such patients demonstrate moderate to severe personality disorder and/or associated neurotic illnesses, but not psychosis ('madness'). In his opinion, Stewart's last few sentences do not describe post-traumatic disorder at all but temporal arteritis, commoner in the elderly but also liable to come on in middle age: "This combination of severe bilateral temporal pain and dramatically deteriorating eyesight is a condition readily recognisable by doctors today."

Logan's introduction may have been necessary, as I have tried to show, to give the book enough academic respectability to allow it to be published, but the result is that the magnificent introduction which John should have been asked to write has perforce to be imagined – pieced together in the mind from countless gems scattered around the book such as his reference at p. 260 to 'hunting and fishing, which in themselves are a species of poetry'. The nearest he comes to a synthesis is, not surprisingly, in his life of William Ross (p. 278):

> In purity of diction, felicity of conception, and mellowness of expression, he stands unrivalled – especially in his lyrical pieces. McDonald's fire occasionally overheats, and emits sparks which burn and blister, while Ross's flame, more tempered and regular in its heat, spreads a fascinating glow over the feelings, until we melt before him, and are carried along in a dreamy pleasure through the Arcadian scenes, which his magic pencil conjures up to our astonished gaze. If McIntyre's torrent fills the brooklet to overflowing, the gentler stream of Ross, without tearing away the embankment, swells into a smooth-flowing, majestic wave – it descends like the summer shower irrigating the meadows, and spreading a balmy sweetness over the entire landscape.

To measure the extent of our loss, this may be compared with Logan (p. lv): "The Gaëlic poetry and music are usually of a melancholy cast, and this has been attributed to the atrabilious temperament of a depressed people." Sadly, even after *Sàr Obair* was published, the innocent enquirer who had no knowledge of Gaelic was still unable to tell who had correctly summed up Gaelic poetry, John Mackenzie or James Logan, because while John's biography and criticism was all in English, the poetry was nearly all in Gaelic only; worse still, almost the only poem for which a translation appeared, 'Miann a' Bhàird Aosda', was bogus, pseudo-Ossianic, and therefore (of course) melancholy.

Following Logan's introduction came a 'Clar-Innsidh' (list of contents, pp. lxiii–lxv), then a second frontispiece on art paper. Maclean says (1915: 248): "In the First Edition there was an engraving of a rural scene taken from Alexander Macdonald's 'Dairymaid'. This plate got destroyed, and in substitution thereof, a view of Rothesay Bay is given as a frontispiece in the later Editions." I have seen two copies of the first edition which have no print here at all, and one of the second (1865) which includes the dairymaids in all their beauty; Rothesay Bay (by A. Donaldson, published by J. & J. Johnstone) makes its first appearance in 1872. Of the three illustrations, what Maclean called the 'Dairymaid' was the only one which accurately reflects the character of the book; if there is ever another edition, it should certainly be restored. Against a dramatic background of Loch Hourn or the like, we see five young women in animated poses at the well with their vessels, mainly of wood; in the background is an admiring young man and

some cows, one of which is being milked by a sixth girl. We can just see the houses. Underneath is: "CUACHAG AN FHASAICH. / 'S ge b' fhonnar an fhiodhall, / 'S a teudan an rithidh; / 'S a [*sic*] bheireadh damhs air gach cridhe / Ceol nighin na h-áiridh. *to face page 128.* / *Published by Macgregor, Polson. Sutherland & Co. Dublin.*" The instruction to bind the engraving at p. 128 to face Mac Mhaighstir Alastair's 'A Bhanarach Dhonn' appears to have been comprehensively ignored.

The first edition of *Sàr Obair*, the only one published in John's lifetime, contained selections from the work of thirty-six leading Gaelic poets (including the bogus 'D(o)uthal', 'Fonnor' and 'Am Bàrd Aosda'), with biographies and criticisms in English and an appendix containing twelve poems by less well-known individuals, similarly accompanied by notes about the authors and the incidents behind the songs. Statistically there were 254 featured poems, i.e. 242 by thirty-six featured poets and twelve in the 'Aireamh Taghta'. Extra verses, songs and occasional translations lie buried in the footnotes, the most substantial examples being at pp. 21, 55, 98, 268, 364. It appears that some of John's friends and acquaintances were expecting rather more than thirty-six poets to be featured – referring to a new edition which was proposed in 1847 but which never materialised, Alexander Mackenzie says (1881–82: 271, cf. 1911: 163):

> A copy of the prospectus in our possession explains what was for long a puzzle to many. It was known that Mackenzie had collected the poems of several Gaelic bards whose works were considered, by good judges who knew them, well worthy of a place in "The Beauties;" but it now turns out that his publishers found the work extending so much that the compiler was obliged at the last moment to omit many of the modern bards. These included John Macrae, of Kintail.

The first three poems in the book are 'Mòrdubh' by D(o)uthal, 'Collath' by Fonnor, and 'Miann a' Bhàird Aosda' by Am Bàrd Aosda. They belong to the curious category well named by Derick Thomson as 'bogus Gaelic literature'. In John's day they were believed to be genuinely ancient; as Thomson has shown, however (1958: 178–83, 187), 'Mordubh' and 'Miann a' Bhàird Aosda' appear to be anonymous products of the 1770s, while 'Collath', as I will show later, turned out to be the work of the Rev. Duncan MacCallum (1784–1863). All three poems were influenced to varying degrees by James Macpherson's Ossianic 'translations', genuine Ossianic ballads, and the late sixteenth-century 'A' Chomhachag' of Dòmhnall mac Fhionnlaigh nan Dàn (the fourth poem in *Sàr Obair*). Neil Macleod (1843–1924), who was hailed as the leading Gaelic poet of his day but is no longer fashionable, was so taken by 'Miann a' Bhàird Aosda' that he devoted a paper to it, not much to his credit (Macleod 1893–94).

The Rev. A. Maclean Sinclair, a harsh critic, said (1899–1901: 273) that all the poems in *Sàr Obair* except twelve were copied from previous publications. He named the twelve as: in the main section, Lachlan MacKinnon's 'Cùram nam Bantraichean' (p. 84), Gilleasbaig na Ciotaig's 'Banais Chiostal-Odhair' (p. 166), Alexander MacKinnon's 'An Dubh-Ghleannach' (pp. 346–47), and am Bàrd Conanach's 'Òran do Bhonipart' (pp. 348–50); in the 'Aireamh Taghta', first edition, 'Òran Ailein', elsewhere ascribed to Mac Mhaighstir Alastair (p. 372), and 'Òran do Phriunnsa Teàrlach', which I prefer to call 'Achadh nan Comhaichean' (p. 373); and in the additional 'Aireamh Taghta', 1865 edition onwards, 'Duanag Ghaoil le Baintighearn Ille-Chalum Rasa' (pp. 379–80), 'Fear an Leadain Thlàith' (p. 385), 'Fàilte Dhut a's Slàinte Leat' (pp. 385–86), 'Iorram do Sheumas Beaton' (pp. 389–90), and two songs by John Munro (pp. 400–02).

Things are seldom quite as simple as the self-confident Sinclair made them out to be, however. There is no reason to disbelieve Clach's evidence that over twelve years John had travelled the Highlands, north, south and west, gathering poems, stories, manuscripts – and subscribers. My study of John's edition of Ross's poems has shown that even where he took his material straight from published sources, he sometimes had fresh stanzas to add. John would certainly have taken exception to Sinclair's claim (*ibid*.) that 'John Mackenzie's aim was not to collect poems, but to publish in one large work the best poems to which he had access'. Ailean Dall's 'Duanag don Uisge-Bheatha' is a case in point. John says (p. 304): "*Note*.—We have printed this song as we took it down from the poet's own recitation in 1828."

This is impressive. It was the year of the poet's death, aged about 78, but it is more than likely that John would have met him, because in 1828 MacDougall, as he points out (p. 300), 'travelled the counties of Argyle, Ross, and Inverness, taking subscriptions for a new and enlarged edition of his works'. Sure enough, a comparison of John's version with those printed in Ailean Dall's two collections (Dughallach 1798 and Dughalach 1829) reveals a number of significant differences, suggesting that by 1828 the poet was no longer singing exactly what he had had printed thirty years earlier, but that in most cases the 1829 version is merely an edited reprint of the earlier one. Here are some of the more significant passages: *O! 'sid i 'n deoch mhilis nach tilleadhmid uainn* (1798: 59) > *O! sid i 'n deoch mhilis nach tilleadh-mid uainn* (1829: 49) > *O! sid i 'n deoch mhilis / Nach pilleamaid uainn* (1841: 304); *Bu mhaith leìs na slugain a fliuchadh gu luath* (1798: 59) > *Bu mhaith leis na slugain a fliuchadh gu luath* (1829: 50) > *Bu mhath le ar slugain / Am fliuchadh gu luath* (1841: 304); *Mu bhios sinn as t iunais, dh'fhalbh ar sugradh sa'n uaìr* (1798: 60) > *Ma bhios sinne as t-iunnais, dh' fhalbh ar sùgradh 's an uair* (1829: 50) > *Ma bhios sinn as t-iunnais, / Bi'dh sùgradh fad bhuain* (1841: 304); *Tha u d dhotair neo-thuisleach, maith a dh' iarruidh gach cuisle, / Cha'n eil iarmailt na duslach air nach cuireadh tu ruaìg* (1798: 60) > *Tha thu a d' lighich' neo-thuisleach, maith a dh' iarruidh gach cuisle, / Cha 'n 'eil iarmailt no duslach air nach cuireadh tu* [last word lost by fault in printing] (1829: 50) > *Tha thu d' lighich' neo-thuisleach, / A dh' fhiachas gach cuisle, / Gun iarmailt no duslach, / Air nach cuir thu ruaig* (1841: 304); *theid do phaigheadh ad dhuais* (1798: 61) > *theid do phaigheadh a d' dhuais* (1829: 51) > *phaighear dhut dhuais* (1841: 304).

Sinclair appears to have had difficulty in understanding that when John made changes to a poem in copying it from a published text, he would normally have done this because he had heard a different version. Discussing Sìleas na Ceapaich's 'Marbhrann', he says (Sinclair 1894–96: 19) that 'it is copied into Sar-Obair nam Bard by John Mackenzie, who made a few changes in it', and that when *bhrionnaich* appears in *Sàr Obair* in place of *bhruidhnich* it is 'evidently owing to a typographical error'!

As with other anthologies, there are two ways to assess the editor's aims: by what he says, and by what he does. It is clear from what he says, for example, that John liked satire, and he claimed to like it clean. On Alastair Mac Mhaighstir Alastair he says (p. 105): "He is not to be excused for his immoral pieces, which of course are excluded from the 'Beauties of Gaelic Poetry'." And on that he is as good as his word. Coming to MacCodrum, he returns to the theme (p. 144): "His satire on '*Donald Bain's Bagpipe*' is a masterpiece of its kind; full of wit and humour, without the filth and servility that disgrace the satires of Macdonald and other Keltic poets."

I know what filth is, but I am not sure what John means by 'servility'. He is hardly referring

to the satires which Alastair made out of loyalty to the Jacobite cause. He may be using the word in its Gaelic sense – *tràilleachd*, 'baseness' – to denote Alastair's apparent misogyny; however, Dr Sarah Fraser, a specialist in Alastair's *drabastachd*, has told me that she does not see these works as misogynistic. I suppose John was thinking mainly of 'Mìomholadh Móraig', in which Alastair seems to have reversed a poem of praise to his mistress in order to please his wife.

Proceeding to Rob Donn, who made his name from satire, we encounter one of John's most challenging statements (p. 187): "As a poet he cannot be placed in the highest rank. He is deficient in pathos and invention. There is little depth of feeling, and very slender powers of description to be found in his works; and, when the temporary and local interest wears away, he can never be a popular poet." Even Donnchadh Bàn does not quite escape the lash (p. 217): "Neither he nor McDonald knew when to set bounds to their descriptions, and in their satires went on beyond measure."

Those are examples of what John says. They are not entirely matched by what he does. Here again however there is more than one yardstick, as I am very aware from personal experience, for statistically my *An Tuil* is a similar book to *Sàr Obair* – it contains about 300 poems, and the number of poems per poet varies from one to thirty-seven (Sorley MacLean). By an astonishing coincidence, in *Sàr Obair*, which also contains about 300 poems (at least in later editions), I find that the number of poems per poet also varies from one to thirty-seven (Duncan Ban Macintyre). The number of poems per poet is only one yardstick, however. The other is the number of pages per poet, because of course some poets make longer poems than others. In *An Tuil*, for example, I tried to make a statement about the importance of traditional verse by giving more pages to Donald Macintyre than to Sorley MacLean.

Did John do anything similar? Yes, he did. With thirty-seven poems in forty-three pages, Donnchadh Bàn appears to be his favourite poet, but only just. With thirty-two poems in thirty-two pages Rob Donn comes a good second by one yardstick, but a poor third by the other, for although Mac Mhaighstir Alastair is allowed only twenty-three poems, these are spread over forty-two pages – nearly as many as Donnchadh Bàn himself. In fourth place is William Ross, with twenty-one poems in twenty-one pages, while hard on his heels by one yardstick is Iain Lom, with thirteen poems in twenty pages. It can thus be argued that, for all John's strictures, there appear to be varying agendas at work. He suppresses Mac Mhaighstir Alastair's satires, and makes him nearly his favourite; he does not – cannot – suppress Rob Donn's satires, and makes him another favourite.

It all adds up to an exquisite balance of opinions, poems and pages. I cannot fault the totality of John's judgement. His elevation of Donnchadh Bàn, who was still alive when John was born, was courageous from a literary point of view but the right thing to do in popular terms. He had noticed Duncan's subtlety and does not patronise him in any way. "He was a man of observation and thought," he says (p. 218), "and revolved the subject of his study often in his mind." It is a knowing judgement, light years away from the travesty which emerged among some later commentators, such as 'a simple country-lover who would cheerfully churn out indifferent Gaelic verse on such themes as his superiors desired' (Grimble 1979: 71).

John loved the work of Màiri nighean Alastair Ruaidh and praises her greatly, concluding magnificently that 'her versification runs like a mountain stream over a smooth bed of polished granite'. This is criticism of the best kind, for it offers an idea which deeper study can build upon.

I would personally develop it by saying that the mountain stream is Mary's experience, talent and imagination, while the smooth bed of polished granite is what Dr MacInnes has called 'the panegyric code'. We have to ponder however why John liked Màiri's work so much when he was, as he put it himself, 'blind to any poetic grandeur' in the work of Mairearad nighean Lachlainn. There are, I think, two answers. One is that John's tastes were eighteenth-century, pre-Ossianic, pre-Romantic – he liked grandeur well enough, but liked it cheerful. The other can be expressed in one word: localism. Localism has vitiated a great deal of commentary on Gaelic literature. Derick Thomson, whose strength as a critic is that he always has views hard enough to hang one's hat upon, said (1974: 259) of the poems of Dòmhnall Ruadh Chorùna that 'the horror of the Somme becomes almost trite' and of those of Dòmhnall Iain Dhonnchaidh (*Gairm* no. 185, An Geamhradh 1998: 91): *Còrdaidh an leabhar seo gu h-àraid ri na h-Uibhistich*. "This book will appeal especially to Uist folk."

John Mackenzie and Derick Thomson have much in common, yet their views on Màiri are diametrically opposite – the former calls Màiri 'the most original of all our poets', the latter (1974: 135) that 'she wears the narrow strait-jacket of the bardic panegyrist without his learning, his occasional wit, and his metrical virtuosity'. Is this because John thought that Màiri had invented Gaelic poetry out of nothing, *ás a seasamh* as it were, while Thomson knew better? I think not. To me, the explanation lies in John's footnote (p. 21):

> We knew an old man, called Alexander McRae, a tailor in Mellen of Gairloch, whom we have heard sing many of Mary's songs, not one of which has ever been printed. Some of these were excellent, and we had designed to take them down from his recitation, but were prevented by his sudden death, which happened in the year 1833. Among these was a rather extraordinary piece, resembling McDonald's "*Birlinn*," composed upon occasion of John, son of Sir Norman, taking her out to get a sail in a new boat.

What this tells us is that Màiri's songs were woven in and out of John's memories of growing up in Meallan Teàrlaich. Mairearad's, on the other hand, he is unlikely to have heard performed in Ross-shire. It is evident from p. 6 of *A' Bheithir-Bheuma* (see below) that John had visited her native island, Mull, but he tells us that he had seen twenty-five of her songs in manuscript, and that must be how he thought of them – as dead things on a page. His view of her work might have been altered had he heard 'Gaoir nam Ban Muileach' as the Rev. Archibald Farquharson of Tiree heard it (1875–76: 182, quoted in Black 2001: 390): "When two or three sing it together, and the whole join in chorus at the sixth line, I have seldom heard singing like it."

The 'Beauties of Gaelic Poetry' were, I believe, in the ear of the beholder.

One way to measure the significance of *Sàr Obair* is to point to statements that later biographers have been forced to struggle with, to accept or reject – that Iain Lom 'received a yearly pension from Charles II. as his bard' (p. 34), that Alastair Mac Mhaighstir Alastair and Rob Donn were elders of the Church of Scotland (pp. 101–02, 186), or that Kenneth MacKenzie in later life was in the habit of 'literally caressing such of his countrymen as chance or business led in his way' (p. 271), a classic piece of innuendo which I, for one, found impossible to ignore (Black 2001: 509).

I have discussed elsewhere (Black 2001: xiv–xv) the fundamental importance of anecdote to

traditional Gaelic literary criticism, and the corresponding prominence given to anecdote in John's lives of the poets. I might have added, considering the outstanding work of the Puilean (Caimbeul 1973), that it is as important to Gaelic autobiography as to biography. Due to the oral nature of Gaelic literature, ceilidh-house criticism was, I believe, essentially linear – it was easy to contextualise a song within a story, harder to discuss it line by line or phrase by phrase. Kenneth MacKenzie's 'Aoir do dh'Alastair Mac an Tòisich' (for which see Black 2001: 318–27) is a superb example of such contextualisation. Not only is it, as John says (pp. 270–71), 'a satire of great merit', a 'cynic production' in which the poet 'pours forth periods of fire', an 'impetuous torrent of bitter irony and withering declamation, rich in the essential ingredients of its kind', but it also, he says, killed its victim – which is, I assume, why he could not include it in *Sàr Obair*, much though he would have liked to, since its author was still alive in Irish exile as recently as 1837, and the memories which it evoked in the Inverness district would have been painful.

A different example of contextualisation is furnished by John's presentation of 'Cuachag nan Craobh'. In a note on the poem, he shores up his attribution of it to William Ross – not by demonstrating from internal evidence that its imagery and preoccupations are characteristic of Ross's work, as a modern scholar would do, but by writing it into the poet's biography (*Sàr Obair*, p. 293):

> The poet, crossed in love, suffered such poignancy of grief that it ultimately brought on a consumption and he was for sometime bed-ridden. On a fine evening in May, he rose and walked out through the woods to indulge his melancholy alone.—Arriving at a large tree, he threw himself on the green sward beneath its branches, and was not long in his sequestered sylvan situation ere the cuckoo began to carol above him.—"The son of song and sorrow" immediately tunes his lyre, and sings an address to the feathered vocalist.—He pours out his complaints before the shy bird, and solicits its sympathies.—Had Burns been a Gaelic Scholar, we should have no hesitation in accusing him of plagiarism when he sung:—
>
> "How can ye chaunt, ye little birds
> While I'm so wae an' fu' o' care?"
>
> But Ross embodies finer feelings and sentiments into his fugitive pieces than even the bard of Coila.

There was still a charge of plagiarism hanging over John himself with regard to Ross's poems; insinuating that it was levelled at Ross himself, John has the effrontery to deflect it upon Robert Burns.

Sàr Obair is undoubtedly a work of great character, reflecting to the full the tastes, the prejudices, the *weltanschauung* of Iain Alastair Òig himself. If I were to sum up these elements I would cite, first of all, the aesthetic concept inherent in the words *Sàr* and *Beauties* – John wishes to emphasise craftsmanship and its underlying social dynamic. Secondly, I would describe his political creed as old-fashioned Highland Jacobitism galvanised by the ideals of the French Revolution. Thirdly, he revels in the subversive qualities of satire, leading a Victorian critic, Nigel MacNeill, to remark caustically (1892: 172) that he 'delighted in unearthing and publishing all the moral dirt he could lay his hands on'. Lastly, he possessed a view of the world which was clear,

objective, sharply-focused and not a little rose-tinted in so far as that world was contained within the ample boundaries of his native Ross-shire; outside these limits there appears to be a gradual loss of focus, so that Islay, in particular, is beyond the edge of his universe (as will become evident in connection with his dictionary). I will try to justify this summary by means of a small number of examples, given in the order in which they occur in the book.

At pp. 68–75 John perpetrates a spectacular error by mixing up the Clanranald poet Iain Dubh mac Iain mhic Ailein with the MacLean poet Iain mac Ailein (Ó Baoill 1994; Black 2001: 379, 402). Under the name and biography of the former he gives two items by the latter ('Marbhrann do Shir Iain Mac-Illeain Triath Dhubhairt' and 'Crosdhanachd Fhir nan Druimnean') as well as three by the former ('Oran do Mhac-Mhic-Ailein', 'Marbhrann do Mhac Mhic-Ailein', 'Oran nam Fineachan Gaelach'). His only excuse is that Turner, himself an Argyll man, makes the same mistake (Mac-an-Tuairneir 1813: 108). The error is the more surprising in that Iain mac Ailein is the one Gaelic poet who is mentioned, and whose work is described, in the whole of Johnson's *Journey* and Boswell's *Journal of a Tour* – "Miss McLean produced some Erse poems by John McLean, who was a famous bard in Mull," says Boswell (Chapman 1970: 372), "and had died only a few years ago."

At p. 80 John devotes more than half of his entire biography of the Skye poet Lachlan MacKinnon (Lachann mac Theàrlaich) to an unedifying story about how he once badly abused the hospitality of a farmer in Lochalsh by deflowering his daughter and murdering her pet dog. MacKinnon was a highly accomplished poet and an excellent satirist who had left Skye for a while, grief-stricken at the death of his young wife, to live in Kintail, where he got a tack of land from Seaforth. He spent four lonely years there, satirising his new neighbours and becoming increasingly unpopular. He is said to have fled across Loch Duich to an uncle in Knoydart, pursued by Kintail men whom he and his uncle defeated in pitched battle at Inverie (Black 2001: 367–68). The accounts which we have of Lachlan from Skye sources are highly complimentary, so it is clear that views of him were polarised between Skye and Ross-shire, and that John's biography reflects Ross-shire opinion. His comic song 'Sgian Dubh an Sprogain Chaim' is central to the issue, for it satirises the 'Hairy MacRaes' (*Clann 'ic Rath Mholach*) of Kintail while containing much self-mockery as well. Given its subject-matter, the song was unlikely to be popular in Ross-shire, and John appears to have got the twelve-stanza version which he prints in *Sàr Obair* from Turner's collection (Mac-an-Tuairneir 1813: 339–42), making some improvements to the text here and there. A twenty-one-stanza version could be reconstructed with the help of NLS MS 14876, a manuscript of poems written in 1776. It is difficult to read, and whether it contains material which was known to John but rejected either because it was too obscene or too offensive to Ross-shire sensibilities, I have no idea. It is a task for the future.

At p. 96, the Blind Piper's 'Beannachadh Baird do Shir Alasdair Mac-Choinnich' illustrates John's aesthetic approach. In the unusually short eleven-quatrain form in which it appeared in the supplement to John's 1834 edition of Ross's work, and thence in *Sàr Obair* (and Watson's *Bàrdachd Ghàidhlig*), it may be described as the perfect poem – a simple lapidary compliment to a young lady from Strathspey on the occasion of her wedding to Sir Alexander MacKenzie of Gairloch. I soon discovered, however, that John had achieved this polished effect by taking a twelve-quatrain version in the Stewart collection (1804: 225–27) and dropping from it a verse which could be described as less than perfect:

Gheibhte aig siol Ailpein nam fiagh dearg,
Leis 'm bu mhiann gach sealg a frith,
Fir mhaiseach, ghasda gun cheilg,
'N am dhol an seilbh an stri.

"Obtained from Clan Alpin of the red deer / Who loved every hunt in the forest / Were handsome men who'd be stalk-like and guileless / When getting to grips with strife." This corresponds roughly to lines 21–24 of my own edition (Black 2001: 122). It will be noticed that it has nothing directly to do with the bride, being merely a compliment to her Grant relatives. In researching the poem further, I found that as originally known in Gairloch it had three more quatrains (*ibid.*, lines 17–20, 53–60), making a total of fifteen. As a Gairloch man himself, John must have known these; on the other hand, they add little to the poem's sparkle, and are in any case mainly concerned with the fish in the Spey and the pleasant time had by all at the wedding. It is easy to see why John omitted them.

At p. 101, in the biography of Mac Mhaighstir Alastair, is a footnote which deserves our attention – for two reasons. The first is that John, for once, provides the source of an anecdote, foreshadowing good fieldwork practice as established a couple of decades later by Campbell of Islay. The second is that the old man thus honoured, Duncan McKenzie, Kilchoan (who had been taught by the poet himself, 'who lived to the great age of ninety-four; and, in 1828, communicated to us this information'), bore the same surname as John, one which is far from common in Ardnamurchan. Was some sort of Ross-shire connection operating here?

At p. 373 John prints a poem consisting of seven quatrains and a chorus under the title 'Oran do Phriunnsa Tearlach'. It was the latest (but the first published) of three early texts of this item; I have now been able to print a version consisting of thirteen quatrains and chorus under the title 'Achadh nan Comhaichean' (Black 2001: 182–87). As I have tried to demonstrate (*ibid.*: 452–54), according to a style which was previously characteristic of waulking-songs, it mixes three interconnected themes: in this case, a poor girl's love for a man of higher status; Prince Charles; and the traumatic aftermath of Culloden. The result of this mingling is a sense that we are being admitted to a set of random thoughts in the mind of a traumatised young girl of the post-Culloden period. John's verses, and those in the shorter of the two manuscript versions, contain everything in the song that relates clearly to the '45, and it appears that it had undergone a process of editorial filleting to emphasise its Jacobite content. I am not suggesting that John was responsible for this filleting, but as he informs us that 'various MS. copies of it are in our possession', it appears likely that the more overtly Jacobite version is the one he selected for *Sàr Obair*.

The last of these illustrations of my summary comes from pp. 373–74, where John prints under the title 'Cumha do dh' Uilleam Siseal' a version of the song best known today as 'Mo Rùn Geal Òg'. While there was nothing original about John's text, other than some editorial tinkering to which I have drawn attention elsewhere (Black 2001: 446–47), he had a great deal of interest to say with regard to the story behind the song. Its author, he said, was Christiana Fergusson, a blacksmith's daughter from Contin in Ross-shire (her father 'made dirks and other implements of war'), and its subject was her husband William Chisholm, tacksman of Inns'-nan-Ceann in Strathglass, who, he claimed, bore the Chisholm banner at Culloden: when the Chisholms were

trapped by redcoats in a barn he 'hewed down all who came within reach of his sword', and died a hero with seven bullets in his back.

There are a number of reasons for being sceptical about this account. No William Chisholm of Innis nan Ceann appears to exist in historical record; Alexander Mackenzie tells us (1891: 222) that the Chisholm standard was borne at Culloden by a man called John Macdonald, *Iain na Brataich*, who survived long after the '45 and eventually emigrated to Canada; earlier versions of the song attribute it to a lady in Strathglass (in one case for her husband Gillies MacBean) or to the wife of Robert MacGillivray, who is said in one source to have killed seven redcoats after Culloden with the tram of a peat-cart; William's alleged feat echoes better-attested stories about MacBean and MacGillivray, and is not mentioned in the account of Culloden in John's own *Eachdraidh a' Phrionnsa* (though admittedly this book was translated from materials supplied by the publisher). One has to tread cautiously, however, where local sensitivities are involved, not least because a stone was erected at Innis nan Ceann in the late nineteenth century bearing the legend: "W. C. / 1746 / Mo Run Geal Og."

The truth, however, appears to lie in a contribution, expressed for tact's sake in fairly elegant English verse, to *The Celtic Monthly* by an Angus Mackintosh, Brookman's Park, Hertfordshire (1895), which reveals William Chisholm as a coward who was goaded by his wife into following his kinsmen to Culloden, where he fought well and was killed. No mention is made of banners or barns. This elicited a spirited response from the elderly Colin Chisholm (1895), which, however, consisted mainly of a reiteration of John's account, prefaced with the words: "Let me quote what an independent writer of eminence (in his line) said of '*Fear-Innis-nan-ceann*' and his most amiable and talented spouse, Christina Fergusson." This argument is suspect, as we know that Chisholm met John in Liverpool in the late 1830s when working there as a customs officer (Mackenzie 1891: 146), and since it concerns Strathglass it is highly likely that John's account derived from him in the first place. More usefully, Chisholm added:

> For the first twenty years of my life I lived next door to the son of one of the men who accompanied William Chisholm when he went to Contin to marry Miss Christina Fergusson, the armourer's daughter. In relating his father's account of the reception the party had and the wedding festivities, it seemed to me the Fergussons were in easy circumstances.

Three conclusions may thus be drawn. Firstly, John's account is correct, but only in its bare essentials. The song was indeed composed by Christiana Fergusson, an armourer's daughter from Contin, to her husband William Chisholm of Innis nan Ceann in Strathglass, who was last seen on his way to Culloden, and died there. Secondly, Christiana comes across as a frustrated wife who had married beneath herself. Since he is absent from the historical record, her husband cannot have been a tacksman, and may have been a landless cottar. Thirdly, as internal evidence shows, Christiana fled to the safety of Skye, where she poured out her remorse in song for the man she wished she had had (MacilleDhuibh 2001g).

Sàr Obair is conspicuously shot through with poems, stories and footnotes about pipers, piping and pipe music. It is noticeable that John prefers the spelling 'pìobaireachds' to Scott's 'pibrochs' (p. 95); it has a modern look, being the form used in the piping literature today. Dixon (1886: 190)

offers us a glimpse of John's personal life in the *Sàr Obair* years which brings to mind the young boy with the pocket-knife who made himself a set of bagpipes: "He became well known as a good piper; he and John Macrae of Raasay used to be judges of pipe music at the Edinburgh competitions." Dixon also calls him 'an excellent piper' (*ibid.*: 175), while MacLennan (1972b: 25) calls him 'piper, poet and author', adding that he 'was allowed to be a very good performer'. The 'Edinburgh competitions' can only be those run by the Highland Society of Scotland on behalf of the Highland Society of London, celebrated in Gaelic literature for the six prizewinning odes composed by Duncan Ban Macintyre during the 1780s on the set subject 'Gaelic and the Bagpipe' (MacLeod 1952: 270–99). They were held in a theatre in the city, annually until 1826, then triennially until 1844, when they were abandoned (Black 1986a: 9–10). Commenting on the first ode in his 1848 edition of Donnchadh Bàn (App., no. 33), John says (pp. 194–95):

> This, and the five following pieces, are the successful prize poems composed for the Highland Society in London, in the years denoted by their respective titles; these meetings for the preservation and improvement of Highland poetry and music, were held in Edinburgh and Falkirk. It is to be regretted that they have been discontinued. The Highland Society of Scotland was originally established on principles which included this as one of its three primary objects. The third article of its printed "objects" states, that "the Society shall pay a proper attention to the preservation of the language, poetry, and music of the Highlands." Too much praise cannot be bestowed upon the Highland Society for its efforts in the advancement of agriculture, yet its deviation from this [*sic*] objects of its constitution must be lamented by all admirers of Celtic music and poetry.

It was a more restrained comment than his earlier one (1841: 325; cf. MacInnes 1988: 304), provoked by the society's becoming in 1834 'The Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland', that its original name 'had reference to the mental culture of their Caledonian countrymen, instead of as now, unfortunately, to the physical development of the points of the inferior animals'. As for Dixon's 'John Macrae', this must be an error for John Mackay (1814–48) from Raasay, whom I mentioned in an earlier article (Black 1986a: 10) as performing the sword dance, a rare accomplishment at that time, at the Edinburgh competition of 1832. Mackay was a competitor in the Edinburgh events of 1832 and 1835, subsequently becoming piper to Admiral MacDougall of Dunollie and then to P. C. Leslie of Invergarry (MacLennan 1972a: 14–16).

It was impossible for John Mackenzie or John Mackay to act as judges, as they were not of the required social class – the pattern at these competitions was for a hard core of committee members to be joined on the bench by whatever high-ranking chiefs and military officers happened to be present, knowledge of piping being a secondary consideration (MacInnes 1988: 51). It is possible however that they were asked to make themselves available for consultation by the judges, as was sometimes done (*ibid.*: 52–53). In John Mackay's case, this would have been in 1838, 1841 and 1844, on the strength of the reputation of his MacCrimmon-taught father, also John Mackay (1767–1848), who had composed at least six big tunes; in John Mackenzie's, it would have been in 1841 and 1844, on the strength of *Sàr Obair*.

The year 1842 was marked by a curious piece of fallout from the book. The Rev. Duncan

MacCallum, Arisaig, produced a little volume entitled *Dàin agus Òrain: Poems and Songs*. Published by P. Campbell & Co. at 24 Glassford Street, it went through Khull's presses – and therefore John's accounts – in Dunlop Street. MacCallum's name does not appear on the title-page. He reproduces the preface to *Co-Chruinneacha Dhan, Orain, &c. &c.* which he had published anonymously in 1821 – the work now known as 'MacCallum's Collection'. This time he subscribes it: "D. M." In it he says, among other things (p. iv):

> It is to be regretted that no attempt has been made to rescue the memories of our Bards from oblivion, by preserving anecdotes and memoirs of their lives along with their works. The Editor could not venture to supply the loss in this Collection, but in a very limited manner.

He thus appears to be saying: "Look! I thought of *Sàr Obair* first." Next he prints a five-page foreword entitled 'Preface to the Third Edition. / The Third Edition of "Collath" and Other Poems' and subscribed: "D. M. / October, 1842." He has a confession to make (pp. vii–viii).

> After a lapse of twenty years, the editor of "The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry" took the ancient poem of *Mòrdubh* from the Inverness Collection, 1821 . . . and next the poem of *Collath* . . . and the learned author of the long introduction to the well-got-up collection, "The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry," passed it as an ancient poem, and both seemed to think it worthy of the rank assigned to it. As, therefore, the poem of *Collath* has obtained so honourable a station, which has given it a chance of longer existence than the Author, who almost forgot it, could have expected, and of being regarded an ancient poem of the first class, he thought it his duty to undeceive any future editor and the public . . . Time, that tries and proves all things, has decided in favour of *Collath*; and it only now remains for the Author to remove the deception, if poetical license might be so called . . . *Collath* was composed about the beginning of the present century.

So he squirms in embarrassment, but makes a clean breast of it in the end. It is difficult for the anthologist to be sure that things are always what they seem – in *An Tuil* I published a song which I understood to be by Angus Morrison, Ullapool, but it is little more than a version of a traditional *port á beul* (Black 1999: 34–37, 719).

Eachdraidh a' Phrionnsa

With *Sàr Obair* safely launched upon the public, its distinguished – and deservedly elated – editor threw himself into his next project, a Gaelic history of the '45. Whether it took shape in his mind as an original work of his own, I do not know; at any rate, it finished up as the first of a long series of translations. John's agreement, in his own handwriting, with D. R. Collie of Thornton & Collie, 19 St David's Street, Edinburgh, regarding *Eachdraidh a' Phrionnsa* (App., no. 14) ultimately reached Clach's desk in Inverness; it 'conveys a pathetic tale', he says (p. 204), meaning – quite rightly – that it arouses our sympathy for the translator.

EDINBURGH, March 21st, 1843.

1. It is hereby agreed by the subscribers, that John Mackenzie shall translate into Gaelic the History of Prince Charles Edward, from materials in English to be furnished to him by D. R. Collie, for which he shall be allowed the sum of three pounds sterling for his trouble, in the first place.
2. That as soon as John Mackenzie shall procure two hundred and fifty *bona fide* subscribers for the work, D. R. Collie shall get it printed according to the terms of prospectus—500 subscribers' copies on fine foolscap 8vo., and 500 on demy 12mo.
3. That besides the three pounds to be paid for translating as above, John Mackenzie shall be allowed sixpence for each subscriber procured by him to the list, and another sixpence for delivering each subscriber's copy—that is, each copy shall be paid for by him at the rate of four shillings, until the account for printing, paper, and binding is paid; and after that, any number of copies may be purchased by either party at the trade price of three shillings and sixpence per copy—money paid before delivery.
4. The remaining profits, if any, arising from the sale of the work, after the first expenses have been cleared, shall be equally divided between John Mackenzie and D. R. Collie.
5. That none of the cheap copies shall be sold until the first expense of printing the whole has been paid off.
6. That in the event of a second, or more, editions of the work being called for, it is hereby expressly stipulated that the one party cannot print, or make any arrangement with a third party for printing or publishing the said work, without the full knowledge and consent of the other; and any profits to be derived from the sale of any future edition, after paying the expenses, shall be shared equally between John Mackenzie and D. R. Collie.

In witness thereof, we mutually copy and sign this agreement, this present 23d day of March 1843.

(Signed) JOHN MACKENZIE.
(Signed) D. R. COLLIE.

We are to understand from this, I think, that the price of the book was to be five shillings. Each subscriber was to pay this amount to John, out of which he retained sixpence as his commission, and another sixpence as his fee for delivering the book to the subscriber. He therefore had to pay the publisher four shillings for each book until the cost of paper, printing and binding had been paid. From that point on the remaining stock belonged equally to both parties, either of whom might dispose of it as he wished on payment of 3s 6d per copy to the other.

The subscription list was crucial. When John had obtained 250 names – and only then – Collie would have 1,000 copies printed. Clearly it was in John's interest to obtain as much of the subscription money as possible at the point of first commitment, before the book even existed, because in due course he was going to have to pay Collie 4s for every copy, this being reduced to 3s 6d only after the printer's bill was paid. No doubt John's task of obtaining subscriptions was made a little easier by the success of *Sàr Obair*; on the other hand, Collie appears to have considered that John's capacity for embroidering the truth must be kept firmly under control.

At any rate, thanks to the fact that a handwritten list of subscribers found its way in due course

to Clach's magnetic-sounding desk, we know that it consisted of 291 names neatly arranged (no doubt beginning with the aristocracy, in the manner of the time, then continuing with the rest in alphabetical order) followed by another dozen or so scattered about on different pages. Referring to point 2 of the agreement, Clach remarks (p. 204): "He had thus over three hundred to begin with."

The twenty-two names which Clach singles out for mention indicate for us the milieu of friends and patrons amongst whom John was operating at this time. Some we have met already, others we will meet again later. I will give them exactly as they come, with my comments.

'John Sobieski and Charles Edward Stuart, "Eilean Aigais" (2 copies each)' are those extraordinary brothers whose true names were revealed in due course as John Hay Allan and Charles Stuart Hay Allan. They lived on Eilean Aigas in the Beauly River in a house crammed with memorabilia and hunting trophies, granted them rent free by Lord Lovat. The book was dedicated to Charles (see App., no. 14). John kept up a regular correspondence with them, several specimens of which reached the desk of Clach, who claims, presumably on the basis of these letters (p. 206), that John 'was by them considered the great authority on all disputed questions of Gaelic orthography, when preparing their "Lays of the Cavaliers" and other works'. Clach's 'Cavaliers' is a Freudian slip for 'Deer Forest', but his point is of great interest. The brothers had learned what Gaelic they had from John's friend Sgt Donald MacPherson in London (*DNB*), and they published three substantial works around this time which deserve to be better remembered today for their content than for their authors: (1) *The Costume of the Clans* (Edinburgh, 1845), a physically massive work whose introduction contains much of interest on Gaelic manuscripts; (2) *Tales of the Century or Sketches of the Romance of History between the Years 1746 and 1846* (Edinburgh, 1847); and (3) *Lays of the Deer Forest, with Sketches of Olden and Modern Deer-Hunting; Traits of Natural History in the Forest: Traditions of the Clans; Miscellaneous Notes* (2 vols, Edinburgh, 1848). They enjoyed sprinkling these works with Gaelic quotations (duly footnoted) and writing forewords for translation into Gaelic, the Gaelic version being placed before the English. (They cite *Sàr Obair* where appropriate, but thank nobody.) All of their large body of work was published during John's brief spell of fame between *Sàr Obair* and his death; given Clach's evidence, it seems likely that John was one of their translators.

'Neil MacAlpine, Islay (2 copies)' (1786–1867) was parish schoolmaster of Kilmeny. Now presumably John's friend, he later became his foe. Born in Kilchoman, he was a gentle giant, 6 feet 4 inches tall and well-proportioned, but, as his biographer insinuated (Macalpine 1930: xii), 'not your pushful man for aggressive work'. After completing his university course he registered as a divinity student; divinity student he remained all his life, never achieving his goal of ordination as a parish minister.

'The late John Maclachlan, bookseller' is John's future employer. His company, Maclachlan, Stewart & Co. of Edinburgh, was founded in 1818.

'James Logan' we have met.

'Duncan Macneill, solicitor-general', the future Lord Colonsay, was of the talented legal family which we have met in the person of Archibald McNeil, WS.

'Archibald Sinclair, *Chronicle* office' is, I suppose, the man of that name from Islay who subsequently set up a printing-press at 62 Argyle Street, Glasgow, where he published books of Gaelic verse in 1859 and 1869. The *Chronicle* will be the *Glasgow Chronicle*, which ran from

1811 to 1857 (Mackenzie 1994: 197). In 1876–79 his son, also Archibald, published *An t-Òranaiche*, the only anthology of Gaelic verse whose popularity has ever rivalled that of *Sàr Obair.*

'John Forbes, schoolmaster, Fort-Augustus' (1818–63) is another present friend and future foe. Seemingly a native of Strathglass, he taught in Fort Augustus from 1843 to 1848 and became minister of Sleat in 1851. In 1843 he published an intelligent but complex work of 377 pages entitled *Gràmar Dùbailt, Beurla 'us Gàelig, anns am bheil Stéidhean na Dà Chainnt Minichte gu Soilleir; a' Co-Ghiùlan nan Ainmean, nam Brighardan agus nan Rialtan Gràmarail, le Cleachdaidhean Lionmhor air Pairteachadh agus Ceartachadh: A Double Grammar, of English and Gaelic, in which the Principles of Both Languages are Clearly Explained; Containing the Grammatical Terms, Definitions, and Rules, with Copious Exercises for Parsing and Correction.* It was a Utopian answer to a practical problem. As Forbes pointed out in his preface, it was 'a well known and an acknowledged fact, that many in the Highlands who can read and spell English fluently, can scarcely connect a single idea with the words read by them, being taught only the art of reading the language or sounding its vocables'; with his *Gràmar Dùbailt*, on the other hand, 'the natives might learn the structure of both English and Gaelic, or either, through the medium of the Gaelic itself, their vernacular language'. Had the Gaelic schools of the 1840s gone from strength to strength and entrenched their aims in the fabric of the nation, leading to a confidently bilingual Scotland with two official languages, Forbes's book might have become a blueprint as fundamental to public life as the *Caighdeán* in the Republic of Ireland; instead the glens were emptied, the Education Act of 1872 swept away the Gaelic schools, the ensuing struggle was for minimal rights to the land, and Highland children who might have gained much from the *Gràmar Dùbailt* learned a very different kind of English on the back streets of Partick and Govan. Forbes's son Alexander wrote a strange but serviceable work, *Gaelic Names of Beasts (Mammalia), Birds, Fishes, Insects, Reptiles, etc.* (Edinburgh, 1905), from which his initials AF are familiar to all users of Dwelly's dictionary.

'Cluny Macpherson of Cluny (2 copies)' is another gentleman whom we will meet again. Ewen MacPherson (1804–84), who succeeded to the MacPherson chiefship in 1817, was generally known in the Highlands as 'Cluny'. He was grandson of his namesake of the '45.

'Colin Chisholm (late President of the Gaelic Society), London' was a native of Strathglass. A customs officer, he was transferred from Liverpool in 1843 and became president of the Gaelic Society of London. Following his retirement in 1876 he moved back north and was for many years a stalwart of the Gaelic Society of Inverness (Mackenzie 1891: 146–47). We have already come across him in both Liverpool and Inverness.

'G. A. Mackenzie of Applecross' is George Alexander Mackenzie, a Liverpool merchant of the Applecross family who died in 1874 (Mackenzie 1879: 447–48).

'G. A. Mackenzie of Dundonell' is George Alexander Mackenzie of Dundonnell, born 1818 (Mackenzie 1879: 284).

It is curious that Clach mentions no Gairloch Mackenzies at all.

'Evan Maccoll, Liverpool, the well-known Gaelic bard, now of Kingston, Canada' (1808–98) was from Kenmore on Lochfyneside, where he is fondly remembered. He had published the first edition of his poems in 1836. A friend and contemporary of John's and of Colin Chisholm's, he was the last and youngest of the thirty-six poets featured in the main section of *Sàr Obair*. In his

biography of him, at p. 357 of *Sàr Obair*, John mentions two other individuals who appear further down the list:

> It is well for dependant merit that there are gentlemen who have something ethereal in them: much to their honour, Mr Fletcher of Dunans, and Mr Campbell of Islay, patronized our author, and through the generously exercised influence of either, or both of these gentlemen, McColl was appointed to a situation, which he now holds, in the Liverpool Custom-house.

'Colin Fraser, now F.C. minister, Strathglass' must I think be a reference to the Colin Fraser who laboured as Free Church missionary (but not minister) in Strathglass from *c.* 1854 to 1880 (Ewing 1914: 210).

'W. F. Skene' is the future Historiographer Royal, Knoydart-born William Forbes Skene (1809–92), another close contemporary of John's; his *Highlanders of Scotland* had appeared in 1836.

'J. F. Campbell, yr. of Islay', *Iain Òg Ìle* (1822–85), was to achieve everlasting fame as the founding father of the study of Gaelic folklore. In 1843 he was a 21-year-old student at Edinburgh University.

'W. B. C. Campbell, Islay House' must be in error for Walter Frederick Campbell, laird of Islay and father of the above. He was, after all, one of the two gentlemen who had, in John's rich phrase, 'something ethereal in them'. His younger son, Walter Douglas Somerset, was not born until 1840.

'Mary Ann Jane Clephane Douglas Maclean' will be a lady otherwise on record as Mrs Marianne Maclean Clephane, daughter and heiress of Maclean of Torloisk, for whom see Sinclair 1899: 461; Grierson 1932: vii, 162–63, 189–92, 226–30, 260–62, 366–67, 489; Ó Baoill 1979, xxvi, xxvii, 155, 168–69. Two of her daughters were Margaret and Anna Jane Douglas Maclean Clephane, whose 'Songs Collected in the Western Isles of Scotland' – including eighteen Gaelic items and three harp tunes – were privately printed, apparently at Torloisk itself, in 1808 (NLS MS 14949 and m/f 266).

'Lord Lovat' is Thomas Alexander Fraser, 12th Lord Fraser of Lovat (1802–75), who succeeded to the title in 1803. For many years he was Lord-Lieutenant of Inverness (Paul 1908: 546).

