SCOTTISH STUDIES 34

Published with financial support from an anonymous donor

Scottish Studies

The Journal of the
School of Scottish Studies
University of Edinburgh

Vol. 34 2006

EDITED BY
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Published by The School of Scottish Studies
University of Edinburgh
2006

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The journal is published annually and costs £12.

Subscriptions should be sent to The Subscription Secretary, *Scottish Studies*, at the address above.

Printed in Great Britain by TBD

Typeset by Brinnoven, Livingston

ISBN 1 86232 000 0

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Editorial

Following Volume 33 under the editorship of Emily Lyle where fairs were featured, the present volume returns to a more varied format encompassing the variety of research being carried out in Scottish Ethnology in the context of the changes, both rapid and gradual, taking place in the field. As a part of a wider reorganisation, one of the most significant recent events in Scotland has been the combining, from 2001, of the School of Scottish Studies with the Department of Celtic into a single entity (Celtic and Scottish Studies) and the appointment of a personal chair in Celtic and Scottish Studies. The result has been to enhance the potential for research and publications in aspects of ethnology relating to Gaelic culture, which we are confident will be realised in the contents of the journal from this issue.

Specific interdisciplinary projects in Scotland are also making their mark on the discipline and providing replies to the timely questions concerning the future raised in the present volume. One of these examines the state of folk tradition in Scotland through an interdisciplinary study of its revivals and survivals. Closely allied is publishing activity emerging around the bagpiping, ranging from historical interpretation to the dynamics of change over the past century. In terms of the prospects for folkloristics during this century, it has begun to become apparent that one promising direction lies in the increased interaction between the discipline and the host communities. The School has lent constant and substantial support to the preparation of the recently launched Tobar an Dualchais/Kist o'Riches Project, a pioneering national initiative to be carried out over four years (and the first major one of its kind) that will make the contents of the major sound collections of Gaelic and Scots ethnological materials widely accessible online. In keeping with the School's long-term commitment to tradition-bearers and their communities throughout Scotland, the benefits will extend beyond the world of academic researchers, bringing the traditions to all levels of education, cultural and arts organisations, folk performers and small communities.

Calum Maclean (1915–1960), a Gaelic-speaker from Raasay and the first full-time collector to be hired by the School in 1951, left behind a legacy of fond respect among Highland singers/reciters and international academics, along with his monumental contribution of recorded materials held in folklore archives. A major research project awarded to the School to begin in 2006 will enable the transfer of thousands of pages of Maclean's Gaelic field transcriptions to disk with sophisticated search and classification enhancements. The major part of the material is being provided through an agreement with the Department of Irish Folklore, University College Dublin in a co-operative initiative that emphasis the central role of international collaboration in the future of ethnology.

The Names of Blantyre, Carluke, and Carnwath, near Glasgow

ANDREW BREEZE

Blantyre, Carluke, and Carnwath all lie south-east of Glasgow. High Blantyre (NS 6856) is now part of Hamilton; Carluke (NS 8450) is eleven miles beyond, near Lanark; Carnwath (NS 9746) is even further, some eight miles east of Carluke. The names of all three have puzzled philologists. Nevertheless, an explanation of their meaning seems possible.

1. BLANTYRE

Blantyre is recorded as *Blantir* in 1289, *Blanntyre* in 1368–9, and *Blantire* in 1426. Nicolaisen calls these forms 'unexplained', though suggesting the second element may be from Gaelic *tir* 'land' (Nicolaisen: 54). Yet the name is more likely to be from Cumbric (not Gaelic) as an equivalent of Welsh **Blaentir*. Welsh *blaen,* 'end, point, summit; headwaters; extremity, limits, uplands', is a common name-element in Wales, and its cognate occurs in Cumbria at Blencarn 'rock summit' (NY 6331) and Blencogo 'cuckoos' summit' (NY 1947), both with Cumbric **blain* (Mills: 40). If the second element of *Blantyre* corresponds to Welsh *tir* 'land', a meaning 'summit of the land, end of the land' poses no difficulty.

Can we go further than this? It is possible that *tir* is here used in a technical sense. In Welsh law, *tir* was the term for land considered as a possession, so that medieval Welsh lawyers distinguished *tir bwrdd*, *tir cyd*, *tir cyfrif*, *tir difoddedig* and so on as land that was held as desmesne, by co-tenants, in base tenure, that was escheated, etc. (*Geiriadur* s.v. *tir*, forthcoming). At Blantyre, Cumbric **tir* may thus have meant 'estate'. Alternatively, it might perhaps have meant 'ploughland', as suggested by the Cumbrian place-name *Tallentire* (NY 1035), which is *tal en tir* 'the end of the land', taken to mean a headland in ploughing (Jackson, 1963: 64). So *Blantyre* may have meant 'summit of the estate' or (just possibly) 'summit of the ploughland', rather than simply 'summit of the land'. In any case, there can be no doubt that the name is Cumbric, not Gaelic.

2. CARLUKE

Carluke is recorded as *Carneluk* in 1315 and *Carluk* in 1359. Nicolaisen takes the first element as the Cumbric equivalent of Welsh *caer,* 'fortress', Cornish *ker* 'homestead',

and Breton *kaer* 'homestead', implying that the 1315 spelling with Gaelic *carn* 'cairn' is an aberration. The second element he describes as 'obscure' (Nicolaisen: 68).

Yet it is surely cognate with Welsh *llug,* 'light, radiance, lustre, brightness', also used as an adjective 'shining, brilliant, resplendent'. This may occur in *Llug Fynydd* 'Shining Mountain', a farm (SJ 0754) in Denbighshire mentioned in pre-Norman poetry associated with Llywarch the Old (*Geiriadur*: 2221; Rowland: 537; cf. Breeze, 1997b: 22–4). Also related to *llug* are Irish *luchair* 'shining' and *Leuca* 'shining one', the ancient name of the river Lougher (Welsh *Llwchwr*) on the Glamorgan-Carmarthenshire border (Rivet and Smith: 388). It appears as well with the river Lugg (Welsh *Llugwy* 'bright stream') flowing through Lugwardine (SO 5541) just east of Hereford (Mills: 217).[1]

It is true there is another word *llug* 'black', cognate with Old Irish *loch* 'black, dark', Modern Breton *lug* 'dark, dull' (of weather). This disappeared early on in Welsh through conflict with *llug* 'light', though it survived in the Middle Welsh compound *llugfryd* 'anger, wrath, indignation, fury; dejection, gloom, sadness, anxiety' (Williams: 189; *Geiriadur*: 2222). Williams notes that in place-names it is hard to tell one form from another. So an interpretation of *Carluke* as 'black fortress' (not 'bright fortress') cannot be entirely ruled out.[2]

On the other hand, if we take the second element as meaning 'bright', how do we understand it? The fourteenth-century bard Gruffudd ap Maredudd calls Chester a *goleugaer dec* 'fair shining fortress', where *goleu* is Middle Welsh 'light; bright' (Lloyd-Jones: 553). The expressions *canncaer* 'white fort', *croewgaer* 'clear fort', *gloywgaer* 'bright fort', and *gwengaer* 'white fort' occur elsewhere (*op. cit.*: 95*)*. Yet such forms have no exact equivalent in place-names. The best interpretation of *Carluke* is hence probably as follows. The first element as 'fortress' need have meant no more than a mere stockade around a hamlet or manor house, as at Cardurnock 'pebbly defended place' (NY 17538) or Cardew 'black fortified settlement' (NY 3449) in Cumbria (