'A. Fletcher of Dunans' is Angus Fletcher (1804–75), son of John Fletcher of Dunans in Argyll. A Roman Catholic, he became Solicitor of the Inland Revenue in 1842 and Comptroller of the Inland Revenue *c*. 1856 (Walker 1987: 54; Loudon 2001: 158). It is clear how he was able to help Evan MacColl get a job in the Customs; as for the 'ethereal' part of his nature, it ran in the family. His grand-uncle Archibald Fletcher, Advocate (1746–1828), was a celebrated pamphleteer, father of burgh reform, and supporter of the American and French revolutions (*DNB*). His grand-aunt Eliza (1770–1858) had both brains and beauty – her marriage to Archibald was romantic and successful, and she left a highly readable *Autobiography* (1874). Their son, his cousin, also Angus (1799–1862), with whom he has been confused (Grant 1944: 72), qualified as Writer to the Signet in 1822, but abandoned the legal profession and became a sculptor in London (Will 1983: 107).

Clach concludes his list with 'Lord Arthur Lennox; the Duke of Richmond, and many other well known names'. In modern parlance, John must have scored these two 'hits' with a 'maildrop'. These gentlemen's secretaries presumably had a library budget to spend. Charles Gordon-Lennox, 5th Duke of Richmond (1791–1860), had already been a member of the cabinet (*DNB*); Arthur (1806–64), 7th son of Charles, 4th Duke of Lennox, was MP for Chichester and became Master of the Ordnance and Lord of the Treasury in 1844. His wife Adelaide was a sister of Walter Frederick Campbell of Islay (Paul 1908: 367).

I do not know how long John's job as a book-keeper in the Glasgow University printing office had lasted, but I suspect that it came to an end on or soon after 23 March 1843 when he signed his agreement with D. R. Collie in Edinburgh, for that agreement required that he go out once again in search of subscribers. The last issue of *Cuairtear nan Gleann* ever to be published appears to have been falling from the presses in May 1843 as half the ministers of the Church of Scotland walked out of the General Assembly to form what became the Free Church (cf. App., no. 13). John himself was (I guess) free at last as well. He must have spent the summer of 1843 travelling in the Highlands, and the autumn translating Collie's materials.

Eachdraidh a' Phrionnsa, no Bliadhna Thearlaich (App., no. 14) was duly printed and published by Thornton & Collie of Edinburgh in 1844. It is the first full-length secular prose work to be published in Gaelic. There is no foreword or preface, and no clue is given that it is a translation. There is a dedication to 'Charles Edward Stuart' (Charles Stuart Hay Allan). The title-page states that it is *le Iain Mac-Choinnich*, and John refers to himself in the dedication as its *Ughdar* ('author'). In fact, roughly seven eighths of the book may reasonably be described as an abridged translation (or translated abridgement) of the fifth edition (1840) of Robert Chambers's comprehensive *History of the Rebellion in Scotland in 1745–6*, drawing extensively upon Gaelic poetry and tradition for its imagery, and choc-a-bloc with errors, misunderstandings and John's own creative intellect. The other eighth, threaded through the work, consists of reliable oral evidence mixed with glimpses of the past picked up by John in countless ceilidh-houses throughout his career.

I have found no evidence that John used any published work other than Chambers's *History*, but it is impossible to be sure of this without making a detailed comparison of his text with every book, pamphlet, article and essay about the '45, especially in matters concerning Ross-shire and where there is some evidence that John's information came from oral sources. He tends to go into particular detail (and provides much new information) in matters related to piping, clothing, food and timber. Although an eccentric production in many ways, *Eachdraidh a' Phrionnsa* is of great value as Gaelic literature and as a window upon issues relating to translation (MacilleDhuibh 2006).

At the end of *Eachdraidh a' Phrionnsa* is a collection of seventeen Jacobite songs. Clearly Collie, having previously published John's *Cruiteara*, agreed that it would be a good idea to test the market for such a collection, and decided that the reaction was positive. Before the year was out, in association with Duncan Macvean of Glasgow, he had published another book with John's name on it – *An t-Aosdàna: or a Selection of the Most Popular Gaelic Songs* (App., no. 15). The Rev. Donald Maclean alleged (1915: 250) that this was 'the same collection of songs as is appended to the 1844 edition of *Bliadhna Thearlaich*', but this is less than the whole truth. John had in fact added two important Ross-shire satires – 'Marbhrann Bhàtair', a *crosanachd* which

adds greatly to our understanding of the events that followed the battle of Àth nam Muileach in Glen Affric on 2 October 1721 (MacilleDhuibh 2001a–f), and 'Daibhidh Greosgach, Crom, Ciar', a lighter piece whose significance lies in its authorship (it is by the celebrated Aonghas Dubh, the Rev. Angus Morrison, minister of Contin and brother of the *Clàrsair Dall*) and by the way it includes verses which set out to praise the same man, but only succeed in satirising him further (MacilleDhuibh 2003a–b). Also of interest is John's dedication to Ewen MacPherson, whom we met as a subscriber to *Eachdraidh a' Phrionnsa*. I print the original below (App., no. 15); here is a translation.

> TO CLUNY, CHIEF OF THE MACPHERSONS – MAGNANIMOUS SIR, I am publishing this little book under your illustrious name, with every hope that it will obtain your protection, since you are the only one surviving today (who understands and respects the rhetoric which it contains) of the remnant of the princely, brave Chiefs who rose up in the epicentre of danger and destruction in order to win back for the legitimate Royal exile, who awoke the sympathy of the sweet-voiced bards who sang these poems, the ancient allegiance of the People of Scotland. I have in truth the honour to be, with great respect, your most humble servant, JOHN MACKENZIE.

John thus points out that, of all the surviving Highland chiefs descended from those who fought on the Prince's side in the '45, Cluny is the only Gaelic speaker. The description is entirely in line with that of the *DNB*: "While thoroughly loyal to the reigning dynasty, he cherished the Jacobite sentiments of his ancestors, and was specially attached to old highland customs and manners. So far as possible he endeavoured to live among his people the life of the old highland chiefs, of whom he was probably the last representative." John addresses him as *thu* in preference to formal *sibh*; this is in line with his practice in *Eachdraidh a' Phrionnsa*, where Prince Charles addresses his father as *thu* in the same way (p. 19).

Glasgow: *A' Bheithir-Bheuma* and *The Harp of Caledonia*

According to Clach (p. 205) *Sàr Obair* and *Eachdraidh a' Phrionnsa* secured John 'considerable fame in literary circles'. Soon after the publication of the latter (which must have taken place early in 1844) he 'obtained an engagement with Messrs Maclachlan and Stewart, Edinburgh, at what would now be considered, even in a *Celtic* literary engagement, starvation wages, namely, one pound per week'. Clach's word *Celtic* – the italics are his – echoes the name of his own periodical. It can be seen in retrospect, then, that towards the end of 1843, Iain Alastair Òig's life changed once more: this time for ever, but not necessarily for the better. He had left behind him the variety of *Cuairtear nan Gleann*, his humdrum post in Khull's office, and the writing of books on poetry and song; in exchange he accepted the holy grail of a regular job in Gaelic which involved translation from English and the correction of Gaelic books for the press (Murchison 1947–48: 126). The year 1844 thus marked the appearance not only of *Eachdraidh a' Phrionnsa* and *An t-Aosdàna* but also of five other books, all religious in nature, of which he may be said to have been the editor of four (App., nos. 16–19) and the translator of one (App., no. 20).

For the time being, however, John remained a 'Glasgow Gael'. When in January 1845 he published his forgotten satirical masterpiece *A' Bheithir-Bheuma* (App., no. 21), he was still in his adopted city.

The story of *A' Bheithir-Bheuma* is as follows. From January 1844 to January 1845 John Forbes of Fort Augustus appears to have edited thirteen numbers of a periodical called *Teachdaire nan Gaidheal*, with which he attempted to build upon the good name of *An Teachdaire Gàelach* (1829–31), *An Teachdaire Ùr Gàidhealach* (1835–36) and *Cuairtear nan Gleann* (1840–43). Thirteen, at any rate, is the number of issues which Maclean (1915: 312) once saw advertised in a sale catalogue; he himself had only ever seen nos. 1, 2 and 8, and although Ferguson and Matheson (1984, no. 2668) list five issues in NLS and EUL (the latter said to be imperfect), all I have found is two copies of no. 1 in NLS and no trace of the periodical at all in EUL. Still, just as Maclean says of *A' Bheithir-Bheuma*, for me the first issue of *Teachdaire nan Gaidheal* is 'quite enough'. The editor's name does not appear, and none of the articles are signed in any way. Most of its four pages consist of news rather than opinions, but at pp. 3–4, under the heading 'Leabhraichean ura Gaelig', is a vitriolic review of *Eachdraidh a' Phrionnsa*. It begins:

> Chaidh sinn troimh an leabhar seo bho thoiseach gu deireadh, cha b'ann gun chràdh inntinn no gun ruthadh gruadhach ri faicinn an riaslaidh agus an ablachaidh a rinneadh leis an ughdair air seanachas cuimhneachain an laoich rioghail . . . 'S cinnteach sinn nach 'eil an diugh anns an Roinn Eorpa, cainnt eil' anns am biodh a' chridh aig neach leabhar a' chur a' mach far am faicte folluiseach, aineolas, di-fiosrachaidh agus cion-curaim cho iomarcach agus cho soilleir 's a chithear anns an leabhar seo. 'S goirid an ùine bho' n dh'fhaodadh gach neach a thairrneadh camacha dubha air paipeir, leabhar a chur a mach 's a ghaidhlig gun eagal bèuma no cronachaidh bho theanga sgeileadair no bho bhèul caraid; ach tha 'chuis a' nis iar atharachadh, rinn Gràmaran an Stiubhartaich, an Rothaich agus an Fhoirbeisich, suilean nan Gaidheal fhosgladh, agus ged tha iad fathast tuille is fàbhorach ri oibrichibh mi-loineil bheadagan bathaiseach nach fios c'iu 's laotha 'naire no 'n eanachainn, gidheadh 's math is faithne dhaibh co 'chuireas gaidhlig an ordugh air shéol ceart, agus 'g am faithne snas-chainnt a' chur sios a' réir riaghailtean gramarail.
>
> ("We have gone through this book from start to finish, not without mental anguish or blushing cheek in seeing the chaos and confusion inflicted by the author upon the biography of the royal hero . . . We are certain that there is no other language today in Europe in which a person would dare publish a book in which ignorance, disinformation and carelessness would be paraded as abundantly and as prominently as is to be seen in this book. It is not long since everyone who could draw black curves on paper could publish a book in Gaelic without fear of complaint or criticism from the tongue of a critic or the mouth of a friend; but the situation has now changed, the Grammars of Stewart, Munro and Forbes have opened the eyes of the Gael, and although they are still excessively indulgent towards the disorderly works of impudent amateurs who do not know whether their shame or their brain is the smaller, they nevertheless know very well who has got Gaelic organised in the proper manner, and who knows how to write elegant language according to grammatical rules.")

It is clear what irks Forbes. He has put enormous labour into writing a grammar-book, yet the public continue to give a warm reception to works like John's which cheerfully ignore its rules.

He now launches into a discussion of specific examples of John's phraseology, such as *fo iomadh comain An Ughdair* in the dedication, remarking:

> Mur h-i seo a chainnt a ta fearsgriobhaidh eachdraidh na gaidhlig ag innseadh dhuinn a labhradh leis na bruidean ma 'n do chruthaicheadh Adhamh, cha 'n aithne dhuinne c' aite 'n do labhradh riabh i, ach mu bharra-sgoileireachd Iain mhic Choinnich, 's è ar barail gur h-è b'fhearr a b' ainm dhi sgopsgoileireachd, mar a nochdar leinn ma 'n dealaich sinn.
>
> ("Unless this is the kind of language that the writer of the history of Gaelic tells us was spoken by the brutes before Adam was created, we don't know where it was ever spoken; but as far as John Mackenzie's super-scholarship is concerned, in our opinion a better name for it would be frothy-scholarship, as we shall show before we part company.")

Our 'anonymous' reviewer is becoming dangerously personal. Many of his criticisms are justified, however, and he leavens them with a little humour.

> Air t. d. 44, "Cha luaithe fhuair iad *crathadh an fhir* de laimh mhìn an Diuc." Am b'aill leat gu'm faigheadh iad crathadh na mnatha, Iain? Air t. d. 47, "Air faighinn nam bàtaichean deas *air an cinn*." Sin thu MhicChoinnich! Cha bu chlì air an casaibh iad. Air t. d. 199. "Anns an robh e *dha fhalach fein*." Cia mar a fhreagradh, bho fhalach fein duit ughdair? Air t. d. 202. "Cho luath 's a chuir Fear Chise Borgh Tearlach a steach do Sheomar mor nan Aoidhean, *Chaidh e thogail bean an taighe*." 'S olc nach d' innis thu 'cudthrom' dhuinn mar an ceudna.
>
> ("On p. 44, 'No sooner had they got *crathadh an fhir* ("the man's shake", i.e. a shake per man) of the Duke's smooth hand.' Would you like them to have got *crathadh na mnatha* ("the woman's shake"), John? On p. 47, 'After getting the boats *deas air an cinn* ("on their heads to the right", i.e. ready for them).' There you go Mackenzie! They weren't on their feet to the left. On p. 199, 'In which he was *dha fhalach fein* ("to his own hiding", i.e. hiding himself).' How would *bho fhalach fein* ("from his own hiding") suit you, author? On p. 202, 'As soon as the tacksman of Kingsburgh had put Charles into the large Guest Room, he went *a thogail* ("to raise", i.e. wake up) the woman of the house.' It's a pity you didn't tell us her weight while you were at it.")

He also points to historical errors such as the statements that the battle of Kilsyth was fought in 1645 for James III (p. 11) and that Forts George, Augustus and William were built between 1715 and 1745 (p. 15). It was problematic for John in the opposite way to that in which 'Ossian' had been problematic for James Macpherson, for he had been obliged by his contract, as we have seen, to base his work on materials provided by the publisher, which means that *Eachdraidh a' Phrionnsa* was basically a translation, even though John's name was given as author. This helps to explain, though not to excuse, the historical errors and what Forbes calls *gaidhlig ghallda 'n sgriobhadair*, 'the writer's Lowland Gaelic' – it is difficult for us not to notice that phrases like *cha do dhearbh a' chùis so 'bhi mar shaoil le Tearlach* ('this affair did not prove to be as Charles

expected', p. 22) are best read as if they were English. However, Forbes had a one-track mind. He might reasonably have summed up the book as ambitious and entertaining while vitiated by poor proof-reading and unanswered questions about authorship and source-material; he might have added that, depending on the answers to such questions, the book was perhaps an important one. Instead, clearly consumed by jealousy at the success of *Sàr Obair*, he concludes:

> Tha e soilleir nach aithne do 'n ughdair tri facail a chur 'an ordugh ceart, ann an litreachadh no 'n claonadh, agus ma dh' eirich dha cainnt cheart a sgriobhadh ann an aite no 'n aite, 's dearbhte gur h-ann bho thuiteamas 'a thachair dha 'dheanamh; cha 'n ann bho' ionnsachadh. Chithear ainmeanan ann an aon aite firionnta agus na h-ainmeanan ceudna ann an ait' eile boirionnta. Chithear iad anns an chor ainmeach 'n uair bu choir dhaibh a bhi anns a chor bhuinteach. Chithear iad anns a chor bhuinteach an uair bu choir dhaibh a bith [*sic*] anns a chor roi-lideach; cha 'n 'eil duilleag air an seall sinn anns nach 'eil mearachd air muin mearaichd, agus b' e ar comhairle dhùrachdach do 'n ugdair [*sic*] e 'leigeadh dheth sgriobhaidh, agus tionndadh ri ceaird onaraich sam bith leis am faigheadh e teachd an tìr agus aodach, oir 's cinnteach sinn nach cuir na 'sgriobhas e air an doigh seo, airgiod 'na phoca no cliu air ainm; na mealladh sè e fein agus na tugadh e feairt air luchd miodail; ged rinn an luchd dealbh-bhreacaidh an cuid fein deth le ragha paipeir agus ailtbhreacadh agus ged bhiodh an leabhar iar a sgriobhadh ann an sàr-ghaidhlig Albannaich, bhiodh e daor, daor air tri tasdain an aite nan coig sgilleanan gealla [*sic*] sasunnach, mar a phàigheas gach neach a cheannachas [*sic*] e ma'm faigh se 'na dhorn e, ach 's e ar barail gur h-ainneamh iad a dh iarras seilbh air.
>
> ("The author has obviously no idea how to put three words together with regard to spelling or declension, and if he has succeeded in writing correct language in one or two places, it is evident that he has only chanced to do so by pure accident; not from his learning. Nouns can be found masculine in one place and the same nouns feminine in another. They can be found in the nominative case when they should be in the genitive case. They can be found in the genitive case when they should be in the prepositional case; there is no page we look at in which there is not error upon error, and it would be our earnest advice to the author that he give up writing, and turn to any honourable trade which might bring him a livelihood and put clothes on his back, for we are certain that what he writes in this manner will neither put money in his pocket nor enhance his reputation; let him not deceive himself and let him pay no attention to flatterers; although the printers have played their own part well, with excellent paper and printing, and even if the book were written in splendid Scottish Gaelic, it would be very expensive at three shillings, never mind the five silver shillings sterling that everyone must pay to buy it before he can have it in his fist; but we believe that few people will wish to possess it.")

John responded by founding a new periodical himself, *A' Bheithir Bheuma*, the first and only number of which was published in Glasgow in January 1845. The name means 'The Smiting

Dragon' (cf. Cheape 1999: 76). For my own part I cannot recall reading anything written in the nineteenth century which has given me quite as much pleasure. It is a classic satirical magazine, clearly focused, full of character and genuine wit, entirely in Gaelic except for the publisher's imprint, utilising upper and lower registers of the language to the full – that is to say, John revels in idioms, *dubhfhacail* and dialect. The following is a brief catalogue of its contents by page, column and line.

1a1. Editorial. The magazine's aim is to publish *cuid do sheann seanachas agus do bhàrdachd Ghàëlach, ni tha sinn lan-chinnteach a bheir ni's mò do thaitneas daibh-san aig am beil spéis do dh'fhior leughadh Gàëlach, no ged chuireamaid cuid do Sgriobhaidhean Beurla gu Gaelig mar bu ghna leosan a chaidh air thoiseach oirnn* ('some of the old traditions and verse of the Highlands, which we are quite sure will give greater pleasure to those who enjoy real Gaelic reading than our translating a few English writings into Gaelic, as has been the practice of our predecessors'). It is thirteen years since the *Beithir-Bheuma* last struck. (What does this refer to?) *Tha buaidh shònraichte innte agus se sin, gach duine anns an sāth i a gath gu'm fās e 'na chontom air an dean madraidh na dùch' an dileag san dol seachad*. "She has a particular virtue, namely that everyone into whom she sinks her fangs turns into a dog-hillock which is pee'd upon in passing by the local canines." She has been awakened, the editorial concludes, by the Post announcing with his horn the arrival of the *Gràmar Dubailt.*

1b11. 'Teachdaire nan Gaidheal.' This review announces the publication of the new journal by *comunn a' chul-taigh ann am Baile nam breabadairean* ('the back-green association in Tradeston'?) whom it names as 'an Cuairtear', 'am Pungar', 'am Post' and 'an Gille Fionn-umh'. It mocks their platitudinous poetry and their bad Gaelic, detailing their many errors at length.

3b25. 'Comhradh *Eadar Murchadh Grè, Coinneach Mac Shuinn, Eobhan Mor 's am Pungar, mu'n Ghramar Dhubailt!! (Air a sgrìobhadh do réir lathailt' Ghramarail a' Phungar féin.)*' This review article on Forbes's *Gràmar Dubailt* is the jewel in the crown of *A' Bheithir-Bheuma*, and John knew it – he appears also to have issued it separately (App., no. 22). Utilising the dialogue mode so favoured by nineteenth-century periodical writers, it reveals John as a comic writer of brilliance who clearly knew his Shakespeare.

> *Pung*. Am beil Laidin agadas fòs?
> *Mur.* Mo righe tha 's Fraincis, is beagan dhe na "*Chainnt* Bheurla,"—parly voo Francy, a bhall urramaich? honey's sweet quo' Mally Spense—nemo me impune lacessit,—eadh. "Olc air fear an uilc;" agus, ma shuidheas tòin rùist air cluaran, stobas e i.
>
> ("*Pung.* Do you speak Latin too?
> *Mur.* Indeed I do, and French, and a little 'Broad Scots,'—parly voo Francy, distinguished member? honey's sweet quo' Mally Spense—nemo me impune lacessit,—yes. 'Evil to him who evil thinks;' and, if bare backside sitteth upon thistle, it pricketh it.")

Had he received encouragement and a little guidance, he might have produced a body of prose work fit to put beside that of Iain Crichton Smith, John Murray and Norman and Alasdair Campbell in Scottish Gaelic, Flann O'Brien in Irish, and James Joyce in English. Were he alive today he would receive Arts Council grants for writing like this, provided he avoided libel. As it

is, I know of no contemporary views upon *A' Bheithir-Bheuma*, but the climate of his day is probably well represented by the Rev. Donald Maclean (1915: 250, 313), who called *Comhradh . . . mu'n Ghramar Dhubailt* 'scurrilous but somewhat clever' then spoiled it by saying that one number of *A' Bheithir-Bheuma* was 'quite enough'.

5b60. 'Cleachdadh air Casan bàrdail.' This section consists of comic verses in the style of (mostly) famous poems by established poets such as Eoghainn MacLachlainn, Donnchadh Bàn, Iain Dubh mac Iain mhic Ailein and Uilleam Ros. The technique re-emerged strongly in the 1960s, see for example Norman Campbell's 'Mi Fhìn agus a' Revolution agus mo Bhata Darach' (Black 1999: xlviii, 584–93). John's sole aim in every case is to satirise the *Gràmar Dùbailt* or *Teachdaire nan Gaidheal* (or both). It begins:

Na'm faighinn cothrom ort fo'n phlaid.
Chuirinn 's an sdaid *shéidicht'* thu.
Hi ri, ho ro mo dhéideagan.
Ceannaiche Muin.

'Nuair bha Gàelig aig na h-eòin
'S a thuigadh iad glòr nan dàn
Na'n cluinnag iad Gàelig Fòb
Bhiog sileag an tòin gu làr.
McLachuinn.

("If I could get you under the blanket
I would mutate you by *aspiration*.
Hi ri, ho ro my darling one.
Ceannaiche Muin.

When the birds were Gaelic-speaking
And understood poetic sound,
If they heard Fòb's kind of Gaelic
They'd have shat upon the ground.
MacLachlan.")

For *sdaid shéidichte* ('lenition, aspiration') see 6b12. *Ceannaiche muin* will be 'a prostitute's client', or more literally 'a purchaser of sex'. As for *McLachuinn*, perhaps he is Art Mac-Lachuinn, see 7a16.

6b12. 'Gaelig a' Phungar'. Choice quotes from Forbes's work, with humorous commentary. The second quote is: "Tha'n ginteach aonar boir, iar a chumadh o'n ghinteach aonar fhear, le tilgeadh na staide séidichte; agus ma's aonsmid e, tha e dunadh gu cumanta le *e* 'us air uairibh le *a*." The commentary on this highly technical point is subtly ribald: attributed to *Catriana Bhuidhe Nic-an-t-Sriùcair o Thobar-Mhuire, cailin òg grinn aig am beil brŏd na Gàëlig* ('Catrìona MacRascal from Tobermory, a gorgeous young blonde who speaks very good Gaelic'), it begins: *Cia b'e air bith a sgrìobh a' Ghàëlig sin, is dòigh leam gur math an gaisgeach anns an dorch e, is domhain a labhair e, ach bheireadh seillean math mil á chainnt . . .* ("Whoever it was who wrote that Gaelic, I'm sure he's a fine performer in the dark, he spoke in some depth, but a good bee could find honey in his speech . . .")

7a16. ‘Buth Ur Dhibhe.’ (‘New Pub.’) The complete text is:

> Tha’n Gàël Còir fialaidh sin Mr. Art Mac-Lachuinn, a bha grathunn a cumail an taigh-òsda mhōir fharsuinn aig iochdar Sràid *Shimeica*, mar thig thu nall air drochait ùr Glascho; a nis air fosgladh bùth ùr aig àireamh *trì fichead ’sa sè deug* do Shràid mhōr Chluaidh.—Gaël ’sam bith a bhios air son pinnt leanna no cairteal uisge-bheatha òl gu’n ghlampar luchd-misge, no masladh graisge ’na lòrg, ruigeadh e ar caraid Mr. McLachuinn agus gheibh e drùchd nam beann gun truailleadh, a’ ruith cho fallain agus cho siùbhlach á chuid feadanan sa bha e riabh. *Air son barrachd fiosrachaidh, faic* “Cuil nam Bard” *air an ath taobh-duilleig*.
>
> (“That kind and generous Gael Mr Artt McLachlan who for some time ran the large spacious public-house at the foot of Jamaica Street, as you come across the new Glasgow bridge, has now opened new premises at no. 76 Great Clyde Street. Any Gael who wishes to enjoy a pint of beer or a quarter of whisky unaccompanied by the wrangling of drunkards or the jeers of riff-raff, let him find his way to our friend Mr McLachlan and he will receive the unpolluted mountain dew, flowing from his tubes as wholesomely and as freely as ever. For more information see ‘Poets’ Corner’ on the next page.”)

This genial publican will be the native of Luing referred to in *Sàr Obair*, p. 56, as ‘Mr Artt McLachlan, of Glasgow, a gentleman well known for his zeal in every thing tending to promote the honour of Highlanders, and the Highlands’. He was a Roman Catholic. In 1855 the Islay poet William Livingston published a song to him, ‘Oran do Artt Mac Lachainn’, in broadsheet (Mac Dhunleibhe 1882: 164–66; Maclean 1915: 165). John had said in 1841 that he was about to erect ‘a tomb-stone, with a suitable Gaelic inscription’ in his native island to the memory of its most celebrated poet, Diorbhail Nic a’ Bhriuthainn (Dorothy Brown), but it had still not been done when he died in 1884, aged 88 (Mac a Phi 1938: 140; public records).

7a31. ‘Bas Teachdaire nan Gaidheal.’ A gleeful announcement that *Teachdaire nan Gaidheal mac a’ Chuairtear* has ceased publication, and that *comunn a’ chul-taigh* has announced that it will be replaced in due course by a fresh periodical, this time without mistakes.

7b21. ‘Naigheachd Mhor ann am Baile Beag.’ A satirical piece on ‘an Gille Fionn-umh’, referring to his lack of success in love and his intention to emigrate to America.

8a1. ‘Cuil nam Bard: Gill’ an Osdair.’ A poem in praise of the beer sold in Artt McLachlan’s pub, see 7a16 above. There is no indication of authorship, but it is probably by John himself – it does not appear amongst Livingston’s collected works. Here it is: the spelling is John’s, the translation is mine.

’S ann tha mi smaointeachadh an drasd	I am thinking at the moment
Air fleasgach àluinn, ainmeil,	Of a handsome famous hero
Bhios uain’ a’s glas an dara h-uair,	Who’s green and grey half the time
’S air chaochladh snuaidh ri leanmhuinn,	With other hues to follow —
’Nuair théid a tharruinn gu finealt,	For when he’s pulled so neatly
As na pìopan margaidh,	Out through the pipes for selling,
Gu’n éirich pìrbhuic ghlas ma cheann,	A grey wig rises round his top
’S gur mòr a mheall i dh’airgead.	That’s cost a lot of money.

Bi sin a phìrbhuic a's glan craobh,
O'n chridh' aotrum amasgaidh,
'Nuair dh-éireas i bho ghrunnd an àird'
Air druim a' chlair a' falbh i
Fear gun bhruailean r'a òl stuaim
Tha ioma' buaidh 'ga leanmhuinn
'Se thogadh gruaim an fhir o'n fhuachd
An uair bu chruaidhe 'ghaille-bheinn!

Full-blooded comes that periwig
From a light and merry heart
When it rises from the bottom
To float upon the top;
If the quiet one is taken sober
Many benefits ensue —
He'd tempt a man in from the cold
When most strongly blows the gale.

'S maraiche math air a' chuan thu,
'S air bharra nan stuadh cròcach;
'Nuair a thig a' chùis gu cruadal,
Bheir thu buaidh mar sheòltair,
'Nuair thig dorchadas na h-òidhch,
'Sa bhios na tuinn 'ga stròiceadh,
Mar a bi thu ac' an uair sin,
Bi'dh iad fuar neo-chnòdaidh.

You're a good sailor of the sea,
On crests of foam-capped waves,
For when hardihood is called for
You perform a seaman's task —
When the night is falling darkly
And the waves are torn asunder,
If they don't have you at that time
They will be cold and wretched.

Fleasgach nach sòradh an abhainn,
Ri ceangal an reòta,
'Sa chuireadh an aois bho gheilte,
Gu seasamh na h-òige:
Thogadh tu fonn fo na mhacnus,
Gu eachdraidh a dòchais
'Sa chuideachd sin a bhios as t-aonais
Chithear coachladh neoil orr'!

A hero who'd not shun the river
When it's encased in frost
And who'd defy decrepitude
In stout defence of youth,
You'd raise a tune from merriment
To tell of its presumption,
While those who are without you
Can be seen another hue.

O! Gill' an òsdair as glan fradharc,
Gu taghadh nan daoine,
'S ann ort nach dìobradh do chasan,
'Stu'n teachdair math aonaich
Ni thu feum a muigh 'sa steach,
As lasaidh tu le gaol iad,
'S am fear a shaoileas a dhol seachad,
Bheir thu staigh air thaod e.

O! The publican's assistant
With an eye for choosing people,
Your legs would not forsake you,
You're a good fairground runner;
Both out and in you're useful
And you light them up with love —
As for him who means to go on past,
You lead him in on a halter!

'Nuair a bheir thu steach air sgeòid e,
Se bhòrd a bhios aobhach,
Cluich a's grinne, mir', as òran,
'S iad gun bhròn mu'n t-saoghal,
Bidh tu fein an ceann a' bhùird,
'S be sin an stiùbhard rìoghail,
'Sa' dh'aindeoin cuideachd g'am bi ann,
Gur tus a's ceann 's a's brìgh dhaibh.

When you bring him in by the lappet
It's his table will be merry:
The best gaming, fun and song
With not a care in the world;
You'll be on the table-top,
And what a royal steward!
For no matter the company,
You're their head and substance.

Fleasgach briunnach nan sùl mìogach,
Dh-fhaodadh rìgh a phògadh,
'S ioma' baintigh'rn 'th'air a thì,
Ach ciod an nì sin domh-sa?—
Leigeamaid fo bhreth nam bàrd,
Mar dh-fhàg mi fear na cròice,
'S am fear a ni mholadh ni's fearr,
'Se-féin a phàidheas còrr e.

The fair youth with smiling eyes,
A king could kiss him himself,
Many ladies pursue him —
But what use is that to me?
Let's put to poets' judgement
How I've praised the foam-topped one,
And let him who does it better
Be the man who pays for more!

8b1. ‘Iongantasan!’ The complete text is: *Tobraichean Ghlinn-Iuch!—Mòr-chùis a’ Phuist!—Drochait Abar-Pheallaidh!—Clach a’ choire a’m Baile-pheatrais! Cluig-Pheairt!—A’ Chlach-Tholl an Asaint ’us an Gramar-Dùbailt! Seachd iongantasan mòra, mòra, na h-Albann!* (“The wells of Linlithgow!—The conceit of ‘am Post’!—The bridge of Aberfeldy!—The kettle stone in Balephetrish! The bells of Perth!—The stone with the hole in it in Assynt and the Double Grammar! The seven great, great wonders of Scotland!”) See Maclean 1845: 206; Beveridge 1903: 115; MacDougall and Cameron n.d.: 82; MacKinnon 1992, no. 10; Miller 1994: 158; Brownlie 1995: 30–31; Black 2005: 396–97, 558, 597; MacilleDhuibh 2005a–b.

8b7. A spoof postbag section. It begins with a not very sincere-sounding apology, signed ‘A’ Bheithir Bheuma’, for harping so much on the same theme, with the explanation that when the ‘Beithir’ has something to chew (*mir-cagnaidh*) it likes to grind it into chaff (*a dheanauh cho mìn ’sa chàth*). To prove the point, the editor proceeds to reassure one of his four alleged correspondents, *Beul gun Fhaitheam, an Dun-Breatainn* (‘Unzipped Mouth, in Dumbarton’) that ‘turas a’ Phuist thun na h-airidh’ (‘The Postman’s Trip to the Shieling’) will be published at the first opportunity.

8b56. “Glasgow:—Printed by Wilkinson & Co. 24 Miller Street, and conducted by J. Mackenzie, for himself and the other Proprietors, at No. 25 East Clyde Street, where all Communications are requested to be sent.—Sold by the Booksellers in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Greenock.”

Thanks to *A’ Bheithir-Bheuma*, then, we have John ’s address, 25 East Clyde Street, and we know that he enjoyed a pint of beer in Artt McLachlan’s public-house at 76 Clyde Street, formerly at the foot of Jamaica Street. I suspect he means Great (or West) Clyde Street on the north side of the river, rather than the *new* Clyde Street in Tradeston on the south bank, given that prior to the construction of Tradeston in the 1790s Great (West) and East Clyde Streets had been a single entity, Clyde Street, as indeed they are again today (MacGregor 1881: 377; Moore 1996, plates 3–6). We are of course tempted to wonder if Artt McLachlan the Glasgow publican was by any chance related to John Maclachlan the Edinburgh bookseller and publisher, for it seems that, despite (or perhaps because of?) engaging him at one pound per week, the latter had our John on a remarkably loose rein. It was all made possible by the Glasgow–Edinburgh railway line, which had opened on 18 February 1842. Perhaps we may be permitted to visualise the lanky figure of John on a day early in 1844 as he sits in the snug of Artt McLachlan’s riverside tavern, turning from the dreary toil of translating Bunyan’s *Come and Welcome* to order a pint and a mutton chop, spluttering in rage at Artt McLachlan over *Teachdaire nan Gaidheal*, then calming himself, pushing Bunyan gladly to one side and jotting down some ideas for *A’ Bheithir-Bheuma* instead. Indeed, it would not surprise me to learn that *A’ Bheithir-Bheuma* was produced to win a wager.

Once every couple of months or so during the course of 1844 John must have boarded the ‘iron horse’ to bring his latest bundle of translations and corrected proofs to John Maclachlan in Edinburgh. Maclachlan would not have been impressed with *A’ Bheithir-Bheuma*. He will have wanted to have Iain Alastair Òig where he could see him. He had ambitious plans, and I think he must have insisted that John come to live in Edinburgh. Following *A’ Bheithir-Bheuma* and its spin-off *Còmhradh mu’n Ghràmar Dhùbailt*, John published nothing else in Glasgow, with the possible exception of *The Harp of Caledonia*.

The Harp of Caledonia (App., no. 23) was Glasgow’s answer to the *Cruiteara.* The nineteenth-

century predecessor of *The Ceilidh Song-Book* which went through so many reprints in the twentieth, it provided the words of popular Gaelic songs for use at concerts. I have seen a number of copies, each from a different Glasgow publisher. None bears a date or the name of the compiler. It is impossible to know for sure when it was first published; all that can be said with certainty is that it was repeatedly re-issued during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Throughout these fifty years the text of *The Harp of Caledonia* (pp. 3–64) never varied in any way. Clearly it was stereotyped. As pointed out by Baoill (1979: xxix–xxx), internal evidence links it with John's work, but I see no reason to assume that its contents were plagiarised from his *Cruiteara*, *Co'-Chruinneachadh* and *Sàr Obair* after his death. It contains thirty-nine songs. At pp. 19–21 is one of John's favourites, 'A' Bhanarach Dhonn'. At pp. 36–37 are eight stanzas headed 'Oran. / Le Uilleam Mac-Coinnich', beginning *'S cianail m' aigne o na mhadainn*. At pp. 48–49 is Ross's 'Òran anns am bheil am Bàrd a' Moladh a Leannain agus a Dhùthcha Fhéin', here entitled: "Mo Run an Cailin.—Le U. Ros." At pp. 53–55 is ''S Trom Leam an Airidh' in all its phallic glory – the only song by Rob Donn in the entire collection. At pp. 57–59 is a Gaelic song in six stanzas headed 'The Flower of Dunblain', beginning *Chaidh a' ghrian as an t-sealladh*. In the index at p. 64 it is described as 'Translated'; I wonder if John was the translator. At pp. 60–62 is Lachlan MacKinnon's 'Oran do Nighean Fir Gheambail', as in *Sàr Obair*, pp. 82–83. At p. 55, imitating the footnote '19th September, 1802' at p. 228 of *Sàr Obair*, the first line of Donnchadh Bàn's 'Cead Deireannach nam Beann' is footnoted: "September, 19th, 1802, in the 79th year of his age." And in another footnote, at p. 63, a song entitled 'An Cagaran' is said to have been 'taken from the mouth of an old woman in Lochaber, who sang it to her grandson'.

I believe, therefore, that John was the compiler of *The Harp of Caledonia*. As to when he compiled it, all I can say is that as it was clearly published in Glasgow, and as John seems to have moved permanently to Edinburgh in 1845, it is likely to have made its first appearance in or about that year.

Edinburgh: the dictionary

During 1845 John prepared four more religious translations for the press (App., nos. 24–27), all for Maclachlan & Stewart. Other than *A' Bheithir-Bheuma*, however, the highlight of 1845 for him must have been the second edition of *Eachdraidh a' Phrionnsa* (App., no. 28), published in this most appropriate of years by Thornton & Collie, as before. In 1846 he prepared just two more religious translations for the press (App., nos. 29 and 30), for the very good reason that he was now hard at work compiling an English–Gaelic dictionary.

All Gaelic translators discover the many deficiencies in existing English–Gaelic dictionaries and curse them frequently. It is an occupational hazard, translations being necessarily focused on a particular subject in depth, while dictionaries attempt to cover all subjects in breadth. The next stage in the translator's mind, one which almost never comes to fruition, is a resolve – some day – to turn his coinages and other hard-won knowledge into an alphabetical word-list for his own use and that of others, in order that the wheel should not have to be re-invented every time a fresh translation is begun. It is easy to imagine John pointing this out to his employer, and equally easy to imagine Maclachlan's reply: "No, John, there's no market for specialist dictionaries. But we can never have enough general ones!"

That, I am sure, was the beginning of a saga which led John straight into controversy and is

still with us today. It involved a third party, Neil Macalpine, whom we have already met as a subscriber to *Eachdraidh a' Phrionnsa*, now sixty years old. In 1832 Niall Mór, as he was called in Islay, had produced a substantial Gaelic–English lexicon titled in some editions *The Argyleshire Pronouncing Gaelic Dictionary* and in others *A Pronouncing Gaelic Dictionary*. It included 'A Concise but Most Comprehensive Gaelic Grammar', and was already into its third edition by the following year.

An academic foundation for Gaelic lexicography had been laid by the large, expensive Gaelic–English/English–Gaelic dictionaries of Robert Armstrong in 1825 and the Highland Society of Scotland (which threw Latin into the mix as well) in 1828; now, thanks to the writings and periodicals of Caraid nan Gaidheal, the era of the smaller, cheaper, more popular Gaelic dictionary had arrived. Macalpine's work came hard on the heels of MacLeod and Dewar's of 1831, which was itself little more than a stripped-down version of the Highland Society's, compiled neither by MacLeod (Caraid nan Gaidheal) nor by Dewar but by Patrick MacFarlane and his son Donald (Macalpine 1930: xiii–xiv). Armstrong's cost £3 13s 6d, the Highland Society's £7 7s 0d or £10 10s 6d, even MacLeod and Dewar's was no snip at £1 1s 0d; John Maclachlan will have known well that whoever produced a small, cheap Gaelic–English/English–Gaelic dictionary could corner the market.

Maclachlan therefore commissioned Macalpine to produce a definitive edition of his Gaelic–English dictionary, while setting John to work on a new English–Gaelic part. Macalpine had little to do, and Maclachlan first published his work in 1845. John also worked fast (invigorated no doubt by the change of occupation), and his dictionary was duly published early in 1847 along with a reprint of Macalpine's (App., no. 31).

A deal appears to have been struck by which the entire work was to appear under Macalpine's name and title but with a preface by John, signed and dated. No doubt this compromise was the product of furious argument, refereed by Maclachlan. The chaos caused by John's liking for polemics is well conveyed by Clach's choice of words (p. 206).

> His Preface, written for his own part—the English–Gaelic—of what is known as MacAlpine's Dictionary, was by the publishers inserted at the beginning of the book—prefaced, indeed, to MacAlpine's share of the work; and as the preface somewhat unfavourably criticises MacAlpine's portion of the work, the latter became furious, and continued Mackenzie's inveterate enemy as long as he lived—so much so, it is said, that the last words he uttered were the very opposite of blessings on the man who wrote the unfavourable preface, which, contrary to the writer's intention, had been, by some unaccountable mistake, prefaced to the Gaelic–English, instead of the English–Gaelic, part of the Dictionary. To make matters worse, the work is also issued separately—MacAlpine's part with Mackenzie's preface, and Mackenzie's part without a preface at all.

It is not difficult to see what upset Macalpine so badly. Near the beginning of a lucid, scholarly and sensible disquisition on Gaelic grammar, dialectology and orthography (dated January 1847) in which he goes out of his way to name Thomas Ross (Lochbroom), James Macintyre (Glasgow), James Munro (Fort William) and Alexander Munro (Glasgow) as 'some of the best Gaelic scholars which the present age has produced', John writes:

> The Compiler of the First Part very judiciously availed himself of the labours of his predecessors. His work is more copious; his definitions more appropriate, many useful examples of idiom and practical phrases being given; and his orthography, in general, much more correct than those who have preceded him; notwithstanding his additions and emendations, there are still omissions, and various provincialisms. Of the latter, the following instances may be given:—"Coca" for *cò-aca*; "driom" for *druim*, back; "thala" for *falbh*; "faid" for *faidh*; "gaoith" for *gaoth*; "maidinn" for *maduinn*; and "urra" for the *prep. pro.* "oirre," on or upon her, &c. &c.; and he has besides made use of other provincialisms peculiar to the Western Isles and some districts of Argyleshire; but as these are generally understood, it would be superfluous to refer to them here. These he defends, giving them a preference over words of more general acceptation, a proceeding by no means to be justified in a work of this kind, and to be accounted for, only, from his partiality to words peculiar to the circumscribed locality of which he is a native—the Island of Islay.

One wonders what Maclachlan thought. It was one thing for an employee to attack a contributor within the pages of what was supposed to be a collaborative work. It was surely another for an employee to attack a large island full of potential customers. But his relationship with Iain Alastair Òig appears to have got better rather than worse. Did Maclachlan blame himself? Did he dislike Islaymen? (I do not know where he was from.) Did he reckon that John's tantrums were good for publicity? Did he dismiss the spat with a wave of the hand: "Who reads the introductions in dictionaries anyway?"

A more sinister reason for cold-shouldering Macalpine is that he had got himself into trouble with the all-powerful landed class. The potato blight had struck the previous year, 1846, and Macalpine had written to those responsible for the relief effort (among whom was Caraid nan Gaidheal) to draw attention to the starving condition of the Islay people. As a result, a cargo of meal was sent to Lochindaal. So far so good; however, as his biographer points out (Macalpine 1930: xii–xiii), 'as is often the case the administration of such funds of charity falls into the hands of local officials who are not always careful to keep their doings clear from favouritism and from misappropriation in the way of using public charity to pay people for services rendered to themselves'. Macalpine criticised their conduct; the laird, Walter Frederick Campbell, who was facing financial ruin, took offence, and moved to have the schoolmaster dismissed from his post; his employers, the Presbytery, sided with the laird; from 1848 to 1853 the estate, now sequestered, was run by an Edinburgh accountant, James Brown, and the atmosphere became more tense than ever (Storrie 1981: 135). Chief among the 'local officials' was the avaricious and unpopular William Webster, who unfortunately survived the change of regime (Meek 2003: 40, 399). The Rev. Donald Maclean, who had strong views on matters of this kind, finishes the story (1915: 173):

> Where Presbyteries are judges it is well known, or ought to be, that neither the Schoolhouse nor the Manse has the slightest chance against the Mansion House. After years of wrangling—the parishioners simply looking on, not daring to interfere or threaten on behalf of their true benefactor—McAlpine was dismissed from his school,

> and thrown utterly destitute on the charity of his indigent friends. He died in receipt of parochial relief in 1867 at the age of eighty years. A very handsome tombstone of polished granite was erected to his memory by his fellow-countrymen, which bears a very suitable inscription.

The part of the inscription to which Maclean refers is: "'An honest man's the noblest work of God,' / And one lies here." Macalpine was seen by his friends as kind, inoffensive and simple-minded – qualities which can lead to victimisation, very different from those of Iain Alastair Òig.

My own guess is that Maclachlan forgave John his part in the affair many times over for the simple reason that both parts of the dictionary sold like hot cakes. It is difficult to picture Maclachlan other than puffing contentedly at a pipe and fingering his latest balance-sheet with loving attention. Far from withdrawing the offending preface, he stuck it like a flag in Macalpine's work. In 1852, long before Macalpine's death, he published a reprint of his *Rudiments* which not only included John's preface, unaltered and still proudly subscribed 'JOHN MACKENZIE. / EDINBURGH, *January* 1847', but boasted of it on the title-page: "Rudiments / of / Gaelic Grammar. / by / Neil McAlpine, / student in divinity, island of Islay, Argyleshire, / author of the Gaelic dictionary. / . . . / Third Edition. / to which is prefixed the / Preface to McAlpine's Gaelic Dictionary. / Edinburgh: / Maclachlan & Stewart. / MDCCCLII."

The Macalpine and Mackenzie dictionaries were neat, cheap and useful. They were repeatedly re-issued, individually and separately, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. John's part was reprinted by Gairm Publications as late as 1973, after which it was superseded (in 1981) by Thomson's excellent *New English–Gaelic Dictionary*. But it enjoyed a curious life after death and continues to cause chaos and acrimony today. In 1925 John Grant of Edinburgh published *A Pronouncing and Etymological Dictionary of the Gaelic Language* by the Rev. Dr Malcolm MacLennan, a native of Uig in Lewis. MacLennan based his Gaelic–English section on Macalpine's, adding words from Maceachan's, Macbain's, current literature and common speech (especially the speech of the west side of Lewis), but he took his English–Gaelic section from Mackenzie's with hardly any changes or additions at all. A list of Gaelic equivalents for English words which claimed to represent the state of the Gaelic language in 1925 was thus in reality a picture of the language as it stood in 1847.

The trouble with MacLennan's was (so to speak) that it looked good. In design, typography and print quality it was outstanding. I was therefore not entirely surprised when it was reprinted in 1979 as a very attractive paperback by Aberdeen University Press and Acair of Stornoway. At this point it could not make things any worse, because Mackenzie's, the only English–Gaelic dictionary in existence, was becoming hard to find under its own name, and Thomson's was still two years down the line. It is an indictment of the state of Gaelic lexicography in 1979 that it was still possible to approve wholeheartedly the endorsement of Dr Donald John MacLeod which appeared on the cover of the new edition: "The reprint of this comprehensive and reliable dictionary, and in particular its English–Gaelic section, has been long awaited both by native Gaelic speakers and by learners of Gaelic."

When Thomson's dictionary appeared two years later MacLeod's statement ceased to be helpful, but the damage was done. In fact, damage has continued to be done ever since, exacerbated by a second dust-jacket endorsement – from Professor William Gillies, at that time

on the board of Acair Ltd: "For learners, speakers and teachers of Scottish Gaelic this is without doubt the most useful of existing Gaelic dictionaries."

No doubt he believed that it was, but from 1981 onwards I was placed in the awkward position of having to warn my students not to buy MacLennan's handy-looking dictionary ("That's right, the green one") but to use Dwelly's and Thomson's instead. My advice was seldom taken. Linguistic casualties kept limping in for treatment, because students will be students, and cannot be persuaded to spend time checking in the Gaelic–English section everything they find in the English–Gaelic one. It came to a head in 1999 when a girl from Islay wrote about meeting an old friend in a pub: *Phòg sinn agus laigh sinn sìos*. On being asked as tactfully as possible what she meant, she explained immediately: "We kissed and cuddled."

"Have you been using the green dictionary by any chance?"

"Yes."

It was the last straw, but by accident this hapless student had raised a fascinating thought about the origin of 'cuddle' – *caidil*? It led straight to the publication of MacilleDhuibh 1999, in which, before pointing out that Mackenzie's definition of 'cuddle' (*laidh sìos, laidh ri làr*) had been slightly altered by MacLennan (*laigh sìos, crùb a steach*) I described our dictionary problem.

> I gave my student some examples. 'Train' in Mackenzie is given as: *Mealladh; cuideachd, buidheann; slaod, earball, iomall; òrdugh, cùrsa; luchd-leanmhainn.* Maclennan gives exactly the same (but misprints *cuideachd* as *cuideach*). This entry was brought to my attention many years ago when a student wrote an essay about going to the station and catching a *mealladh.* It took a bit of working out, because of course *mealladh* means deception or temptation. 'Train' as we know it developed out of 'train of carriages', 'train of waggons' and the like and was already being used on its own by 1830. But Mackenzie, a Gairloch man living in Glasgow, would have known these principally as iron horses; to him, a 'train' was above all something dragged along the ground to make a scent or trail, pieces of carrion or the like laid in a line for luring (*mealladh*) foxes into a trap. A lure, in other words.
>
> Then there's 'hobby'. Look up Maclennan and you will find it given as *seòrsa seabhaic; eachfiodha*. Here he has made an effort – Mackenzie's entry in 1845 was *Seòrsa seabhaic; each-maide, làir-mhaide*. But pity the poor student who has to write about his favourite hobby and has forgotten that a hobby in the sense of pastime is *cur-seachad*. *Eachfiodha* (presumably a misprint for *each-fiodha*), *each-maide* and *làir-mhaide* are all variants on the theme of 'wooden horse', hobby-horse that is. But *seòrsa seabhaic*? It means 'a kind of hawk', and sure enough the second meaning of 'hobby' given in my English dictionary is 'a small species of falcon'. What this entry shows is that Mackenzie expected his dictionary to be used by fluent Gaelic speakers like himself who needed to know what English words meant. To his users of 1845, an explanation was as good as a synonym.

In stating that Mackenzie's dictionary appeared in 1845, I was following the imprint page of MacLaren's 1956 edition. MacLaren's mistake in getting the date wrong by two years is infinitely preferable to the negligence of Acair Ltd and Aberdeen University Press in allowing MacLennan's plagiarised version of John's dictionary to masquerade as twentieth-century lexicography.

In the context of John's achievements the dictionary was a triumph, but Maclachlan was by now a happier man than his extraordinary employee, of whom Clach says (p. 207): "The labour which he bestowed on the Dictionary, which was published in 1846 [*sic*], shook him severely, and being naturally of a very delicate constitution, the labour and close application he bestowed upon it brought about a stomach complaint, which laid him almost prostrate, and quite incapacitated him for work."

Sàr Obair again, the Bible, and death

John was on a slippery slope, but was far from finished – 1847 saw the publication of the second religious book which John had translated from scratch (App., no. 32), this time with a translator's note subscribed 'J. McK. / *Edinburgh, 14th June* 1847', and in the same year, says Clach (pp. 205–06, cf. Mackenzie 1911: 163), he issued a prospectus for a new and greatly enlarged edition of *Sàr Obair*, to be published (by subscription) by Maclachlan & Stewart and sold to subscribers at ten shillings.

> It was "to comprise the works of *forty-six* professional bards, with an Appendix, containing a general collection of songs, original and select, composed by private gentlemen, who invoked the muse only on particular occasions, or under the impulse of strong feeling excited by extraordinary events . . . Every bard considered worthy of the name, whose compositions are known, and of whose existence any tradition remains, shall be noticed. Among those lays which are particularly cherished among their countrymen, but which, notwithstanding their worth, have never before been printed, may be mentioned *Alastair Grannd* and *Alastair Buidhe MacIamhair*, of Gairloch, and *Iain MacMhurchaidh*, or Macrae, of Kintail. The works of these three Poets were unavoidably omitted in the first edition of this work, but by the liberality of the present publishers the Compiler has many advantages in making the work more satisfactory than in its former state. The songs of John MacMhurchaidh are the most pathetic and sentimental of all the modern Highland bards."

The prospectus brings into stark profile the issue of John as an unreconstructed *Rosach*. We have noted his treatment of Lachann mac Theàrlaich and of Christiana Fergusson, his unqualified ascription of 'Cuachag nan Craobh' to William Ross, his insult to the people of Islay. If John was really a Ross-shire nationalist, why did he leave three of the greatest Ross-shire poets out of the first edition of *Sàr Obair*? Why, in his own words, were they 'unavoidably omitted'?

I agree entirely with John that the inclusion of these three Ross-shire poets would have left *Sàr Obair* 'more satisfactory than in its former state'. These things can be influential; *Sàr Obair* was influential. I have treasured, read and re-read my 1877 edition of *Sàr Obair* since I lit upon it one day in John Smith's bookshop in Glasgow as a student. It bears a beautifully inscribed, and very touching, dedication on the flyleaf: "Presented to / Miss Mc. Millan, / Gowan Hill, / as a Small Tribute of Esteem / By / John Downie, / Student, / Glasgow University / Christmas 1877." I have sometimes wondered over the years if this John Downie was related to his namesake, the nemesis of William Ross, that minister of Stornoway who married Mór Ros to Captain Clough. I tell a lie – I found two copies of *Sàr Obair* on that shelf. I bought them both and sold the other to

a fellow-student (Duncan MacQuarrie HMI), who was as delighted as I was at the find. When I drew up my plan for *An Lasair* I was eager above all to translate and annotate my favourites from *Sàr Obair* and also from a cherished companion of my schooldays, Watson's *Bàrdachd Ghàidhlig*. As a result, Alastair Grannd was never in my thoughts; Alastair Buidhe I knew only as the man from whom John took down Ross's poems; Iain mac Mhurchaidh was a niggling worry, a poet celebrated mainly as an emigrant in non-literary anthologies like Margaret MacDonell's *The Emigrant Experience*. I remembered him, then forgot about him again. *Sàr Obair* – the edition we have, rather than the one we never got – had cast its spell upon me.

The new edition was no mere pipe-dream. John's brother James told Clach that John left the poems of Alastair Buidhe and Alastair Grannd 'written out, in two separate manuscript volumes, ready for the printer', but that unfortunately they disappeared after John's death, and that nobody now knew where they had gone. "It is to be feared," Clach remarked (p. 206), "that the material which he possessed is now for ever lost." Clach did what he could to repair the damage, using *The Celtic Magazine* to publish various poems by Alastair Buidhe (vol. 1, pp. 8, 80–81, 249–50; vol. 6, pp. 362–63; vol. 8, pp. 107–08) and Iain mac Mhurchaidh (vol. 7, pp. 271–76, 322–25, 387–89, 426–28, 464–67; vol. 8, pp. 462–64). And see now Chaimbeul 2020.

The year 1848, the last of John's life, yielded a book which must have given him enormous pleasure – a fifth edition of Duncan Ban Macintyre's poems, corrected, with an introductory memoir on the author's life, and some notes on the poems (App., no. 33). The memoir is dated Edinburgh, 1 March 1848, and is in John's inimitable style. A quarter of it is taken up with the story of Fletcher's sword, and, just as in *Sàr Obair*, he gives us two other classic anecdotes as well. One, on John Campbell of the Bank, helps us to understand the umbilical relationship between traditional praise and satire, the other is about the time the poet was asked if he was the man that made Beinn Dobhrain – with the important difference that in the latter case he now supplies Duncan's actual words.

> When our bard was travelling through the Highlands to dispose of his poems in 1790, a forward young man came rudely up to him and asked,—"An sibhse rinn Beinn-dòrain?" to which the bard answered, "Ud! ud! a ghaolaich cha mi; 's ann a rinneadh Beinn-dòrain comhladh ris na beanntaichean eile, ciann mu'n d'rugadh tu-féin no mise;" that is, "Was it you that made Beinn-dòrain?" To which the Poet answered, "Tut! Tut! my good fellow, Beinn-dòrain was made along with the other mountains, long before either you or I was born; but I made a poem in praise of Beinn-dòrain."

It was the perfect swan-song for the compiler of *Sàr Obair*.

At the time of John's death he was preparing a new edition of the Gaelic Bible, which he left in an incomplete state. Clach saw the proofs, but was unable to find out 'by whom he was engaged on this important work' (p. 207). I would be surprised if it were not John Maclachlan, given that he had agreed to publish the new edition of *Sàr Obair*, and that a new edition of the Bible was the natural culmination of all John's work for him on religious texts.

It was understood by the Gairloch people that it was John's work on the Bible that had undermined his health. Perhaps this is what he told them. It is contradicted by Clach, who points instead to the 'stomach complaint' – an ulcer, I suppose – caused by his work on the dictionary. At any rate John decided to go home, thinking, as Clach put it (p. 207), 'that a change of air might

benefit him, and if the worst came to the worst, preferring to die, lovingly and tenderly cared for, in the bosom of his own family'.

Clach says (p. 207) that when John arrived in May 1848 at his father's house in '*Lon-Dubh*, Poolewe', which Dixon (1886: 190) calls 'Kirkton, or Inverewe', it was 'after an absence of fourteen years'. This speaks volumes to me about a young man who had disgraced himself in the eyes of family and community but had long since repaired the damage tenfold. It also speaks as much of his own resentment at their treatment of him. I believe it also explains the statement in his new *Sàr Obair* prospectus that 'the works of these three Poets were unavoidably omitted in the first edition'. The manuscripts must have been stuck at home, locked away by stubborn pride. John was very weak when he arrived, presumably following a long and painful journey by mail-coach from Edinburgh to Glasgow and steamer from the Broomielaw to Poolewe. One wonders if he was well enough to sit on deck in the early summer sunshine, well wrapped up against the breeze, and enjoy the west-coast scenery for one last time as it passed by, for the world can offer no finer *via dolorosa*.

Murchison tells us (1947–48: 127) that before the end came, John's sister Mary took to reading to him from the new edition of the Gaelic Bible which had been published in 1807. Whenever she came to a passage which had not been translated as well as he would have liked, he said: *Na leugh ás a leabhar sin, a Mhàiri – leugh ás a' Bhìoball bheag agam fhéin.* "Don't read from that book, Mary – read from my own little Bible." And his eyes would come to rest upon a copy of Kirk's Bible, a little red book.

Clach says (p. 207) that John 'lingered without any improvement, but cheerful to the end, and died, apparently without pain, in the arms of his sister Mary, who still survives him, on the 19th of August 1848'. He was forty-two years, one month and two days old. It was a dramatic end, for the fame of the *mac stròdhail*, of the peculiar but clever young man, had preceded him home. His remains were followed to the grave by a large concourse of people, including almost the whole population of the district, and he was buried in the grave of his ancestors, in the ruins of the *caibeal* or pre-Reformation church in the parish churchyard of Gairloch.

The legacy

John's death should not be seen as some kind of welcome release from a life of grinding toil. Until now, every downward turn in his life had propelled him upwards again ever faster. His blow on the head brought him to fieldwork. His failure in love brought him to poetry. His self-imposed exile from Gairloch and Inverness brought him to steady employment and literary success in Glasgow, culminating in the lasting triumph of *Sàr Obair*. The collapse of *Cuairtear nan Gleann* led to his brilliant *A' Bheithir-Bheuma*. His success as a translator brought him the unfailing support of John Maclachlan, and one senses that the dictionary of 1847 marks some kind of watershed – after this, in a manner very reminiscent of clause 4 of the Collie agreement of 1843, Maclachlan was more his colleague than his employee, and their plans were becoming both more interesting and more ambitious – an expanded *Sàr Obair*, the Bible . . .

Clach also has many useful things to say about John's literary remains, those in print and those unpublished. Of the former he says (p. 205) that 'in all, he composed, edited, or translated above thirty different publications'. My appendix demonstrates that this is true. It shows that the precise number of publications known to have come from his hand during his lifetime, including *The*

Harp of Caledonia, counting new editions as separate, and counting *Cuairtear nan Gleann* as a single publication, is thirty-two. If we also include reprints from the *Cuairtear* known to have been issued under separate cover during the time of his sub-editorship (App., nos. 13a and 13b), the total goes up to thirty-four.

With John's death the Gaelic language had lost an anthologist and polemicist second to none. Had he survived he could have been of enormous service to cultural regeneration and land reform. He would have been 65 when the Gaelic Society of Inverness was founded, and 80 when the Crofters' Act became law. His two greatest works stand as a monument and a guiding beacon to breadth of literary taste. To read his edition of William Ross at a sitting is to take a roller-coaster ride through the mind of a warm-blooded human being in love, while reading *Sàr Obair* is like taking a walk along a long and busy street with a garrulous young guide, seeing a rich man here, overhearing a snatch of scandal there, observing a beautiful lady alight from her carriage, peering into candle-lit windows, and watching a fight on the cobblestones. The narrow attitudes which continued to prevail for a hundred years after John's death are well represented by Murchison's verdict (1947–48: 128): *Is dòcha nach robh e cho faiceallach 's a dh'fhaodadh e mu chiod as fhiach a chur ann an leabhar, agus tha òrain ann an* Sàr-Obair *nach bu chòir a bhith an clò idir.* ("Perhaps he was not as careful as he might have been about what is worth putting in a book, and there are songs in *Sàr-Obair* that should not be in print at all.") This demonstrates that when John chose what to publish he was exercising not carelessness but courage.

Professor Donald Meek (2003: xiv) has described Sorley MacLean (1911–96) as 'the first native Gael to apply critical yardsticks to Gaelic song and poetry'. How he reached this judgement I do not know. As I have tried to show elsewhere (Black 2001: xiv–xix), I see Gaelic literary criticism as a continuum. In the person of John Mackenzie, it emerged from the ceilidh-house into the light of day to be taken up by Victorians such as Thomas Pattison, Nigel MacNeill and Magnus Maclean. We may not agree with their critical yardsticks today, but the fact that they applied them is not in doubt.

While *Sàr Obair* will never be forgotten, it is perhaps too easy to forget that John also played a pivotal role in assembling the corpus of three of our greatest poets. His editions of Ross, MacDonald and Macintyre all contained poems never previously published. It is also worth remembering that, in addition to his achievements as anthologist, collector, editor, translator, literary critic, lexicographer, and writer of expository prose in English and satirical prose in Gaelic, John was a competent Gaelic poet. We have noticed his song to Mary Sudge, his satirical squibs, and his praise of Artt Maclachlan's beer (assuming that it is his). While two of the four poems in *An Leobhar Liath*, 'An Oba Nodha' and 'Dòmhnallan Dubh' (Black 2001: 18–21, 78–81) are clearly old, the other two, 'An Seudagan' and 'Eachann an Slaoightear' (Black 2001: 264–67, 352–53), are not, and it is possible that John made them himself. 'Eachann an Slaoightear' is a very able piece of work, and of course the name Eachann is common in Gairloch; perhaps more can be said when the reference in it to *sionnach nam bruach a mharbh Mac-a-Phì* is explained (*ibid.*: 521). Clach remarks (p. 207) that John 'composed several pieces of his own' but that 'his attempts at original poetical composition are not of a very high order'; then, after discussing the song to Mary Sudge, he says: "Another excellent composition, which has not yet appeared in print, he composed to a weaver's loom in his neighbourhood, while yet a mere stripling. The reader will have an opportunity of judging of their merits in an early number."

Regrettably, Clach did not fulfil his pledge, and the ‘loom’ poem seems to be lost. I would point out, however, that John’s abilities as a poet emerge in some of his Gaelic responses to English verse. Scott’s ‘Mackrimmon’s Lament’, beginning *Macleod’s wizzard flag*, was translated directly by Norman MacLeod (*Bratach bhuadhail Mhicleòid . . .*), but a completely different version, beginning *Dh’iadh ceo nan stuchd*, appeared in John’s own *Co’-Chruinneachadh* of 1836 (App., no. 5), p. 71, and may well be by John himself (Blankenhorn 1978: 48–51 and 2019: 369–73). It is poetry in its own right. I suspect that John was also responsible for ‘Doirre Gheala-bhuinne’, the Gaelic translation of ‘The Bonnie Lass o’ Kelvingrove’ which appears at pp. 61–62 of the *Cruiteara* (see the note at p. 64). He regularly ‘improved’ the poems in *Sàr Obair*, but when a poem was a translation in the first place he was entitled to try and do better. His edition of Bunyan’s *World to Come*, for example (App., no. 19), appears to be based on one by George Munro published in Tain in 1825 (cf. Maclean 1915: 42–43); he overhauls the spelling and phraseology of Munro’s prose, then approaches the verse with relish. Munro’s poem ‘Beachd do Fhlaimheanas’ becomes ‘Sealladh de Neamh’; Munro’s poem ‘Beachd do dh’ Ifrinn’ becomes ‘Sealladh de dh’ Ifrinn’. For comparison, I will set out side by side the two versions of the first and fifth quatrains of the former, and the last quatrain of the latter.

George Munro	John Mackenzie
Tha ’n tìr ud maiseach sòlasach,	*Tha ’n tìr ud maiseach sòlasach,*
’Sa naoimh ag riaghladh ghnà:	*’S a naoimh a’ riaghladh ’ghnà:*
Tha ’n dorch ’s gach pìan air fhogradh mach,	*Tha ’n dorchadas air dol a mach,*
Le solus glan gu bràth.	*’S tha solus glan ’na àit.’*
Ach dirichmid Pisga chreideamh,	*Na’ n deanadh sinne mar rinn Maois,*
Is dearcamid an gèall,	*’N àm dearcadh air an fhonn*
’S cha chuir Iordan sinne an agadh,	*Cha chuireadh Iordan sinne fo gheilt,*
Le eagal dholl a nùll.	*Le eagal dol a null.*
O staid ro thruagh! bhi faicinn Dhe,	*O staid ro thruagh! bhi faicinn Dhé,*
’Ga fholach o gu bràth;	*G’a fhalach féin do ghnà;*
’S an ionad sin a choìdhe no ’n cein,	*’S iadsan ann an ifrinn shìos,*
’S nach mothaich iad a ghràdh.	*Gu’n éiridh nios gu bràth!*

Regarding John’s unpublished *Nachlass*, Clach tells us (p. 206) that he has in his own possession some ‘Lives of the Bards’ written by John but never published, some valuable manuscripts on ‘Gaelic Orthography’, and some of the Gaelic sermons which he had composed for those ministers unable or unwilling to write their own. He concludes his memoir (p. 210):

> We have in our possession, in MS., Mackenzie’s defence of the Orthography of the Gaelic language, being the “Second Part of the Highlander’s Reply to Gathelus,” and addressed to the editor of the *Scots’ Times*. Perhaps some of our readers can supply us with the First Part of this valuable correspondence, and so enable us to give it entire, with other interesting letters, in an early number. We also have, in MS., a severe criticism of Forbes’s Gaelic Grammar, which was to have appeared in pamphlet form. It is a cause of keen regret, and a loss to Celtic literature, that a large chest-full of this

> valuable and interesting correspondence was heedlessly burnt a few months after his death, his family considering them of no value. Any information regarding him, or his lost manuscript collections of Gaelic poetry, will be esteemed a favour.

The 'severe criticism of Forbes's Gaelic Grammar' is perhaps the manuscript of publication no. 20. Clach appears to have published just one of John's surviving 'lives', that of Allan MacDougall (*Ailean Buidhe nan Òran)* of 'Glendoran' (*Gleann Domhainn*, Glen Doin) in Upper Craignish, who flourished during the incumbency of the Rev. William Campbell as minister of Kilchrenan (1745–93). It is highly entertaining, in John's inimitable style, and even sheds a little light on John's methods, for it ends (Mackenzie 1876–77: 405): "Six pieces are all that is now extant of his productions." What John does not tell us is that six is precisely the number of poems by Ailean Buidhe published by Turner (Mac-an-Tuairneir 1813: 208–25). This suggests that John's method in compiling *Sàr Obair* was first to arm himself with poems already published, then go out in search of information about the men and women behind them.

What happened to *Sàr Obair* after John's death could never have been predicted. In 1863, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, a man named Norman Macdonald published a pirated edition. Macdonald (1820–98) had emigrated to Antigonish in 1843 from his native Glenuig in Moidart; he became a schoolmaster and Justice of the Peace, numbering among his pupils and friends the Rev. Alexander Maclean Sinclair, the Gaelic historian, anthologist and literary critic (Sinclair 1898). A Catholic, in 1862 he had published a Gaelic translation of Butler's *Sum of Christian Doctrine* (Maclean 1915: 48, 85). The new *Sàr Obair* had viii + 348 pp.; its title-page is: "Sar-Obair nam Bard Gaelach: / or, / The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry, / and / Lives of the Highland Bards; / with / Historical and Critical Notes, / and / A Comprehensive Glossary of Provincial Words. / A New Edition Enlarged and Improved / by / Norman Macdonald, Esq. / Halifax, N. S. / Printed by James Bowes and Sons, / 1863." At pp. iii–iv Macdonald's unsubscribed 'Advertisement' explains:

> In order to meet the wishes of many of the most influential and patriotic noblemen and gentlemen connected with the Highlands, as well as to gratify the desire of the natives in general, the present work—being the "BEAUTIES" selected from the native bards, both ancient and modern, known and unknown to the public at large—is now undertaken.
>
> From what he has already published, the qualifications of the Editor, it is believed are well known to his countrymen. He has had peculiar facilities for the preparation of the present work. Pursuing the subject for many years,—he has traversed the Highlands in all directions, and has been fortunate enough to preserve many fine pieces, which, he has reason to believe, are now wholly lost among the people. Respecting the bards—he is in possession of a large collection of curious and interesting particulars, known to few others.

It is difficult to imagine anything more duplicitous. The facts fit John, but Macdonald takes advantage of the editorial third tense to allow his readers to guess for themselves whether the 'Editor' referred to is John (when in life) or himself (now). He has stolen not merely John's book but his identity.

Macdonald's claim to have 'enlarged and improved' *Sàr Obair* scarcely stands up to scrutiny. The text is entirely re-set, but, as Maclean points out (1915: 249), the typographical errors of the 1841 edition are reproduced. The improvements are minimal, and with regard to quantity if not quality the losses outnumber the gains. John's preface and Logan's introduction are dropped, as are 'Mordubh' and 'Collath', and there are no engravings. 'Oran do Lochial' is added to the poems of Gilleaspuig na Ciotaig (pp. 145–46). To please the Canadian readership, one of their favourite poets is featured at pp. 322–30 after Evan MacColl – John MacLean, 'Am Bard Mac-'Illean', with four of his poems. The 'Aireamh Taghta' consist of the same thirteen songs as in the 1841 edition, ending with 'Mo Rùn Geal Òg' at pp. 343–44, followed at pp. 345–46 by three new ones: 'Marbhrann do Leanahm [*sic*] Gille a bha Ro-Thaitneach le Athair', beginning *Fhir a dh'fhalbh 'uam dirdaoine*; 'Marbhrann do Bhean Og Chliuiteach a bha Posda aig Alasdair Caimbeul, sa Chaochail sa Bliadhna [*sic*] 1859', beg. *'S gur e mise tha fo eislein*; and 'Oran Gaoil le Duine Uasal Araid', beg. *Mhari* [sic] *bhoidheach gur mor mo ghaol ort.* There is also a lengthy note on Archibald Campbell, author of the first two of these, a Skyeman who emigrated to Nova Scotia in 1830 and was still farming in Cape Breton in 1863. The book ends, like the 1841 edition, with John's glossary (pp. 347–48), and Maclean tells us (1915: 248–49) that 'one thousand copies were printed at 10s. on fine paper and 7s. 6d. on poor paper'.

For the extraordinarily high esteem in which *Sàr Obair* was held amongst settlers in the New World see Sinclair 1881: xxiv, Dunn 1953: 49–50, and Bennett 1989: 59–60. But for a contemporary Nova Scotian view of Norman Macdonald I consulted Maureen Williams, curator of the Father Charles Brewer Celtic Collection, Angus L. MacDonald Library, St Francis Xavier University, Antigonish. Her mother is a direct descendant of Donald, a brother of the poet Alexander MacDonald, whose father *Ailean an Ridge* emigrated from Bohuntin in Brae Lochaber in 1816. She told me (e-mail, 3 April 2003):

> There is little doubt that a lot of people bought his edition of *Sàr Obair*. Next to the Bible and the Gaelic catechism I would say that this would be the book most commonly found in the Gaelic-speaking homes of Nova Scotia. It seems there was a mixed reaction in this area to his plagiarism. Maclean Sinclair didn't seem to have a problem with it – he looks upon his efforts as a contribution to Gaelic culture. On the other hand, some anonymous person, date unknown, wrote 'Pirated copy' on the title page of our shelf copy. Norman Macdonald was definitely a very colourful character so he is still well remembered today, certainly in this area. He was highly regarded for his intelligence and devotion to duty. His correspondence (Thompson papers, N.S. Archives) indicates a highly articulate (if somewhat florid) style of expression – almost bardic when he gets into high gear. Nevertheless, he should not have ignored J. Mackenzie when he published his work.

On the one hand, then, the appearance of the 'American edition' was a pleasing reflection of the strength of the transplanted Gaelic tradition in Cape Breton, and of the demand there for *Sàr Obair*. The Editor of *Scottish Studies* tells me that he believes it was a great aid to Gaelic literacy for Nova Scotians – many of the songs, he points out, were known from oral sources, and could serve as a guide to acquiring a functional command of Gaelic orthography (e-mail, 20 Nov. 2019).

Macdonald is credited in Canadian sources with 'bringing that fine collection within reach of many Gaelic readers' (MacLean 1976: 74; MacDonald 1988), which suggests that Macgregor, Polson & Co. had failed to reach part of their target readership. On the other hand, the magnificent triple title of John's book had been used in all its glory and resonance, but his name had been completely suppressed, leading to Norman Macdonald being regarded by some (e.g. Rankin 1929: 256) as the author. It was certainly an outrage, and if ever there was a moment for the sleeping *beithir-bheuma* to rise and strike again in legitimate wrath, this was it.

The keepers of John's legacy, his publishers in Glasgow and Edinburgh, kept the *beithir* chained firmly in its hole, however, and dealt with the matter quietly but efficiently. Within two years they had produced a second edition of the real *Sàr Obair*. The plates of the first edition had been stereotyped and could not by definition be changed. Even the front-matter was left untouched, except of course for the title-page, where the imprint at the foot was altered to: "Glasgow: / John Muir, Athenæum Buildings, Ingram Street; / Edinburgh: McLachlan & Stewart. / MDCCCLXV."

The key to the action which they took lies in Maclean's remark that 'none of the additional songs of the later Editions are given'. In the first edition the concluding 'Aireamh Taghta' consisted of thirteen songs, beginning at p. 359 with 'Moladh Chabair-Feidh' and ending with 'Cumha do dh' Uilleam Siseal', the song now known as 'Mo Rùn Geal Òg'. This finished neatly in its double columns a little over an inch from the foot of p. 374. The book was then rounded off with John's two-page 'Glossary', ending at p. 376 with the obligatory: "A' Chrioch. / Glasgow:— Printed at the University Press, by Edward Khull."

What John Muir & Co. now did was this. They added thirty-six more songs at the end of the 'Aireamh Taghta', creating a fresh pp. 375–402. (The last prelim page, following 'An Clar-Innsidh', was blank, but the opportunity to add the titles of the new songs here was not taken until 1872.) After the new songs they placed John's glossary, repaginated 403–04. They followed this with a four-page 'Clar-Amais / do reir eagair na h-aibidil.' This index of first lines includes the new material and has no less than 369 entries, integrating as it does poems embedded in John's notes and double entries for items beginning with refrains. It is alphabetical in the eighteenth-century sense that while it groups together first lines beginning with A, B, C and so on, within each letter the entries are left in the order in which they appear in the book. The new *Sàr Obair* thus had lxxiv + 408 pp., a perfectly formed book from a technical point of view, consisting of 480 pages (a multiple of 32). With regard to illustrations, I have seen one copy of the 1865 edition containing only 'The Aged Bard', and one with both 'The Aged Bard' and 'Cuachag an Fhasaich' (placed between John's preface and Logan's introduction).

We have to ask, however, where did John Muir get the thirty-six extra songs? The answer, I suspect, is simply that they had inherited them from their predecessors McGregor, Polson, & Co. The first edition had been an equally 'perfect' book of 448 ordinary pages (lxxii + 376). The 'Aireamh Taghta' must have been intended simply to fill out the last few pages of the book, rather like journalist's copy which is written in such a way that it can be cut back from the end.

This is a point of some importance, because among the fresh material, at p. 400, is a note on 'Gaoir nam Ban Muileach' by Mairearad nighean Lachlainn (*c.* 1660–1751) which must have been a cause of anguish to the editor of her poems, just as it will anger any feminist literary historian:

> The real name of the author of this lament was Margaret Maclean, sometimes called *Mairearead Ni' Lachuinn*, from Lachlan being the christian name of her father. She lived in the island of Mull, of which place she was a native. Like all local poets, *Ni' Lachuinn* has been applauded by her countrymen in general, though we must confess that we are blind to any poetic grandeur in her compositions. We have seen twenty-five pieces of composing, but the above seven stanzas is her *chef d'œuvre*.

Sorley MacLean found only eleven poems ascribed to her, and eleven is the number now published as her collected work (Ó Baoill 2009), so if John really saw twenty-five, the loss is great. MacLean felt that the most frequent note in her poems was 'an eerie power', and he also drew attention to a 'cutting restraint' which puts her 'nearer Voltaire than Iain Lom'. She was, he says (Gillies 1985: 181–82, 188–190), 'weighed down and wearied all the time with the great distresses that Clan Gillean suffered because of their loyalty to the Stewart family'.

These are far from trivial themes, but it may be precisely this grand elegiac tone that John so disliked. There is however a demotic touch to the 'Gaoir' which is particularly appealing today. "There is no elegy for a chief in Gaelic poetry in which the real voice of the whole clan is so poignant and certain as it is in 'The Cry of the Mull Women'," wrote MacLean (*ibid.*: 185; Black 2001: 389–90). "It could be compared with the best of them in a noble perfection of language."

It is therefore hard to know what to make of John's sudden attack of blindness. *A' Bheithir-Bheuma* demonstrates that John would have been most at home in the 1960s, and I am forcefully reminded of the extraordinary judgement on Màiri nighean Alastair Ruaidh by Derick Thomson (1974: 135) that 'there is . . . much repetition from poem to poem of basic ideas and phrases, and one can scarcely escape the conclusion that this poet's reputation has been greatly inflated'.

One may wish to argue that John was not the author of the words at p. 400, or that he would have struck them out at proof stage had they not been published posthumously. Both are theoretically possible, but John was not much in the habit of pulling his punches, and the following footnote references in the new 'Aireamh Taghta' (pp. 375–402) demonstrate, I believe, that the material was written in (or shortly before) 1841 by John Mackenzie.

With regard to dates, the evidence is as follows (relevant years given in bold). At p. 376 is a mention of Smollett's *History of England*. This was published in **1757**. At p. 398 we read of 'John McGilvray, piper to the late Mr Macdonald, of Glenaladale'. John McGilvray or MacGillivray emigrated to Nova Scotia on Glenaladale's death in **1818** (MacInnes 1988: 106, cf. Sinclair 1896: 171). At p. 384 the writer cites *McPherson's Melodies from the Gàëlic*. This book, by Donald Macpherson, was published in London in **1824** (Maclean 1915: 280). At p. 386 a song is stated to have been written by the Rev. Charles Stuart, D.D., 'late minister of Strathchur'. Stuart died in **1826** (Scott 1915–50, vol. 4: 45). At p. 397 reference is made to a 'Mr Kenneth McKenzie, late tacksman of Monkcastle and Strath-na-Sealg, in Lochbroom . . . Mr McKenzie died in **1827**'. At p. 375 the writer says: "We took down this version of the poem from the recitation of an old man in Glencoe, *anno* **1833**." At p. 383 is a mention of the Rev. Duncan Macfarlane, 'lately minister of the Gaelic chapel, Perth'. Macfarlane (1743–1841) was deposed for contumacy in **1833** and replaced in **1834** (Scott 1915–50, vol. 4: 240). 'Burns's Letters' are cited at pp. 384 and 392. These were first published in Allan Cunningham's *The Poems, Letters and Land of Robert Burns* (2 vols, **1838–40**). Finally, one piece of dating evidence is lacking, but may become available in

the future: at p. 383 Hector Mackenzie, Ullapool, author of 'An Cailin Dìleas Donn', is described as an old sailor, 'still alive—verging upon ninety years of age, and resides either in Glasgow or in Liverpool'. If his date of death can be found it will provide a *terminus ante quem*.

The above is evidence for dating but not authorship. This is forthcoming, however, in matters of spelling and scandal. The title of Donald Macpherson's book was in fact *Melodies from the Gaelic* – 'Gàëlic' at p. 384 is John's trademark. At p. 399 the writer refers to 'Alexander, son of the late Mr McLeod of Triaslan, in the Isle of Skye', adding: "On his begetting several illegitimate children, he emigrated to America about thirty years ago." And at p. 401, a note on the spelling *bochg* in a poem by John Munro runs as follows: "This song and the following are printed *verbatim et literatim* from the author's own MS. being what he deemed an improvement on the received system of orthography."

A final pointer to John's authorship of the new 'Aireamh Taghta' is the inclusion of a full biography of this John Munro, a native of Creich in Sutherland who became an accountant in Glasgow. It follows the second poem, forming the last item before the glossary; the writer, who clearly knew Munro well, gives his dates as 1791–1837, and remarks that his name was 'familiar to the religious portion of his countrymen throughout the Highlands'. Munro's orthography is also commented on, and exemplified, by Maclean (1915: 300).

Clach pointed out (p. 207) that, by 1877 at least, not the slightest mark remained to indicate John's last resting-place. Whether this has to do with a superstitious dislike of marked gravestones, or some lingering shame about John Mackenzie's career, I do not know, but Clach set about righting the injustice to his memory and secured the active support of (among others) Professor J. S. Blackie, Sir Kenneth S. Mackenzie of Gairloch, Osgood Mackenzie, Charles Fraser-Mackintosh MP, John Mackay (formerly of Shrewsbury) and Donald Macgregor (London). Blackie wrote to Clach, addressing him as the representative Gael (p. 208), "Posterity will think justly you owe more to him than to Macpherson."

Clach's campaign involved him in a flurry of correspondence, of which the outstanding item was a reply dated 4 February 1878 from Evan MacColl, now aged 70 and living in prosperous retirement in Canada. It was so good that Clach used it in an appeal which he posted off to *The Inverness Courier*, *The Highlander*, *The Inverness Advertiser*, *The Ross-shire Journal* and *The London Scottish Journal*, as well as publishing it in his own magazine (Mackenzie 1877–78a). Clach appears to have assumed that the two men were personally unknown to each other.

> Unknown indeed! Why, my dear sir, John and I have eaten at the same table and slept in the same bed hundreds of times between the winter of 1835 and the spring of 1839, at which latter date I left Scotland for Liverpool, never again to meet with him in this life. We, however, continued to occasionally exchange letters up to within a year or two of his death. It was in the town of Greenock that we first met each other, and that at the hospitable evening fireside of a most estimable friend of mine, and his too—Hugh Fraser, a citizen of Inverness, although at that time resident in Greenock, where he did business as a bookseller. Many a time have I listened, under Mr Fraser's roof, to our friend's favourite *Feadan* (chanter)—that inseperable companion of his, that often afterwards helped to chase dull care away from us both, when together in Glasgow 'cultivating literature on a little oatmeal.' Poor John! when I think of all the privations

> he endured in pursuit of his favourite object—the cold shoulder so often given to him by men who, if he were now living, would be proud to call him their friend—I may well admire the perseverance which enabled him eventually to make himself 'a name which the world will not willingly let die.'

The response far exceeded expectations. A guinea from MacColl, a guinea from 'John Henry Dickson, Inveran Lodge', 10s 6d from 'Messrs Maclachlan & Stewart, booksellers, Edinburgh', £1 2s from 'Mr Artt Maclachlan, Glasgow' . . . The lists of subscribers are long, and they are full of the ordinary people of Gairloch, 1s here, 2s 6d there, while the clergy are notable by their absence, with the honourable exception of the Rev. Dr Donald Tolmie Masson of the Gaelic Church in Edinburgh, who gave 5s (Mackenzie and Fraser 1877–78; Mackenzie 1877–78c: 433–34).

The original plan, as announced in April 1877, was for a granite or marble slab on the wall of the *caibeal*, the style depending upon the amount subscribed. On 26 July 1878 the monument was unveiled by Sir Kenneth in the presence of a large group of spectators. It was a granite column thirteen feet six inches high, on a projecting rock between the Gairloch churchyard and the road, bearing the following inscriptions (Mackenzie 1877–78c: 431; Dixon 1886: 191, 311; Murchison 1947–48: 128):

> Thogadh an Carn-Cuimhne so do Ian MacCoinnich (de theaghlach Alastair Chaim Ghearrloch), a thionail, agus a chuir an ordugh "Sar Obair nam Bard Gaidhealach," agus a sgriobh, a thionail, a dheasaich, no dh'eadartheangaich 30 leabhair eile, am measg iomadh cruaidhchas. Rugadh e anns na Mealan, 1806. Chaochail e an Inbhir-iugh, 1848. 1878.

> In memory of John Mackenzie (of the family of Alastair Cam of Gairloch), who compiled and edited the "Beauties of Gaelic Poetry;" and also compiled, wrote, translated, or edited, under surpassing difficulties, about 30 other works. Born at Mellan Charles, 1806. Died at Inverewe, 1848. In grateful recognition of his valuable services to Celtic literature, this monument is erected by a number of his fellow-countrymen. 1878.

Personally I think I prefer the epitaph bestowed upon John by the Rev. A. Maclean Sinclair, who said (1899–1901: 272): "He deserves the highest praise for his loyalty to Gaelic literature, and for his indefatigable labours in behalf of it. His 'Beauties of Gaelic Poetry' has been an exceedingly useful work."

Appendix: John Mackenzie's publications

1. Ross's *Orain Ghaelach*, 1st edn, Inverness, **1830**: pp. 1–111. At p. 1 is: "Orain Ghae'lach, / le / Uilleam Ros. / Air an sgriobhadh, agus air an co'-chruinneachadh / ri cheile, / le / Iain Mac-Choinnich, / *Ann an Inbheiriue.* / ''S dubhach mi gun iolach shòlais, / Ach tùrsa bròin a 'sior eigheachd, / A chruit chiuil is binne mire, / Cha duisg mo chridhe gu h-eibhneas: / Cha chluinn mi tuille do chòradh, / Bu bhinne na ceòl na'n teudan, / Na smeorach 'san ghleannan fhàsaich, / 'S na cuthag air bharr na geige!' / Inverness: / Printed by R. Carruthers, / For Lewis Grant, and D. Macculloch, Booksellers. / 1830." At p. 2 is: "Entered in Stationer's Hall." At pp. 3–7 is 'The Life / of / William Ross', subscribed: "John Mackenzie. / Gairloch, May 30, 1830." The texts are at pp. 9–110; at p. 111 is an index of first lines. Maclean says (1915: 334): "Circumstances seem to indicate that the work was printed in 1833 and not in 1830 . . . A *very rare* Edition." See also Ferguson and Matheson 1984, no. 2484.

2. *An Leobhar Liath*, Glasgow or Paisley, **1833(?)**: pp. 1–8. At p. 1 is: "An / Leobhar Liath; / anns am beil / Ceithir Oranan Rŏ Ghasda: / Se sin:— Eachunn an Slaoightear— / An Obair-Nogha— / An Seudagan Beag Greannar— / Agus Donullan Dubh. / Air an dianamh / *le Daoin' Uaisl' Iunnsaichte:* / A nis air an cuir a mach air iarrtas, / agus cosgais moran de luchd-gràidh / na fir bhàrdach. / —— 'S Leobhar an "*Leobhar Liath;*" / 'Thereir iasg ris a' bhreac bheag; / 'Canar nead ri nead gach eoin, / ''S nead an dreadhainn duinn gur nead.' / Clo-bhuailte ann am Baile nam Breabadairean; / agus ri'n reic fos-n'iosal leis na leabhar- / reiceadairean ioma-shiubhlach. / 1801." The texts are at pp. 2–8, subscribed simply: "Crioch." Maclean says (1915: 247): "The Editorship of this very free poetical work is attributed to John Mackenzie, notwithstanding the difference in orthography. The year of publication is of course ante-dated. It was printed in Glasgow about 1845. *Excessively rare*. Only one copy known." According to Ferguson and Matheson (1984, no. 1332) there are copies in GUL and the British Library, with a photocopy in Glasgow University's Dept of Celtic.

3. Ross's *Òrain Ghàëlach*, 2nd edn, Glasgow, **1834**: pp. i–xii, 13–200. At p. i is: "Òrain Ghàëlach, / le / Uilleam Rŏs. / Air an co-chruinneachadh ri cheile / le / Iain Mac-Choinnich, / ann an Inbhiriue. / An Dara Clò-Bhualadh. / MDCCCXXXIV. / Glasgow: John Reid & Co. / Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd. / London: Whittaker, Arnott & Co." At p. ii is the stanza which appears at p. 1 of the 1st edn, subscribed: "Bell and Bain, Printers, Glasgow." At pp. iii–iv is John's 'Preface' subscribed: "Glasgow, *August 20th*, 1834." At pp. v–x is 'A Short Memoir / of the / Life of William Ross', and at pp. xi–xii is a list of contents. The texts are at pp. 13–178. At pp. 179–99 is a supplement headed (p. 181): "Ath-Leasachadh, / anns am beil trì dain / Le Iain MacAoidh, / Am Piobaire Dall, / Seanair an Ùdair." At p. 200 is: "Glascho / Clò'-Bhuailte le Bell agus Bain, / Aireamh 85, Sràid na Bann-Righ." Maclean says (1915: 335): "This work was stereotyped by Maclachlan & Stewart in 1868, when the press was corrected by D. C. Macpherson. In 1868, 250 copies; in 1870, 250 copies; in 1870, 300 copies; in 1877, 450 copies were printed." See also Ferguson and Matheson 1984, no. 2485.

4a. MacDonald's *Aiseiridh*, 4th edn, 1st impression, Glasgow, **1834**: pp. i–ii, v–vi, 1–180. The title and dedicatory ode (pp. i–ii) are as in the 2nd impression except that the date is given as 1834. There is no dedication, pp. iii–iv being missing. Contents list, text, glossary and printer's imprint are as in 2nd impression. Described as follows in Macvean's advertisement on the back cover of the *Co'-Chruinneachadh* (no. 5 below): "MACDONALD'S POEMS, Edited by JOHN MACKENZIE, with three new Songs, from the Author's MSS. in the possession of his Grandson. 18mo. 1834. 2s." Maclean says (1915: 190): "This Edition is well printed on fine paper; it is now scarce. The Editor was John Mackenzie, who *mirabile dictu* left out all the free pieces of the earlier Editions. The wrappers gave an English title. Price 2s." See also Ferguson and Matheson 1984, no. 1513.

4b. MacDonald's *Aiseiridh*, 4th edn, 2nd impression, Glasgow, **1835**: pp. i–vi, 1–180. At p. i is: "Aiseiridh / na / Sean Chanain Albanaich. / no'n / Nuadh Òranaiche Gàëlach. / le / Alasdair Mac-Dhomhnuill, / Mac Mhaisdeir Alasdair. / '*Bidhidh* Ghaelig fo sge na'm fuar bheann / Aig an t-sluagh is suairce manran, / Cha dean eug no beud a glusad [*sic*], / Cha d'thoir uaigh a smuais nan cnamh i.' / Glascho: / Clò-buailte, le

Miur, Gobhan, agus an Cuideachd, / Aireamh 42 Sraid Earra-Ghael; / agus r'an reic leis gach leabhar-reiceadair. / 1835." At p. ii is Latin stanza 'De Actuore Testimonium', beg. *Optime quem tellus genuit montana poeta*. At pp. iii–iv is dedication 'Do / Chomunn Oiseineach Ghlascho' subscribed: "Iain Mac-Choinnich. / Glasgho: an 10*amh* latha, / De'n Dara-mìos-deug, 1834." At pp. v–vi is list of contents headed: "An Clar-Innseadh." The text (pp. 1–176) consists of 35 poems. At pp. 177–80 is 'A Glossary; / explaining, in English, all the words that / seem difficult in the preceding work' (most of the longer entries are piping terms), subscribed: "Glascho:—Clo-Bhuailte le Miur, Gobhan, agus an cuideachd; / aireamh 42, Sraid Earra-Ghael." Not listed in Maclean 1915, but see Ferguson and Matheson 1984, no. 1514.

5. *Co'-Chruinneachadh*, Glasgow, **1836**: pp. 1–72. On the front cover is: "Co'-Chruinneachadh / de / dh' Oranan Taoghta: / iomadh dhiu / nach deach riabh roimh an ann [*sic*] clò. / A Collection / of the most / Popular Gaelic Songs; / including / a number of original pieces of merit / now printed for the first time. / Glasgow: / Published by Duncan Macvean. / 1836. / *Price One Shilling*." The title at p. 1 is identical save for omission of last line. The 'Preface' (pp. 3–4) is subscribed 'Glasgow, / *Sept.* 21, 1835'. The main text (pp. 5–72) is subscribed: "Bell and Bain, Printers, Royal Exchange Court." On the back cover is a list of Macvean's books for sale. On John's editorship see p. $ above. See also Maclean 1915: 285; Ferguson and Matheson 1984, no. 748.

6. Ross's *Òrain Ghàëlach*, 3rd edn, Glasgow, **1836**: pp. i–xii, 13–200. At p. i is: "Òrain Ghàëlach, / le / Uilleam Rŏs. / Gaelic Songs, / by / William Ross: / collected and edited by John Mackenzie. / Second edition, corrected and enlarged. / Glasgow: / Printed by Bell and Bain, / for Duncan Macvean, 175, High-Street. / 1836." Other than that p. ii is here blank, the rest of the book is an exact reprint of the 2nd edn. According to Ferguson and Matheson (1984, no. 2486) the only surviving copies are in New College and the Signet Library. Further editions appeared in 1868, 1877, 1892, 1902 and 1937 (*ibid*., nos. 2487–91). The circumstances of this edition are described in Macvean's advertisement on the back cover of the *Co'-Chruinneachadh* (no. 5 above): "ROSS'S SONGS, the Second edition, corrected, and enlarged; with a Life of the author, by JOHN MACKENZIE. 12mo. 1836. D. M. having purchased all the remaining copies of this beautiful book; the price is now reduced from 4s. to 3s."

7. *Eachdraidh Mhic-Cruislig*, Glasgow, **1836**: pp. 1–16 + buff-coloured paper cover. On the outside front cover, with a picture of a lyre, is: "Eachdraidh / Mhic-Cruislig, / Sgialachd Ghàëlach. / 'Sgéul' ri aithris air àm o aois; / Gniomh' làthaibh nam bliadhna dh' àom.'—Oisian. / Glascho: / Clo-bhuailte airson an udair le Bell agus Bain, / Aireamh 85, Sraid na Bann-righ. / 1836. / *A few copies only printed for private circulation, Price One Shilling*." The title is repeated, except for the last line, at p. 1. The preface (p. 3), subscribed 'J. McK. / GLASGOW, *August* 8*th*, 1836', is quoted in full above, p. $. The text, at pp. 4–16, is subscribed: "Crioch. / Bell agus Bain, clo-bhuailtearan ann an Glascho." On the outside back cover is a list of books with dates and prices headed: "Gaelic Books Sold by D. Macvean, / *Opposite the College*, *Glasgow*." Maclean says (1915: 249): "The above is rather a free production in prose, printed appropriately on *blue paper*. Price 1s. It is now *extremely rare*." The blue paper is a figment of Maclean's imagination. According to Ferguson and Matheson (1984, no. 1857) there are copies in New College, the Signet Library and the British Library, with a photocopy in Glasgow University Dept of Celtic.

8. *An Cruiteara Gàëlach*, Edinburgh, **1838**: pp. 1–64 + card cover (yellow on outside). On the outside front cover, along with an illustration of a piper, is: "An / Cruiteara / Gàëlach. / Edinburgh: Printed and sold by D. R. Collie. / 1838. / Price Fourpence." I have seen different versions of the title-page (p. 1). One is: "The Gaelic / Melodist, / being a / Selection of the most Popular / Highland Love Songs / collected and arranged by / John Mackenzie, / *Honorary Member of the Glasgow Ossianic Society;* / *Editor of the Songs of Ross; &c. &c*. / Stereotype Edition. / Edinburgh: / D. R. Collie and Son. / Price Fourpence." Another concludes: "Printed and sold by D. R Collie, / 1838. / Price Fourpence." This tiny book (it measures 10.5 x 6.5 cms) contains the words of forty-one songs, many of which were subsequently published in *Sàr Obair*. John's own song 'Oran Sugraidh' (pp. 22–23) is the only one footnoted. At pp. 63–64 is an index in which authors' names are given as initials. Following it (p. 64) is a note beginning: "These songs marked with a † in the Index, were taken down from oral recitation in different parts of the Highlands and Isles, by the Editor. Some verses, omitted in former copies, have been added to complete the others, and many phrases corrected, which had been misunderstood by former transcribers." At the foot of p. 64 is: "Printed by D. R. Collie." On the outside back cover is 'Sold also by' followed by a list of booksellers. To the locations given for this item by Ferguson and Matheson (1984, no. 1867) we should add EUL, whose copy

is shelfmarked Mackinnon (1924) P.18 (1). Like the one apparently seen by Maclean (1915: 251), it lacks its cover.

9. MacDonald, *Aiseiridh*, 5th edn without supplement, Glasgow, **1839**: pp. i–xiv, 1–180. At p. iii is: "The Poetical Works / of Alexander Macdonald, / the Celebrated Jacobite Poet; / now first collected, / with a short account of the author. / Glasgow: / Published by Duncan Macvean. / 1839." At p. iv is: "Glasgow: Printed by James Hutchison, 31, Argyle Street." At pp. v–xiv is a substantial biographical 'Memoir' (unsubscribed, but clearly by John) which begins with the significant comment that although MacDonald died during the lifetime of many persons still living, 'few or none of them can give any satisfactory account of the life and personal history of the greatest poet which their country has produced', and at p. ix he adds: "As a poet, he may be placed at the head of all the Caledonian bards, ancient or modern." Text, glossary and printer's imprint (pp. 1–180) are exactly as in 4th edn. Maclean says (1915: 191): "The text of this Edition seems to be what was left unsold of the impression of 1834, with a new Title and Memoir added." See also Ferguson and Matheson 1984, no. 1515.

The 6th edn, published in Glasgow in 1851 by G. & J. Cameron (pp. 1–4, 1–180), is identical except for the prelim pages, where the 'Memoir' (pp. 2–4) is shortened by the simple expedient of removing fifteen of John's twenty-six paragraphs. See Maclean 1915: 191; Ferguson and Matheson 1984, no. 1517.

10. MacDonald, *Aiseiridh*, 5th edn with supplement, Glasgow, **1839**: pp. i–xiv, i–vi, 1–214. The first section (pp. i–xiv) is exactly as in the main edition. This special edition is the one referred to at p. xiii of the 'Memoir' of the poet, where John touches on one of the songs in *An Leobhar Liath* (no. 2 above):

> In his age, a song was composed by a lady of the family of Keppoch, in answer to a very indecent but clever song, called "*An obair Nogha.*" The poetess says that her ears were stunned with the sound of men's voices singing this song; and, in her answer to it, she gives excellent advices to the young women to avoid unlawful pleasures. Songs of this description could not even be alluded to by a lady of the present day.
>
> Several persons having expressed a wish to obtain the works of Macdonald complete.—To supply this demand, a small impression of the supplement has been printed, with this brief and imperfect account of the author and his works.

Following the 'Memoir', at the second p. i, is: "Aiseiridh / na / Sean Chanain Albanaich. / no'n / Nuadh Òranaiche Gàëlach. / le / Alasdair Mac-Dhomhnuill, / Mac Mhaisdeir Alasdair. / '*Bidhidh* Ghaelig fo sge na'm fuar bheann / Aig an t-sluagh is suairce manran, / Cha dean eug no beud a glusad [*sic*], / Cha d'thoir uaigh a smuais nan cnamh i.' / Glascho: / Clò-buailte, le Miur, Gobhan, agus an Cuideachd, / Aireamh 42 Sraid Earra-Ghael; / agus r'an reic leis gach leabhar-reiceadair. / 1834." At the second p. ii is the Latin ode 'De Actuore Testimonium'; it is followed at pp. iii–iv by a specially-compiled 'Contents' which includes the supplementary pieces, then at pp. v–vi by 'An Clar-Innseadh' as in previous editions. The text, glossary and printer's imprint at pp. 1–180 are also as in previous editions. At pp. 181–214 are the supplementary poems: 181–90 'An Aircе' beg. *'N deigh dhomh tuiteam ann mo chadal*; 191–93 'Oran d'a Cheile Nuadh Phòsda' beg. *Air Allt-ghartan ghlacas bradan*; 193–200 'Mi-mholadh Moraig' beg. *A Mhuideartaich dhuibh dhana*; 200–04 'Marbhrann do Mhairi nian Iain Mhic Eoghain; do 'n gairte an Aigionnach' beg. *Tha mi craiteach tinn*; 204–05 'Oran do'n Bhana Bhard nigh'n an Notair' beg. *A nigh'n Donnchaidh duibh nòtair*; 205 'Moladh air deadh bhall' beg. *Tha ball-ratha sinnte riut*; 205–06 'Tinneas na h-urchaid' beg. *Gu bheil tinneas na h-urchaid*; 207–14 'Oran do dha bhodach a bha 'n Aird na morchuan; as iad a cur ri Striopachas ann an aois an ceithir fichid bliadhna' beg. *C'aite am bheil tiunnail*; subscribed: "Crioch." For source-list of Mac Mhaighstir Alastair's poems see Black 1986b: 37–39. Maclean says (1915: 191): "A small impression of this Supplement, but without a Title, was actually printed in 1839. It is printed with smaller type than the rest of the work and was meant to bind with the earlier part, though in signatures it does not follow that part. It is only met with in rebound copies of the 1839 Edition. We have only met with three copies of this Supplement." According to Ferguson and Matheson (1984, no. 1516) the only copies now known are in the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales.

11. *Cuairtear nan Gleann*, Glasgow, **1840–43**. Monthly magazine edited by the Rev. Dr Norman MacLeod and allegedly sub-edited by John Mackenzie, subscribed: "Glasgow: / Published by the Proprietors, / J. & P. Campbell, Booksellers and Stationers, / 63, Arcade. / Edward Khull, Printer to the University, Dunlop Street." From the June 1841 issue the proprietors' address was changed from '63, Arcade' to '24, Glassford

Street'. Whenever space permitted a list of stockists was added; its length and contents varied, but it always began: "Edinburgh: McLachlan, Stewart, & Co." Once bound, the first volume (March 1840 – February 1841) contained iv + 284 pp., the second (March 1841 – February 1842) iv + 352 pp., and the third (March 1842 – February 1843) iv + 336 pp. The last four issues (March–June 1843) contain 118 pp. Edited as it was by a prominent minister, the *Cuairtear* became a casualty of the Disruption (May 1843). It contains no evidence of John Mackenzie's involvement, whether as sub-editor or contributor. Maclean says (1915: 312): "This Periodical sold for sixpence each monthly number. The leading contributor was the Rev. Dr. Norman Macleod of St. Columba Church, Glasgow." See also Ferguson and Matheson 1984, no. 828.

12. *Sàr Obair*, 1st edn, Glasgow, **1841**: pp. i–ii, iii*–viii*, iii–lxvi, 1–376. At p. i is: "Sar-Obair nam Bard Gaelach: / or, / The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry, / and / Lives of the Highland Bards; / with / Historical and Critical Notes, / and / A Comprehensive Glossary of Provincial Words. / By John Mackenzie, Esq., / Honorary Member of the Ossianic Society of Glasgow, the Gaelic Society of London, etc., etc. / with an / Historical Introduction / containing an account of / The Manners, Habits, &c., of the Ancient Caledonians. / By James Logan, Esq., F.S.A.S., / Corresponding Member S. Ant., Normandy, Author of the Scottish Gael, &c., &c. / Glasgow: / Macgregor, Polson, & Co., 75, Argyll Street, / 11, Lothian Street, Edinburgh; 10, Upper Abbey Street, Dublin; / and 71, York Street, Belfast. / MDCCCXLI." At p. ii is: "Glasgow: / Edward Khull, printer to the University, Dunlop Street." John's 'Preface', subscribed 'University Printing Office, / Glasgow, *April* 1, 1841', is at pp. iii*–viii*; Logan's 'Introduction' is at pp. iii–lxi, with list of contents at pp. lxiii–lxv. The main text is at pp. 1–358, and the 'Aireamh Taghta' are at pp. 359–74. The 'Glossary' (pp. 375–76) is subscribed: "Glasgow:—Printed at the University Press, by Edward Khull."

Good copies have two illustrations, 'The Aged Bard' and 'Cuachag an Fhasaich'; some have the former only. The position of these varies. Maclean explains (1915: 247–48):

> The book was stereotyped by the publishers, Messrs. McGregor, Polson & Co., Glasgow, in 1841. It was published in two volumes at 12s. for the complete work. The first volume was more in demand than the second, so that it was sold out, leaving a stock of the second volume in the hands of the publishers. A second impression of the first volume was issued to complete sets. The plates were sold to Messrs. Blackie, the Glasgow publishers, who afterwards sold them to Messrs. Maclachlan & Stewart of Edinburgh. The publishers to whom the plates were sold put their own name on the title-page of the second issue of Part I. In the First Edition there was an engraving of a rural scene taken from Alexander Macdonald's 'Dairymaid.' This plate got destroyed, and in substitution thereof, a view of Rothesay Bay is given as a frontispiece in the later Editions. The First Edition has only 376 pages; subsequent Editions have 402 pages.

The 1841 edition is usually found complete. I have seen no copies of the first volume in isolation, but I have seen two of the second volume. In both cases it consisted of the prelim pages to viii*, Logan's introduction from p. xix to the end, the table of contents (pp. lxiii–lxv), the main text from p. 225 (beginning in the Donnchadh Bàn section) to the end, and the glossary (pp. 375–76).

I have also seen an alternative first edition without Logan's introduction: pp. i–ii, iii*–viii*, lxiii–lxv, 1–376. At p. i is simply: "Sar-Obair nam Bard Gaelach: / or, / The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry, / and / Lives of the Highland Bards; / with / Historical and Critical Notes, / and / A Comprehensive Glossary of Provincial Words. / By John Mackenzie, Esq., / Honorary Member of the Ossianic Society of Glasgow, the Gaelic Society of London, etc., etc. / Glasgow: / Macgregor, Polson, & Co., 75, Argyll Street; / 11, Lothian Street, Edinburgh; 10, Upper Abbey Street, Dublin; / and 71, York Street, Belfast. / MDCCCXLI."

The following appeared after John's lifetime: American edn, 1863 (see above, p. $); 2nd edn, John Muir, Glasgow, 1865 (see above, p. $); 3rd edn, Maclachlan & Stewart, Edinburgh, 1872 (includes original 1841 advertisement for the work, placed at end); 4th edn, Maclachlan & Stewart, Edinburgh, 1877; 5th edn, Maclachlan & Stewart, Edinburgh, 1882; 6th edn, Norman MacLeod, Edinburgh, 1904; 7th edn, 1907, a joint enterprise between John Grant, George IV Bridge, Edinburgh, and John McNeilage, 65 Great Western Road, Glasgow, whose products were identical (text re-set, lxxii + 447 pp., John's preface dropped) save for their respective imprints on title-page; 8th edn, Keltia Publications, Edinburgh, 2001 (John's preface re-set; Logan's introduction replaced with essay by Kaledon Naddair entitled 'The Culture of the Gaedeals, Caledonians and Other Kelts'; contents-list, text, glossary and index photographically reproduced and enlarged from 3rd, 4th, 5th or 6th edn; new bibliography added). See also Ferguson and Matheson 1984, nos. 1868–77.

13a. Rev. Dr Norman MacLeod's *Còmhradh mu Chor na h-Eaglais*, 1st impression, Glasgow, **1843**: pp. 1–24. At p. 1 is: "[An Dara Cuir a mach.] / Còmhradh / mu / Chor na h-Eaglais. / [*Bho* Chuairtear nan Gleann *airson Ceud Mìos an t-Samhraidh*.]" At p. 24 is: "Glasgow: / J. & P. Campbell, 24, Glassford Street. / MDCCCXLIII. / Edward Khull, Printer to the University, Dunlop Street." Reprinted (with new pagination) from *Cuairtear nan Gleann*, vol. 4 (1843), pp. 57–84. John Mackenzie may have sub-edited the original article. See Maclean 1915: 270. According to Ferguson and Matheson (1984, no. 2068) there are no holdings of this item outside EUL.

13b. Rev. Dr Norman MacLeod's *Còmhradh mu Chor na h-Eaglais*, 2nd impression, Glasgow, **1843**: pp. 1–24. At p. 1 is: "[An Treas Cuir a mach.] / Còmhradh / mu / Chor na h-Eaglaise. / [*Bho* Chuairtear nan Gleann *airson Ceud Mhìos an t-Samhraidh*.]" At p. 24 is: "Glasgow: / J. & P. Campbell, 24, Glassford Street. / MDCCCXLIII. / Edward Khull, Printer to the University, Dunlop Street." See Maclean 1915: 90. According to Ferguson and Matheson (1984, no. 2069) there are no holdings of this item outside NLS, but there is in fact a copy in EUL, severely trimmed, shelfmarked Mackinnon (1924) P.2 (1).

14. *Eachdraidh a' Phrionnsa*, Edinburgh, **1844**: pp. i–viii, 9–312. On p. ii is a sketch of Prince Charles; at p. iii is: "Eachdraidh / a' Phrionnsa, / no Bliadhna / Thearlaich. / Le Iain Mac-Choinnich, / Ball Urramach de Chomunn Oisianach Ghlascho; / de Chomunn na Gaelig an Lunnainn, &c.; / Fear-Sgriobhaidh 'Sar-Obair nam Bard Gael- / ach,' agus 'Eachdraidh Beatha nam Bard,' &c. &c. &c. / Duneideann: / Clò-bhuailte le Thornton agus Collie. / m.dccc.xliv." At p. v is a dedication to Charles Edward Stuart (Charles Stuart Hay Allan): "Tha'n Leabhar so / Air a chur a mach fo Thearmann / An Uasail Oirdheirc, agus / Ionnsaichte, / Tearlach Imhear Stiubhart, &c. &c. / fo iomadh comain / An Ughdair, / Iain Mac-Coinnich." The work is in thirty-two chapters. At p. 241 is a fresh title: "Cruinneachadh Taghte / de / Dh-Òranan / a rinneadh do'n / Phrionnsa agus 'na Aobhar, / le ughdaran eugsamhail." At p. 242 is an introductory note: "Mheas mi iomchaidh na h-òranan a leannas a chur mar leasachadh ris an leabhar so chum an 'Eachdraidh' a dheanamh cho iomlan sa' b'urrainn mi. Tha iad a' cur mòran soluis air cŏr agus dùrachd nan Gàël mu'n àm anns an d'éirich iad a mach a' chur an aghaidhean ri cruadal 'Bliadhna Thearlaich'." Seventeen songs follow at pp. 243–311, some footnoted (see also no. 15 below). One of these footnotes (at p. 244) provides a brief description of the Kilbride MSS then in the library of the Royal Faculty of Procurators in Glasgow, and is thus of unique value to the study of the Gaelic manuscripts of Scotland (Bannerman 1977, 2: 29). On p. 312, following list of errata, is: "Edinburgh: / Thornton & Collie, Printers, St David Street." Maclean says (1915: 249): "This work was a Translation from MS. material supplied by the publishers." See also Ferguson and Matheson 1984, no. 1853.

For the 2nd edn see no. 28 below. A third edition (311 pp., reprinted from the 1st edn) appeared in 1864. According to Maclean (1915: 250) it was published in Glasgow, but this statement may have been made in error. Ferguson and Matheson say (1984, no. 1855) that it was published in Edinburgh by Thornton & Collie, and that the sole known copy belongs to the Highland Region Library Service, Inverness.

15. *An t-Aosdàna*, Edinburgh, **1844**: pp. 1–96 + card cover. On the outside front cover is: "An / t-Aosdàna: / or a Selection of / The Most Popular / Gaelic Jacobite Songs, / &c. &c. / Edinburgh: / published by Thornton and Collie; / and sold by D. Macvean, Glasgow. / 1844. / *Price Ninepence*." At p. 4 is a sketch of Prince Charles as in *Eachdraidh a' Phrionnsa*, 1st edn, p. ii. At p. 5 is: "An / t-Aosdàna: / or a Selection of / The Most Popular / Gaelic Jacobite Songs, / &c. &c. / collected and arranged by / John Mackenzie, / Honorary Member of the Ossianic Society of Glasgow, the Gaelic Society / of London, &c. &c.; Compiler of the 'Beauties of Gaelic Poetry, / and Biographer of the Highland Bards,' &c. &c. &c. / Edinburgh: / published by Thornton & Collie; / and sold by D. Macvean, Glasgow. / 1844. / *Price Ninepence*." At p. 7, underneath Cluny's coat of arms, is the dedication: "Do Chluainidh, / Triath Chlann-Mhuirich. / Uasail fiùghantaich, / Tha mi cur a mach an leabhair bhig so fo t' ainm aloil-sa le lan-dòchas gu'm faigh e do dhion, a thaobh gur tu an t-aon a mhain a tha maireann an diugh, (a thuigeas an uirghioll a th' air a chuir sios ann, agus aig am beil speis d'a leithid,) de dh'iarmad nan Triath flathasach, treun a dh'eirich suas ann am buillsgean cunnairt agus leireidh chum seanna chòir SHIOL ALBA ath-chosnadh do'n dìobarach rìoghail, dhligheach, a dhuisg comh-mhothachadh nam bard binn a sheinn na dana so.—Is mise da rìreadh, / Le mòr speis agus urram, / Do Sheirbhiseach fior umhal, / Iain Mac-Choinnich. / Glascho, an treas / latha de'n Iuchar. 1844." (For translation of this see p. $ above.)

The text consists of three elements. At pp. 11–79 are the same seventeen songs which appeared in the 1st edn of *Eachdraidh a' Phrionnsa* (no. 14 above), with some minor alterations to the notes (that on the Kilbride MSS appears unchanged, except for spelling, at p. 12). At pp. 80–86 is the 'Marbhrann

Bhatair' (with substantial editorial notes), which I have discussed at length elsewhere (MacilleDhuibh 2001a–f, see also Black 2001: 421). At p. 87 is: "[Several gentlemen who had seen the foregoing and following pieces in M.S. in the possession of the Editor, expressed a strong desire to have copies of them in print; but as they were too short for a separate publication, he hopes the reader will not be displeased to find them attached to the Jacobitical Songs, even though unconnected with the subject.]" At pp. 87–92, again with substantial editorial notes, is 'Daibhidh Greosgach, Crom, Ciar', consisting of a satire in verse on a certain weaver called David, followed by verses in praise of the same man, both by 'the Rev. Angus Morrison, minister of Contine, Ross-shire, and brother to the celebrated Rory Dall the Harper' (see Matheson 1970: 223). At p. 93 is a note on additions made by the editor to two of Mac Mhaighstir Alastair's poems, citing as sources 'his grandson, the late Mr A. MacDonald of Laig, Island of Egg, as well as several other individuals in the poet's native district'. See Maclean 1915: 250; Ferguson and Matheson 1984, no. 1852.

Maclean states (1915: 250) that a second edition of *An t-Aosdàna* was published in Edinburgh in 1871, but gives no details. There is no mention of such an edition in Ferguson and Matheson 1984, nor have I found any trace of one in library catalogues.

16. Buchanan's *Beatha agus Iompachadh*, Edinburgh, **1844**: pp. i–iv, 1–185 (no foreword or introduction). At p. ii is: "The Life and Conversion / of Dugald Buchanan, / who died at Rannach in 1768, / (written by himself.) / to which is annexed his / Spiritual Hymns. / 'The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.'—Ps. cxii. 6. / 'He, being dead yet speaketh.'—Heb. xi. 4. / Edinburgh: / Maclachlan, Stewart, & Co. / MDCCCXLIV." At p. iii is: "Beatha agus Iompachadh / Dhùghaill Bochannain / a dh'eug ann an Ranach sa' bhliadhna 1768. / (air a sgrìobhadh leis féin.) / maille r'a / Laoidhean Spioradail. / 'Air chuimhne gu bràth bithidh am fìrean.'—Salm cxii. 6. / 'Air dha bhi marbh, tha e fathast a' labhairt.'—Eabh. xi. 4. / Dunéideann: / Mac Lachuinn, Stiubhard, agus an Cuideachd. / MDCCCXLIV." At p. iv is: "Stereotype Edition." The main text is at pp. 1–185. Bound with this volume (separate title and pagination, ii + 47 pp.) are Buchanan's hymns. At p. i is: "Laoidhean Spioradail, / le / Dùghall Bochannan." The text (pp. 1–47) is subscribed: "*Dunéideann Clò-bhuailte le Iain Mac-Thomais.*" Maclean says (1915: 39): "Stereotyped edition. 1000 copies struck off, and 500 copies in each of the years 1857, 1859, 1863, 1867, 1872, 1875, and 1877, and printed still at frequent intervals. The Editor was John Mackenzie."

See also Ferguson and Matheson, no. 429.

17. Lothian's *Teagasg, Rùn agus Nòs na Pàpanachd*, etc., Edinburgh, **1844**: pp. 1–36. At p. 1 is: "Earrann de'n Leabhar / Cheasnuighe Aithleasuichte; / a ta 'nochdadh / Teagaisg, Rùin, agus Nòis / na Pàpanachd. / clobhuailte an Dunéaidain le Daibhidh Mac Phàtraic. / MDCCLXXIX. / Maille ri / Cònsachadh / eadar / Am Pàp' agus Reformèision. / le / Donnchadh Loudin. / Fòs / 'Taois Ghoirt' na Pàpanachd. / 'An Dunéidionn: / le / Maclachluinn, an Stiùbhartach, 's an Cuideachd; / agus Comunn Ùr nam Meanbh-Leabhar. / MDCCCXLIV." The prose text 'Teagasg, Rùn, agus Nòs na Pàpanachd' (translated by Duncan Lothian) is at pp. 3–17, the poem 'Cònsachadh eadar Am Pàpa agus an t-Ath-Leasachadh le Donnchadh Loudin' at pp. 19–34, and Lothian's poem '"Taois Ghoirt" na Pàpanachd 1755' at pp. 35–36. Maclean says (1915: 169), referring to this work and Lothian's *Cònnsachadh* (see next item), "Of these two last Editions 500 copies of each were printed. The Editor was John Mackenzie." For the 1779 editions of 'Teagasg, Rùn agus Nòs' see Ferguson and Matheson 1984, nos. 2433–34.

18. Lothian's *Cònnsachadh*, Edinburgh, **1844**: pp. 1–35 + stiff paper cover. On front cover is: "Cònnsachadh / eadar / Am Pàp agus an t-Ath- / Leasachadh. / agus / Fior Fhocail 'us Sanasan Géura. / le / Donnachadh Loudin. / Toïrt Ùr. / Dunédin: / Maclachlainn an Stiubhartach, 's an Cuidd. / MDCCCXLIV. / *Price Fourpence*." The title on p. 1 is basically the same, except that the last line is omitted. The introduction (p. 2) is: "Focal do'n Leughadair. / Anns na h-argumaidibh fallain, firinneach a leanas, chithear am PÀP (*an t-ana-Criosd*) iar 'fhàsgadh 'us iar a rùsgadh o mhullach a' chìnn gu bònn a' choise,—gun òirleach de thalamh glan aige, air an urrainn e seasamh. Tha a mhearachdan eagallach, an-so, iar am bréugachadh 'us iar an dìteadh, gu-géur, le buaidh na Firinn. Is i ar dùrachd gach aon, a ta fo'n chùing dhòrch so, a bhi gu-luath iar a thoirt gu solus agus teagasg an t-soisgeil. / *Dunédin*, / *An* 10*mh Mios* 1844." The suffix *-ibh* and spelling *iar* suggest that John was not the writer – see his notes on orthography etc. in *Sàr Obair*, p. v*. The contents consist of the following poems: 'Cònnsachadh eadar Am Pàp agus an t-Athleasachadh' (78 qq. + 2 qq. introduction from *Turus a' Chriosdaidh*, part 3); 'Sean Fhocail, agus Comhadan' (57 qq.); 'Deoch an Doruis' (2 qq.); 'Laoidh a' Chreidmhich' (31 qq.); 'Am Bogha-Frois. The Rainbough. le C.—N.—B.' (15 qq.). On the outside back cover is a list of books published by Maclachlan & Stewart. Earlier editions appeared in 1797 and 1833. Maclean says (1915: 169), referring to this work

and Lothian's *Teagasg, Rùn agus Nòs na Pàpanachd*, etc. (see previous item), "Of these two last Editions 500 copies of each were printed. The Editor was John Mackenzie." See also Ferguson and Matheson 1984, no. 1356.

19. Bunyan's *The World to Come*, Edinburgh, **1844**: pp. i–iv, 1–172. At p ii is: "The World to Come; / or / Visions of Heaven and Hell. / by / John Bunyan. / 'And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day / shalt thou be with me in paradise.'—Luke xxiii. 43. / For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil.'—Eccles. / xii. 14. / Edinburgh: / Maclachlan, Stewart, & Co. / MDCCCXLIV." At p. iii is: "An Saoghal a Ta ri Teachd; no / Seallaidhean Néimh agus Ifrinn. / le / Iain Buinian. / 'Agus thubhairt Iosa ris, Gu deimhin tha mi'g ràdh ruit [*sic*] gu'm / bi thu maille riumsa an diugh ann am pàrras.'—Luc xxiii. 43. / 'Oir bheir Dia gach obair chum breitheanais, maille ris gach / ni diomhain *ma's* math, no *ma's* olc e.'—Ecles. xii. 14. / Dunéideann: / Mac-Lachuinn, Stiubhard, agus an Cuideachd. / MDCCCXLIV." At p. iv is 'Stereotype Edition'. Bunyan's foreword is at pp. 1–4, his introduction at pp. 5–19, and his main text at pp. 21–168. At pp. 169–72 are two hymns in full rhyme, 'Sealladh de Neamh' (8 qq.) and 'Sealladh de dh' Ifrinn' (8 qq.), subscribed: "Crioch." Lists of Gaelic books published by Maclachlan & Stewart appear on front and rear end-papers. Maclean says (1915: 43): "In 1844, 1000 copies were printed from the plates, and 500 copies in each of the following years, 1858, 1861, 1864, and 1872. The Translator was John Mackenzie." See also Ferguson and Matheson 1984, no. 499.

20. Bunyan's *Come and Welcome*, Edinburgh, **1844**: pp. i–iv, 1–282. At p. ii is: "Come and Welcome / to / Jesus Christ. / by / John Bunyan. / 'And they shall come which were ready to perish.'—Isa. xxvii. 13. / Edinburgh: / Maclachlan, Stewart, & Co. / MDCCCXLIV." In some copies a frontispiece portrait of Bunyan appears between pp. ii and iii. At p. iii is: "Thig agus Se Do Bheatha / chum / Iosa Criosd. / le / Iain Buinian. / 'Agus thig iadsan a bha basachadh.'—Isaiah xxvii. 13. / Duneideann: / Maclachuinn, Stiubhard, agus an Cuideachd. / MDCCCXLIV." At p. iv is: "Stereotype Edition." Bunyan's text is at pp. 1–282, subscribed: "Crioch. / Dunéidean: / Clò-bhuailte le Iain Mac-Thòmais." Maclean says (1915: 46): "The work was stereotyped in 1846 when 1000 copies were printed, and 500 copies were printed in each of the years 1859 and 1874. The published price was two shillings. The Translator was John Mackenzie." According to Ferguson and Matheson (1984, no. 453) this edition survives in EUL only. There are three copies in that library.

21. *A' Bheithir-Bheuma*, Glasgow, **1845**: pp. 1–8. The first issue (January 1845) of an all-Gaelic magazine of which no further issues appeared. At p. 1 is: "A' Bheithir-Bheuma. / Aireamh 1. / Earrann 1. / Glascho, Mios Deireannach a' Gheamhraidh, 1845. / R'a reic arson / Trì sgillinn." Unusually for a Scottish Gaelic publication, the title is in Gaelic script; underneath it is an illustration showing an enormous serpent emerging from a cave at the direction of a bonneted man (intended to be John Mackenzie himself, presumably) and threatening three well-dressed gentlemen, one of whom drops a book in fright. As *A' Bheithir-Bheuma* is a brilliant piece of satirical literature, the contents are described in detail at pp. @$–$ above (see also next item). The Rev. Donald Maclean, who would clearly have disagreed with this opinion, comments (1915: 313): "Only this number (and quite enough) ever appeared. The Editor was John Mackenzie." According to Ferguson and Matheson (1984, no. 78) *A' Bheithir-Bheuma* survives in EUL only. Its shelfmark there is Mackinnon (1924) P.19 (1).

22. *Còmhradh mu'n Ghràmar Dhùbailt*, Glasgow, **1845**: pp. 1–4. Maclean (1915: 250) lists this item as follows: "MACKENZIE (JOHN), A DIALOGUE ON FORBES' GRAMMAR. *Glasgow*, 1845. 'Comhradh eadar Murchadh Grè, Coinneach Mac Shuine, Eobhan Mor 's am Pungar, mu'n Ghramar Dhubhailt do'n nach e'm Pungar héin idir is Udar.' 8vo. 4 pp. A scurrilous but somewhat clever pamphlet. *Extremely rare.* We have seen only one copy."

I have seen no copies at all, nor is there any entry for it in Ferguson and Matheson 1984. However, it is presumably an offprint or enlargement of the feature which appears at pp. 3–5 of *A' Bheithir-Bheuma* (no. 21 above) under the title: "Comhradh *Eadar Murchadh Grè, Coinneach Mac Shuinn, Eobhan Mor 's am Pungar, mu'n Ghramar Dhubailt!! (Air a sgrìobhadh do réir lathailt' Ghramarail a' Phungar féin.)*" It is essentially a dramaticised review article, unfavourably comparing John Forbes's *Double Grammar* (Edinburgh, 1843) to the Rev. Dr Alexander Stewart's universally admired *Elements of Gaelic Grammar* (Edinburgh, 1801 and 1812). The 'Pungar' (Forbes) is shown arriving in a township with his load of books for sale; the natives, who are already familiar with his work, gather round.

Mur. An si héin a rinn a' leothar?
Pung. Is mi, a h-uil "ciallairt" is "seollairt" dh'i.
Mur. 'Sdiach 's ann agai bha 'n ceann mus do shniomh si an eididh mhor so as! cha saoil mi gu'n d'robh mu thuath an tù so a'ïn aonan eil riamh a rinn a leithid dhe ghniomh.
Coinn. Gu seadh, a Mhurchaidh, is suarrach an tac ri so an t-saothair a rinn a ministear Stiùardach a bha 'n Ionarfeotharan; cha row aigeas ach beurla chruaidh shasunnach nach tuigeag Gael.
Pung. Haic si cha d'rinn an duin sin ach a Ghàelig ionnsachduinn as a Phìobal, 's cha d'robh i math aig, ach bha i a'ms bho rugag mi, agus shiubhail mi Alab air fad ga h-iunnsachdainn gu coiliant gus nach eil coimpir agam. Tha teisteanasan a'm bho na sgoilaran is àird an Alab nach deach riamh roimh oibir chur mach air "lathailt" na h-oibir so, agus gu'n d'thug i a chliù bho na h-uil duin a sgriòbh strāc Gàelig air thoiseachd orum; nach ceannaich si té am fear dhe na ghramar? Faolumas i dhùi "Brìghardan" agus "Rialtan labhairt na Beurla 's na Gàelig" a ta air an cur sios innt tù ri tù gu *brisg*, òrdail, soilleir, iomlan, anns an dà chainnt; gheibh si innt "eolas teagaisg gràmair, fuaimragan, cònnragan, rialtan gu cùbadh, seorsachadh fhocalan, Ainmear, Buadhar, Clisgear, Dagar, Eagar, Freagar, Glogar, Ioladair, Liugar, Martar, Naisgear, Osdair, Pocair, Pungar, Põitear, Pàirtear, Ragair, Slaodair, Sloightear, Slimear, Traoightear, Tiolpair, Ughdair."

("*Murdo.* Is it you that wrote the book?
Pungar. Yes, every 'ciallairt' and 'seollairt' of it.
Murdo. Well well, you must have had your head screwed on to be able to weave such a big web of cloth from it! I don't think we've ever had anyone else up here in the north who's ever done such a thing.
Kenneth. Indeed, Murdo, the magnum opus of the Stewart minister in Dingwall pales into insignificance beside this. All he wrote was plain uncompromising English that no Gaelic speaker could understand.
Pungar. Well, you see, all the Gaelic that man learned was from the Bible, so he didn't learn it properly. But I've been speaking it since I was born, and I've travelled the length and breadth of Scotland learning it to perfection, so there's none to rival me. I've got attestations from the greatest scholars in Scotland that no work like this has ever been published before, and that it puts everybody who ever wrote a single syllable of Gaelic before me in the shade. Will each of you please buy a copy of the grammar? It will teach you the 'Brìghardan' and the 'Rules for speaking English and Gaelic' that are laid down in it side by side quickly, efficiently, clearly, completely, in the two languages; in it you'll find 'how to learn grammar, vowels, consonants, rules for declension, the categorisation of words, Ainmear, Buadhar, Clisgear, Dagar, Eagar, Freagar, Glogar, Ioladair, Liugar, Martar, Naisgear, Osdair, Pocair, Pungar, Põitear, Pàirtear, Ragair, Slaodair, Sloightear, Slimear, Traoightear, Tiolpair, Ughdair.'")

The dialect is that of the Inverness area; Maclean says (1915: 125) that Forbes was from Strath, but if Hew Scott is to be believed (1915–50, vol. 7: 175), he was a native of Strathglass. At any event, the 'Pungar' has met his match, and the book receives a thoroughgoing evaluation.

Eobh. Cha'n eil 'sa leothar, a Mhurchaidh, ach Gaelic *riataich*, mar their thus, sliochd collaidh, a ghineadh eadar an *gramadair* agus a Bheurla, *ann* an cruidse annuinn an tigh-sgoile; na tha do Bhéurl ann tha fios againn cò d'am buin e.
Pung. Am beil thu 'm balar gur e a *shlaid* a rinn mi?
Eobh. Is luaineach a' chogais chiontach:—'ne'n leabhar, na na th'ann tha thu 'gràdhinn.
Pung. Na th'ann.
Eobh. Ma ta tha mi fiosrach gu'n d'thug thu sop dheth as gach seid, agus á raon no dha gu'n do sguab thu leat am bàrr iomlan:

Spùill thu 'n Rothach gu buileach,
'S thug thu 'n còrr o Mhac Cullaich,—

Sin na rinn thu, mar tha fhios aig do chogais. Beannachd leat.

("*Ewen.* All that's in the book, Murdo, is *bastard* Gaelic, as you say yourself, the fruit of fornication, conceived by intercourse between the *grammarian* and the English language in the schoolhouse loft; we know where all the English that's in it comes from.
Pungar. Do you think I *plagiarised* it?
Ewen. Restless is the guilty conscience:—is it the book you mean, or what's in it?
Pungar. What's in it.
Ewen. Well, I know you've taken wisps of it from here and there, and from one or two fields you've taken away the whole harvest:

You robbed Munro completely,
And took the rest from MacCulloch.

That's what you've done, as your conscience well knows. Good day to you.")

23. *The Harp of Caledonia*, Glasgow, **n.d.**: pp. 1–64. At p. 1 is: "The / Harp of Caledonia; / A Collection / of / Popular Gaelic Songs. / Clarsach na h-Alba: / no, / Orana Taghta Gaidhealach. / Bu mhòr am beud gu'm bàsaicheadh / A' chànain is fearr buaidh, / 'S i 's treis' thoirt greis air àbhachd, / 'S na h-uil' àit 'n téid a luaidh; / S i 's fearr gu aobhar-gàire, / 'S i 's binne, blàithe fuaim." There were various editions, all undated. The punctuation of the above varies slightly, while the printer's imprint underneath varies a great deal. I have seen the following, and there may be others: (1) "Glasgow: / Robert McGregor & Co., / 22 Glassford Street." (2) "Glasgow: / Robert McGregor & Co., / (India Buildings,) / 45 Bridge Street." (3) Glasgow: / John Cameron, Renfield Street; / and sold by all booksellers." (4) "Glasgow: / Archibald Sinclair, / Celtic Press, / 47 Waterloo Street." Two of these retain their cover. These covers bear advertisements which show that the book was still being printed (or at least bound) for sale in 1898. Throughout the fifty years or so during which this little book – it measures 11.5 x 7.5 cms – was reproduced, the text (pp. 3–64) never varied in any way. At p. 64 is a contents list headed: "An Clar." See Maclean 1915: 149; Ferguson and Matheson 1984, no. 1222.

24. Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted*, Edinburgh, **1845**: pp. [i*–vi*], i–xviii, 19–174. At p. [ii*] is: "A Call / to / The Unconverted / to / Turn and Live. / by / Richard Baxter, / Minister of the Gospel. / 'Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye / die?'—Ezek. xxxiii. 11. / Edinburgh: / Maclachlan, Stewart & Co. / MDCCCXLV." At p. [iii*] is: "Gairm / do'n / t-Sluagh Neo-Iompaichte / Pilleadh agus a Bhi Beò. / le / Richard Baxter, / Ministear an t-Soisgeil. / 'Pillibh, pillibh o 'ur droch shlighibh, c'arson a bhàsaich- / eas sibh?'—Esec. xxxiii. 11. / Dunéideann: / Mac-lachuinn, Stiùbhart, agus an cuideachd. / MDCCCXLV." At p. [iv*] is: "Stereotype Edition." At p. [v*] is the list of contents, and at p. [vi*] is a brief foreword headed 'Cunntas gearr mu thimchioll an leabhar so leis an Olla Calami', ending: "Tha *Olla Cotton Mather* ag innse gu'n d' rinn a leughadh urrad dhrùghadh air Prionns' anns na h-Innsibh, 's gu'n do shuidh e sìos ga leughadh a' sileadh dheur gus an d' eug e!" At p. i Baxter's introduction is headed: "Roimh-Radh. / Do gach neach mi-naomh' a leughas an leabhar so, gu h-àraidh do m' luchd-éisdeachd ann an sgìreachd Chiderminster." It is subscribed: "Richard Baxter. / Ciderminster, / Sa' bhln: 1657." The main text (pp. 19–174) is subscribed: "A' Chrìoch. / Dùnéideann clò-bhuailte le Iain Mac-Thòmais." *Call to the Unconverted* was the first work of an English divine ever to be published in Gaelic (in 1750, translated by Alexander Macfarlane). In the third edition (1811) the text was revised by Patrick Macfarlane in line with modern orthography. Maclean remarks of this edition, the fifth (1915: 10): "This version differs slightly from Macfarlane's. It was prepared for the press by John Mackenzie." See also Ferguson and Matheson 1984, no. 56.

25. Dyer's *Christ's Famous Titles*, Edinburgh, **1845**: pp. i–viii, 1–339. At p. ii is: "Christ's Famous Titles; / Believer's Golden Chain, / and / The Straight Way to Heaven, &c. / By William Dyer, / Minister of the Gospel. / 'Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is the grace given, / that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of / Christ.'—Eph. iii. 8. / Edinburgh: Maclachlan, Stewart, & Co., / MDCCCXLV." At p. iii is: "Ainmeannan Cliùiteach Chriosd; / Slàbhraidh Òir a' Chreidich, / agus / An t-Slighe Chumhann do Nèamh, &c. / Le Uilleam Dyer, / Ministear an t-Soisgeil. / Dhomhsa, a's lugha na'n tì a's lugha do na naomhaibh uile, / thugadh an gràs so, saoibhreas do-rannsaichte Chriosd a shearmonachadh / am measg nan Cinneach.'—Eph. iii. 8. / Dunéideann: Mac-Lachuinn Stiùbhard agus an

Cuideachd. / MDCCCXLV." At p. iv is: "Stereotype Edition." Dyer's foreword (pp. v–vi) is headed 'Do 'n Leughadair Chriosdail' and subscribed: "Uilleam Dyer. / Baile Lunnainn, / Bliadhna, 1665." The main text (pp. 1–339) is subscribed: "A' Chrìoch. / Dunéidean: Clò-bhuailte le Iain Mac-Thòmais." The first edition of this translation was published in Glasgow in 1817 and reprinted in Charlottetown, P.E.I., in 1832. Murchison says (1947–48: 126) that the original translator was Patrick MacFarlane, but this appears to be an error, as the translator's name is given in the 1817 edition as 'C. Maclauruinn' (Maclean 1915: 113). Of the new edition Maclean says (*ibid.*: 114): "The work was stereotyped by the publishers in 1845 and 1000 copies printed; 500 in 1860; 200 in 1870; 250 in 1875. This Edition was revised for the press by John Mackenzie." According to Ferguson and Matheson (1984, no. 921) the only surviving copies are in AUL and the library of the Gaelic Society of Inverness. This is incorrect – there are no copies in Aberdeen, but EUL has three.

26. Guthrie's *Christian's Great Interest*, Edinburgh, **1845**: pp. i–viii, 1–258. At p. ii is: "The Christian's / Great Interest: / in two parts. / by / William Guthrie, / Minister of the Gospel. / 'Wherefore the [*sic*] rather, brethren, give diligence to make your / election sure.'—*2 Pet.* i. 10. / Edinburgh: / Maclachlan, Stewart & Co. / MDCCCXLV." At p. iii is: "Còir Mhòr / A' Chriosdaidh: / ann an dà earrainn. / le / Uilleam Guthrie, / Ministear an t-Soisgeil. / 'Uime sin, a bhràithrean, deanaibh tuilleadh dìchill chum bhur / taghadh a dheanamh cinnteach.'—*2 Pead*. i. 10. / Dunéideann: / Mac-Lachuinn, Stiùbhard, agus an Cuideachd. / MDCCCXLV." At p. iv is: "Stereotype Edition." Guthrie's preface is at pp. v–vi and his main text (in two parts) at pp. 1–258, subscribed: "A' Chrìoch. / *Dùnéideann clò-bhuailte le Iain Mac-Thòmais.*" Maclean says (1915: 148): "This Edition was stereotyped and 1000 copies printed, and 500 copies in 1865. The work was again reprinted in 1894. The Editor was John Mackenzie." See also Ferguson and Matheson 1984, no. 1201.

27. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Edinburgh, **1845**: pp. i–vi, 1–413. At p. ii is: "The / Pilgrim's Progress / from this World / to the World to Come. / under the similitude of a dream. / In Three Parts. / By John Bunyan. / 'I have used similitudes.'—Hos. xii. 10. / Edinburgh: / Maclachlan, Stewart, & Co. / MDCCCXLV." A portrait of Bunyan appears as a frontispiece between pp. ii and iii. At p. iii is: "Cuairt an Eilthirich, / no / Turas a' Chriosdaidh; / o 'n t-Saoghal so / chum an t-Saoghail a ta ri Teachd. / fo shamhla bruadair. / Ann an Trì Earrannan. / Le Iain Buinian. / 'Ghnàthaich mi cosamhlachdan.'—Hos. xii. 10. / Dunéideann / Mac-Lachuinn, Stiùbhard, agus an Cuideachd. / MDCCCXLV." At p. iv is: "Stereotype Edition." Bunyan's foreword is at pp. v–vi, and his main text at pp. 1–413, subscribed: "A' Chrìoch. / *Dunéideann Clò-bhuailte le Iain Mac-Thòmais.*" This appears to be the fourth edition of the work, the translator of the first (1812) having been Robert MacFarlane. John's contribution was as editor and corrector of the press (Murchison 1947–48: 126). Maclean says (1915: 41): "In 1845, 1000 copies were struck off, and 500 copies in each of the years 1856, 1860, 1862, 1864, 1872, and 1876. Price 2s. 6d. The Editor was John Mackenzie." See also Ferguson and Matheson 1984, no. 475.

28. *Eachdraidh a' Phrionnsa*, 2nd edn, Edinburgh, **1845**: pp. 1–170 + plain card covers and blank flyleaves. At p. 3 is: "Eachdraidh a' Phrionnsa / no / Bliadhna Thearlaich: / anns am beil min-chunntas air / Taisdeal a' Phrionnsa do dh' Albhainn; / Tògbhail nam Fineachan Gaëlach 'na Aobhar; / agus / Gach Teugbhail 'bha aca r'a Naimhdean; / maille ri / Iomruagadh a' Phrionns' agus a Luchd-Leanmhuinn / an deigh Latha Chuil-Fhodair, &c. &c. / le / Iain Mac-Choinnich, / Ball Urramach de Chomunn Oisianach Ghlascho; de Chomunn na Gàëlig ann an / Lunnuinn, &c. &c.; Fear-Sgrìobhaidh 'Sàr-Obair nam Bàrd Gàëlach,' / agus 'Eachdraidh Beatha nam Bàrd,' &c. &c. &c. / Dunéideann: / Clò-bhuailte le Thornton agus Collie, / agus ra'n reic leosan. / 1845." This pocket edition contains the prose text only (re-set in smaller type), the poems having been moved into *An t-Aosdàna* (no. 15 above). See Maclean 1915: 249–50; Ferguson and Matheson 1984, no. 1854.

For the third edition (based on the first) see no. 14 above. A fourth (based on the second but re-set in 199 pp.) was published by Alexander Gardner, Paisley, in 1906. It is not mentioned in Maclean 1915, but is described in Ferguson and Matheson 1984, no. 1856.

29. Bunyan's *Sighs from Hell*, Edinburgh, **1846**: pp. i–xii, 13–254. At p. iv is: "Sighs / from Hell; / or / The Groans of a Damned Soul. / by / John Bunyan. / 'The rich man died, and in hell he lifted up his eyes.'—/ Luke xvi. 22, 23. / Edinburgh: / Maclachlan, Stewart & Co. / MDCCCXLVI." Pp. iii–iv consist of a plate bearing a portrait of Bunyan (this is not present in all surviving copies). At p. v is: "Osnaichean / bho Ifrinn; / no / Acain Anma Damnaite. / le Iain Buinian / 'Fhuair an duine saoibhir bàs agus ann an ifrinn thog e

suas a / shùilean.'—Luc xvi. 22, 23. / Dunéideann: / Mac-Lachuinn, Stiubhart, agus an Cuideachd. / MDCCCXLVI." Bunyan's preface is at pp. vii–xii and his main text at pp. 13–254, subscribed: "A' Chrìoch. / *Dùneideann: clò-bhuailte le Iain Mac-Thòmais*." Maclean says (1915: 44): "In 1846, 1000 copies were printed from the plates, and 500 copies in each of the years 1863 and 1872. The Translator was John Mackenzie." It would perhaps be more accurate to say that John revised an earlier translation by Robert MacDonald which had been published in Inverness in 1829 (Maclean, *ibid.*). See also Ferguson and Matheson 1984, no. 488.

30. Bunyan's *Water of Life*, Edinburgh, **1846**: pp. i–viii, 9–96. At p. ii is: "The / Water of Life. / by / John Bunyan. / 'And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely'— / Rev. xxii. 17. / Edinburgh: / Maclachlan, Stewart, & Co. / MDCCCXLVI." In some copies a portrait of Bunyan appears as a frontispiece between pp. ii and iii. At p. iii is: "Uisge na Beatha. / le / Iain Buinian. / 'Agus ge b'e neach leis an àill, gabhadh e uisge na beatha / gu saor.'—Tais. xxii. 17. / Dunéideann: / Mac-Lachuinn, Stiùbhard, agus an Cuideachd / MDCCCXLVI." Bunyan's preface is at pp. v–viii, and his main text at pp. 9–96, subscribed: "A' Chrìoch." At p. 23, unusually, a reference to 'uisgeachan *Epsom*, *Drochaid-thuna*, *Bhells* agus *Bhath*' ('the waters of Epsom, Tunbridge, Wells and Bath') is footnoted: "Uisgeachan méin-ioc-shlainteach Shasuinn, a ta math air leigheas cuid do ghalairean, agus a ta luchd-eucail ag òl air son fallaineachd." ("The curative mineral waters of England, which are good for healing some diseases, and which sufferers drink for health.") Maclean says (1915: 45): "In 1846, 1000 copies were printed from the plates, and 500 copies in each of the years 1862 and 1875 . . . The Translator was John Mackenzie." It would perhaps be more accurate to say that John revised an earlier translation by William MacDonald which had been published in Inverness in 1835 (Maclean, *ibid.*). See also Ferguson and Matheson 1984, no. 493.

31. John Mackenzie's *Dictionary*, Edinburgh, **1847**: pp. i–ii, 285–550. At p. i is: "An / English–Gaelic Dictionary: / being / Part Second / of the / Pronouncing Gaelic Dictionary. / Edinburgh: / Maclachlan, Stewart, & Company. / MDCCCXLVII." The text, in double columns, is at pp. 285–550, and is subscribed: "Printed and stereotyped by Stevenson and Company, / 32 Thistle Street." There is no introduction or preface. The copy I have seen is entitled 'McAlpine's Gaelic Dictionary' on the spine, even though it consists of John's part only. Ferguson and Matheson (1984, nos. 1858–66) list editions or reprints in 1847, 1890 (Maclachlan & Stewart, Edinburgh); 1930, 1936, 1943, 1950, 1962 (Alexander Maclaren, Glasgow); 1971, 1973 (Gairm, Glasgow). John's *Dictionary* was plagiarised by Malcolm Maclennan in *A Pronouncing and Etymological Dictionary of the Gaelic Language* (John Grant, Edinburgh, 1925), which was reprinted by Acair/AUP in 1979. Maclaren's edition of 1930 was, I think, the first to include John's preface, still subscribed 'JOHN MACKENZIE / *Edinburgh*, January 1847' but paged vii–x; it is described on the imprint page as first published 1845, re-issued '1847, 1853, 1858, etc.', published by MacLaren 1930, and reprinted 1936, 1943, 1950 and 1956.

John's dictionary was designed as the second part of Macalpine's *Pronouncing Gaelic–English Dictionary*, which was first published in 1832 and sometimes entitled in earlier impressions *The Argyleshire Pronouncing Gaelic Dictionary*. This work appears to have had 281 pp. from the beginning. The plates changed hands several times and corrections continued to be made until John's dictionary appeared with it in 1847. Both parts were then stereotyped by Stevenson & Co. This, at any rate, is my understanding of the tangled history of the enterprise – *pace* Maclean (1915: 172), I can find no evidence that John's part existed in 1845. John's controversial 'Preface / by the / Compiler of Part Second', subscribed 'JOHN MACKENZIE / *Edinburgh*, January 1847', was prefixed to the 1847 edition of Macalpine. Referring to 1847, Maclean says (1915: 172): "In this year Messrs. Maclachlan & Stewart bought the stereotyped plates from Stevenson, and 500 copies of the complete work were printed. 270 copies were printed in 1853; 250 in 1858; 250 in 1863; 500 in 1866; 500 in 1872; 500 in 1876. Reprints again appeared in 1881, 1891, 1903, 1906." Ferguson and Matheson (1984, nos. 1364–93) list editions and reprints in 1832 (printed for the author); 1833 (Stirling & Kennedy, Edinburgh); 1845, 1847, 1853, 1858, 1863, 1866, 1872, 1877, 1881, 1890 (Maclachlan & Stewart, Edinburgh); 1894, 1898, 1903 (John Grant, Edinburgh); 1929, 1930, 1934, 1942, 1948, 1955, 1957, 1962 (Alexander MacLaren, Glasgow); 1971, 1973 (Gairm, Glasgow).

For most of its history the Macalpine/Mackenzie dictionary also appears to have been available bound as a single volume, see Ferguson and Matheson 1984, nos. 1367–70, 1372–78, 1380, 1382–83, 1387. My own copy was published in 1930. Entitled on the spine 'Macalpine's / Pronouncing / Gaelic / Dictionary / Gaelic–English / English–Gaelic / MacLaren & Sons / Glasgow', it consists of pp. i–xvi, 1–281, i–viii, 285–549, and some unnumbered pages of advertisements (there are no pp. 282–84 at all). At the first p. i

is: "A / Pronouncing / Gaelic Dictionary / By Neil Macalpine / Glasgow: / Alexander MacLaren & Sons. / 360–362 Argyle Street." The first p. ii refers more clearly to Macalpine's part only: 'First Published 1832. / Re-issued 1833, 1845, 1853, etc. / New Large Type Edition 1929. / *Reproduced for Alex. MacLaren & Sons, from the* / *Revised Edition of 1833, Printed at Edinburgh* / *by Duncan Stevenson, Printer to the University.* / *Printed in Germany on Paper made in Britain* / *Bound in Scotland*'. The first pp. v–xvi are occupied by a key to pronunciation, list of abbreviations, and seven-page biography of Macalpine, with his portrait. (Ironically, no known portrait exists of John, but see no. 21 above.) Macalpine's text (in double columns) is at pp. 1–281. The second pp. i–viii consist of the prelim pages for John's part: at p. iii is 'An / English–Gaelic Dictionary / by John Mackenzie / Author of "The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry" / being part second of / The Pronouncing Gaelic Dictionary / Glasgow: / Alexander MacLaren & Sons / 360–362 Argyle Street, C.2'; at p. iv is 'First Published 1845. / Re-issued 1847, 1853, 1858, etc. / MacLaren's New Edition 1930. / *Reproduced for Alex. MacLaren & Sons, from the* / *Revised Edition of 1845, Printed at Edinburgh* / *Printed in Germany on Paper made in Britain* / *Bound in Scotland*'; at pp. v–viii is John's original preface, dated 1847, and at pp. 285–549 is his text.

32. Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*, Edinburgh, **1847**: pp. i–xii, 13–223. At p. ii is: "Grace Abounding / to the / Chief of Sinners. / by / John Bunyan. / 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus / Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the / chief.'—1 Tim. i. 15. / Edinburgh: / Maclachlan, Stewart, & Co. / MDCCCXLVII." In some copies a portrait of Bunyan appears as a frontispiece between pp. ii and iii. At p. iii is: "Gràs am Pailteas / do / Cheann-Feadhna nam Peacach. / le / Iain Buinian. / 'Is fior an ràdh so, agus is airidh e air gach aon chŏr air gabh- / ail ris, gu'n tàinig Iosa Criosd do'n t-saoghal a thearnadh / pheacach; d'am mise an ceud-fhear.'—1 Tim. i. 15. / Duneideann: / Mac-Lachuinn, Stiubhard, agus an Cuideachd. / MDCCCXLVII." At p. iv is: "*N.B.*—This Volume has been translated from 'Bunyan's Unabridged Works,' being the most correct edition that could be obtained; all the late publications of this little book abound so much in omissions, misprints, and wrong marked scripture references, that the Author's meaning, in many instances, is often done away with. The continuation of the Author's life, beginning at p. 209, is taken from a modern revised copy. / J. McK. / *Edinburgh, 14th June* 1847." Bunyan's preface is at pp. v–xii and his main text at pp. 13–223, subscribed: "A' Chrìoch. / Dùneideann: Clò-bhuailte le Iain Mac-Thòmais." Maclean says (1915: 46): "There is a note by the Translator, John Mackenzie. In 1847, 1000 copies were printed from the plates; 500 copies were printed in each of the years 1862 and 1872." See also Ferguson and Matheson 1984, no. 457.

33. Macintyre's *Orain agus Dana*, 5th edn, Edinburgh, **1848**: pp. i–xii, 13–224. At p. i is: "Orain agus Dana / Gaidhealach, / le / Donnachadh Ban Mac-an-t-Saoir. / Songs and Poems, / In Gaelic, / by / Duncan Ban Macintyre. / The Fifth Edition, Corrected, / with a memoir of the author's life, and notes in English. / Edinburgh: / Maclachlan, Stewart, & Co. / 1848." At pp. iii–viii is 'A Short Memoir of the Author', subscribed: "*Edinburgh*, *March* 1, 1848." The texts are at pp. 13–224. At p. 224 is: "Duneideann clò-bhuailte le Thornton agus Collie, / anns a' bhliadhna 1848." Maclean says (1915: 233): "Of this edition one thousand copies were printed."

The source for John Mackenzie's editorship is Clach. The editor's name is not given, the longer footnotes merely being signed '—ED.' The marks of John's involvement are clear to be seen, however. The book contains the largest number of Donnchadh Bàn's poems so far printed under one cover – sixty-four, two more than in John Reid's 1834 edition, the additions being the bawdy 'Òran do Chàraid Tàilleir air son Cuairt Shuirghe', restored from the first edition, and the warmly Jacobite 'Òran Eile air Blàr na h-Eaglaise Brice', of which the editor says (p. 16): "This Song, was excluded by the Author from three editions of his work printed for himself, because it was a Jacobite piece, and offensive to the Campbells, who always were his best patrons. It is here inserted for the first time, at the solicitation of many of the Bard's admirers."

John's style may be recognised in the note on 'Òran nam Briogsan' (p. 126): "The disarming and *diskilting* act was detested by the Highlanders, whose free born limbs did not agree with the fetters of the odious breeches imposed on them. There is a popular and humerous [*sic*] song, called '*The Turnimspike*,' where the same complaints are brought against the *Gray-breeks*." Moreover, in a note on 'Òran a' Bhotail', Simon Fraser of Knockie is quoted with evident approval as pointing out that the air 'has been current in the North for sixty years, as the composition of John Mac Murdo (or McRae) of Kintail, since emigrated to America'. See also Ferguson and Matheson 1984, no. 1757.

ABBREVIATIONS

AUL	Aberdeen University Library
beg.	beginning
DNB	*Dictionary of National Biography*
edn	edition
EUL	Edinburgh University Library
f(f).	folio(s)
GUL	Glasgow University Library
NLS	National Library of Scotland
TGSI	*Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*
WHFP	*The West Highland Free Press*

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'*Tam o' Shanter 's Geansaidh Snàith*': The Innovative Work Songs of Gaelic-Speaking Herring Gutters

MEG HYLAND

Introduction

In the mid-nineteenth century, the commercial fishing industry introduced a new type of itinerant labour to women in the Hebrides: gutting herring. From the 1850s to the 1950s, thousands of Hebridean women spent part of their youths away from home in the busy fishing ports of the North Sea. In this article I will address their work song, which has previously received little scholarly attention. Through an archival survey of oral history recordings held in the School of Scottish Studies Archives and Canna House, as well as published materials on Gaelic song, I have identified fifty-seven variants of eight Scottish Gaelic gutting songs (see Appendix A). My analysis of these songs will be primarily sociohistorical in nature rather than musicological, though musical genre will also form an important component.[1]

The Gaelic songs of Hebridean gutters reveal a vibrant world of economic change, female agency, and the expansion of geographical and linguistic horizons. Capturing the *Gàidhealtachd* at a moment of great transition, they reveal the adaptations women made to Gaelic work and dance song when faced with new work contexts. I will argue that while gutting songs grew out of the female communal work song tradition, gutters favoured singing *puirt-à-beul* ('mouth music', typically used for dancing) to accompany the quick work of gutting. Gutting song has historically been excluded from studies of Gaelic work song. In part, this is due to an ambiguity of genre; the songs are variously classified as *puirt-à-beul* and different types of work songs, such as waulking and spinning songs, an ambiguity which will be explored throughout this article. However, I will also argue that their association with the relatively recent commercial fishing industry, rather than the agricultural and domestic work contexts which have historically dominated the interests of work song collectors and commentators, has contributed to their invisibility in Gaelic song scholarship. The songs' fluidity of genre and their full engagement with the multilingual landscape of the fishing industry call for a reassessment of standard narratives about the effects that outside influences had on the Gaelic work and dance song traditions in the twentieth century.

1. The Gutters and Their Songs

In this section, I will introduce the evidence for women singing while gutting and then give an overview of the body of gutting songs I researched. I will then analyse contextual information which enables different variants of the songs to be dated, concluding with a rough

[1] This article is an adaptation of my MSc thesis in Celtic and Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh. The title of this article comes from a bilingual line of one of the fish gutting songs: *tam o' shanter 's geansaidh snàith*, meaning "a tam o' shanter hat and a knitted jumper", a reference to the fishermen's clothing.

chronological guide to the oldest known variants of each song. Throughout the analysis, key contributors of gutting songs will be introduced.

1.1 Singing at the Gutting

The nineteenth century saw a profound shift in Hebridean fishing practice. Although Hebridean people had long engaged in subsistence fishing, islanders' employment in the commercial fishing industry, based in the Lowlands, increased substantially from the 1850s to the 1880s (Domhnallach and Davenport 1987: 15–20). Hundreds of Hebridean women began working as gutters and packers (Macdonald 1978: 104). Within a generation, herring came to feature prominently in the lives of many Hebridean women; in Stornoway in 1887, for example, there were 1,212 women working as gutters (known as *clann-nighean an sgadain* in Gaelic), about

Figure 1. Women gutting at a farlan. © The Scottish Fisheries Museum

800 of whom were from Lewis and Harris alone (Domhnallach and Davenport 1987: 16–20). As soon as the catch was landed, the women began gutting and packing the herring into barrels, curing them with salt so that they could be sold all over Europe. Women worked in teams of three – two gutters and a packer – and several teams would work at one farlan, a wooden trough set up on the pier (Wilkins 2018: 85–86; See Fig. 1). The gutters were employed by curers, men who owned the gutting yards and paid the women by the barrel (Watt 2004: 96–104).

Not only did women gut at their home ports, but they travelled all over Scotland and England to follow the herring shoals. The season ran from May to November, beginning in the Hebrides before moving clockwise around the coast of Britain, through the Northern Isles and the fishing ports of the Moray Firth and the east Fife coast, all the way down to East Anglia, where the season ended in the winter in Lowestoft and Yarmouth (Wilkins 2018: 21). In the early days, women would take boats to each of these destinations; later, special trains were also set up to transport workers between mainland ports (Macleod 1988). Sometimes gutters worked in Ireland, the Isle of Man, and even Newfoundland (Watt 2004: 81; Stewart 2016). Gutters

could start working as young as ten (Watt 2004: 38). However, they typically began as young teenagers, often working until they got married but sometimes continuing well into adulthood (Wilkins 2018: 21). This meant that for many young Hebridean women, working as a gutter was not only a source of employment, but an opportunity to travel and meet people from all over Britain and beyond. Thousands of women left home for the first time, accompanied by their peers and meeting a wide range of other young people, leading to a situation where 'every young island girl looked forward to the time when they were old enough to get away to the fishing' (Macleod 1988). Hebridean women worked alongside gutters from Lowland Scotland and England as well as Ireland, Man, Sweden and Norway (MacKenzie 2019; Watt 2004: 132–133). The working conditions could be gruelling at times, since the women had to continue gutting until all of the fish had been cured; sometimes they were still gutting after midnight (Lawrie et al. 1988: 25). However, they routinely report that it was an incredibly happy time in their lives (e.g. MacNeil 1974; Hughes and Hughes 2016). The decline of the herring industry in the mid-twentieth century means that this form of itinerant labour only lasted about a hundred years. Across that period, however, it impacted the lives of thousands of Hebridean women.

One aspect of their lives which has received little scholarly attention is the role of music. Dancing was a regular feature of the women's lives. Dances were often held in their lodgings on Saturday nights, since there was no fishing on a Sunday (Domhnallach and Davenport 1987: 110–112; M. Morrison 1974a; Macleod 1988). The men sometimes brought melodeons or fiddles to accompany the dancing; although fishermen were not supposed to have instruments on the boats, they sometimes smuggled melodeons aboard so that they could use them at these dances (Domhnallach and Davenport 1987: 110–112; Innes 1988). At other times, however, the Gaelic-speaking women would accompany dancing themselves by singing *puirt-à-beul*, and some women even achieved reputations as good singers of *puirt* among their colleagues (M. Morrison 1974a; MacMillan 1974; Johnson 1969b; MacNeil 1970).

Figure 3. Scottish gutters knitting in Lowestoft. © The Scottish Fisheries Museum

Figure 2. Gutters on their way to work. © The Scottish Fisheries Museum.

Gutters' singing went beyond evening recreation. They sang on the way to work, whether on the trains that brought them to port or while travelling from their huts to the gutting yards (Macleod 1988; see Fig. 2). While waiting for the catch to land, they were always knitting, and

some women sang while doing this (Macleod 1988; Nic a' Ghobhainn 2016; see Fig. 3). They even sang while striking for higher wages, which happened several times in the early twentieth century (Macleod 1988; Thompson et al. 1983: 169–172). Perhaps most remarkably, however, they also sang *while* gutting, meaning that the herring industry stimulated a new context for work song among Gaelic-speaking women. They came to the gutting with a long tradition of singing while working, most famously while waulking tweed (Bennett 2007: 40–43). In the gutting yards, this tradition was applied to the new work of gutting great quantities of fish at high speeds – some women gutted fifty fish a minute (Macleod 1988). The knives they used were very sharp, meaning that the women often sustained injuries to their hands which were made worse by the curing salt. They wrapped their hands with cloth bandages (known in Scots as *clooties*) in order to prevent further damage, and children would sometimes stand to attention in the gutting yards ready to provide more (Patrick 2003: 52).

In such high-paced and dangerous work, communal singing helped coordinate the women's movements and maintain focus (Wilkins 2018: 87). Lizy MacMillan of Barra reported that she and the other women sang 'anything' while gutting, but dancing tunes in particular (1974). An English gutter recalled that 'as one passed through Lower Pultney in Wick, one could hear them singing the lovely Gaelic songs as they worked at the herring' (Domhnallach and Davenport 1987: 56–59). Gaelic-speaking women were not alone in singing while gutting. Maggie Durno, a gutter interviewed by Buckie Heritage, said that there were 'twa o ye ti ae barrel, singin a the time in a'' (Durno and Durno 1988). When writing of how the women sometimes had to keep gutting after dark, Mary Bella Findlay of Whitehills described herself and her colleagues singing 'My eyes are dim, I cannot see' (a line from the folk song 'The Quartermaster's Stores') and commented, 'We sang a lot at work: I sometimes think we sang to stop ourselves crying' (Lawrie et al. 1988: 25).

The most detailed academic work on gutting songs has been done by Frances Wilkins (2018). Her research explored the effects of evangelical Christian revivals on the fishing communities of North East Scotland (6). She found that these revivals instigated the singing of hymns in many different contexts in fishing communities, including the gutting, where women started singing hymns while they worked. They favoured hymns with nautical themes, relating their choice of repertoire directly to their own lives (88). Not all of the Scots-speaking women sang hymns; others sang 'the popular songs of the day, including well known Scottish and Irish folk and music hall songs' (Wilkins 2018: 87; cf. Innes 1988; Motion 2017). However, Wilkins argues that the singing of hymns in particular demonstrates how 'the gospel repertoire was used as a form of testimony, prayer and work song', transforming secular work into a devotional act (2018: 89).

While her analysis highlights the profound impact of evangelical revival on gutters' repertoires and brings to light crucial contextual evidence about the practice of singing while gutting, it is of limited application when understanding the repertoire of Gaelic-speaking gutters. Gutting song was only a small part of Wilkins's much larger project about sacred song in fishing communities in the North East. It was never her intention to analyse gutting song as a whole or in Gaelic, and indeed, her work serves as a model and inspiration for the present analysis which seeks to bridge the language divide by subjecting gutting song in Gaelic to similar levels of scrutiny. In the same vein, gutting song was addressed in several places in the book *Rhythms of Labour: Music at Work in Britain* (Korczynski et al 2013: 56, 100–112, 130). The authors were primarily interested in assessing the ways singing built a sense of community among fish gutters and drew significantly from oral history interviews conducted by Jane Liffen for her PhD research (Liffen 2007). Although Gaelic-speaking gutters were briefly

mentioned, the book focused on the experiences of women from the North East, particularly while they were working as itinerant gutters in England.

The only other researcher who has investigated gutting songs in Scottish Gaelic is Maggie Smith, who undertook a substantial amount of unpublished research on the topic as preparation for her play *Os Mo Chionn Sheinn an Uiseag: A Souvenir of Great Yarmouth*. My interview of Smith in 2016 will be referenced periodically throughout this paper (Smith 2016). Beyond her work, no systematic survey of Gaelic gutters' repertoire has ever been undertaken (see Section 4). The following paper will build on this small foundation to expand our understanding of this under-studied area of Gaelic work song.

1.2 The Songs

In the course of my research, I identified eight discrete Gaelic songs which were used as work songs among herring gutters. An additional Manx Gaelic gutting song was also identified, but its provenance is unclear. Of the eight Scottish Gaelic gutting songs, there are in total fifty-seven variants, combining printed and recorded materials. While I endeavoured to be as exhaustive as possible in my search, several of these variants were happened upon by chance, and it is reasonable to assume that there are other variants in the School of Scottish Studies Archives and elsewhere which have yet to be identified. The high level of variability in song titles is largely responsible for this discrepancy. In addition to the eight primary gutting songs, seven songs were identified which were composed or transmitted by gutters but whose rhythms and structure suggest they were not used as work songs. This study will not focus on these songs in as much detail, but they will sometimes be referenced in the course of the wider analysis. Most of the songs go under various names, a full list of which can be seen in Appendix A, but a list of the eight work songs under the names used in this paper are as follows:

Title	**Translation**	**Variants**
'*Rionnag às an oidhche fhrasaich*'	'A star out of a showery sky'	15
'*Caolas eadar mi 's mo luaidh*'	'A strait between me and my love'	21
'*Cha dèan mise fuireach riut*'	'I won't be waiting for you'	2
'*Chan e taigh air am bi tughadh*'	'It's not a thatched house [that I want]'	6
'*Nuair a sheinneas ise 'n fhìdeag*'	'When she plays the whistle'	1
'*Haoi o nach dannsadh sibh e*'	'*Haoi o* won't you all dance it?'	1
'*Càit' am bi na maraichean*'	'Where will the sailors be?'	7
'*Tha fear a muigh a' fuireach rium*'	'There's a man out waiting for me'	3

Most variants lack contextual evidence which could establish their time of composition and transmission more specifically than the early- to mid-twentieth century. However, occasionally there is evidence from either internal references or information about the contributor's life that has enabled me to date variants more precisely.

The oldest two songs are Nan MacKinnon's versions of '*Chan e taigh air am bi tughadh*' and '*Haoi o nach dannsadh sibh e*' (1958c; 1958d). MacKinnon is one of the School's most prolific contributors, whose repertoire of over 400 songs has been described as being 'the most varied and extensive in the archives of the School' (Campbell and Collinson 1977: 10;

MacInnes 1972: 201; see Fig. 4). Like many of her songs, she learned these two from her mother, a native of Mingulay. Her mother heard the song from Lewis women working at the gutting. MacKinnon's mother worked as a gutter before she married around 1890 at the age of twenty-two. The transmission of this song may have happened at any point in the 1880s, when she worked as a gutter in Fraserburgh, Peterhead and Aberdeen (MacKinnon 1958e). MacKinnon herself worked as a herring gutter (MacInnes 1972: 201) but specifically traces these songs to her mother. Her version of '*Haoi o nach dannsadh sibh e*' is the only variant of that song I was able to find, while her version of '*Chan e taigh air am bi tughadh*' is the only one not provided by Mary Morrison of Barra.

Figure 4. Nan MacKinnon, photographed by James Ross in 1958. © The School of Scottish Studies Archives

Mary Morrison was recorded singing gutting songs more often than any other contributor (see Fig. 8 and Appendix B). Born in Barra in 1894, Morrison worked as a gutter from a young age. The song described as her 'masterpiece' (M. Morrison 1974b), which she recorded three times, was a variant of '*Caolas eadar mi 's mo luaidh*' (see Appendix A). Morag MacLeod published a transcription and translation of it (1993: 240–243). It contains many verses which do not appear in any other version. The unique verses she provides date her version of the song to 1922 or later. She sings that the boats *Honeydew* and *Fair Weather* are coming into the bay (MacLeod 1993: 243).

Figure 5. The Honeydew (with its later registration number BF122) in Fraserburgh, late 1940s © The Scottish Fisheries Museum

Figure 6. KY47 Fairweather in Anstruther, pictured left, date unknown © The Scottish Fisheries Museum

The fishermen’s almanacs of 1901, 1903, 1910, 1920 and 1922 are complete accounts of every fishing boat registered in the United Kingdom in those years. The only boats which match those named in Morrison’s song are the herring drifters KY47 *Fairweather* of Pittenweem and the BCK96 *Honeydew* of Buckie (see Figs. 5 and 6). Built in 1911, the *Honeydew* first appears in the 1920 almanac, but the *Fairweather* does not appear until 1922 (Almanack: 1920 and 1922). This suggests Morrison was still working as a gutter in 1922, aged twenty-eight, at which time she probably composed her own verses of this song.

Peigi MacRae’s gutting songs were also transmitted in 1922. These are ‘*Cha dèan mise fuireach riut*’ (1951b) and two variants of ‘*Caolas eadar mi ’s mo luaidh*’ (1951a; 1955). MacRae grew up in South Uist. She and her sister Màiri became close friends of folklore collector Margaret Fay Shaw, who lived with them while doing her fieldwork (see Fig. 7). Before Margaret moved in with them, however, MacRae spent eleven weeks in 1922 gutting in Shetland, the only time she engaged in this line of work (MacKenzie 2019). This brief transmission period for her gutting songs means that all of her gutting-related repertoire dates to 1922.

Figure 7. Màiri and Peigi MacRae in South Uist. Reproduced by kind permission of the Margaret Fay Shaw Photographic Archives, Canna House, National Trust for Scotland

There are four further versions of ‘*Caolas eadar mi ’s mo luaidh*’ which date to before Mary Morrison’s and Peigi MacRae’s variants. Christina MacKinnon of Barra and Mary MacKay of Lewis both contributed variants which can be dated to between about 1903 and 1905. MacKinnon was born in 1886 and left for the gutting at age seventeen, working for at least two years (MacKinnon 1970). She therefore gutted between approximately 1903 and 1905, learning the song at that point. MacKay, on the other hand, learned the song as a waulking song at her mother’s waulking table in Stornoway when she was a child of ten or twelve (1957a). Although her date of birth is not known, her husband, the fiddler Geordie MacKay, was born around 1893 (MacKay 1956); if they are the same age, that would date her learning of ‘*Caolas eadar mi ’s mo luaidh*’ to between about 1903 and 1905. Another version of the song dates to sometime before WWI. Morag Johnson of South Uist worked as a gutter before the war (1969b). Thus, her versions of both ‘*Caolas eadar mi ’s mo luaidh*’ and ‘*Nuair a sheinneas ise ’n fhìdeag*’ date to that time. Her contribution of the latter song is the only version of that song I could locate (1969a).

The oldest variant of ‘*Caolas eadar mi ’s mo luaidh*’, however, may be Marion Morrison’s version (1968). Morrison’s song contains several verses unknown in other versions.

In one, she sings that her lover is sailing *an eathar mòr an Irish*, in the large boat belonging to 'an Irish'. Maggie Smith has identified 'an Irish' as Malcolm Macritchie of Uig, who was known by this byname locally (personal correspondence). He was the eldest of the Reef Raiders who were arrested for occupying Reef in 1913 in an attempt to resettle the village, which had been cleared in the mid-19th century. When Reef was finally resettled in 1921, he moved there from Kneep with his family (Hebridean Connections 2020c). Later in Morrison's song, she sings that one of Macritchies's sons, *mac an Irish*, is in Uig, and she expects to marry him (1968). Only two of Malcolm's five sons married. Donald Macritchie, known as Dòmhnall an Irish, born 1895, served in the RNR and married an unknown woman in Hull (Hebridean Connections 2020b). The song does refer to a man called Dòmhnall Donn fixing a broken oar on Macritchie's boat, but he may have been a different man who lived in the Reef/Kneep area (Maggie Smith, personal correspondence). The other son who married was Norman Macritchie, Tormod an Irish, born in 1877. He worked as a line fisherman out of Aberdeen and married Catherine O'Hare there in 1898 (Hebridean Connections 2020d). O'Hare herself had been born in Lochgilphead under the surname Kerley, but after her parents met an unknown fate she was adopted by the O'Hare family of Carishader (Hebridean Connections 2020a). Of the two brothers, Norman's profession as a fisherman makes him a more likely candidate for the *mac an Irish* named in the song. If the song is indeed about him, then the verses about him and his father's boat must have been composed before 1898, since the singer expects to marry him. They may have even been composed by Catherine O'Hare herself; Aberdeen is on the fishing route so it is not even out of the question that she may have been a gutter. Regardless of the composer's identity, if Norman is the *mac an Irish* this would push the earliest known date of '*Caolas eadar mi 's mo luaidh*' to before his marriage in 1898. Since the song could refer to Dòmhnall an Irish, however, who was only born in 1895, this is not an iron-clad date, but it nevertheless suggests the song's origins *could* go back to the 19th century.While variants of '*Caolas eadar mi 's mo luaidh*' are the most numerous, the song which shows the most textual instability between variants is '*Rionnag às an oidhche fhrasaich*'. Hamish Henderson described this song as a 'floating song in the Western Hebrides' of which 'you get versions […] in Lewis especially' (MacLennan and MacLennan 1960). While this is true of all the gutting songs to some extent, some variants of this song are so different that it is not entirely clear they are all the same song. The two verses which appear in most variants begin *Rionnag às an oidhche fhrasaich* ('a star out of a showery sky') and *Rud nach fhaca duin' air thalamh* ('something no one on earth has seen'). The former appears in the versions sung by Peigi Oighrig MacIver (1949); Mary MacKay (1957b); Peggy MacLean (1958); Dolina MacLennan (e.g. 1958a); and Norman MacAskill (e.g. 1975b). The latter verse appears in the versions sung by Peigi Oighrig MacIver (1949); Kitty and Marietta MacLeod (1952); and Dolina

Figure 8. Mary Morrison in the 1920s. © The School of Scottish Studies Archives

MacLennan (e.g. 1958a). That verse also appears printed in the *Eilean Fraoich*, but under a song titled '*Abu chuibhl'*' (Comunn 1938: 60–61). This '*Abu chuibhl'*' shares many verses in common with other recorded variants of '*Rionnag às an oidhche fhrasaich*' but has a different tune and different vocables and is notably missing the *rionnag* verse. While this initially suggests that two different songs share a substantial number of lyrics, matters are further complicated by Mary Morrison's recording (1956d). Her song is given the name '*Abo Chuidhil*' in the chronological register even though that phrase does not appear in the recording. However, its tune resembles both the printed melody of '*Abu Chuibhl'*' (Comunn 1982: 55) and recordings of '*Rionnag às an oidhche fhrasaich*'. Although it has several unique verses, it shares many lyrics with both of those songs, particularly Dolina MacLennan's recording of '*Rionnag às an oidhche fhrasaich*' (1958a). *Eilean Fraoich* labels '*Abu Chuibhl'*' a waulking song, and commercial recordings have characterised it as a spinning song – an example of the ambiguity of genre alluded to above (e.g. Believe SAS 2018).

The missing link in the chain may be Kate MacLeod's recording of '*Abu Chuibhl'*', which directly follows her performance of '*Caolas eadar mi 's mo luaidh*' (1955a; 1955b). While this song has the same melody as that printed in *Eilean Fraoich*, its vocable refrain begins with the sound of *abu chui* but becomes *abu chuidil uidil uidil*, the quick percussive rhythm of which bears some resemblance to Mary Morrison's *o ato i o ari | hio itil arii*. Kate MacLeod's version also includes the *rionnag* verse which other versions of '*Abu Chuibhl'*' do not, further suggesting the link between the songs. While the exact relationship between these variants remains unclear, this is evidently a song which has morphed to have many different uses and verses. Usually in Gaelic work song, the vocable refrain is the key identifying feature between variants (Campbell and Collinson 1969: 227–228). While these variants do not all carry the same vocable refrain, the similarities of melody and lyrics between them have led me to cautiously consider them all as variants of the same song. I have not been able to date any variants of this song earlier than *Eilean Fraoich's* 1938 publication of '*Abu Chuibhl'*' (60–61).

The remaining song for which there is dating evidence available is '*Tha fear a-muigh a' fuireach rium*'. In her book *Sheòl Mi 'n-Uiridh,* Màiri Nic a' Ghobhainn writes that the song was composed by Lewis gutters while gutting in Barra. This version contains lines about the singer's lover serving aboard the *HMS Virginian* (Nic a' Ghobhainn 2009: 128). The ship served in WWI and was renamed in 1920, meaning that this verse, at least, must date to before then ('HMS Virginian' 2016). The two variants of this song held in the School of Scottish Studies Archives do not include this verse (cf. MacArthur and MacLean 1954; MacLeod 1956). Finally, although I located seven variants of '*Càit am bi na maraichean*', there is no evidence available with which to determine a date of composition or transmission for any variant.

In conclusion, the earliest known dates of each song are as follows:

Title	**Earliest Known Date**	**Source**
Rionnag às an oidhche fhrasaich	1938* *if same as *Abu Chuibhl'*	Eilean Fraoich (Comunn 1938: 60–61)
Caolas eadar mi 's mo luaidh	c. 1903 – c. 1905 or before 1898	Christina MacKinnon (1970) Marion Morrison (1968)
Cha dèan mise fuireach riut	1922	Peigi MacRae (1951b)
Chan e taigh air am bi tughadh	1880s	Nan MacKinnon (1958c)
Nuair a sheinneas ise 'n fhìdeag	before 1914	Morag Johnson (1969b)
Haoi o nach dannsadh sibh e	1880s	Nan MacKinnon (1958d)

Càit' am bi na maraichean	?	N/A
Tha fear a muigh a' fuireach rium	1914–1918	*Sheòl Mi 'n-Uirid*h (Nic a' Ghobhainn 2009: 128)

While each song is probably older than its first dateable variant, the above table gives an overview of the time range which will inform the following discussion of gutting song composition, from about the 1880s to the 1930s.

Before proceeding to analyse the contents of these songs, a final disclaimer is necessary about how I determined which songs to consider gutters' work songs. As explained above (see Section *1.1*), there is ample evidence to indicate that Gaelic-speaking women did sing songs while gutting, in particular *puirt-à-beul.* However, recordings of individual songs are rarely prefaced with the explicit information that they were learned from gutters *while gutting*, as opposed to the other occasions for music-making in their lives such as dances or knitting. The phrase 'at the gutting' (in Gaelic, *aig a' chutadh*), when used to describe the time a contributor heard the song, does not technically rule out these other music-making opportunities in the gutters' lives since this phrase is also used to describe a woman's time as a gutter in general. The only Gaelic song which has been explicitly referred to as a gutting work song is '*Caolas eadar mi 's mo luaidh*'. When Christina MacKinnon related her version of the song, it was described as *òran luaidh na cutadh*, or the 'gutters' waulking song' (1970). While the other seven songs are never so explicit about their function, they have all been included due to very strong links to the gutting in their transmission, subject and contributor. Other songs which were closely associated with gutters, but not in such a way that led me to conclude they could be work songs, are also included in a section below the work songs (see Appendix A). Although the number of songs which I have been able to identify as gutting work songs is relatively small, these songs represent a chronological range of at least fifty years. Their contents reflect a rich and exciting time in the lives of young Hebridean women, the most salient themes of which will be explored below.

Figure 9. Interior of gutters' accommodation c. 1900. Walker and McGregor 1999: 35. Provenance unknown.

2. Themes in Gutting Song

In this section, I will analyse the lyrics of the gutting songs to explore two major types of thematic content in the songs: the women's economic environment, and their relationships with men. I will argue that these songs demonstrate that gutters played an active role in ushering in economic change in the Hebrides and in negotiating their relationships with men.

2.1 Economic Themes

Working in the front lines of the commercial fishing industry, the gutters

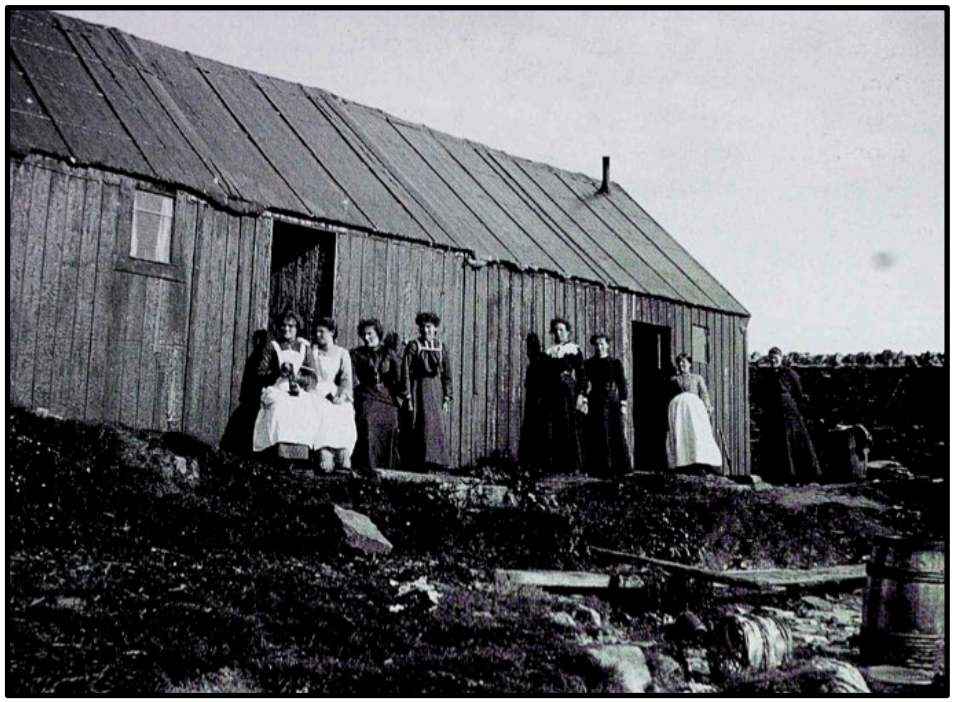

Figure 10. Single-storey block of gutters' housing in Shetland, c. 1900. Walker and McGregor 1999: 36. Provenance unknown.

were part of a new era in the economy of the *Gàidhealtachd*. Their songs reflect this. While some women also had experience of employment from working in domestic service, for others who had only worked in the context of subsistence crofting, this was the first time they were directly employed for wages (Macleod 1988). As such, it is unsurprising that the names of employers occasionally appear in the songs. Some of the gutting songs name the curers who employed them in reference to the lodgings they built for the women. Curers built temporary housing for their employees (Leitch 2003: 224–235; Walker and McGregor 1999: 31; see Figs. 9 and 10). The gutting crews and fishermen would gather in them on Saturday nights for dances. The oldest musical reference to a curer comes in Nan MacKinnon’s ‘*Haoi o nach dannsadh sibh e*’ (1958d), which dates back to the 1880s (see Section 1.2). The song is about people dancing merrily in the houses of Alig Steven, who MacKinnon reported worked as a curer. Alig Steven was likely the head of Alexander Stephen and Sons, curers from Peterhead who operated curing stations in Shetland (Walker and McGregor 1999: 44–46). In this song, the curer primarily serves as a backdrop to the dancing which is of more immediate interest to the singer.

Other curers were mentioned in the context of the fishing work itself. Two different variants of ‘*Caolas eadar mi ’s mo luaidh*’ refer to a man called MacIver. Maggie Smith learned a version of the song from Morag MacLeod which contained lines about the *Fear Not* bringing in herring for MacIver (Smith 2016). Through her research, Smith determined that this referred to Duncan MacIver, a curer from Stornoway who owned a gutting yard in Yarmouth. He also owned yards in Shetland (Walker and McGregor 1999: 44–46). While the name *Fear Not* is too common for fishing boats to identify the specific boat referenced in this version of the song, MacIver’s name appears again in Mary Morrison’s versions which, as explained above, must date to later than 1920 (see Section 1.2). Mary sings of how her boyfriend aboard the *Honeydew* is bringing in a *shottie*, privately owned by MacIver (MacLeod 1993: 242–243). *Shottie* is a Scots word which can signify a catch of fish (‘Shottie’ 2019). The BCK96 *Honeydew* was

owned by J. Cowie and others of Buckie (Almanack 1920), so the private ownership refers not to the boat itself, but to the catch of herring, which belongs to the curer. The only song which goes into more detail about individual curers is '*Earnaisean 's duaisean air gluasad gu tighinn*' ('Earnests and wages are on the way'), but this was written from a man's perspective addressing a gutter (MacKinnon 1958b); there is no indication that women ever sang it while working (see Appendix A).

Overall, the references to curers in gutting songs reflect the women's experiences working directly for these middle men of the herring trade, something which would have been a new experience to many of them who had never before worked in commercial ventures. The relationships between gutters and curers were not always good, with gutters occasionally striking to raise wages in protest of what they considered exploitative economic practices (Thompson et al. 1983: 169–172; cf. Watt 2004: 102–104, 122–125). However, the gutting songs which mention the curers do not reflect these tensions. They instead engage with the curers primarily as background figures influencing the action of their lives, declining to pass any direct comment on their character.

While the temporary lodgings that the curers built for the women featured in some of their songs, far more recordings make reference to the houses the singers expected their sweethearts to build them when they returned home. Mary Morrison's versions of '*Chan e taigh air am bi tughadh*' are centred around the premise of what kind of house she wants her lover to build: She doesn't want a thatched house, but a white house with running water and a new carpet under her feet.[2] The reasons for this are suggested by the rest of the song's lyrics, which detail how in spite of much negotiation about the best time and place to meet, the lovers' rendezvous is foiled anyway by an old woman who catches them in the act in the singer's current living arrangements (e.g. 1956b). The desire for a white house is echoed in Norman MacAskill's versions of '*Rionnag às an oidhche fhrasaich*', where he sings that the house and the floor will be white-washed to keep his sweetheart healthy (e.g. 1975b). In the closely related '*Abu Chuibhl"* (see Section 1.2), Kate MacLeod sings that she will fill all the nooks and crannies of the house with whitewash so that her sweetheart doesn't get dirty (1955b).

This preoccupation with modern housing captures a snapshot of a time of monumental transition in the domestic architecture of the Hebrides. The houses which Mary Morrison's song rejects are the traditional thatched houses which had served the Hebrides for centuries, but by the mid-twentieth century they were falling out of use. In 1953, Colin Sinclair wrote, 'Standards of living yield to change, and what pertains to-day may be discarded to-morrow. These houses are the survivals of a phase of Gaelic life of which but the scene remains [… but] while these old dwellings are rapidly diminishing in number, many remain in occupancy at the present day' (8). The turn of the twentieth century saw the beginnings of a shift away from thatched roofs to slate, pantiles and felt (Beaton 1997: 99–100). The black houses, or *taighean dubha*, were built out of local materials and suited the local conditions, meeting the needs of people whose lives were primarily lived outdoors but needed shelter from the wind and rain (Pride 1996: 16; Carruthers and Frew 2003: 90–91). The older ones were built of turf and often had no windows. The new white houses, or *taighean geala*, were by contrast built of whitewashed stone walls and had a slated roof (Pride 1996: 16, 64). White houses started appearing elsewhere in Scotland in the eighteenth century and were occasionally built in the

[2] I am grateful to Margaret Stewart for pointing out that the transcribed *bùth* (shop) should actually be *bùrn* (water) here, the error possibly arising as a mondegreen and/or from Mary Morrison's Barra accent.

Hebrides for wealthier people such as ministers, but it was not until the twentieth century that they started replacing black houses in the Hebrides in earnest (Carruthers and Frew 2003: 90–93). As early as the 1880s, however, Nan MacKinnon's mother was singing in '*Haoi o nach dannsadh sibh e*' of how her sweetheart was building a white house for her with a wooden floor and stairs, foreshadowing the coming change (1958d). The construction of semi-detached villas and bungalows took off in Scotland in the 1930s, with over 47,000 such houses built across the country. Coloured washes were particularly favoured on the west coast where they helped protect against rain (Carruthers and Frew 2003: 93, 101–102). By the time Alan Lomax visited the Hebrides in the early 1950s, the shift to 'two-storey, whitewashed houses with slate roofs' was already well underway (Bennett 2007: 38).

While the changes in Hebridean housing have been attributed to different itinerant Gaels such as soldiers and returning emigrants (MacLeod 1996: 128), the gutting songs which eagerly anticipate whitewashed houses suggest that the women who travelled all around the country to work as gutters were also key actors in this architectural shift. The song '*Càit am bi na maraichean*' is a catalogue of all the places sailors go to dance with women when the weather keeps them from the sea. All variants of this song include *taighean geala* in these destinations, in either Lerwick, Gordon, or Greenock (e.g. Chaimbeul 2002: 75–77). In Shetland, participation in the fishing industry escalated from the 1870s onwards and led to a marked improvement in the economic status of ordinary islanders, a change reflected in local architecture where stone walls and wooden floors began to dominate. Thus, it was the commercial fishing industry that prompted the transition towards 'post-vernacular' architecture in Shetland (Tait 2012: 507–512). A similar process happened in the Hebrides, where in spite of local alterations, the domestic architectural model which predominates today is one which was imported from elsewhere rather than a strictly vernacular form (Carruthers and Frew 2003: 90–93). Itinerant gutters saw these more modern houses and aspired to have their own when they returned home.

In contrast to the cheerfulness with which the gutters sang of wanting their new houses, the shift away from the black house has often been portrayed in negative terms. For example, the strain which this hope for domestic upgrades could put on the men expected to pay for and construct them has been explored in prose by Iain Moireach (1973: 39–44). It has even been suggested that the transition to carpets was one factor in the decline of the *taigh cèilidh* or ceilidh house, the traditional focal point for music-making in Gaelic culture. Morag MacLeod argues that 'beautiful light-coloured carpets, which became practical because they could be kept clean by electric vacuum cleaners, are discouraging to courteous visitors who are afraid they might dirty them' (MacLeod 1996: 128). Surely this was not the intent of the gutters who brought ideas of mainstream Scottish architecture back home, given the hosting of their own ceilidhs in their gutting huts. Nevertheless, the impacts of architectural change on the Hebrides have been profound and more far-reaching than the gutters and others who aspired for this change may have ever anticipated.

The other main economic themes at play in the gutting songs are to do with the work of catching and gutting fish. The main reference the women made to their own work was in discussing the herring coming in to be gutted, such as the version of '*Caolas eadar mi 's mo luaidh*' that Maggie Smith learned from Morag MacLeod. Smith sings of boats so heavy with fish for the curers that the water has risen up to the boats' registration numbers in the harbour (2016). In her version of the same song, Christina MacKinnon sang that there were no herring coming out of the loch, with only *sgadan grod* ('rotten herring') left for Calder, who was presumably a curer (1970). These lyrics may refer to a situation where there is not enough fresh

herring being caught and sold, or it may simply reflect the disgust with which women sometimes viewed the fish they gutted. Annie MacNeil, Mary Morrison's niece, said of her experiences as a gutter, 'We'd never see the bottom of the farlans for weeks and weeks. We used to go down and put a face to the herring' (1974). She also reported that the gutters themselves rarely ate the herring ''cause we were sick [of] looking at it' and that the herring they were given to eat was usually old and unappetising. Aside from their own work, the work of the fishermen also merited occasional mention. Mary Morrison's version of '*Caolas eadar mi 's mo luaidh*' features the most extensive treatment of this topic. In a series of verses about her lover's life aboard a fishing boat, she sings of how he is a deck-hand, how he works in the engine room, and how engine trouble has forced him to raise a red alarm light and keeps him from coming home sooner (MacLeod 1993: 242–243).

Beyond the fishing work, there are occasional references in the songs to the wider world of agriculture. After all, women who worked the herring season still had to return home to crofting communities in the Hebrides once the season was over. Some gutting songs, such as Dolina MacLennan's version of '*Caolas eadar mi 's mo luaidh*' which included lines about eating curds and drinking cream at Anna Finlay's shieling, may have been songs of the shieling before they circulated in fishing communities, though the difficulty of dating song variants make this difficult to prove (1958b; Maggie Smith, personal correspondence). Shielings for the care of cattle and dairy production remained operative in Lewis until the mid-twentieth century, the last survival of a system which had existed in the Irish Sea region since at least the early medieval period (Cheape 1996: 12).

The shieling system and the gutting work have several characteristics in common, despite being in pursuit of the different economic goals of subsistence agriculture and commercial fisheries. Both activities were summer seasonal work for young women which involved being away from their usual domestic setting. Because of the relative independence and youth of the women who worked on shielings, shielings took on connotations of pre-marital sex and youthful merriment, to the extent that 'some expression of female sexuality was integral to the social construction of seasonal upland sites in northern Europe', including in the Hebrides where the young men's visits would often include dancing and music (Costello 2018: 168–171). Gaelic poetry is full of references to summer frivolities at the shielings (e.g. Meek 2003: 6–7; cf. MacLeod 1996: 127–129). The gutting was likewise an opportunity for young women to spend time away from parental supervision and meet other young people. For many young women, it was a time of romantic intrigue and courtship; the end of the fishing season in the winter typically saw many marriages between gutters and fishermen (Hughes and Hughes 2016). The line about eating curds and drinking cream appears in other variants of '*Caolas eadar mi 's mo luaidh*', but MacLennan's version is the only one which makes direct reference to a shieling; the others comment on how the man ate an entire summer's worth of cheese, but it won't make him any taller, and the summer in Fraserburgh at the gutting is sometimes referenced instead of the shielings (e.g. Gillies 2005: 107–109).

In some parts of the wider Gaelic-speaking world, agricultural and fishing activities were more closely linked than in the major fishing ports. According to Manx folklore collector Mona Douglas, gutting sometimes took place in farmyards on the Isle of Man:

> They always used to sing […] when they salted down the herrings for the winter […] I remember when the farms were there in Ballaragh, they used to go to each in turn, then all the girls and women of the district, they would have two or three big tubs set out on […] the farmyard […] and they would sit round these tubs, working to salt down the herrings. […] As they worked, they sang […] they made

> little rhymes in the Manx, about somebody making fun of somebody (Bazin 1997: 65–66).

While Scottish ports seem to have had a clearer demarcation between space used for fish processing and space used for agriculture, this anecdote about Manx gutting shows the overlap between the women’s lives on the farm and their lives curing herring. The link between agricultural and fishing work in the Scottish Gaelic gutting songs paints a holistic picture of their lives, showing their world beyond the gutting at which they were temporarily employed. At the same time, subjects from life at the shieling might have been chosen specifically because it related a part of their lives back in the Hebrides to the work they were doing now, establishing a thread of cultural continuity even in a new economic environment.

2.2 Love

While the women’s economic world is omnipresent in their music, the principal unifying theme in all of the gutting songs is the relationship between the gutters and the men in their lives. Every song discusses the singer’s beloved in some capacity. Love songs were popular among gutters in general (Domhnallach and Davenport 1987: 113). Individual men whose names have been preserved in these songs include Murchadh, son of Catriona, addressed in Mary Morrison’s versions of ‘*Chan e taigh air am bi tughadh*’ (e.g. 1956b). Different men are named in the variants of ‘*Caolas eadar mi ’s mo luaidh*’, such as Iain, who the singer longs to meet at midnight in Calum and Annie Johnston’s version (1949); Dòmhnall Donn, the Lewis sailor who fixed a broken oar in Marion Morrison’s version (1968; identified as being from Lewis by Maggie Smith, personal correspondence); and, in the same song, Macolm Macritchie, one of the Reef Raiders (Maggie Smith, personal correspondence). In ‘*Cha dèan mise fuireach riut*’, Peigi MacRae sings that if Dòmhnall Mòr never comes for her, she won’t keep waiting for him no matter how lonely she is (1951b). Even the Manx gutting song ‘*Juan y jaggad keeir*’, or ‘Grey-jacketed John’, names two men, the Juan of the title as well as Juan y Quirk who mourns him when he gets shot (Bazin 1997: 66).

More often than not, however, the specific identities of the men in the songs are up to the singers’ and audience’s imaginations. This universality made the songs ripe for teasing and extemporisation. When I interviewed her in 2016, Lewis singer Margaret Stewart commented on this phenomenon:

> A lot of them would have known each other. They might have come from the same district, same village. And they were young […] and they were generally very happy, and they would have sung songs that they knew. But then they would have created verses to tease each other. […] When a lot of girls are together, or a lot of men are together, doing tasks like that, there’s bound to be verses created extempore […] and because these fishing girls were away from home together, as a big group […] and there were always these young men around, there was more opportunity. There was a hefty amount of courtship and teasing going on. […] Maybe they were just kind of pairing off in a jocular fashion, you know. You see that in some waulking songs, so that would be brought into the gutting songs as well. Just young girls, working together and teasing each other, putting it into song. (Stewart 2016)

Thus, when references to individual men are preserved in some of the songs, they represent moments of improvisation and teasing which were once extemporised and full of personal meaning. These ephemeral moments have now crystallised in sound recordings, the original context usually long forgotten.

There are several facets of the relationships between gutters and the men they loved which feature in the gutting songs. The most poignant of these is the separation which lovers experienced while the men were at sea or otherwise deployed. One of the most commonly occurring verses in variants of '*Caolas eadar mi 's mo luaidh*' is about the strait that keeps the two sweethearts apart – usually the strait between Bernera and Uig in Lewis (e.g. Smith 1957b). The man's employment as a fisherman was often the cause of separation (e.g. MacLeod 1993: 240–243). Other times, the Armed Forces were responsible. This is the premise in Margaret MacArthur's '*Cha dèan mise fuireach riut*' where it is the Army that keeps her lover away (1954). The Militia and Navy are also causes of separation (e.g. MacKenzie 1957; Nic a' Ghobhainn 2009: 128). Fort George is mentioned as a place where sweethearts are stationed (e.g. MacAskill 1972). Several of the songs' sweethearts are attached to the Royal National Reserve (e.g. MacRae 1951a). The most extended treatments of the anxiety that came from loving a man who was frequently away in dangerous employment occur not in the work songs, but in other songs which gutters composed. '*O cò thogas dhìom an fhadachd?*' is a song from Point in Lewis wherein the singer fears the hardships, including storms and duplicitous Lowlanders, that will face her lover while he is away (e.g. Domhnallach and Davenport 1987: 79). The work songs tended not to focus on the perils of the fishing industry, though even one as jocular as Mary Morrison's '*Caolas eadar mi 's mo luaidh*' referenced mishaps that could keep a man at sea longer than planned (MacLeod 1993: 242–243).

The times when lovers were reunited, however, also provided ample material for gutting song. Bawdiness in Gaelic song is not always easy to study given the bowdlerisation of verses that happened when they passed through the hands of collectors such as Marjory Kennedy-Fraser (MacLeod 1996: 128–129). With the mostly unpublished corpus of gutting songs, however, there is more room for bawdiness to survive, though the innuendo in which it is cloaked is often obscure to an outsider. For example, references to butter and milk in versions of '*Caolas eadar mi 's mo luaidh*' may be innuendo befitting songs of the shieling (e.g. MacLennan 1958b; cf. Anonymous 1907: 314–316, 345). Maggie Smith has suggested that the two versions of the song which mention a lover's feet keeping the cows awake are allusions to night-visiting (personal correspondence; see Morrison 1968, MacLean et al. 1954, and Ross 1957: 103–105). Mary Morrison's version of '*Caolas eadar mi 's mo luaidh* also has a good deal of innuendo concerning her lover's inability to reach the 'gangway' due to 'engine trouble' (MacLeod 1993: 240–243).

The song '*Chan e taigh air am bi tughadh*' is an extended treatment of night-visiting. It features a back-and-forth dialogue between lovers, worked out in clandestine meetings behind the peat-stack or garden, a theme which also appears in some variants of '*Rionnag às an oidhche fhrasaich*' (e.g. M. Morrison 1956a; MacLean 1958; cf. Celtic Lyrics Corner 2008). Indeed, Hamish Henderson acknowledged the bawdiness inherent in the latter when he introduced it at the Bothy Ballads and Blues Céilidh of 1960 as 'a kind of floating "Ball of Kirriemuir" […] in the Western Hebrides' (MacLennan and MacLennan 1960). The 'Ball of Kirriemuir' is a Scots song from the 1880s. It is unabashedly sexual in its graphic description of a drunken orgy (Coleman 2016). While nothing in any recorded variant of '*Rionnag às an oidhche fhrasaich*' is so brazenly bawdy, Peigi Oighrig MacIver's reference to a hat on the mast in a version about men from Uig may be a phallic euphemism (1949; cf. Anonymous 1907: 299; Bennett 2007: 37). Nan MacKinnon's version of '*Chan e taigh air am bi tughadh*', dating from the 1880s, may jokingly allude to group sex or at least a lively group of suitors: She sings that she will go down to get herself a lover and find sixteen of them in Lower Shader (1958c). In Mary Morrison's later variants, that number has been reduced to six (e.g. 1956b),

the same number also found by the singer in ‘*Tha fear a-muigh a’ fuireach rium*’ (Nic a’ Ghobhainn 2009: 128).

Whether the gutters were actually engaging in such adventurous liaisons is beside the point given the hyperbolic and teasing nature of the songs. Rather, the takeaway from such exaggerated songs is that they clearly entertained the women singing them. There were, however, premarital sexual relationships between gutters and fishermen, as evidenced by the bitter songs of women left pregnant by promiscuous sailors (e.g. Gillies 2005: 65–67). Indeed, some of the relationships between men and women in the industry were far from pleasant, as indicated by Christian Watt’s account of how fisherwomen were always prepared to use their sharp gutting knives to defend themselves against sexual assault on dark roads at night (2004: 36). However, in keeping with their cheerful nature, the songs that gutters sang while working appear never to have referenced the darker side of sexual relationships and focused instead on the playful pairing off of gutters with fishermen. These cheerful and cheeky songs reflect how the gutting is almost always described as one of the happiest times of the women’s lives. Thrust into the new world of the commercial fisheries, their songs suggest that these women embraced the exciting opportunities, both economic and romantic, that their new lives offered them.

3. The Geography of Gutting Songs

In the following section, I will assess the geographical origins of the gutting songs. I will argue that while the songs tend to be very in touch with local concerns, particularly connected to Lewis, they also reveal a world with active connections to the Lowlands, England and beyond. This argument will be made through the analysis of place-names referenced in songs, places associated with their composition and transmission, and their macaronic quality and choice of vocables which demonstrate the profound influence of Scots and English on women who worked in the fishing industry.

3.1 *The* Gàidhealtachd *and Beyond*

The women who contributed Gaelic gutting songs to the School of Scottish Studies came from a variety of islands, but many of their songs were attributed to the women of just one – Lewis. As early as the 1880s, Nan MacKinnon’s mother learned her gutting songs from Lewis gutters (1958c). Both her and Mary Morrison’s versions of ‘*Chan e taigh air am bi tughadh*’ discuss the men of Lower Shader (MacKinnon 1958c; M. Morrison 1956b). The Lewis gutting song *par excellence,* however, is ‘*Caolas eadar mi ’s mo luaidh*’. It is described as a Lewis song in recordings provided by singers from Lewis (e.g. MacRae and MacLeod 1977), but also of those from South Uist (Johnson 1969a) and Barra (MacKinnon 1970). The song appeared in *Eilean Fraoich*, a collection of Lewis melodies, in 1938 (86). When Morag MacLeod recorded the song from Marion Morrison of Lewis, she noted that the song was a modern, local composition (Morrison 1968), and when publishing Mary Morrison’s version of the song in *Tocher*, MacLeod wrote, ‘The song repertory of Barra women like Mary Morrison contains a handful of songs like this, learned from Lewis girls when they followed the herring as gutters’ (1993: 243). The song’s Lewis provenance is also evident in its lyrics. One of the most commonly appearing verses laments how the strait between Bernera and Uig separates the singer from her lover (e.g. Gillies 2005: 108). Uig is also the setting of Marion Morrison’s version, in which an individual local family (the Macritchies) are discussed through references to their byname *an Irish* (1968; see section 1.2). Other Lewis locales mentioned in variants of the song are Leurbost, Back and Aird Thunga (MacLeod 1955a). These represent just a sample of the possibilities which women may have substituted to sing about their own hometowns.

'*Rionnag às an oidhche fhrasaich*' also has strong links with Lewis. Some versions of the song extol the qualities of Uig men, such as the one sung by Peigi Oighrig MacIver, herself from Uig (1949). In other variants, the *rionnag às an oidhche fhrasaich* ('a star out of a showery sky', a Gaelic idiom referring to something unlikely) of the title is seeing a sailor from Achmore (e.g. MacLennan 1959). Achmore is an inland farming community (Smith 2016) and the only Lewis location mentioned in the gutting songs which is not on the coast. The rest of the places mentioned in different versions of the song are all on the eastern side of the island. In one, the singer explains how she could get a man from Gravir or Keose, but she will get a 'smasher' from Cromore (MacLennan 1959). Stornoway also features as the setting for one sweetheart's drunken escapades at the Royal Hotel (MacLennan 1958a). Like '*Caolas eadar mi 's mo luaidh*', this song has been described as originating in Lewis. For example, Mary MacKay sang the song in response to Hamish Henderson asking her if she knew any Lewis songs (1957b). The most assertive Lewis identity comes in the version published in *Eilean Fraoich* (Comunn 1938: 60–61). It goes beyond the light-hearted praise of men from different villages and expresses the singer's refusal to leave for Glasgow. She uses the brave, bonny heroes of Sandwick and Coulregrein to represent the superiority of Lewis and a rejection of the merits of urbanisation. Glasgow has a long history of being denigrated in Gaelic poetry (c.f. Meek 2003: 22). This early version of the song is therefore in keeping with a long-standing antipathy towards the city where so many Gaels moved when they left the islands.

These verses, however, do not appear in any of the versions of the song recorded in connection with the fishing industry, and gutting songs as a whole show a markedly different attitude towards cities outside the Hebrides. While Lewis dominates the gazetteer of geographical references, other place names which come up in the songs represent the cosmopolitan outlooks of the women who sang them. The frequent mentions of the houses in Lerwick have already been discussed, representing the Shetland leg of the fishing season and demonstrating a great interest in exogenous architectural styles (see Section 2.1). References to spending the summer in Fraserburgh appear in variants of '*Caolas eadar mi 's mo luaidh*' as early as Christina MacKinnon's version from the turn of the twentieth century (1970). Hers is also the only one to mention Yarmouth, the great English fishing port, but Fraserburgh is mentioned more often. Morag Johnson sings in her pre-1914 version, '*Chan eil mo leannan-sa às a' Bhruaich | cha dèan mi suas ri strainnsear*' ('my sweetheart is not from Fraserburgh and I won't take up with a stranger') (1969a), while by 1922 Peigi MacRae has learned to sing, '*Tha mo leannan às a' Bhruaich | 's cha dèan mi suas ri strainnsear*' ('my sweetheart is from Fraserburgh, and I won't take up with a stranger') (1955). The extent to which a man from Fraserburgh was considered a stranger was consequently a matter of varying opinion. Mary Morrison's sweetheart in '*Caolas eadar mi 's mo luaidh*' may also be a Lowlander, as he works aboard the BCK96 *Honeydew,* a Buckie boat, though his catch of herring will ultimately be sold to Stornoway merchant Duncan MacIver (MacLeod 1993: 240–243). While a non-work song like '*O cò thogas dhìom an fhadachd?*' expresses a gutter's fear that her lover will be taken advantage of by Lowlanders (Domhnallach and Davenport 1987: 79), other gutters clearly felt more warmth towards the Lowlanders in the industry – enough to engage in romantic relationships with them.

These relationships did not always end happily. 'Stronsay Rocky Shores' was written in the 1920s or 1930s by Jessie Finlayson of Barvas, a Gael, but she wrote her song in English so that if it ever circulated back to her ex-lover, he would be able to understand it (Smith 2012; Smith 2016). The song chronicles how the man seduced her in Stronsay before she realised he was married. The final verses extend his deceptive behaviour to all Lowland men, ending with

the warning, 'Oh never trust a Lowlander, nor on his oath rely' (Smith 2012). The gutters' songs relate their full engagement with the places and people of the wider fishing industry. These encounters were not without occasional prejudice and mistrust, but they were also characterised by mutual curiosity and affection as many women were exposed to a world beyond their home villages for the first time.

These songs, which are at the same time lovingly local in their detail and internationally aware in their outlook, resonate with the tensions Ronald Black explores in his deconstruction of the term *bàrd baile* as it has been applied to the study of Gaelic poets (1999: xliv–lxvi). Black follows Sorley MacLean and Angus MacNeacail in arguing that the distinction between a *bàrd baile,* a village poet whose verse is confined to local affairs, and the composer of *nua-bhàrdachd,* typically a university-educated man whose concerns were global, is a false dichotomy. He argues that terms like *bàrd baile*

> were used as loaded weapons in the tradition-innovation wars of the 1960s. What they seek to imply is that such a person is a laureate of a small community and therefore narrow in his (or her) view of the world. In practice, however, such poets have typically fought a war, sailed seven seas, or otherwise sweated blood far and wide for a living, and their view of their community is by no means uncritical or lacking in global perspective (lxi).

Female poets and their poetry were largely absent from these debates, which centred around the conflicts between traditionally male clan and village bards' poetry and what Black has rightfully characterised as 'a hugely successful men's club' of educated men in the mid-twentieth century (lviii). While this leads Black to describe the final quarter of the twentieth century's resurgence of female poets as a 'refeminisation' of Gaelic poetry, such a framing of the situation ignores the robust female composition of poetry which the gutting songs represent. References to personal automobiles in Lewis in Kate MacLeod's version of '*Rionnag às an oidhche fhrasaich*', recorded in 1955, suggest that these women were composing new verse right up until the mid-twentieth century (1955b; cf. Macdonald 1978: 194–195). Ephemeral, extemporised, and sung far from the armchairs of Edinburgh literati, these gutting songs nevertheless show that women's verse composition in the first half of the twentieth century reinforces Black's point that poetry composed from the point of view of someone who is rooted in a local Hebridean community can be far from provincial in its worldview.

3.2 *Linguistic Diversity*

It is not only the subjects of their songs which bring out the gutters' engagement with the world beyond the *Gàidhealtachd*, but their language. Many of the gutting songs are macaronic, meaning that they mix English and Scots with Gaelic (cf. Ross 1957: 130). In the version of '*Caolas eadar mi 's mo luaidh*' published in *Eilean Fraoich* in 1938, the editors put the words *gainsie* ('gansey', a Scots name for a fisherman's jumper; cf. Gordon 2016: 18–28), *Mhalaisi* ('Militia'), and *drile* ('drill') in quotations (86). By the 1982 edition, these words were no longer differentiated from the other Gaelic words in the text (87–88), indicating that in the intervening fifty years, all of these loan-words had been sufficiently Gaelicised. Elsewhere, the non-Gaelic words remain clearly marked. Morag MacLeod italicised *engine-room, deck-hand, shottie, private, engine trouble* and *gangway* when transcribing Mary Morrison's version of '*Caolas eadar mi 's mo luaidh*' (1993: 240–243). Morrison also used *carpet* in '*Chan e taigh air am bi tughadh*' (1956b). The most macaronic version of '*Rionnag às an oidhche fhrasaich*' includes *Morris, whitewash, gable, tidy, Ford, smashair,* and *gin* (MacLeod 1955b). Sometimes singers even substituted an English or Scots word when a Gaelic equivalent was

available; Peigi MacRae used *tam o' shanter* instead of '*boineid cruinn*' when describing her sweetheart's hat (1951a; cf. Comunn 1982: 88).

Macaronic verse is not something which has received much attention in the history of Gaelic song, though James Ross argued it is usually meant to be humorous (1957: 130). In Ireland, it has been described as a 'transitional song category' (Ó Muirithe 2011: 642). Ó Muirithe argues,

> The sudden flowering of macaronic song [in the nineteenth century] coincides with the period in which a variety of pressures led to the gradual dominance of English […] In those places where the people were comfortable in both Irish and their new English, a certain pride was shown both by the makers of the bilingual songs and those who sang them (643).

Whether or not the gutters felt pride in their multilingualism, there is certainly nothing shy about the liberal use of English and Scots in Gaelic gutting songs like Mary Morrison's. The timeframe of these songs' composition is one that encompasses a substantial decline in the number of Gaelic speakers in Scotland, with the number dropping by nearly 160,000 speakers from 1891 to 1951 (McLeod 2014: 4). The role of macaronic Gaelic song in multilingualism requires further research, but the gutting songs suggest that Hebridean gutters who picked up terminology from working in the fishing industry were part of a phenomenon not unlike that which Ó Muirithe describes in Ireland.

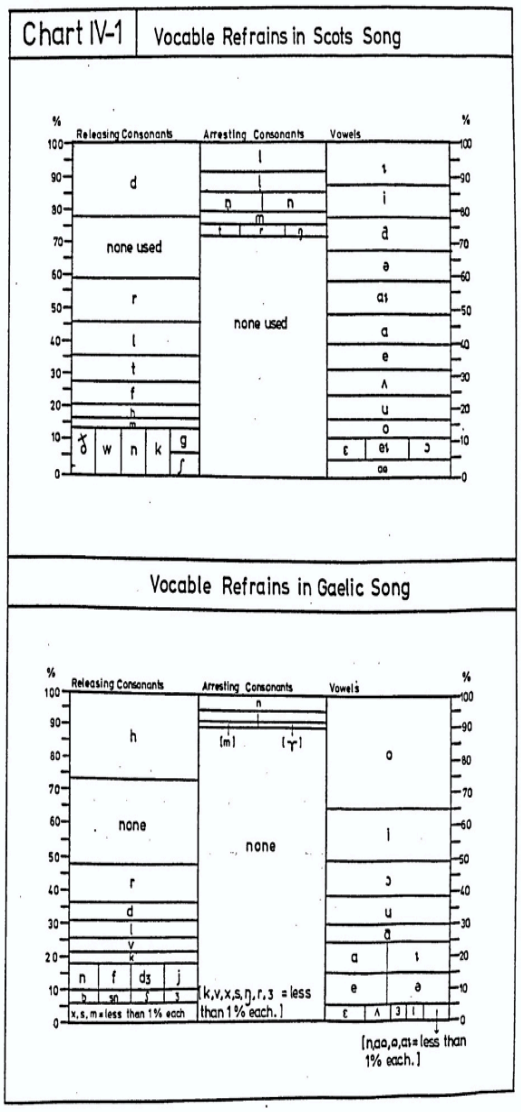

Figure 11. Comparison of vocables in Scots and Gaelic song refrains. Chambers 1980: 182

The vocables used in gutting songs are also of great interest in analysing the degree of Scots influence on the music. Vocables, the syllabic components of songs which on their own carry no lexical value, are an integral part of Gaelic work song, wherein they form the bulk of the refrains (Chambers 1980: 1, 178–181). Although the sounds carry no specific meanings in the Gaelic language, vocable refrains serve as the primary identifying feature in waulking songs because the verses are so variable. The sounds which make up these vocables in Gaelic song have traditionally been 'strikingly restricted as compared with the spoken language' (Campbell and Collinson 1969: 227–229). Christine Chambers conducted a phonetic analysis on 167 Gaelic recordings of songs with vocable refrains and compared them to 196 recordings of Scots songs (1980: 178, 150). She summarised her findings in a chart which compares the most common releasing consonants (the beginning of the sound), arresting consonants (used to interrupt the sound) and vowels in the vocable refrains of Scots and Gaelic songs (see Fig. 11). Among releasing consonants, Scots songs employ *d* most frequently, in over twenty per cent of cases, with *h* forming less than five per cent of vocables. The case is flipped in Gaelic, wherein over twenty-five per cent of vocables begin with *h* and only about five per cent begin with *d*. Arresting consonants occur

in just over ten per cent of Gaelic vocables but over twenty-five percent in Scots. Among vowels, Gaelic speakers prefer *o* and *i* while Scots-speakers shows a more balanced range of vowel preferences, with *o* taking up one of the smallest shares (Chambers 1980: 182).

Chambers’s conclusions can be used to analyse the gutting songs’ vocable refrains in order to assess the possible influence of Scots on the gutters’ choice of vocables. Some of them fit the typical Gaelic mould, such as Nan MacKinnon’s ‘*Haoi o nach dannsadh sibh e*’ with the vocables *haoi ó* (1958d). However, others show the influence of diddling, a form of Scots vocableising which involves singing a tune with non-lexical vocables instead of words, often to a fast rhythm used for dancing (Chambers 1980: 17–24). Diddling is named for its most common sounds, namely *d* as a releasing consonant and *l* as an arresting consonant (cf. Blankenhorn 2018: 110). Diddling is an art form which was historically associated with women in Scots tradition, though this changed throughout the twentieth century (Hyland 2019). Diddling’s influence can be detected in several gutting songs’ vocable refrains. Peigi MacRae’s ‘*Cha dèan mise fuireach riut*’ employs an almost entirely diddled chorus (1951b). In many of the songs, however, the distinction is not so clear-cut because the vocables show a mixture of typical Gaelic sounds like *o* with the *d, l* and *um* sounds of diddling. Such a hybridity is evident in Mary Morrison’s ‘*Chan e taigh air am bi tughadh*’ when she sings, ‘*O hodil oidil o | Ho hodil oil adi | O hoidil oidil o | Hodil o hodil adi*’ (1956b). The degree of diddling’s influence on a given song sometimes varies between singers. For example, in ‘*Rionnag às an oidhche fhrasaich*’, Peigi Oighrig MacIver (1949) sings ‘*Dheóghail am sa dheóghail i*’ which, while not immediately reminiscent of waulking songs, shows a greater fidelity to Gaelic style than Kitty and Marietta MacLeod’s ‘*O ha leido ha leidio halo ha leidh*’ (1952). Tellingly, the transcriber who annotated the latter version for *Tobar an Dualchais* wrote that the ‘vocables [are] sung in an untraditional style’.

The best example of the hybridised vocable refrain comes in the many variants of ‘*Caolas eadar mi ’s mo luaidh*’. The transcribers who have worked for the School of Scottish Studies or who have published the song in books have made many different attempts to render the refrain of this song into Gaelic orthography. Thus, although the song’s refrain remains remarkably stable from one variant to the next, it has been transcribed in a myriad of ways:

Transcription	**Source**
’S a dhió al ó al ó al am (x3) *’S a dhió al am ’s ì h-aurum*	*Eilean Fraoich* (Comunn 1938: 86)
Ió ari ó ari ai ri um *’S ió ari o ari ai ri um* (x2) *’S ia ai ri um si àrum*	transcription book (Johnson and Johnson 1949)
’S i dheó ali ó ali aidi um (x3) *’s i dheó alum sa dhearum*	transcription book (MacLeod 1955a)
’S a dheó a leó a laoi di am (x3) *’S a dheó ri am ’s i dheàram*	*Tocher* 46 (MacLeod 1993: 240)
’S i ò, à lò, à laoididh	*Tobar an Dualchais* (MacKenzie 1957)
’Si dheo ail o ail ad iam	chronological register and transcription book (MacKenzie 1957)

Hi ló hi ló ha lai di hum	a biographical index card for Gormelia MacKenzie, referring to MacKenzie 1957
'S i ó hol ó i di um (x3) *ó i ó hol ó hol owrum*	transcription book (MacKay 1957a)
'S a lo alo alaidiau	chronological register (MacKay 1957a)
'S o ail o ail aidi am	chronological register (Morrison 1959b)
I eó a leó a laoi di am	chronological register (Morrison 1968)
'S a eo a lo a li di um	chronological register (MacKinnon 1970)
'S i o al o al o al am (x3) *'S io al am 's i h-aurum*	*Eilean Fraoich* (Comunn 1982: 87)
'S i o al o al o al am (x3) *'s i o al am 's i h-abhram*	*Tog Fonn! 2* (Mhàrtainn 2000: 13)
'S i o al o a leididh am (x3) *'s a leididh am 's i h-aurum*	*Songs of Gaelic Scotland* (Gilles 2005: 108)

Transcribing this vocable refrain with Gaelic orthography is not straightforward. These attempts make recourse to spellings which do not accurately represent the sounds; for example, *'s i* and *di* do not represent the slenderised pronunciations that Gaelic orthographical conventions would usually imply. The frequency of *l* and *d* as arresting consonants is more in keeping with Scots vocableising than Gaelic. However, this refrain is not truly diddled in the Scots sense. The biggest giveaway is the beginning of phrases with *'s*, a normal way of starting song lyrics in Gaelic, representing either a contracted form of *agus* ('and') or *is* (the verb for 'to be'). For example, the lament '*'S daor a cheannaich mi an t-iasgach*' ('I paid dearly for the fishing') begins thus (Gillies 2005: 45). The prevalence of *h* as an initial consonant and *o* as a vowel are similarly indicative of Gaelic influence as suggested by Chambers's analysis.

Chambers identifies many categories of vocableising which fall between the twin poles of Gaelic and Scots vocable refrains. These comprise a spectrum from formal *canntaireachd* – the relatively standardised system of vocables which is used by highly trained pipers to teach tunes – to diddling which merely imitates the sound of the bagpipes as part of strictly vocal repertoire (1980: 21–36). This pipe-diddling or cantering lacks the strict correspondence between sung syllables and notes on the bagpipe that formal *canntaireachd* has. Virginia Blankenhorn makes a similar distinction between what she calls 'didactic *canntaireachd*' and 'pseudo-*canntaireachd*', the latter of which includes Mary Morrison's performances (2018: 109–110). She describes diddling separately as having 'infiltrated the *Gàidhealtachd* through contact with itinerant musicians from non-Gaelic speaking areas' (117). Diddling is originally a Scots musical form, but it has been adopted in other linguistic settings, most notably in Ireland where the practice is called lilting (Chambers 1980: 73; Madden and Vallely 2011: 403–405). Diddling and *puirt-à-beul* are both strongly associated with dancing, creating an overlap in both their function and in the associated musicality; both require singing at a tongue-twisting, relentless pace to keep up with the dancers (Chambers 1980: 70–74; MacDonald 2012: 17–29). The main difference is that diddling is mostly non-lexical while *puirt-à-beul* usually contains lyrics. Gaelic and Scots dance tunes have a long history of mutual influence and exchange (see

Lamb 2013), so it is not surprising that the vocable refrains of dance songs are an area where we would find cross-fertilisation.

Willie Fraser, a competitive diddler, identified Highland and Lowland diddling as two separate but related styles, saying, ‘the West coast follow the bagpipes, more or less, an’ the East coast follow […] the fiddle and piano’ (Chambers 1980: 301). This theory may explain the influence of diddling in Mary Morrison’s gutting songs; she became proficient at *canntaireachd* after being barred from playing the bagpipes due to her gender, and she would sing *canntaireachd* for dances so well that ‘people couldn’t keep off the floor’ (1974c). Joshua Dickson has argued that the links between Morrison’s *canntaireachd* and diddling have contributed to an unfair devaluation of her repertoire as less authentic compared to male pipers (2013: 53–60). While *canntaireachd* clearly influenced Morrison’s gutting refrains, she is not the only gutter who diddled. Scots-influenced diddling may have already started to permeate the dance music of the *Gàidhealtachd,* giving rise to what Fraser describes as ‘Highland diddling’ and influencing what Blankenhorn calls ‘pseudo-*canntaireachd*’, before Hebridean women ever left home for the gutting (see Blankenhorn 2018: 110).

Alternatively, working side-by-side in the gutting yards with women singing in Scots, in what Frances Wilkins has described as ‘a mélange of different songs sung in parallel’ (2018: 86–87), gutters may have played a crucial part in the absorption of Scots vocable refrains into Gaelic song. Indeed, the mixing of musical languages is explicitly described by gutter Mary Findlay, who said of Gaelic-speaking gutters in 1930 in Wick, ‘We worked very well together, and they soon had us singing in their language’ (Findlay 1991: 28). One can imagine that the vocable refrains of Gaelic songs, which required no knowledge of the language to sing, would have been the easiest part of the songs for women like Findlay to pick up – and perhaps influence with their own vocableising styles as they joined in the choruses.

Regardless of the exact mechanism by which Scots-style diddling entered gutting songs, the hybridised nature of these vocable refrains further emphasises the way that these songs represent a world of cultural cross-fertilisation. The women who composed and sang them were not isolated from the world beyond the *Gàidhealtachd*, but fully engaged with it. They leave us with a corpus of Gaelic work songs which are, in language, unapologetically macaronic; in musical style, openly influenced by Scots; and in subject, rooted in local communities while honestly appraising the merits (or lack thereof) of the outside world.

4. Gutting and Gaelic Song Scholarship

I will now evaluate how gutting songs fit into the wider field of Gaelic work song. We have seen that the songs gutters sang while working hold a vast range of detail about their social lives, economic environments, gender relations, and interactions with the world outside the *Gàidhealtachd*. Given the great wealth of information preserved in these songs, the question inevitably arises: Why hasn’t anyone written about this before? I will expose the absence of gutting song in all major academic treatments of Gaelic work song and investigate how this absence came to be. I will argue that these songs have been omitted because of their relationship to the relatively modern and cosmopolitan fishing industry as well as their defiance of easy categorisation. Finally, I will argue that rather than being an anomaly in the Gaelic work song corpus, gutting songs reinforce the ultimate fluidity and adaptability that work and dance songs have always shown, as well as their fundamental relationship to each other as expressed in the emic song category of the *luinneag*.

To my knowledge, gutting songs have never been included in any published evaluation of Gaelic song. They are entirely absent from Alexander Carmichael’s *Carmina Gadelica* (1900a; 1900b); Frances Tolmie’s *One Hundred and Five Songs of Occupation from the*

Western Isles of Scotland (1911); James Ross's 'The Classification of Gaelic Folk Song' (1957); John Lorne Campbell and Francis Collinson's *Hebridean Folksongs* (1969; 1977); Margaret Fay Shaw's *Folksongs and Folklore of South Uist* (1998); and Virginia Blankenhorn's 'A New Approach to the Classification of Gaelic Song' (2018). They also do not appear in Margaret Bennett's '"A Song for Every Cow She Milked…" Sharing the Work and Sharing the Voices in Gaeldom' (2007). However, Bennett has indicated that she is aware of the phenomenon, recalling that 'the girls loved songs that had choruses and were fun' (2016, personal correspondence). Morag MacLeod included a note about gutters' repertoire on Mary Morrison's performance of '*Caolas eadar mi 's mo luaidh*' published in *Tocher* (1993: 243) but has not published anything more on the topic and did not mention it in her overview of twentieth-century Gaelic song (1996). Maggie Smith, who consulted MacLeod, is the only known researcher who has previously investigated the songs of Gaelic-speaking gutters, but most of her work was in preparation for live performances and has not been published (see Section *1.1*). We are thus left with a situation where, in over a century of Gaelic song scholarship, gutting songs have managed to go completely unmentioned by any of the major scholarly publications in the field and have barely registered in publication history at all. The question is, *why?*

In some cases, the dates of fieldwork that informed a collection mean that it would be unrealistic to expect gutting songs to have been included. This is true of Frances Tolmie's work. Although *One Hundred and Five Songs of Occupation* was published in 1911, Tolmie learned most of her songs in the 1860s and 1870s from women who were by then elderly (143–149; 155–156). Alexander Carmichael's fieldwork was also undertaken during a similar time frame (Stiùbhart 2008: 3–19). The women these collectors met, who tended to be older members of their communities, would not have gone to the gutting, which had only taken off for younger women in the 1850s (Domhnallach and Davenport 1987: 15–20). We could therefore not expect them to have known any songs from that line of work, and so the collectors who interviewed them did not publish any. However, the introduction to Tolmie's work written by Lucy Broadwood of the English Folk Dance and Song Society gives us our first hint as to why these songs might not have been of great interest to early collectors even if they had come across them:

> [T]he interest and importance of Gaelic traditional song-texts [… is that] we have in them legend, history and lore which owe nothing to broadsides, chap-books or other printed matter […] Gaelic traditional songs put us in touch with a long and romantic past, with verse and music of an older and more untouched type than is found elsewhere in British folk-song. (Tolmie 1911: ix).

Gutting song hardly fits the romantic view of Gaelic work song that Broadwood applies to Tolmie's collection. Itinerant gutting was a new phenomenon, not part of the 'long and romantic past' of agricultural labour, and its macaronic lyrics were far from 'untouched' by outside influences. While Tolmie and Carmichael can be forgiven for publishing song collections which were a few decades out of date, the vision these publications set out for Gaelic work song has had a long-lasting impact.

The most recent iteration of this preference for songs representing older traditions is in Virginia Blankenhorn's lengthy re-evaluation of Gaelic song classification (2018). While her work is a far cry from the romanticism of Broadwood, she still frames modern developments of Gaelic song as fundamentally irreconcilable with the tradition's long history. She establishes a timeframe of between about 1850 and 1960 for her classification system, a period which encapsulates the height of the herring industry from beginning to end, but gutting songs do not

appear. In part, this may be due to the common inclination against seeing commercial contexts as a part of 'traditional' Gaelic culture. Blankenhorn frames the twentieth century as a time of decline in the tradition due to war and economic change which have 'effectively brought about the demise of traditional Gaelic communities' (82). The 'dominance of the Anglophone world' and bilingualism are two of Blankenhorn's culprits in the downfall of traditional Gaelic song culture, but the cheerfully macaronic work songs of herring gutters hardly fit into this paradigm, and they challenge Blankenhorn's emphasis on 'the essential conservatism of the Gaels' as a defining feature of their society (126–130). Gutting songs, while connected to the long tradition of Gaelic work song, are anything but conservative. All of the work songs which Blankenhorn includes in her classification system are songs of agricultural and domestic labour, except for rowing (91–92), following the pattern established by Tolmie and Carmichael over a century earlier.

As crucial as it is to recognise the way scholars have overlooked commercial work as a source of work song, it is not only a bias against including modern innovations that has led to these songs being left out. Another key factor is the gutting songs' utter defiance of easy categorisation. While they are, by definition, work songs, they were very rarely categorised that way by collectors and transcribers working for the School of Scottish Studies. This must explain in part why James Ross did not include them as 'occupational songs' in 1957, despite having already personally collected six variants of four gutting songs by that point (MacLeod 1955a and 1955b; MacDonald 1956; M. Morrison 1956a, 1956c, and 1956d). As explained above, gutting songs have most often been categorised as *puirt-à-beul*, the genre gutters favoured when choosing songs to sing at work (see Section *1.1*). Indeed, some of the songs were introduced by their contributors simply as *puirt* without making any connection to the gutting at all, and they may not have been aware of the song's use as a work song (e.g. MacDonald 1956). However, gutting songs have also been categorised as waulking songs, and some are on record as having been sung at waulkings (see Section 1.2). The preference for categorising the songs as *puirt-à-beul* is understandable, as they share much in common with that repertoire. Gutting songs and *puirt-à-beul* are both usually humorous, favour four-line verses with frequent repetition, and sometimes sport vocable refrains (Sparling 2014: 139–143). But they also share qualities with waulking songs, particularly clapping songs which were sung at the end of the waulking process and were improvised along comic formulas to pair up men and women (Ross 1957: 102–103, 144; Stewart 2016). Waulking songs follow a similar performance structure to gutting songs, with one woman taking the lead by singing the verses, and the other women coming in on the refrain (Blankenhorn 2018: 101–102; cf. Wilkins 2018: 87–88). *Puirt-à-beul* were sometimes sung this way too (e.g. Morrison 1950). Similarities between *puirt-à-beul* and clapping songs, notably their shared delight in bawdry and quick wit, have been observed before (Blankenhorn 2018: 108–109, 131).

Their overlap with *puirt-à-beul* means that much of the reason gutting songs have escaped notice before now may be explained by the same factors which have caused that genre to be historically under-represented in Gaelic song scholarship; according to Heather Sparling, these include poor preservation and a concern among some Gaelic-speakers that they do not represent the full poetic weight of Gaelic tradition to outsiders (see Sparling 2014: 1–10, 302–309). And yet, this cannot entirely explain their absence. *Puirt-à-beul* have been covered in Tolmie (1911: 192–195), Ross (1957: 133), Lamb (MacDonald 2012), Sparling (2014) and Blankenhorn (2018: 107–110), and it seems that in academia, at least, their status has been undergoing a successful rehabilitation, if indeed they were under-represented to begin with.

This has not been the case for gutting songs, which remain mostly unknown. It is their innovation, their comparatively modern usage, and their resistance to clear categorisation that has made them fly under the radar of Gaelic song scholars.

But this fluidity of genre is not in itself alien to Gaelic song. Waulking songs are known for adapting songs from different backgrounds (including other work contexts) into the new context of waulking (Blankenhorn 2018: 75). Ross actually excluded waulking songs as a category because he believed the diversity of repertoire made it less useful as a category than, say, milking songs, which were mainly about the work itself and thus more easily contained within a classification system (1957: 96). However, the fact that songs sung during a particular type of work rarely addressed the work itself should not make them any less important a category of work song, and few today would agree with Ross that 'waulking song' is an unhelpful category. Ross's evaluation of waulking songs' great diversity does point to the waulkers' happiness to adapt a wide variety of song genres, such as ballads and rowing songs which are today only preserved as adapted waulking songs (cf. MacInnes 2006b: 208; MacDonald 1951). Similarly, while I have in this study isolated gutting songs whose lyrics show a clear relationship to the gutters' work and lives, many gutting songs likely began their lives as existing *puirt-à-beul* or other songs such as clapping or night-visiting songs before being adapted to the gutting (Smith 2016). They also often had lives beyond the gutting; Anne Lorne Gillies has reported hearing a version of '*Caolas eadar mi 's mo luaidh*' sung about a Glasgow police officer (2005: 109). These constant adaptations of old songs to new contexts undermine Blankenhorn's rejection of 'incremental change' as a useful way to analyse the shifting uses of song in twentieth-century Gaelic society since the gutting songs' remixing of older materials stands in continuity with the waulking tradition (2018: 126).

Genre fluidity has of course been acknowledged by scholars working to classify Gaelic song, including Blankenhorn's many caveats about her own classification system (2018: 75, 91–94, 111, 130–132). Nevertheless, these systems have all failed to accommodate gutting song. They have suffered from the same problem Lamb diagnosed for *puirt-à-beul* scholarship:

> Very little of what we know about the performance of puirt has been constructed from first-hand sources […] [S]cholars have been content to base their understanding of the genre on the paltry written evidence that exists in books and manuscripts. Much yet lurking in our sound archives could challenge our preconceptions about the history and performance of not just puirt-à-beul, but Gaelic (and Scottish) music at large (MacDonald 2012: 29).

The present study has done precisely that. By delving into the Sound Archives, we have brought to light an entire genre of Gaelic song which has gone mostly unnoticed. The gutting songs certainly challenge our understanding of *puirt-à-beul,* pushing its documented use for dancing through at least the first quarter of the twentieth century, if not later (cf. Lamb 2013: 87–88). Beyond that, they pose a fundamental challenge to our existing classification systems of Gaelic song.

Where do we go from here? Is it enough to append a 'gutting song' category to all future enumerations of the different types of Gaelic work song? Or would this do a disservice to what the gutting songs tell us about the mutability of boundaries and adaptability to change inherent in the tradition? In spite of these difficulties, there is, in fact, a song category in the literature which the gutting songs fit perfectly into: the *luinneag.* MacInnes brought the *luinneag* back into wider conversation in his article 'Gaelic Song and the Dance' (2006a). He quotes the eighteenth-century author John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, who wrote that '*luinigs* were sung by the women […] during almost every kind of work, where more than one person is employed

[…] When labourers appear to flag, a *luinig* is called for, which makes them for a time forget their toil, and work with redoubled ardour' (255). A *luinneag* in this historical context is 'a choral song with vocable refrains' which accompanies group labour, particularly among women, though in contemporary Gaelic the word is usually translated as a 'ditty' or 'light song' (262). Broadwood's evaluation of Tolmie's collection also concluded that songs in the collection were *luinneagan,* making reference to Ramsay's criteria (1911: vi). Crucially, Tolmie's collection included a few examples of *puirt-à-beul,* thereby including them under the *luinneag* umbrella. Lamb picks up on this underlying relationship between *luinneagan,* dance song and work song in his article 'Reeling in the Strathspey' (2013). After arguing that the same fundamental rhythm underlies much of Gaelic work and dance song (68–81), he expands on MacInnes's observation that today's words for 'dance' in Gaelic are all loan-words and that Gaelic culture must have therefore lexicalised dance differently in the past (84). Lamb highlights several examples of the word *luinneag* being applied to dance song and argues that the word could have once lexicalised dance and work song as 'merely parts of a greater, holistic category of communal activity' (83–85).

Through the lens of *luinneag,* gutting songs cease to be an outlier. Their conflicts of genre – dance song used as work song, and vice versa – are reconciled when it is recognised that these categories are ultimately two sides of the same coin. The fluidity between dance and work song which they represent reinforces Lamb and MacInnes's argument that understanding *luinneag* as an emic category for lexicalising songs which are rhythmically linked to coordinated group movements is a fruitful way forward. The gutting songs show that the cultural drive behind women composing *luinneagan* to lighten their labours continued undeterred until the end of itinerant gutting in the mid-twentieth century. Rather than commercial industry and exposure to English and Scots being a catalyst of decline in Gaelic work and dance song, these forces shaped an environment that kept the genre functional and relevant longer than in any other context. The gutting song corpus thus undermines the construction of Gaelic song culture's twentieth-century experience as one of monolithic decline in the face of outside forces. Instead, we find that the resilience, creativity, and open-mindedness of Gaelic-speaking women kept their *luinneagan* alive and vibrant in a time of seismic economic and linguistic shifts in the *Gàidhealtachd*.

5. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated how a close investigation of archival sources can stimulate new directions in the study of Gaelic song. The ultimate endpoint which scholars such as Blankenhorn describe as the state of Gaelic song today – a preference for performance aesthetics instead of community participation, and a decline in audience comprehension (2018: 126–130) – may not have changed. The story of how we got here, however, is not a linear one. The impact of multilingualism and economic change on Gaelic song have generally been evaluated in negative terms without recognising that alternative threads exist in the narrative. In a situation where Gaelic has been experiencing critical decline, it is understandable that Gaelic work songs which happily employ English and Scots and valorise a commercial industry have not been a priority. Failing to explore the implications of these songs, however, does an injustice to the resilience and adaptability inherent in the tradition.

This is only the beginning of the study of Gaelic gutting songs. As awareness of these songs grows in the scholarly community, further studies may uncover more about their origins. Musicological analysis comparing their melodies and rhythms to other dance and work songs could either strengthen or complicate Lamb's arguments about the strathspey rhythm being a fundamental part of the *luinneag* concept (2013: 81–89). A thorough linguistic comparison

between the songs of gutters from different islands could uncover a rich variety of dialectical variation. It might also shed light on the unresolved question of why so many of the songs are attributed to Lewis women – is this simply the product of a higher population (cf. Domhnallach and Davenport 1987: 20), or could there be unique qualities in the practice of work song or *puirt-à-beul* on Lewis that influenced the women there in their choice of repertoire? In particular, investigating the social history of gutting in Skye would be valuable, since James Ross, Frances Tolmie, and Margaret Bennett all hail from Skye (Blankenhorn 2018: 75–80). It is possible that this strong Skye strain in the scholarship has contributed to the invisibility of gutting song, since Lewis and Barra have dominated the oral history accounts of the practice; if Skye women were not as likely to participate in the gutting, then scholars from these areas may not have been as attuned to the practice as if they had been from Lewis or Barra. Furthermore, the macaronic quality of gutting songs could usefully be incorporated into studies on the development of multilingualism among Hebridean Gaels; this too could yield illuminating differences between the islands.

While it has so far proven more difficult to find examples of Scots and English gutting songs than Gaelic, further research could uncover more comparative material which would enable scholars to explore the similarities and differences between gutting song repertoires across the country. Bill Motion, from a Cellardyke fishing family, reported how his mother improvised a romantically teasing Scots gutting song about a fellow gutter and her future husband to the air of the dance tune 'Bon Accord' (2017). This suggests that in areas where hymns were not taken up as work song, Scots-speaking women may have been calling on an underlying fluidity between work and dance song in their compositions similar to that of their Gaelic-speaking counterparts. Broadening out beyond Scotland to more thoroughly investigate whether Irish, Canadian, Manx, American and English oral history archives contain any gutting songs would shed light on the wider North Atlantic phenomenon. The same can be said of extensions into Scandinavia, since gutters from Sweden and Norway gutted alongside Gaels in Scottish ports (MacKenzie 2019; Watt 2004: 132–133). Repertoire exchange between Norway and Britain happened among fishermen (cf. Spooner 1976); might the same have happened among herring gutters? There is still much to be done in the study of women's itinerant work song in the fishing industry and beyond. The study of Gaelic gutting songs opens up an under-explored chapter of Scotland's musical history, and new conversations and directions for the field will hopefully follow.

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APPENDIX A: GUTTING SONGS

For Appendix A, please see the linked document, Appendix A.

APPENDIX B: CONTRIBUTORS AND THEIR SONGS

Key

Contributor’s Name (# of discrete songs - # of total contributions) Place of Origin
Title of variant, Archival reference when applicable (Fieldworker)
Variants of a song already listed

Contributors

Dolina MacLennan (3-5) Marvig, Lewis
Rionnag anns/as an Oidhche Fhrasaich, SA1958.180.A9 (Hamish Henderson)
Chan eil mo leannan ann a seo, SA1958.180.B5 (Hamish Henderson)
Càit’ am bi na Maraichean, SA1971.72.3 (Peter Cooke)
Rionnag anns/as an Oidhche Fhrasaich, SA1959.116.2 (Hamish Henderson)
Rionnag as an Oidhche Fhrasaich, SA1960.111.A5 (Hamish Henderson) (with her sister)

Peggy MacLean (1-1) Berneray
Rionnag anns/as an Oidhche Fhrasaich, SA1958.173.A6 (John MacInnes)

Kitty MacLeod and Marietta MacLeod (1-1) Skigersta, Ness, Lewis
Rionnag anns an Oidhche Fhrasaich, SA1952.39.B5 (Hamish Henderson)

Norman MacAskill (1-3) Glendale, Skye
Rionnagan air oidhche fhrasach, SA1972.179.A10 (Ian Paterson)
Rionnagan air oidhche fhrasaich, SA1975.157.A14 (Ian Paterson)
Rionnagan air oidhche fhrasaich, SA1975.161.A8 (Ian Paterson)

Mary MacKay (2-2) Stornoway, Lewis
’S a lo alo alaidiau, SA1957.47.A2 (Hamish Henderson)
Rionnag as an Oidhche Fhrasaich, SA1957.48.A1 (Hamish Henderson)

Peigi Oighrig MacIver/Peggy Effie Smith (2-2) Kneep, Lewis
Rionnag as an Oidhche Fhrasaich, SA1949.8
Caolas Bhearnaraigh is Uig, SA1957.102.B10 (James Ross)

Peigi MacRae (2-3) North Glendale, South Uist

Tam o' Shanter 's Geansaidh Snàith, CW0160A.729 (Margaret Fay Shaw)
Mura tig thu Dhòmhnaill Mhòir/Cha dèan mise fuireach riut, CW0160C.813 (Margaret Fay Shaw)
O Théid 's gun Téid mo Luaidh, CW0194.1128 (John Lorne Campbell)

Mary Morrison (3-9) Ersary, Barra
Caolas Eadar mi 's mo Luaidh, SA1956.66.2 (James Ross) (with chorus)
Gimleid 'is Tàl 'is Locair/Abo Chuidhil, SA1956.76.4 (James Ross) (with others)
Chan e taigh air am bi tugadh, SA1956.95.3 (James Ross)
Chan eil taigh air am bi tughadh/Ho hadil hoidil, SA1959.67.B6 (James Ross)
Chan e taigh air 'm Biodh Tughadh, CW1046C.733 (John Lorne Campbell)
Chan eil taigh air am bi tugadh, CW0146D (John Lorne Campbell; Annie Johnston)
Chan eil taigh air am bi tugadh, CannaTape.0088 (John Lorne Campbell)
Air Tìr A-raoir 's air Muir A-nochd/'S o ail o ail aidi am, SA1959.67.B7 (James Ross)
Air Muir A-raoir 's air Tìr A-nochd, SA1974.110.B7 (Mary MacDonald, Emily Lyle) (with others)

Marion Morrison (1-1) Uig, Lewis
'S Eò a Leò a Laoi Di Am, SA1968.124.10 (Morag MacLeod)

Christina MacKinnon (1-1) Ledaig/Castlebay, Barra
Chan eil mo leannan ann an seo/'s a hò a lò a li di um, SA1970.351.B2 (Mary MacDonald)

Morag Johnson (2-2) Carnan, South Uist
O théid 's gun téid mi cuairt, SA1969.104.A7 (Angus John MacDonald)
Nuair a sheinneas ise 'n fhìdeag, SA1969.104.A8 (Angus John MacDonald)

Gormelia MacKenzie (1-1) Balallan, Lewis
'S ì ò, à lò, à laoidhidh, SA1957.12.B9 (James Ross)

Mary MacRae and Mary Ann Macleod (1-1) Uig, Lewis; Reef, Lewis
Chan eil mo leannan ann a seo/Cha dèan ìm, no gruth, no bàrr, SA1977.63.B2 (Morag MacLeod)

Calum and Annie Johnston (1-1) Barra

Tha caolas eadar mi ’s mo luaidh, Log 89

Nan MacKinnon (2-2) Barra/Vatersay

Tha i fuar, tha i frasach, SA1958.149.3 (James Ross)

Haoi o nach dannsadh sibh e, SA1958.149.4 (James Ross)

Angus MacKenzie & Co. (1-1) New South Wales

Rud nach fhaca duin’ air thalamh, SA1977.44.B2a (Emily Lyle)

Maggie Smith (1-1) Achmore (?), Lewis

Fearnot a steach a loch (Meg Hyland)

Chrissie and Margaret MacArthur and John MacLean (3-3) Stornoway, Lewis

Càit’ am bi na Maraichean, SA1954.75.A6 (Francis Collinson)

Tha fear a muigh a’ fuireach rium, SA1954.75.B10 (Francis Collinson) (just with a Miss MacArthur – first name unknown)

Caolas Bhearnaraidh is Uig, SA1954.75.B14 (Francis Collinson)

Annie MacLeod (1-1) Lewis

Càit’ am bi na Maraichean, SA1954.78.A14 (Francis Collinson)

Rev. Norman MacDonald (1-1) Skye

Càit am bi na Maraichean (James Ross)

Kenneth MacIver (1-2) Lewis/London

Càit’ am bi na Maraichean, SA1956.56.B4 (James Ross)

Càit’ am bi na Maraichean, SA1959.12.3 (James Ross)

Catriona Anna Nic a’ Phì (1-1) Barra/Ottawa

Grinn donn sgiobalta, mo ghiobag air an ùrlar

Nan MacLeod (1-1) Lewis

Tha fear am muigh a' fuireach rium, SA1957.11.A8 (James Ross)

Màiri Nic a' Ghobhainn (1-1) Lewis

Hò rì ai tri haoiream (Meg Hyland)

Kate MacLeod (2-2) Leurbost/Stornoway, Lewis

'S ann an Leurbost nan Loch, SA1955.2.A15 (James Ross and Francis Collinson) (with chorus)

Abo Chuibhl, SA1955.2.A16 (James Ross and Francis Collinson) (with chorus)

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An Interpretation of 'how the Wran come out of Ailssay' (Gavin Douglas, *The Palice of Honour*, l. 1713) as a Version of the Cumulative Tale 'Henny Penny'

EMILY LYLE AND JOHN SHAW

Gavin Douglas, poet and Bishop of Dunkeld (c. 1474-1522), is best known for his translation of Virgil's 'Aeneid' into Scots which he completed in 1513. 'The Palice of Honour' was an earlier work that was probably composed in 1501 or shortly before that (Bawcutt 2003: xxviii). At the point in the poem with which we are concerned, there are a number of stanzas which describe what the poet is shown in a mirror, and the relevant stanza on narratives is sandwiched between one on hawking and one on displays of magical transformation. It runs (Bawcutt 2003: 109, ll. 1711-19; notes 205-7, 325):

> I saw Raf Coilyear with his thrawin brow,
> Craibit Iohne the Reif and auld Cowkewyis sow,
> And how the Wran come out of Ailssay,
> And Peirs plewman that maid his workmen fow,
> Greit Gowmakmorne and Fyn Makcoull, and how
> Thay suld be Goddis in Ireland, as thay say.
> Thair saw I Maitland vpon auld beird gray,
> Robene Hude and Gilbert with the quhite hand,
> How Hay of Nauchtoun flew in Madin land.

The narratives listed include works in Scots, like 'Raf Coilyear', or English, like 'Robene Hude', and there is also reference to Irish tradition in the lines on 'Greit Gowmakmorne and Fyn Makcoull'. It has not previously proved possible to identify the narrative concerning 'how the Wran come out of Ailssay' but it is suggested here, on the basis of comparison with Scottish Gaelic material, that it may have been the cumulative tale ATU 20C 'The Animals Flee in Fear of the End of the World'[1], familiar to the English-speaking world as 'Henny Penny' or 'Chicken Little'. If so, an extension of the idea in the title might run: 'how the wren came out of Ailsa, crying that the end of the world was at hand'. In the tale-type, a chicken or other creature is generally frightened when something falls on its head or tail, taking it that the sky is falling and that this is a sign of the end of the world. The earliest version published in the Anglophone world is the Scots form given below which appeared in Chambers (1842: 51). It was followed into print shortly afterwards by a longer English version in Halliwell (1849: 29-31) in which also the creatures aim to tell the king but are eaten by the fox. As will be seen shortly, Scottish Gaelic forms exhibit a closer relationship to the Douglas quotation, but these parallels suggest the possibility that the creatures, starting from the periphery, come towards a centre where they expect to find the king (cf. the point that the wren 'come out' of Ailsa). The Chambers version is as follows:

> THE HEN AND HER FELLOW-TRAVELLERS
>
> A hen picking at a pease-stack, a pea fell on her head, and she thought the lifts were faun. And she thought she would go and tell the king about it. And she gaed,

[1] In Uther's classification of international tales (Uther 2004, I: 28).

> and gaed, and gaed; and she met a cock. And he said, "Where are ye gaun the day, henny-penny?" And she says, "I'm gaun to tell the king the lifts are faun."* And he says, "I'll gang wi' ye, henny-penny." And they gaed, and they gaed, and they gaed; and they met a duck. And the duck says, "Where are you gaun the day, cocky-locky, henny-penny?" "We're gaun to tell the king the lifts are faun."* "I'll gang wi' you, cocky-locky, henny-penny." "Then, come awa', ducky-daddles." And they gaed, and they gaed, and they gaed; and they met wi' a goose. And the goose says, "Where are you gaun the day, ducky-daddles, cocky-locky, henny-penny?" "We're gaun to tell the king the lifts are faun." And he says, "I'll gang wi' you, ducky-daddles, cocky-locky, henny-penny." "Then, come awa', goosie-poosie," said they. And they gaed, and they gaed, and they gaed, till they came to a wood, and there they met a tod. And the tod says, "Where are you gaun the day, goosie-poosie, ducky-daddles, cocky-locky, henny-penny?" "We're gaun to tell the king the lifts are faun." And he says, "Come awa', and I'll let you see the road, goosie-poosie, ducky-daddles, cocky-locky, henny-penny." And they gaed, and they gaed, and they gaed, till they came to the tod's hole. And he shot them a' in, and he and his young anes ate them a' up, and they never got to tell the king the lifts were faun.

Of interest here are marginalia made, probably in 1860, by the Scottish folk tale collector John Francis Campbell of Islay in his copy of the 1858 edition of Chambers's work *Popular Rhymes, Fireside Stories, and Amusements, of Scotland* (211), now in the National Library of Scotland. Campbell notes some differences in the version he knew. He gives 'tail' instead of 'head' in the first sentence and indicates the following interpolations at the points marked with asterisks in the Chambers text given above: 'And he says, How do ye ken that henny penny & she says How should I no ken when it played nippy nappy on my rumpumpo.' and 'How do ye ken that henny penny said the duck. – How should I no ken said she when it played nippy nappy on my rumpumpo.' In the second case the interpolation is introduced by 'tell the king the lift's faun'. Campbell notes that the tale was 'told to me by my mother when I was a very small child about 1825 or thereabouts'. His mother, Lady Eleanor Charteris, was apparently not Gaelic speaking, giving us the earliest evidence to date, though fragmentary, of an English/Scots version.

The Gaelic Traditions

In addition to the above, which are of English/Scots origin, there is also a fairly large body of variants from Gaelic traditions, nearly always recorded in the original Scottish or Irish Gaelic. These are worth examining in connection with Gavin Douglas's allusion to Ailsa Craig, not only from their geographical proximity to the location, but from the fact that the closely following allusions in the work to 'Greit Gowmakmorne and Fyn Makcoull, and how / Thay suld be Goddis in Ireland, as thay say' make it clear that the author, to some degree, at least, was aware of prominent figures in the Finn Cycle, the most widely revered branch of Gaelic oral tradition of that time.

We should recall here that at the time *The Palice of Honour* was composed, Ailsa Craig was located close to the active maritime trade routes carrying economic and cultural exchanges between the two countries. Ailsa Craig is conspicuously situated in the Firth of Clyde, and is mentioned as *Aldasain*, 'the Rock between Galloway and Kintyre', in the 12th century Irish manuscript the Book of Leinster. The etymology of the name is unclear; it is known in modern Gaelic as *Creag Ealasaid* (Watson: 173, 515).

The Gaelic traditions of Scotland and Ireland, like those of their Scots/English neighbours, have left us no variants of the story from earlier than the 19th century; their structure and content can be summarised in the following outline:

> One character, or two (in some versions a hen, in others human) receives a signal that the sky is about to fall on the earth, or simply of the approach of death (*bàs*) or doom (*bràth*). In some variants they are down by the shore and are made aware of the impending disaster by being struck by an object falling from the sky. They set out to carry the news to others (animals or humans) in succession, all of whom bear distinctive, often comical names, using a formula along the lines of: "Who has seen or heard it?" "My eyes have seen it, my ears have heard it, and my soles (or back[-side]) have felt it". They form a growing procession as they go through the country until they reach a destination of sorts: in many variants a white horse carries them to a river where they are drowned.

Scottish Gaelic

In Scottish Gaeldom, the fright may be caused not just by the supposed falling sky, but also by an apprehension of a rising sea taken as a doomsday sign, and this factor suggests the setting on the island of Ailsa Craig as having a potential relevance.

The chicken in panic sets off to tell others and the companions accumulate new members as they proceed on their way, which is potentially from the periphery by the shore to a central location where they could tell the king. Scottish versions identify the originator as a woman called Mór (or a man or a hen). Although no known version features a wren at the start of the story, one Scottish Gaelic version from Islay does include an appropriately located wren later by adding *an Dreòlan a bha anns a' chreig* ('the Wren that was in the rock') to the company (Campbell 1940: 64-65).

This notable Islay version was provided to the tale collector John Francis Campbell some time shortly after the middle of the 19th century, apparently recited by a nurse on the island, no great distance from Ailsa Craig. It was published in a posthumous collection, titled *More West Highland Tales* (Campbell 1940: 62-66):

> Mór the daughter of Smùid falls and thinks that death (*Bàs*) has come. She meets Ewan MacAlc, saying to him, 'Beware of death'. 'Have you seen or heard him?' She replies, 'My ear has heard, my eye has seen, and my foot has felt'. She then encounters a series of characters: Priest Speckled Boy, the One-eyed Man, the Lark that was on the Nest and the Wren that was in the Rock, the Thatcher of the Kiln, the Grinder of the Mill, Little Rory of the Rock, Big Rory of the Rock, and the Old Woman of the Bothy. Finally as they flee together they come to a river and the Horse with the White Trews offers to take them across. They all climb up on his back and the whole group of them are carried away by the river.

The old woman's companions, much like the English traditions we know well, are given comical names, of which four and probably five of the 11 refer either to a bird and/or to a large rock or crag:

> The Lark that was on the Nest '*An Uiseag a Bha air an Nead*'
> The Wren that was on the Rock '*An Dreòlan a Bha anns a'Chreig*'
> Little Rory of the Rock '*Ruairidh Beag na Creige*'
> Big Rory of the Rock '*Ruairidh Mór na Creige*'

At first glance, *Aon Sùil Fhear* translated 'One-eyed Man' would not seem to belong to the set, but the editor J.G. McKay rightly notes that the name is 'bad Gaelic' and provides the very plausible suggestion that it is a misinterpretation acquired in transmission of *An Sùlair* 'The Solan Goose or Gannet' (Campbell 1940: 65).[2]

[2] Ailsa Craig is 'home to the third largest gannet colony in Scotland' (http://www.rspb.org.uk/our-work/rspb-news/news/280200-rspb-stress-importance-of-ailsa-craig-but-are-not-in-negotiations-to-purchase-iconic-landmark) whose presence has been recorded 'since at least 1526' (Haswell-Smith: 4).

Thus, in addition to the intriguing reference to ‘The Wren that was on the Rock’, we are provided with a few details regarding the rock or crag in the story and may wonder whether it was indeed Ailsa Craig.

Scottish variants from further up the west coast also contain items of interest. Two closely similar settings (D.J. MacDonald MSS 8: 690-97; 49: 4556-68) from storytellers in South Uist, in the Outer Hebrides, open with a man on the shore hearing a rustling under a rock (*fo chreig*). In his flight, he encounters the same Big Rory of the Rock, and the whole company is eventually drowned in the sea. Further north in Bernera, Harris, a rendition recorded in the late 1960s from Mrs Kate Dix (SA 1967/88/A3) gives us the story of the Speckled Hen on the shore, who on her way to town to heal her leg encounters a series of birds: a seagull, a crow, and a rook. They meet with a fox who attempts to eat them all, but the Speckled Hen escapes and reaches the town.

One complete mainland variant from Morar, on the western coast, was recorded in Gaelic-speaking Nova Scotia in 1978 (MacLellan 2000: 350-53, 417; Shaw 2007). It opens with the main character Croma-Ghille Cromaidh walking on the shore and taking fright as the sea rises, perceiving it as a sign that the day of doom is imminent:

> Croma-Ghille Cromaidh is walking one day along the seashore and the sea comes in about his feet and he becomes frightened. So off he runs until he reaches Donna-Ghille Donnaidh who asks, “What is wrong?” Croma-Ghille Cromaidh replies ‘The day of doom is coming’ (‘*Tha am bràth a’ tighinn*’). ‘Who saw and heard it?’ (‘*Có chunnaic ‘s a dh’fhairich e?*’) his companion asks, and Croma-Ghille Cromaidh replies, ‘It is I that saw and heard it.

> Didn't it come beneath the soles of my feet?' (*'S mis' a chunnaic 's a dh'fhairich . Nach ann fo'm bhonnaibh a thànaig e?*')

Croma-Ghille Cromaidh goes on to meet a typical cast of characters, and finally, to complete the circle, meets Big Finn mac Crùslaig (a possible reference to the Finn Cycle), who averred that the day of doom would not arrive just yet

Irish Gaelic

The tale type is more abundantly recorded in its Irish variants, which are with one or two exceptions in Irish Gaelic. In his work *The Types of the Irish Folktale*, Seán Ó Súilleabháin (1963: 338) lists manuscript sources, along with some 20 printed versions from the 20th century published mostly in obscure Irish-language periodicals. Thanks to the National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin, we have had access to field transcriptions of an additional 20 examples of the story, again nearly all from Irish speakers. The Irish versions available appear to show a greater uniformity than those we have examined from Scotland.

Typically, an object from above lands on the tail of a hen by the seashore. She takes fright and runs off to tell the others that a heaven and earth cataclysm is about to occur, or that doom is approaching. In the course of this she assembles a motley procession, often but not invariably consisting of other birds such as a rooster, a gander, a goose or drake; or occasionally animals such as a ram or a bull. In a few versions, as in Scotland, the procession can consist of characters with strange and comical names. They are met by a crafty fox who leads them into his den, and devours them, or by a white horse who carries them into a river where they perish. The story is reinforced throughout by a repeated formula along the lines of: 'It is my two eyes that saw it and my two ears that heard it; it struck my backside and had it been a heavy rock, I would be long dead.' One Irish version of the tale printed in *Irisleabhar na Gaedhilge/The Gaelic Journal* (Mac Tíre 1889) ix; 339-341) in 1889 was noted down in the late 19th century from a Brigid Boyle of Glenties, Co. Donegal. It features names that correspond strikingly to those in the Islay version published by John Francis Campbell, some 30 years earlier:

Glenties		Islay
Mórnaic O Smuilc	:	*Mór nighean Smùid*
Ruaidhrí Beag na Carraige	:	*Ruairidh Beag na Creige*
Ruaidhrí Mór na Carraige	:	*Ruairidh Mór na Creige*

The last two names may be particularly significant, where the Irish *carraig* is simply another word for *creag* 'rock', providing a close parallel and perhaps a shared origin with the Islay story.

From our comparisons of the written and field evidence available, we cannot state conclusively that the passage in Gavin Douglas's *Palice of Honour* refers to the widespread folktale, 'Henny Penny' (ATU 20C). However, it does provide a likely explanation for an allusion that is otherwise obscure. The allusions to Irish Gaelic traditions, in particular the Finn cycle (which was very much alive in Scotland in his day), bear witness to an interest in Gaelic legend shared by Gavin Douglas's Lowland contemporaries, together with an awareness of oral sources differing little if at all from the one suggested here. The Wren in the Rock appears on a list of characters involved in the closest geographical variant to Ailsa Crag, that recorded in Islay. Similar lists of characters in variants further removed, extending up the western coast of Scotland and throughout the west of Ireland, feature various varieties of birds fleeing the catastrophe, with a notably close counterpart to the Islay variant taken down in Donegal. The possible

reference to the folktale is further supported by the mention of the sea in some descriptions of the impending cataclysm, recalling the location of Ailsa Crag in the western part of the Firth of Clyde.

If our suggestion is correct, Gavin Douglas will have provided the earliest known reference in the British Isles to a widespread international folktale, setting its first appearance in the record back from the early 19th century to the early 16th century.

MANUSCRIPTS AND FIELD RECORDINGS IN THE SCHOOL OF SCOTTISH STUDIES ARCHIVE

'*Tuaireadaire Teallaich*'. D.J. MacDonald MS 8: 690-97.
'*Tuaireadaire Teallaich'*. D.J. MacDonald MS 49: 4556-68. SA 1967/88/A3.

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Friendship, Faith and the Bard MacLean

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ABSTRACT

Among Canada's pioneer poets John MacLean is uniquely *Am Bàrd MacGilleathan*. His 'The Gloomy Forest' gave an eloquent account of tree-felling challenges facing Highland settlers. MacLean's background in fertile Tiree, where his bardic skills developed, was very different. This paper focuses on a friendship between the bard and a priest, Colin Grant, who shared his knowledge of clan-based society. The friendship flourished in an area of Nova Scotia where faith communities met. Protestants from the northern Highlands put down roots in Pictou while Catholics from further west settled in Antigonish and Cape Breton. The personal friendship reflected a period of shared Gaelic culture when clergy were in short supply. Scripture in Gaelic helped to establish Calvinist values, while Catholic belief and practice continued to draw on an imaginative folk-culture. The bard's praise-poetry for the priest followed him to death, but MacLean turned to spiritual verse as faith communities drew apart.

Renowned in Canada as *Am Bàrd MacGilleathan*, John MacLean was the leading Gaelic poet of immigration from the Scottish Highlands. Despite this, little progress was made towards a biography following his grandson the Rev. Alexander Maclean Sinclair's brief 'memoir'.[1] Professor Robert Dunbar of Edinburgh University is in process of filling that gap on the basis of his doctoral thesis.[2] Here the focus is on an unlikely friendship between the Protestant bard and a priest from Scotland, Colin Grant. *Maighstir Cailean Grannd* was given charge of Nova Scotia's first Catholic mission at Arisaig in Antigonish county. Grant is little known beyond the song-poems which MacLean composed for him.

That segment of biography is played out against the wider background of relationships between contrasting approaches to religious faith. Catholics came to Nova Scotia from the Western Isles and the *Garbh Chriochan* ('Rough Bounds') between Morar and Moidart.[3] Protestant immigrants could be seen as heirs to northern Highland revivalism, notably at annual communion gatherings when ministers were supported by the 'Men'.[4] MacLean and Grant met at the boundary between Antigonish and Pictou, where the bard was helped by the priest. This was at a time when faith communities were in process of being created.

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[1] Maclean Sinclair 1881: xiii-xxvi.

[2] Dunbar 2007.

[3] Roberts 2015. Knoydart emigrants settled in Glengarry County, Ontario.

[4] Macinnes 1951: 211-20.

Here we are concerned with those who settled in Nova Scotia and the island of Cape Breton. Inured to subsistence farming in Scotland, these Gaels of two faiths faced the same challenge. Clearing forest land and making homes out of logs called for hard work and new skills. MacLean's *Òran do dh' Ameireaga* was so well known that it became known by the end of its first line, *Gu bheil mi am ònrachd sa coille ghruamaich*, 'I am so lonely in this gloomy forest.'[5] It has been rated 'undoubtedly the greatest of all emigrant songs.'[6] Sent back to Scotland by the bard, *A' Choille Ghruamach* had the effect of stemming emigration. A wedding at Tobermory is said to have been reduced to tears by it.[7]

Colonisation of Nova Scotia's mainland by Highlanders began in 1767 when forty settlers were landed by the Philadelphia Company at what became Pictou Harbour. One of them, James McCabe, serves to introduce the theme of religious faith: McCabe was a Catholic in a place which the Company stipulated was for Protestants, so the holding had to be registered in his wife's name. McCabe's tree-felling was unusual: 'He had brought with him what they call a mattock, a heavy instrument, on one side an axe and on the other a grubbing hoe. Instead of chopping down the tree, his practice was to take away the earth from the main roots and cut off all the smaller ones, and then leave it to fall by the wind or drag it down and out of root.'[8]

Highland settlers followed.[9] There was friction when immigrants from Loch Broom in Wester Ross refused the offer of holdings up to three miles inland, breaking into stores when denied provisions. The trees upriver were very large, and 'to men unaccustomed to clearing the wood in America, and unskilled in the use of the axe, the work seemed hopeless.'[10] They prayed for deliverance, and after eleven years without a pastor Pictou's settlers appealed to Scotland for a Gaelic-speaking minister. The man sent out by the Secession Church in 1786 was James MacGregor. An Anti-Burgher strict Calvinist, MacGregor was licensed as a probationer and taught in Highland schools until ordained for Pictou. Friendship touched on faith quite widely when he encouraged his people to provide shelter for the many Catholic migrants who came among them:

'As they were all newly beginning in the woods, a gift which he gave to numbers of them was an axe and a hoe.'[11] Long after this MacGregor visited some of his former hearers at River Inhabitants and West Bay in Cape Breton. Preaching

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[5] Sinclair 1881: 98.

[6] MacDonell 1982: 17.

[7] Newton 2014: 21.

[8] Patterson 1872: 60.

[9] See Donald MacKay, *Scotland Farewell: The People of the Hector* (Toronto, 1980).

[10] Patterson 1872: 84.

[11] Patterson 1859: 258.

in barns, he urged them 'to continue steadfast in their Protestant profession, as he knew they were surrounded by Papists on all hands.' On his way back to the Canso crossing MacGregor met Catholics he had helped on their arrival in the New World. One of them guided him through the forest: 'The Doctor offered to pay him for his kindness but he refused, and asked him if he did not remember giving such a poor man an axe and a hoe.'[12]

Tiree and Coll

John MacLean grew up at Caolas in Tiree, looking over a narrow strait to Coll. It is hard to imagine a greater contrast between the America of MacLean's lament and the island of Tiree. One description of it is *Tìr an Eòrna*, the land of barley. Low-lying, sunny and above all treeless, it was a heavily cultivated place: 'The harvest generally begins about the middle of August. . . Barley is the prevailing crop, which gets two and sometimes three ploughings and so consumes much time.'[13] Tiree's barley fueled a West Highland whisky boom, and a ceilidh culture of music and story flourished. The parish minister Archibald MacColl saw no problem in 'Fingalian and other tales repeated by the inhabitants, mentioning engagements and the names of chieftains. At this day they point out their burying-places, whence the ground derives its name.' He was a moderate clergyman of his time, with no call to condemn papists among his people:

> They still retain some Roman Catholic sayings, prayers and oaths, as expletives; such as "*Dias Muire leat*", i.e. God and Mary be with you, "*Air Muire*", swearing by Mary, &c. They are free of superstition, and make a considerable progress in knowledge. There is no schism from the established church; and none of any other persuasion, except now and then a few Roman Catholic servants from Barra.

The parish school was poor in quality, and another was opened by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge. However 'These two schools generally had not ten scholars each. The people had not taste for education. . .'[14] As for being 'free of superstition', it was a *Tirisdeach* who told a later minister about an encounter between *Fionn mac Cumhaill* and the headless *Colann gun Cheann*.[15] According to local belief, a man at Ruaig killed eighty hens with one glance of his evil eye and went on to wreck a big ship of five cross trees.[16] It was generally Highland Catholics - not least in Nova Scotia - who were accused of being credulous.

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[12] *op. cit.*: 445-6. Guidance on felling trees was later published. Robert MacDougall 1841 re-presented by his descendant Elizabeth Thompson (Toronto, 1998).

[13] Sinclair 1791-99: xxix. Parish of Tiry (1794), 397.

[14] *op. cit.*: 401, 413, 415.

[15] Black 2008: 277.

[16] *op. cit.*: 203.

Apprenticeship to a Tiree cobbler failed to make a craftsman of John MacLean, whose background was comfortable. From an early age he enjoyed listening to elderly song-makers and story-tellers:

> He could learn very easily; he read all the books that came his way; and he remembered whatever he heard or read. He delighted especially in history and poetry. He went several years to school, learning to read and spell both English and Gaelic, to cipher, and to write. He was an excellent reader and a good pen-man.[17]

At a time and place where there was little regard for formal education, John MacLean stood out from township poets like his brother *Dòmhnall Cùbair*.[18]

John MacLean was known in Scotland as *Bàrd Thighearna Cholla*. How did the Tiree man become bard to the laird of Coll on the other island? There was a precedent: another bard in the family. In 1754 his maternal great-grandfather Neil Lamont, living at Balevullin, composed a panegyric for Hector MacLean of Coll. His patronage was appreciated: 'After I returned from visiting you to my delight I even had a full powdered wig.'[19] Alexander MacLean followed his brother as a benevolent landlord. There were no evictions, and he maintained a home in Coll while supporting Gaelic traditions. In 1815 the laird and his bard fell out when the Society of True Highlanders was being launched by Walter Scott's figurehead Glengarry. As the gentlemen sat down to dine Coll's bard was left outside, only to be brought in by Alasdair Ranaldson Macdonell.[20] After draining the chief's dram he declaimed a toast to the effect that 'Glengarry and not Coll was the King of the Gael.'[21] This threatened 'one of the last patron-poet relationships in the Gàidhealtachd'.[22] Harmony was restored, and three years later the bard dedicated a collection of songs to his patron.[23] MacLean of Coll was from home when his bard left for the New World. Colonel Simon Fraser, a Mull tacksman, owned the ship

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[17] Maclean Sinclair 1881: xiv. Tiree's SPCK school was following a new national policy of promoting English literacy through Gaelic.

[18] Dunbar 2014:200. John MacLean's brother, a cooper by trade, was born about 1785. Five short poems by him have survived.

[19] Cregeen and Mackenzie 1978: 6. See also Cameron 1932.

[20] See Osborne 2001.

[21] Maclean Sinclair1881: 89. The 1926 edition with the quarrel between Coll and his bard added was revised by Hector MacDougall.

[22] Nicholas MacLean-Bristol 2007: 359.

[23] The collection was published in 1819 as *Òrain Nuadh Ghaedhlach* by Robert Menzies in Edinburgh, with financial help from the laird of Coll. When MacLean left for America he owed £33 6s, with 380 Gaelic song books unsold. Maclean Sinclair1881: xv, xvi.

Economy on which both men crossed the Atlantic. Fraser had property at Pictou.[24] As a collector of Gaelic books he was willing to cover the printer's bill in Edinburgh, and this enabled John MacLean to sail with his wife and three children in August 1819.

Creating Faith Communities

The first Highland emigration to what became Canada was a very Catholic affair. John MacDonald of Glenaladale's 1772 expedition mainly benefited his own Moidart people, but there were others. A campaign extended as far as London against Colin MacDonald of Boisdale's attempt to force his South Uist tenants into kirk attendance. Catholic money enabled some of them to cross with Glenaladale, and persecution ceased.[25] *Isle Saint-Jean* (later Prince Edward Island, Gaelic *Eilean Eòin*) became a haven for Catholics, and the future bishop Angus Bernard MacEachern took on a leadership role. He criticised James MacGregor's provision of tools as proselytism among Catholic immigrants (there were conversions) and helped to create settlements for them. Over time Glenaladale's paternalism was rejected by tenants attracted to Nova Scotia by the government's offer of freehold property. He condemned them as 'Yankified Highlanders'.[26] Although bishops of Quebec included Scots immigrants in visitations of the Maritimes, French-speaking priests could do little for the Gaels. Acadians were their primary care. The same applied to Irish clergy ministering to immigrants in English, while the Mi'kmac natives presented another linguistic challenge.

Protestant Gaels came mainly from the northern counties of Ross and Sutherland, where evangelical 'awakening' had taken place in the previous century. Charles Dunn judged that Protestant and Catholic Churches in Scotland were both slow to support the emigration of Gaelic-speaking families. Clergy 'did not follow their flocks until some years had passed.' Catholic missionaries (as in Scotland) were more mobile: 'When they could reach no minister, Presbyterians had their children baptized by itinerant Catholic priests. And even in the later part of the century many communities were supplied only irregularly. In the large Presbyterian community around Whycocomagh in Cape Breton, from the first arrival of a minister in 1837 until the end of the century . . . there were twenty-four years in which the pulpit was vacant.'[27] When the future bishop William Fraser reached Antigonish town in 1822, Highland Protestants listened 'as attentively as our people, and declared that they would contribute to our Church, and would become

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[24] MacLean-Bristol 2007: 398.

[25] Gordon 1874: 78-82. Scotland's Bishop George Hay was friendly with Bishop Richard Challoner who caused collections for South Uist to be taken at embassy chapels in London.

[26] Clan Donald Centre Collection, MS.1.1. John MacDonald, London, to John MacDonald, Borrodale, 30 January 1806.

[27] Dunn 1953, 1991): 92-3.

Catholics if Mr Fraser would stay among them.'[28] He went to rural settlements: 'We have conversions not a few; during one year's residence in Bras d'ore I had no less than 25 converts.'[29]

Scripture lies at the heart of Protestant belief and practice, so the New Testament translation into Gaelic which became available in the latter part of the eighteenth century was timely for settlers who rarely heard clergy preaching. Sponsored by the SPCK, it was the joint work of the Rev. James Stewart of Killin and the poet-catechist Dugald Buchanan.[30] The Old Testament was added in 1807 before a corrected Gaelic Bible was issued by the Kirk's General Assembly in 1826. Scripture readings at home depended on someone literate in the language, but there developed 'the custom of committing the Shorter Catechism to memory on the Sabbath evening. . .' There were also times when a senior member of the family 'would recite "notes" from the lips of the ministers or catechists that they heard on certain occasions in the old land.'[31]

At this time catechists led Cape Breton worship, but regular Presbyterian forms were in place at Pictou. Metrical psalms led by a precentor aided congregational singing, but there were no hymns. Gaelic ones by the Baptist minister Peter Grant of Speyside inspired devotion on both sides of the Atlantic. Set to tunes well known in the Highlands, his *Dain Spioradail* went into a fourth edition at Montreal in 1836. By no means all who sang were Baptists: 'In brief it may be said that, though Presbyterian custom precluded the use of the "dain spioradail" in public worship . . . they became, and continued almost up to our own time, to be the Gaelic-speaking Highlander's chief devotional commentary on the Gospel.'[32]

The Rev. James MacGregor, who had learned his Gaelic in Scotland, led the way in moving from bardic lore to religious verse. Such was the hostility in Pictou to his enjoyment of Alasdair Mhaighstir Alasdair and Duncan Ban Macintyre that he lost worshippers. MacGregor presented 'a new and aggressive Evangelicalism' for missionary effort oversees: 'All things were possible; with the key of knowledge in his hand the Gael would open a door which led straight to an ampler life.'[33] MacGregor has recently been celebrated, with fresh recognition, as the man who brought to Nova Scotia a more than religious enlightenment.[34] Pictou became noted for graduates who professed science and agriculture as well as the liberal arts.

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[28] Johnston 1960: 433.

[29] *op. cit.*: 436.

[30] MacLean 1913.

[31] Murray 1921: 264-5.

[32] Macinnes 1951: 265.

[33] *op. cit.*: 289-90.

[34] Wilson 2015.

A narrower view focused on ministers: 'In less than a hundred years she [Pictou] has given to the church nearly three hundred clergymen.'[35] More than a preacher to Gaels, MacGregor was committed to the Scottish Enlightenment which he had espoused at Glasgow University. Book-learning was the way ahead. Despite his concern to preserve the Gaelic language, it was English schools which provided the means.

As a minister he made arduous journeys over a large area essentially Protestant but far from united in religious belief. Anglicans reflected the views of the Halifax government.[36] Loyalists who came north after the American colonists rejected British rule, brought their Puritan heritage, and MacGregor particularly approved of Ulster Scots for their 'steady Presbyterianism'.[37] It took him years to accept that Scotland's close theological disputes hardly mattered in a pioneer setting, and he came to see value in the earlier preaching of Henry Alline 'the Apostle of Nova Scotia'.[38] Among his hearers were former soldiers: 'They had received a large grant of land, still called the 82nd Grant extending east to Merigomish.'[39] The military connection explains why Col. Simon Fraser, whose father had served as an officer of the 82nd, arranged land at Barney's River for John MacLean.

Agreeing on at least one thing with Angus MacEachern, MacGregor sought to move Highland Catholics on from Pictou. The newcomers were regarded as a bad influence: 'Most of their time was spent in naughty diversions, jestings which are not convenient or decent, in telling extravagant stories of miracles done by priests. . .'[40] MacGregor had no time for these clergymen: 'What miserable teachers are the priests, who prohibit the use of the Scriptures and teach pure fables?' Considered to be a 'good man', however, the minister was expected to find animals lost by Catholics and cure their ailments, as with one woman's cow:

> As she would take no denial he at length went, and laying a rod which he had in his hand upon her back he said, 'If you live you live, if you die you die.' The cow recovered. Some time after the Doctor himself had a sore throat, and this old woman came to see him. As soon as she entered the room she said, 'Ah, if you live you live, if you die you die.' He immediately recollected the

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[35] MacPhie 1914: iv.

[36] Gardina Pestana 2009.

[37] Patterson 1872: 68.

[38] Stewart 1982. Alline was an evangelical whose influence was mainly on Canada's Baptist Church. He composed 487 hymns before dying at the age of thirty-five.

[39] Patterson 1872: 80. The 82nd Foot or Prince of Wales's Volunteers served in Haiti before the Nova Scotia land grant was made.

[40] *op. cit.*: 257. See also Roberts 2006.

> circumstances and burst out laughing, which broke the abcess that had been forming, which discharged and he soon got better.[41]

MacGregor had a sense of humour. The same was true of the Rev. Thomas McCulloch who followed him as Presbyterian leader. From the Covenanting corner of south-west Scotland, he shared MacGregor's Secessionist viewpoint which led to Disruption and the Free Church. Also a graduate of Glasgow University, McCulloch's earliest publications were on 'Popery condemned'.[42] His Stepsure Letters in the *Acadian Recorder* provoked laughter 'until the rafters o' the house fairly shook. . .' In more serious vein, his *Colonial Musings* of 1826 introduced James MacGregor, which 'helped to consolidate the increasingly religious tone of McCulloch's fiction, for in [Macgregor's] lengthy sermon there was an elaboration of the Calvinist vision which formed the moral underpinning of . . . Mephibosheth Stepsure.'[43]

Faith and Folk-Culture

Dr MacGregor was not the only one who looked down on priests from Scotland. Bishop Joseph-Octave Plessis of Quebec found Highland clergy improperly dressed for worship: 'A Scottish priest, wearing lay attire, places around his neck a stole. . . With this he preaches, hears confessions, and administers all the sacraments.'[44] Better clerical attire was acquired in time. Writing in 1812 Plessis also criticised Highlanders for talking in church and bringing in dogs, but he was astonished at their devotion:

> During Mass you hear them sighing, and at the Elevation they burst forth into sobs. Many of them keep joining and separating their hands while they pray, and their arms are in continual motion during the Holy Sacrifice. . . When they come to Communion, both men and women drag themselves forward on their knees.[45]

In the year of James II and VII's accession, an Irish Vincentian wrote about Highlanders who 'never speak to a priest but after reseving his benediction kneeling before him.'[46] Even when the region produced its own priests, their numbers were few and their people scattered, so that clergy contact was a source of great joy. Meanwhile the Sulpician-trained clergymen of New France had a high sense of

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[41] Patterson 1872: 258-9.

[42] McCulloch 1808; 1810 in response to Nova Scotia's Bishop Edmund Burke.

[43] Buggey and Davies 1988.

[44] Johnston 1960 i: 230.

[45] *op. cit.*: 232.

[46] John Cahassy, Paris, to Cardinal Norfolk, Rome, December 1685. SCA/ BL 1/90/2 (1). See also MacDonald, 2006.

vocation and vestments to go with it. No wonder the congregation was emotionally engaged when a richly attired bishop, with acolytes, consecrated the host they rarely saw elevated.

Church services are almost a minor part of the story, however, as shown by the Gaelic scholar John MacInnes while introducing an accessible version of Alexander Carmichael's *Carmina Gadelica* out of its six volumes:

> These religious texts with their strange blend of pagan and Christian imagery, witnesses to the spirituality of a vanished age, their complement of mysterious words and phrases . . . and their dignified, almost liturgical style, fascinate the reading public, English and Gaelic alike. Here it would seem was a lost lexicon of piety which almost miraculously had survived into modern times.[47]

MacInnes went on to discuss the doubts raised by Carmichael's 'tidying up' (or editing) of what he heard before reaching a balanced conclusion: 'In spite of many unanswered questions, it is now clear that *Carmina Gadelica* is not a monumental exercise in literary fabrication nor, on the other hand, is it a transcript of ancient poems and spells reproduced exactly in the form in which they survived in oral tradition.'[48] Questions were discussed through Edinburgh University's Carmichael Watson Project, and answers have appeared in print.[49]

'Spells' provide a way into the Gael's religious sensibility which touched every aspect of natural life. There were charms against sickness in humans and animals. As Dunn the folklorist noted, sties in the eye could be removed by *Eolas an Déididh* and 'in most cases there were complicated stipulations to be observed. The Charm for the Eyes had to be recited by three people of the same first name – by three Maries, or three Duncans, for instance.'[50] The waulking of wool by women thumping and tugging became the milling frolic – marked as ever by musical refrain. Catholics had a formal way of ending it, with three sunwise (*deiseil*) turnings of the cloth dedicated to the Trinity.

Singing had been condemned by ministers in Scotland along with the playing of bagpipe and fiddle. Across the Atlantic traditional *pìobaireachd* failed to 'take' in the absence of chiefs to sponsor players. However Cape Breton became known for loose-fingered pipers playing quick tempo strathspeys and quicker reels.[51] A percussive 'close to the floor' style was replaced by genteel country dancing in Scotland. It is now being reintroduced, with fiddle music, from across

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[47] MacInnes 2006: 477.

[48] *op. cit.*: 17.

[49] See Stiùbhart (ed.) 2008.

[50] Dunn1953: 43.

[51] See Gibson 2002.

the Atlantic.[52] Step-dancing had to be learned. Alexander Gillis was a dance-master based at South West Margaree who left Ardnamurach, Morar, in 1826.[53]

Associated with the bardic verse at which John MacLean excelled was story-telling. Some of it was ancient, and long sessions of well-remembered lore could become 'tales until dawn'.[54] It was not only Catholics who enjoyed the tradition-bearer's art. Cape Breton's Presbyterian chronicler recalled 'a time when telling stories of fairies and witches was a common practice round the big hardwood fire.'[55] Representing the oral tradition of song and story is the late Lauchie MacLellan of Dunvegan in Inverness County. John Shaw, an American who crossed to the School of Scottish Studies, recorded Lauchie over a period of years, and his shared conclusions with this latter-day tradition-bearer found their way into print.[56] Lauchie MacLellan's district in Cape Breton was largely settled by families from Morar, so it is pleasing to find he knew of a great-great-grandfather who enjoyed some status in Scotland. *Fearchar an Òir* (Farquhar of the Gold) collected rents for the landlord.[57]

Loneliness

John MacLean's land was at Middle Barney's River, named after Barnabas McGee who had been the first settler in Merigomish.[58] MacLean moved into an empty house overlooking the stretch of woodland he had acquired. His nearest neighbour was two miles away. In the following year he began to fell trees and planted potatoes.[59] He named the farm *Baile-Chnoic* (Township of the Hill) but spent that winter down river for the sake of his children's schooling. MacLean's ordeal may be said to have begun in the winter of 1821.[60] He complained that 'every former talent in my head has gone'. This is ironic in light of the poem's high reputation and 'a massive text of 144 long lines.'[61]

Nutrition was meagre, and we are left to imagine how Isabella fed six children. Motherhood restricted her outdoor work in the *Baile-Chnoic* years which

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[52] Melin 2006:, 219.

[53] MacDougall 1922: 401.

[54] MacNeil 1987.

[55] Murray 1921: 265.

[56] MacLellan 2000.

[57] Roberts 2017, 51.

[58] Patterson 1872: 66.

[59] Patterson 1859: 130.

[60] Michael Newton (2014: 8) suggests before 1820.

[61] *op. cit.*: 65, 21.

extended to 1831, although 'she could handle the hoe, the sickle and the rake.'[62] Cold was expected, but summer heat brought on a 'taloned insect' in the form, surely, of the Canadian black fly making 'eyes swell through its potent poison.'[63] The poem returns to the theme of loneliness, in contrast to 'when I was youthful – at every table I loved to chat, in jovial company, in hearty spirits, in carefree style as our time ran fast.'[64]

Robert Dunbar has drawn attention to emigrant poets sharing 'a distinct rhetoric or code of dispraise'.[65] The earlier they came, the worse the conditions. Furthermore the first generation of versifiers belonged to groups which had faced the least hardship in Scotland.[66] Another 'Song of America' was composed by John 'the Hunter' MacDonald. He had been a forester and brought his gun, which featured in nostalgic verse about 'roaming the dells on the wild moors, stalking the young deer.'[67] This provoked a cousin, Allan 'the Ridge' MacDonald. His *Moladh Albainn Nuaidh* praises Nova Scotia but more of it is about old Scotland where 'the gentry got it for themselves'. As for hunting, 'Though you brag greatly about the stag, should you kill it for your use . . . you will be prosecuted'.[68]

Allan the Ridge was closely enough related to Keppoch chiefs in Lochaber to be ranked as gentry. John Gibson has placed some emphasis on the cultural importance of the Gaelic middle class, Protestant and Catholic, in Nova Scotia.[69] By contrast John Shaw reckons its rural society, thanks to the 200-acre land grants, was 'markedly less hierarchical'.[70] Mabou was Gaelic in culture, its Catholic loyalty encouraged by Alexander MacDonald as resident priest.[71] *Alasdair Mòr* was described by Effie Rankin as 'a veritable chieftain and patron of poets'. She felt that Allan the Ridge was 'insulated to a great extent from the outside English world', so that he flourished in a 'cheerful bardic community'.[72]

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[62] *op. cit.*: xxi.

[63] Meek 2003: 69. The translator suggests mosquito for *a' chuileag ineach* (405).

[64] o*p. cit.*: 71.

[65] Dunbar 2004-2006: 22-125 at 43.

[66] See MacLellan, Vincent 1891.

[67] MacDonell 1982: 85.

[68] Rankin 2004: 77-81.

[69] Gibson 1998: 187-200.

[70] MacLellan, Lauchie 2000: 5.

[71] Johnston 1960 ii: 125, 247. Alexander MacDonald went on to become the first vicar general or deputy to Bishop Colin MacKinnon. o*p. cit.*: 275-6.

[72] Rankin 2004: 28.

MacLean's situation was very different, but his sociable nature found an outlet in due course as celebrated in *Òran Bhàil Ghàidhealaich*. This 1826 gathering which took place at Merigomish has been described as 'an act of ethnic solidarity'.[73] Religious differences set aside, Gaelic-speakers from Pictou and Antigonish met to celebrate their common culture. MacLean sang his own verses about preserving it. Michael Newton put the matter formally: 'Like other minority cultures whose existence is threatened by hegemonic forces, Gaels have often perceived tradition as an internal cultural resource for the renewal and reassertion of the culture itself.'[74] John MacInnes has suggested that the annual communions of Revivalism in northern Scotland resembled 'tribal gatherings in sacred places to renew the spiritual vigour and fertility of the community.'[75] Calvinism played no part in John MacLean's friendship with the priest Colin Grant.

Priest in Scotland and Nova Scotia

The Rev. Colin Grant was born in Glenmoriston about 1784 as the son of Duncan Grant, Presbyterian, and Helena Chisholm, Catholic. He was two years a priest in Strathglass after ordination at the Highland District seminary on the island of Lismore. Bishop John Chisholm who performed the ceremony was a cousin. He and his brother Aeneas were long remembered in Scotland and Canada as *na h-Easbuigean Bàna* 'the fair-haired bishops'.[76] Grant's next posting was to Braemar. This district south of Glenlivet was awash with home-distilled whisky, and smuggling followed a change in the law.[77] Fellow clergy agreed that Grant's predecessor William McLeod had not been up to the challenge of 'a particularly turbulent period'.[78]

Mgr. Alexander MacWilliam researched and admired two Highland Jesuit missions.[79] Regarding the last Jesuit in the Braes of Mar, 'It could be wished that the secular clergy who took his place kept up the same standard. Unfortunately some of them gave too much evidence of the weaknesses of human nature.'[80] Colin Grant's memorial stone in Nova Scotia recalled him as 'a man of splendid

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[73] Dunbar 2014: 221.

[74] Newton 2009: 120.

[75] John MacInnes 2006: 441.

[76] A pectoral cross produced at Antigonish by an old lady was believed to have been worn by the two bishops (Blundell 1909: 210).

[77] An Act of Parliament made a capacity of forty gallons the minimum legal size of still in 1823 (Daiches 1969: 53.

[78] MacHardy 2009: 41-68 at 43.

[79] MacWilliam 1972: 22-39; 1973: 75-102.

[80] 'The Braemar Mission' typescript is in that part of the Scottish Catholic Archives still in Edinburgh after the removal of most pre-1878 material to Aberdeen University.

physique'.[81] Despite this, the priest was badly bruised after being provoked into a trial of strength at a market. The Rev. Charles Gordon in Aberdeen reported to the Lowland District's Bishop Alexander Cameron: 'You probably have heard that our Braemar friend, Mr C. Grant, has been and still is in another scrape. . . Some of his Great Great friends taking the thing into consideration advised him and prevailed upon him to commence an action before the Commissary Court here.'[82] The affair did not go to court, thanks to the influence of 'Priest Gordon'.[83] He ended: 'But should not Bishop Chisholm be informed of this? What would you say if any of us were going on thus?'[84] Further light was shed by Henry Innes, priest at Ballogie on Deeside:

> Mr Grant of Braemar, who some time ago rendered himself conspicuous by being inveigled into a quarrel and a scuffle in a public house (though I do believe it was less owing to his own imprudence than to the malice of some people who bore him ill-will) has now again exposed himself and his character to the public notice in a most unbecoming and odious light. A young girl, the daughter of a Mrs Cumming who keeps a publick house in Castletown of Braemar, has it seems taken such a fancy to Mr Grant that in defiance of her mother and other friends she insisted on her being in his house as his housekeeper and he is weak enough to harbour her as such to the great scandal, as it is reported, of both Protestants and Catholics, and utter ruin of the girl's character and certainly not much less of the priest's.[85]

Bishop Chisholm acted quickly, and within three weeks Bishop Cameron learned that Colin Grant was leaving for America. There was an element of scandal, but Grant may have asked for a transfer as other Highland priests had been doing. A key example, Alexander MacDonell, came from Grant's corner of Scotland.[86] Grant was not dismissed for drinking like later Highland priests.[87] On the positive side, he

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[81] Johnston 1994: 45.

[82] Commissary courts dealt with small debts and had disciplinary powers over defamation.

[83] See Stark, 1909.

[84] SCA/BL 4/409/4, Gordon to Cameron, 18 Feb 1813. The priest's comment on Grant's 'Great Great friends' may be contrasted with his own humble origins. Constance Davidson, *Priest Gordon* (London, 1929), 14.

[85] SCA/BL 5/46/2. Henry Innes, Ballogie, to Bishop Cameron, Edinburgh, 23 Jan 1818.

[86] See Toomey 1985. MacDonell was vicar general to Bishop Plessis of Quebec until the Kingston bishopric was created in 1826.

[87] See Roberts 2004: 17-44. Two of the three who took up a new life in Nova Scotia did very well.

was responsible for the erection of a clergy-house at Braemar and a school for seventy pupils.[88]

After crossing the Atlantic in 1818 *Maighstir Cailean* was asked to serve as pastor of Arisaig.[89] Nova Scotia's first Catholic mission had been given this name by its priest James MacDonald, whose boyhood home in Arisaig became a seminary for the Highland District.[90] Grant found a log chapel beside the landing-place, built in a single day.[91] His predecessor Alexander MacDonald from Clianaig in Lochaber had come out in 1802. Still incomplete was 'an immense wharf (the work of Father MacDonald, paid for by the government).'[92]

The church which MacDonald began was 40 feet long and 26 wide. A larger one had been built on the other side of the Strait at MacEachern's Savage Harbour - 'a frame Church on the premises 60 feet by 36 and 18 feet at the post, with a choir over the door and Galleries on both sides up to the Sanctuary.'[93] Colin Grant fell heir to MacDonald's 'spacious Glebe House'.[94] In 1820 Bishop Edmund Burke came there from Halifax to discuss opening a seminary at Arisaig. Grant might have been in charge (teachers of Latin and Greek were to be supplied) but the bishop's death halted progress.[95] In 1821 Grant had the Arisaig church enlarged, making it slightly longer than that of the man who became bishop of Charlottetown.[96] Catholic churches in Nova Scotia tended to be 'narrow and high while the Presbyterian ones were frequently wide and low.'[97]

Having demonstrated a concern for education in Scotland, Grant set about providing schools for the children of immigrants. Soon there were four in his parish, no doubt teaching largely through the medium of Gaelic. Alexander MacGillivray who taught the Arisaig school had a father, John the Piper, who

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88 Christine Johnson, *Developments in the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland, 1789-1829* (Edinburgh, 1983), 224.

89 Johnston 1960 i: 380.

90 Watts 2002: 93.

91 Johnston 1994: 61.

92 Johnston 1960 i: 254.

93 SCA/BL 4/272/15. MacEachern to Cameron, 29 Nov 1806.

94 Johnston 1960 i: 474. MacDonald's chapel and house had been built in 1808. The 'magnificent living room and two bedrooms of the glebe house' were admired by Bishop Plessis. *Ibid.*, 252.

95 *op. cit.*: 416.

96 MacEachern became vicar general with responsibility for most of the Maritimes in 1819 and bishop ten years later.

97 Campbell and MacLean 1974: 214.

composed 'The Song of the Gaels'.[98] Then during a six-month period in Pictou County there were opened along the Gulf Shore 'six or seven flourishing English schools'.[99]

Grant was present in 1827 with upwards of two thousand people when his cousin William Fraser was consecrated at Antigonish as Nova Scotia's first Catholic bishop.[100] School children were one thing, old people another: 'So long as the care for the sick or dying is one of the indispensable functions of the ministry, so long shall the name of Father Grant remain associated with all that is self-sacrificing in the life of a devoted priest.'[101] Despite criticism by fellow clergy in Scotland, in short, Grant made an immediate impact in Nova Scotia. In the words of John MacLean's grandson, 'The Rev. Mr Grant was a man of many excellent qualities. The poet was deeply attached to him.'[102]

Friendship and Poetry

Perhaps Arisaig's priest assisted the MacLean move to a less isolated site, if only to the extent of advice. MacLean took his family six miles east to James River near Addington Forks, which was to become known as Glenbard. Despite its being on the Antigonish side of the county line, the cemetery was associated with Pictou.[103] Children of the family attended school two miles away at Beaver Meadow, as did several future priests of the diocese.[104] This was a faith frontier, but a friendly one when the MacLeans moved in. At a later time of tighter boundaries, the coffin of a Catholic woman was re-buried at Arisaig after being dug up at Glenbard, 'a Protestant cemetery'.[105]

The first of the bard's three songs to the priest starts with MacLean being astounded at what he had learned from being 'in the company of a nobleman' the

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[98] *Mac-Talla* (Jonathan G. MacKinnon [ed.]) 1903, vol. xi, no. 25: 199. John MacGillivray had been Glenaladale's piper in Scotland. 'His house took fire a few years before his death and his manuscripts perished.' Maclean Sinclair 1881: 316.

[99] Johnston 1960 ii: 70.

[100] *op. cit.* i: 518. Fraser, who had taught Colin Grant at Lismore, was a second cousin through his mother. Johnston 1994: 27.

[101] MacDonald, Ronald 1878: 10. MacDonald became Bishop of Harbour Grace, Newfoundland.

[102] Maclean Sinclair 1881: 172.

[103] Ritchie 1956 xi: 2.

[104] Beaver Meadow pupils included future priests James Fraser b. 1842, Alexander MacGillivray b. 1847 and Ronald MacGillivray b. 1885. Johnston 1994: 40, 71, 73.

[105] Johnston 1960 ii: 281.

previous Tuesday.[106] Clearly this was a first meeting, some time before 1825. Later, during MacLean's 'greatest hardships', Grant gave him 'a present of a snuff-box, which contained together with the snuff five pounds in gold.'[107] As the friendship developed MacLean gave Grant a drinking-horn, as described in the dialogue poem *An Adharc.* Drinking was important in Gaelic culture, and MacLean celebrated convivial Antigonish sessions in *Diteadh Mhic-an-Toisich*.[108] Later Bishop Colin MacKinnon led a teetotal campaign which forbade clergy participation: 'An *ipso facto* suspension will be incurred by any pastor who dares to drink intoxicating liquor in a tavern. . .' Grant's hospitality at the Arisaig glebe house was celebrated: 'At the time of sitting down about your table famous were your habits with the guests.'[109]

The same mood is struck, somewhat incongruously, in the final lament: 'Stoups filled with hard liquor, when they were emptied more would be found.'[110] With a shift towards clericalism, the bishop's ban also forbade drinking 'with lay people anywhere.'[111]

In the third verse MacLean goes into the panegyric mode which had once been reserved for clan chiefs and leaders like the laird of Coll. John MacInnes has made the subject his own, showing how the traditional warrior theme became concerned with the protection of a threatened society:

> Gaelic panegyric is not merely the direct celebration of great men in life and death. . . The utterance is controlled by social norms, and deviations are more likely to be regarded as such than to be valued as an original point of view. But far from weakening poetic expression this confers strength, clarity and classical normality on it. It often concentrates the art so that the mundane takes on an archetypal intensity.[112]

MacLean makes reference to Grant's handsome appearance and virtuous character before coming to his true introduction: 'I received proven testimony from others that you were expert in every manly exploit. Why should I not report some of them?'

More than a third of the poem (verses 10-17) is concerned with what the Aberdeen priest Charles Gordon called Colin Grant's 'Great Great friends'. The

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[106] MacLean, *Òran do Mhaighstir Cailean Grannta, Sagairt Arasaig*, l. 5. MacLean Sinclair 1881: 167

[107] *op. cit.*: xvii.

[108] *op. cit.*: 149-55.

[109] MacLean, *Sagairt Arisaig*, ll. 152-3. *op. cit.*:172.

[110] MacLean, *Marbhrann do Maighstir Cailean Grannda, Sagairt Arisaig*, ll. 91-2 *op. cit.*: 176.

[111] Johnston 1960 ii: 275.

[112] MacInnes 2006: 317-8.

bard chose to describe them as 'many a strong soldier who was closely related to you in the high country of the mountains.'[113] In his examination of these verses Dunbar has identified kin connections which are better left for their repetition in MacLean's final elegy.[114] Two verses here celebrate Grant's skill as a seaman and call up the idea of him setting out from the Arisaig wharf on pastoral duty. He also made journeys on land:

> You were a lively horseman
> On the pacey, well-shod horse of the proud head,
> Girdled, saddled and harnessed
> I'm sure it had never beheld any better;
> It trots straight, without straying,
> With a simple touch of your heel to its side,
> Nimble, spirited and wild,
> Snorting, noisy, eager on the ground.[115]

Allan the Ridge MacDonald made his prime example of better life in Nova Scotia travel on a 'saddled horse'.[116] That pleasure was unknown to pioneers at the time of this poem, but forest trails were being beaten into tracks and horses were particularly associated with priests on peripatetic mission. Winter prevented that for Alexander MacDonald Clianaig: 'He is too heavy for snow shoes and no horse can carry him through deep snow.'[117] Tracks were wide enough for two riders by the time a second Alexander MacDonald reached Cape Breton. This appears in an exchange of verse when Angus Beaton got a small horse which some thought could challenge that of the Mabou priest *Alasdair Mòr*. Also a poet when required, MacDonald rejected the possibility of his horse being outrun: 'A word would suffice to get him to gallop, and Angus Beaton would lose, though he'd die in the attempt.'[118]

Grant's Fall

Colin Grant was a fine horseman who had considered taking up an army career like his brother. However the priest had a serious accident when tracks were still challenging, as appears in the poem of 1825. The third verse describes the priest's fall:

> You were a most excellent horseman

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[113] MacLean, *Sagairt Arasaig*, ll. 138-40. MacLean Sinclair 1881: 172.

[114] Dunbar 2007: 252-3.

[115] MacLean, *Sagairt Arasaig*, ll. 65-72. MacLean Sinclair 1881: 169. Transl. Dunbar 2007.

[116] Rankin 2004: 81.

[117] SCA/BL 4/272/15, MacEachern to Cameron, 29 Nov 1806.

[118] Rankin 2004: 89. This cheerful flyting over the priest's horse appears as *Each an t-Sagairt*.

On a strong-willed wild horse,
I didn't see you denied
In the place where you had tested him;
Though it has just now happened to you
Falling to the ground from your saddle,
When he jumped so skittishly,
Whatever fright caused him fear.[119]

It appears from the poet's farewell lament for the priest that Grant regularly spurred his horse 'hurriedly in motion' as 'an object of mirth'.[120] The animal left his rider with broken bones, and according to a note in the poet's hand the priest 'looked to be dying.'[121] MacLean was distressed to learn that Grant 'was in his bed of illness and pain.' He wished he had the medical skill to 'leave you healed, without affliction and without a fever.'[122]

These injuries had long-term effects. Bishop Fraser found Grant's constitution was shattered in October 1828, as he informed the rector of the Scots College, Rome.[123] Four months later Grant resigned, still in his forties, after agreeing to make sick calls until a successor could be found. William Bernard Macleod took over. Grant bought a farm at Malignant Cove, seven miles south-west of the new Morar chapel, the erection of which was his last public achievement. For Grant there was an old log chapel at Malignant Cove built by army veterans.[124] Alexander MacGillivray the Arisaig school teacher no doubt lived with his father at Malignant Brook.[125] After health problems ended his hopes of becoming a priest, MacGillivray put together a collection of moral and spiritual advice as *Companach no Oganaich* or 'The Youth's Companion'. Charles Dunn gave full approval: 'It apparently found its way into even the humblest settler's cabin and appealed to the Highlanders, especially those of the Catholic faith for whom it was particularly intended.'[126] Colin Grant would have been cheered in difficult times: 'His

[119] MacLean, *Òran do Mhaighstir Cailean Grannta*, ll. 17-24. Transl. Dunbar 2007.

[120] MacLean, *Marbhrann*, ll. 87-8. = MacLean Sinclair 1881: 175. Transl. Dunbar 2007.

[121] Dunbar 2007: 256.

[122] MacGilleain 1819, *Òran do Mhaighstir Cailean*, ll. 15-6. Transl. Dunbar 2007.

[123] William Fraser to Angus MacDonald, 8 October 1828. Archives of the Scots College, Rome. Johnston 1960 ii: 70

[124] *op. cit.* ii: 144.

[125] Maclean Sinclair 1881: 316.

[126] Dunn 1953: 75-7 at 76. *Companach no Oganaich, no An Comhairliche Taitneach* was published at Pictou in 1836.

constitution shattered, he was in straitened circumstances in his last years.'[127] The community's historian was moved to sympathy:

> Enforced retirement often adds to existing physical ailments a burden of mental suffering which can seem too bitter to bear; and this fact may suggest the reason why the hospitality and practical charity of the Highlanders were sometimes impeded by a sensitive refusal of their needy neighbours to accept proffered aid. The pioneer years, too, were far antecedent to our modern age of the welfare state, which seeks to provide professional attention to those of its citizens who are physically or psychologically unable to take care of themselves; and one is saddened to learn that the ailing priest was imprisoned for debt in 1838 and that he died intestate and without means.[128]

Four years earlier Grant's priest-nephew John Chisholm had also died intestate. Born in Strathglass, he grew up at Antigonish Harbour and assisted Bishop Fraser after his ordination. After taking charge of a new academy at Arichat he drowned on a crossing to Newfoundland.[129] His older brother Alexander was appointed Crown Land Surveyor and became a mathematician of some distinction.[130] The parents of Alexander (Sandy *Mòr*) and John were Donald *Mòr* Chisholm and Catherine Grant, a sister of *Mhaighstir Cailean*.[131] There was another sister Margaret, married to Alexander Chisholm, whose son Duncan Chisholm was a merchant in Antigonish.[132]

The Rev. Colin Grant died at Antigonish on 31 March 1839. John MacLean's elegy, or *marbhrann*, described an unnamed sister as 'most sorrowful and often the tears run down her cheek.' Grant died on Easter Sunday, yet it was two days before she saw him 'in white clothing, unconscious and cold' (l. 204). It is natural to wonder why neither of his surviving nephews, one of them a merchant, was able to save the Rev. Colin Grant from debtor's prison. Clergy buried him in Antigonish's old cemetery at Lower South River. A memorial raised by public subscription after half a century could only be found, in more recent times, 'with great difficulty'.[133]

Last Words

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[127] Johnston 1994: 45.

[128] Johnston 1960 ii: 70-71. The evidence for debtor's prison comes from a letter by Bishop Fraser's vicar general Jean-Baptiste Maranda dated 2 May 1838.

[129] Johnston 1994: 27.

[130] See Chisholm 1861.

[131] Johnston 1994: 27.

[132] The kinship of Margaret's husband to the Chief of Clan Chisholm has been questioned. Dunbar 2007: 251.

[133] Johnston 1960 ii: 71.

Considerably longer than *A' Choille Ghruamach*, MacLean's *marbhrann* has twenty-seven verses.[134] It was sung to the air *Mile marbhphaisg ort a shaoghail* - 'A thousand shrouds upon you O world'. A distinction has been drawn between the bardic *marbhrann* and the spiritual elegies of Highland revivalism. These latter moved swiftly on from the deceased to religious homilies, although their 'exaggerated panegyric is reminiscent of the old clan bards. . .'[135] MacLean's is not spiritual. After opening verses on the qualities of the departed, his main emphasis is on Grant's link with Highland clans and warriors of a former age. Dunbar comments on the significance of 'Creagellachie' (pipe tune and war cry) to the Grants in Strathspey but finds no connection through the *MhicPhàdraig* Patersons of Glenmoriston. He cites MacLean Sinclair on Grant of Glenmoriston's descent from the MacLeans of Ardgour, Campbells of Barcaldine and Camerons of Lochiel. Bard MacLean relished this detail but gave priority to Chisholms as 'the kindred of your mother' (l. 115). The *marbhrann* praises MacKenzie from Brahan (l. 123). 'Colin Òg Chisholm married in 1749 Margaret, daughter of Alexander MacKenzie, third of Ballone, by whom he had Helen, mother of Colin.'[136]

Another name in the elegy is of less obvious relevance, but the Frasers of Lovat from Dounie Castle (l. 129) could hardly be ignored in a parade of significant clans. On the other hand MacLean had started a verse of his earlier praise-poem with 'Glengarry is loyal to you'.[137] The chief Grant toasted at Coll's expense must surely appear, but this unrelated branch of Clan Donald receives only passing mention at the last. As for *Mac-na-Ceàrda Morair Ghallaibh*, otherwise the Sinclair lord of Caithness (l. 157), MacLean's daughter Christy was ending her marriage to John Sinclair of Strathalladale when the bard mourned Colin Grant. Alexander MacLean Sinclair lost a father by this, and it may be that 'the poet was trying to convince his daughter to stay with Sinclair.'[138] MacLean was mainly looking to the past, however, treasuring what he had learned from Grant: 'He was a seannachie as well as a poet, and possessed vast stores of information respecting the history, poetry, genealogy and tales of the Highland clans'.[139] Maclean Sinclair's view of his grandfather has been confirmed in our times: 'In short, it is clear that John MacLean's work as a collector, custodian and publisher of poetry, much of

[134] Working from a manuscript version by the bard's son Charles MacLean, Dunbar found sixteen more lines than appear in MacLean Sinclair, *Clàrsach na Coille*.

[135] Macinnes 1951: 275.

[136] Maclean Sinclair 1901: 194.

[137] Mac Gilleain 1819 *Òran do Maighstir Cailean Grannta*:, l. 121 = MacLean Sinclair 1881: 171.

[138] Dunbar 2007: 263.

[139] Maclean Sinclair 1901: 15.

which would otherwise have been lost, has made a very significant contribution to the preservation of important aspects of our Gaelic heritage.'[140]

In light of this, the bard's emphasis on Grant's connections in Scotland goes far beyond a snobbish preoccupation with 'Great Great friends'. The priest shared his knowledge with the bard in a mutual imaginative spirit. The first line of MacLean's three celebrations of the priest is *Gu bheil m' inntinn air dùsgadh*, translated as 'My imagination has been awakened'. Then MacLean makes use of the priest's forename for the sake of a pun:

> *'S mo dhùrachadh do Chailean,*
> *A dh'ùraich dhomh 'n càilean an dràst'. . .*

'And my greetings to Colin, who has refreshed my mental faculties just now. . .' [141] A mourning comment at the last regrets the bard's lack of kinship but may also touch on contact coming to an end: 'Though I was not closely related to you great is the loss to me that is your death.' MacLean regrets his part in this: 'You were loyal in support of me to stand by me when I was in need.'[142]

Moving on to faith, John MacLean's friendship with Grant clearly lapsed at a time when his reformed religious convictions were strengthening. Having grown up in Tiree where 'vital godliness was at a very low ebb,' MacLean married the daughter of a Lismore elder. His grandson testifies that in Nova Scotia he 'had always observed the worship of God regularly in his family.' The same source notes MacLean's devotion to Puritan writings; 'Boston's Fourfold State was a work in which he especially delighted. He read it very frequently.'[143] Some of this influence from John Bunyan to Philip Doddridge may have come later, but it was at Barney's River that he 'turned his attention to this species of composition.'[144]

Canada's national biography states that although MacLean was a good friend of the priest, he was 'a fervent admirer of the Reverend James Drummond MacGregor of Pictou.'[145] MacGregor was MacLean's example in moving from secular poetry to hymns. The first edition of MacGregor's *Dàin a' Chòmhnadh Crabhaidh* published at Glasgow in 1819 had twenty-five long composition aimed

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[140] Dunbar 2014: 224.

[141] MacLean, *Sagairt Arisaig*, ll. 1, 145-6.

[142] MacLean, *Marbhrann*, ll. 21-4

[143] Maclean Sinclair 1881: xiv, viii, vix. See Thomas Boston, *Human Nature in its Fourfold State* (Edinburgh, 1753). Boston was minister at Ettrick.

[144] Maclean Sinclair 1881: xviii.

[145] Maureen Lonergan Williams, 'MacGhilleathain, Iain', *DCB* vol. 7. Williams taught at the Jesuit School of Theology in Toronto. Her 1977 Glasgow University MA thesis was on 'The Canadian songs of John MacLean'.

at instruction.[146] Eleven years before this he had obtained Gaelic bibles from the British and Foreign Bible Society 'for sale or free distribution'.[147] Hence MacLean's 'The Propagation of the Gospel in this Country' rejoiced that 'in our hands we have the Bible in a language that we know', thanks to 'Master James'.[148] The bard's own hymns far outnumbered his other compositions in America. Coming from an oral tradition, he 'never called a pen to his aid.' Latterly, however, he became conscious of the need to preserve what might be lost. A small edition of his hymns was 'very inaccurately printed.'[149]

Master James MacGregor may have discouraged MacLean's friendship with Grant, if only by example. After the first threat of Catholic Highlanders corrupting the Pictou flock was overcome by a spreading apart of settlements, there was a brief period of mutual toleration. Time and place were right for inter-faith friendship. Before the horse-riding accident the bard was a witness to the priest's eloquence:

> What has increased your countrymen's sorrow
> Is to be missing you on Sundays,
> At the time they gather together
> To listen to your homily;
> When you would put on your vestments
> To go to read the scripture
> And you would explain it to them
> To bring knowledge to the ignorant.[150]

Gaelic preaching was separate from the Latin mass, which a conscientious Presbyterian might have chosen to avoid. Long after attending the church at Arisaig, MacLean made his address as if to a minister rather than a priest: 'Often you read from the Bible, from your mouth it sounded so sweet.'[151] During the following decades Presbyterianism became firmly established in Pictou, and there were resident priests in all Catholic settlements to the east. Eighteen Chisholms served the Antigonish diocese in its first century and a half. Many more with

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[146] At the end of MacLean Sinclair's *Clàrsach na Coille* of 1881 notice was given of his newly published *Dain Spioradail* which included forty-six of MacLean's hymns, mostly unknown, and six by MacGregor: 'Dr M'Gregor's hymns occupy forty-five pages. They are the last hymns he composed.'

[147] Susan Buggey, 'MacGregor, James Drummond' *DCB* vol. 6 1988.

[148] Meek 2003: 75. The bard drew attention to Pictou Academy and the first three Gaelic-speaking ministers who graduated there in 1825. *op. cit.*: 77, 407.

[149] Maclean Sinclair 1881: xviii, xix. The contemplated 'second and larger edition of his hymns' had to wait for inclusion in the 1881 volume.

[150] MacLean 1819, *Òran do Maighstir Cailean Grannta*, ll. 33-40. Transl. Dunbar 2007.

[151] o*p. cit. Marbhrann*, ll. 207-8. = MacLean Sinclair 1881: 179

Highland Scots names are on record, and a later *Sagairt Arisaig* wrote about them.[152] The bard's last words were 'You have left a gap in the clergy…'[153]

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Book Reviews

Còmhraidhean nan Cnoc: the Nineteenth-Century Gaelic Prose Dialogue. Ed. Sheila M. Kidd. Glasgow. Scottish Gaelic Texts Society 2016. xiii + 432pp. ISBN: 978-0-903586-08-5. £25.00 (Hardback)

The twenty-fourth volume in the series of publications by the Scottish Gaelic Texts Society is devoted to the important literary prose genre of the *còmhraidhean* ('dialogues, conversations') that first emerged in the Gaelic periodicals of the nineteenth century. In her substantial introduction, Sheila M. Kidd details the literary and social context in which the *còmhraidhean* originated. Then the editor presents a selection of thirty-five prose *còmhraidhean*, chosen from a corpus of more than 300 which appeared at various points during the nineteenth century. Each *còmhradh* is accompanied by detailed explanatory notes and references in English; there are no translations of the texts themselves. The selected *còmhraidhean* are divided into seven thematic sections containing five *còmhraidhean* each that reflect the important concerns that impacted Gaelic-speaking communities in the nineteenth century: Education and Gaelic; Social Control: Famine, Emigration and Migration; Land; Electioneering; Ecclesiastical; News and Information; and Past and Present. In their original form, the *còmhraidhean* conformed to the orthographic standards of their time and the present editor's decision to normalise spelling and punctuation to current standards greatly improves their accessibility for those readers who may be unused to the earlier conventions. In order to demonstrate the differences between modern and nineteenth-century conventions, the first *còmhradh* is presented in an appendix in the form in which it appeared originally. A bibliography, a glossary, and an index conclude the volume.

The Rev. Dr Norman MacLeod (*Caraid nan Gàidheal*) was the first to give a platform to the genre in the various periodicals he published, beginning in 1829 with *An Teachdaire Gae'lach*. But *còmhraidhean* also featured in other publications, for instance the Free Church's *An Fhianuis* or its Church of Scotland equivalents *Teachdaire nan Gaidheal* and *Cuairtear nan Gleann*. Clergymen were dominant among the writers of *còmhraidhean* in the early periodicals, and their influence and attitudes are clearly visible in the themes and their treatment. Many newspapers that circulated in the *Gàidhealtachd* published *còmhraidhean* at times, but during the last quarter of the nineteenth century they were most prominent as a vehicle for political discussion in Gaelic in newspapers as diverse as the conservative *Northern Chronicle* and John Murdoch's radical *Highlander*. The various publications where *còmhraidhean* were printed thus demonstrate that the topics covered addressed ideas and topics across the Presbyterian denominational as well as the political spectrum. As Kidd puts it (p. 64): '[t]he *còmhradh* was the single most conspicuous strategy adopted by Gaelic writers to navigate a way for themselves, and their audience, in a world of changing social and literary relationships'.

And the term 'audience' is entirely appropriate here because in a society where, prior to the introduction of compulsory education in 1872, literacy – especially literacy in Gaelic – was by no means universal, a strong oral element made the literary material that was beginning to be published in Gaelic widely accessible. The *còmhraidhean*, with their cast of easily distinguishable speakers, presented an ideal vehicle for entertainment, for different viewpoints to be discussed, and for information to be disseminated. Kidd points out the models, from within and without the Gaelic tradition, that contributed to the development of the *còmhraidhean*, from dialogue as used in Gaelic verse to contemporary material in

Blackwood's Magazine, via examples from the Classics that the clergymen who wrote the *còmhraidhean* would have encountered in their university studies. As Kidd highlights (p. 26): '[w]hat we have in the *còmhradh* is not so much a new paradigm in Gaelic literature but an amalgamation of existing ones, both oral and literary, religious and secular, reinforced by non-Gaelic models'.

While the Rev. Dr Norman MacLeod is the best known, and the most influential, among the authors of *còmhraidhean*, there are others who deserve recognition as significant contributors to the genre as well, e.g. the Rev. Alexander MacGregor, whose work appeared both in the *Highlander* and in the *Northern Chronicle*. Many authors remain anonymous, or hidden behind unattributable pen-names, but Kidd makes a clear case for the authorship of John Murdoch of *Còmhradh* 33 which originally appeared in the *Highlander* in 1877 (356). In this, the dialogue partners deplore the growing influence of the Lowlands and the English language on all aspects of life in the Gàidhealtachd (353):

> *Osgar*: 'S iongantach an gnothach sin. Chì mi nach e a-mhàin gu bheil na Gàidheil a thig a-mach don Ghalltachd a' feuchainn ri bhith leantail nan Gall anns na nithean sin, ach gu bheil a h-uile maighstir-sgoile, is ministear, is ceannaiche 's tuathanach as urrainn trì òirlich a chur an earball a chòta a' dol anns an aona cheum air feadh na Gàidhealtachd fhèin.
>
> *Fionnlagan*: Ciod eile, ciod eile? Chan fhiù 's chan fhiach ach nithean Gallta! Sin mar a tha chànan, sin mar a tha an t-aodach, 's gach nì. Tha an t-uachdaran Gallta, tha 'm bàillidh Gallta agus tha h-uile aon a bhios a' streap a-staigh dan cuideachd, 's a bhios an dùil ri buannachd fhaighinn bhuatha, a' leigeil air gu bheil esan an dèidh fàs cho Gallta riutha fhèin.

The speakers in the *còmhraidhean* are often stock characters, some representing authority (catechist, schoolmaster) who are generally the providers of information and others playing the role of those being instructed (foxhunter, blacksmith, crofter). The latter often serve as identification figures for the audience. Sometimes, famous figures from Gaelic literature are pressed into service, such as Osgar, Fionn mac Cumhaill's grandson, in the above example.

Còmhradh 12, from the pro-crofter *Highlander*, highlights the high-handed treatment by the landlord and his representatives that crofters often received, using the example of having to do work for the landlord without pay or face eviction (167):

> *Dòmhnallach*: Tha mi cuimhneachadh air an rud a thuirt thu rium o chionn fichead latha – 'Cuir cuairt air Tiridhe 's gheibh thu 'n aon sgeul'. Ach, a Ghilleasbaig, innis dhomh an fhìrinn: a bheil thu faotainn dad airson na mòrlanachd? Mur eil, an robh e ann an cumhachaibh an fhearainn thu bhith 'g obair don Diùc an-asgaidh?
>
> *Gilleasbaig*: Chan eil eadhon taing agam airson na mòrlanachd, nas motha bha e sna cumhachaibh. Chan e sin a-mhàin, ach nuair a chuireas am Bàillidh fios thugam dol a mhòrlanachd feumaidh mi falbh neo bidh a' bhàirlinn agam mun tèid a ghrian fodha.

Còmhradh 10, taken from a mid-century Tasmanian periodical, *An Teachdaire Gaidhealach*, discusses the dangers of lawlessness and drinking faced by emigrants. Iain Bàn has been robbed at gunpoint of the proceeds of the sale of his crop of potatoes by men he met at the inn. On hearing Iain Bàn's account, his friend Calum Tàilleir advises him to take his money to the bank in future (p. 153):

Calum Tàilleir: (…) Bheirinn aon chomhairle ort, agus is e seo i – seachain na taighean-òsta agus an uair a gheibh thu airgead a-rithist, cuir ann an àite sàbhailt' e a bhios tu cinnteach air nach amais aon duine, ged a rannsaicheadh iad an taigh agad thairis 's thairis, gus am faigh thu rogha a chothrom gu chur sa bhanc (…).
Iain Bàn: 'S math a labhair thu, Chaluim. Tha mi faicinn gu soilleir gum feum sinn a bhith 'glic mar an nathair agus neo-lochdach mar an calman'. Ach nuair a reiceas mise dad as fhiach a-rithist cha ghabh mi an t-airgead gus an ruig mi am baile agus an sin cuiridh mu sa bhanc na bhitheas agam ri sheachnadh, no mas aithne dhomh an ceannaiche gu math, gabhaidh mi òrdugh air a' bhanc.

As all books published by the SGTS, the volume is sturdy and attractively produced. *Còmhraidhean nan Cnoc* will be greatly welcomed by readers interested in the development of literary Gaelic prose as well as those with an interest in the social history of the Gaelic-speaking community. Sheila Kidd, a leading expert on the Gàidhealtachd and its literature in the nineteenth century, deserves our thanks for making this fine and wide-ranging selection of texts available.

ANJA GUNDERLOCH

Stewart Forson Sanderson, 1924 – 2016

MARGARET A. MACKAY[1]

Stewart Forson Sanderson, who passed away peacefully at home on October 14, 2016, was born of Scottish parents in Nyasaland, now Malawi, in 1924 but his education and early career gave him an attachment to Edinburgh and to Scotland which he retained until the end of his life. He was appointed to the staff of the School of Scottish Studies early in its foundational first decade and helped to set in train working approaches and methods which continue to this day.

He was schooled in Scotland, at Madras College in St Andrews and at George Watson's College in Edinburgh. He excelled in classical and modern languages and music, playing the piano and organ, conducting the school orchestra and taking up dance band music too. He was Dux of the school and won a bursary to study Classics at the University of Edinburgh in 1943.

He deferred his university place to serve in the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve from 1943 to 1946, first as a Sub-Lieutenant and later as a full Lieutenant RNVR, in postings across the Mediterranean: Gibraltar, Taranto, Naples, Malta, Alexandria and Leros. His perceptive approach to the needs of local populations in post-war planning is illustrated by his recommendation that the naval bases established by the occupying powers in the Dodecanese Islands should be transferred at the end of the war to the communities in which they were located.

When he entered the University of Edinburgh Stewart altered his registration to English Language and Literature with Italian and British History. He was active in student societies and in a range of musical activities, developing keen editorial skills on *The Old Quad Review* and *The Student* newspaper. He graduated with First Class Honours and a medal in Italian in 1951, winning travelling scholarships to Italy.

Angus McIntosh, who had been appointed Forbes Professor of English Language and General Linguistics at the University of Edinburgh in 1948, was instrumental in the creation of the School of Scottish Studies in 1951 and the following year Stewart was appointed its Secretary-Archivist. He furthered the vision of McIntosh and those who supported him at the time from Ireland and, through Ireland, Sweden, in a programme of field recording and archival work which remained at the heart of its teaching, research, publications and outreach. He participated in field collection himself when possible, with a focus on fishing and maritime traditions. In 1957 he became a Senior Research Fellow and was an Assistant Editor of the journal *Scottish Studies*, inaugurated in the same year.

Stewart reached out to many for whom the new institution was a welcome focus for their interests. Donations to the School's research library were encouraged from many

[1] The author thanks Professors David Sanderson, John Widdowson, and Clive Upton and others for material included here.

sources and journal exchanges were established. The result is a resource which is unique for Scottish and comparative ethnological studies. He befriended the German ethnographer Werner Kissling, who had settled in Scotland. Kissling became a part-time fieldworker for the School and made a major contribution to its growing photographic archive. Sound collections made before 1951 were acquired and from the start; but particularly after 1954, when its base moved to premises in George Square, the School became a lively and important meeting-place for those active in Scottish Studies of many kinds. Its walls were characterised by Scottish paintings gifted by supporters or bought for a song at Edinburgh's famous 'lane sales', held behind the New Town auction houses.

Those early days saw useful visits by scholars from many places eager to assist the new School. Stewart married Alison Cameron in 1953 and together they created a welcoming home in Duddingston, a historic corner of Edinburgh. They offered hospitality to scholarly visitors, many of whom became close friends. The inauguration of the cross-disciplinary Northern Scholars' Scheme at the University of Edinburgh, which continues to foster practical links with Scandinavian, Finnish and, more recently, Baltic institutions, was a direct outcome of the School's initiatives in the 1950s. Stewart's earlier involvement with student publications had shown him the value of press publicity and the School felt its benefit as its aims and activities were chronicled for the wider public.

Stewart never lost his love of the Italian language and the people and culture of the Mediterranean. He enjoyed its cuisine and formed friendships with the families from Italy engaged in Edinburgh's culinary scene, who offered colour and pleasure in a city emerging from the austerity of post-war rationing, and revelled in revived and new forms of internationalism such as the Edinburgh International Festival. The column in *The Scotsman* which he co-wrote under the pseudonym 'The Gastrologue', incorporated a good deal of this spirit. The School played its role in reaching out to colleagues beyond this country through engagement in the folklore and folklife networks which were emerging after the hiatus of war. Stewart encouraged this heartily.

Stewart's appointment in 1960 as Director of the University of Leeds Folk Life Survey, which evolved into the Institute for Dialect and Folk Life Studies, drew on the experience gained in the Edinburgh years and heralded a significant period in study, research and publication in these disciplines. Though university cutbacks brought the closure of the Institute in 1983, its achievements during his tenure deserve very high praise. The Leeds Archive of Vernacular Culture (LAVC) in the Special Collections section of the Brotherton Library at the University of Leeds is one of his several legacies.

Stewart brought to Leeds his familiarity with the Linguistic Survey of Scotland (Gaelic and Scots), begun shortly before the founding of the School. He became intimately involved in the Survey of English Dialects (SED) initiated in 1947 by Professor Harold Orton with Professor Eugen Dieth of Zurich. Before and following his retirement in 1983, when he was made the first Honorary Harold Orton Fellow, he took the SED project forward in accordance with Orton's wishes, ensuring the publication of the *Linguistic Atlas of England* (1978 [1996]) by securing Leverhulme Trust funding, and promoting with the publishers the creation of several other indispensable volumes including *Studies in Linguistic Geography* (1985) with John Kirk and John Widdowson, a smaller atlas entitled *Word Maps: A Dialect Atlas of England* (1987 [2015]) with Clive Upton and John Widdowson, and the *Survey of English Dialects: the Dictionary and Grammar* (1994) with Clive Upton, David Parry and John Widdowson. He sought expert advice from colleagues in the British Isles and

continental Europe and a commitment from the publishers Croom Helm to fund the analysis and inputting of data as well as providing other essential support.

Stewart Sanderson 1924-2016

His appointment also gave him scope to develop the first university courses in Folk Life Studies in the UK, with options for undergraduate BA students in English and full MA, MPhil and PhD programmes for postgraduates. A one-year postgraduate Diploma was offered for students interested in careers in museums or archives. Here and elsewhere graduates of these remember with gratitude the careful guidance they received from Stewart, his staff and visiting lecturers. His personal experience of living and studying far from home gave him an empathy with his students from abroad, many of whom continued to keep in touch. The data gathered by students contributed to the rich store of material available in the LAVC.

Stewart's facility with languages, his commitment to collaboration and his keen interest in research of a comparative nature made him ready to engage in projects which crossed borders. These included committee work for the International Commission for the Atlas of European Folk Culture and the International Society for Folk Narrative Research, and membership of the editorial boards of several journals. The Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy for Swedish Folk Culture appointed him a Corresponding Fellow. From 1979 to 1983 he was a governor of the British Institute of Recorded Sound and an advisor to the British Library National Sound Archive thereafter.

In 1982 he was awarded the Coote-Lake Research Medal of The Folklore Society, which he served as a trustee between 1968 and 1979 and as president from 1970 to 1973. In 1981 he gave the Society's inaugural Katharine Briggs Lecture on "The Modern Urban Legend". He wrote in a range of journals and his edition of *The Secret Commonwealth,* a treatise on fairy beliefs and second sight compiled by the 17th century Scottish minister and Gaelic scholar Robert Kirk, published by the Society in 1976, has been a boon to scholarship.

On retirement he and Alison returned to Scotland, which again became the home base for their children, Mariot, David and Gavin and their families. They committed energy and creativity to their communities in the Bowmont Valley and Town Yetholm and to Scotland more widely. Stewart chaired the Scottish Arts Council's literature and grants to publishers panels for five years, a period which saw much formative activity in Scottish publishing. Recording talking books and a regular newsletter for the visually impaired were amongst

Stewart's contributions in these years. He never lost his love of the cultures of those countries where he had served as a young naval officer. Closer to home, he relished opportunities to cast a line in favourite Borders waters.

Stewart Sanderson's devotion to folklore and folklife studies arose from a deep understanding of the value of these in the lives of all involved. He was generous in assisting many in publishing their research. Importantly, he documented the state of these subjects as they took their place in the curricula of our institutions of higher education. His essay on 'The Work of the School of Scottish Studies' in the first issue of the School's journal *Scottish Studies* in 1957 (pp 3-13) and a version the same year in *Folklore* (Vol. 68, No. 4, pp 457-466), 'The Present State of Folklore Studies in Scotland', are required reading for historians of Scottish Ethnology. These concentrate on current activities and aspirations for the future. But in a paper which appeared in the *Transactions of the Yorkshire Dialect Society* in 1960 (Part 60, Vol. 10, pp. 21-34), 'Yorkshire in a new folk-life survey', he points out the wide relevance of our subject in the contemporary world and its nature as a humanistic science. 'Our study is indeed a proper one for this day and age… Whether we be interested in speech, in customs, in beliefs, or in practices, let us never forget that our subject is man, and the common lot of humanity. The human figure must dominate our minds: our greater duty is not to academic techniques but to our fellow men and women' (33, 22).

At Stewart's funeral, one of his six grandchildren, also called Stewart Sanderson and an acclaimed Scottish poet, read the poem "Tradition Bearer" from his recent collection *Fios*. It opens 'When I was born the man downstairs/put a pound under my pillow, said/ *dae richt'*. These two words make a fitting epitaph for his grandfather and his life and work.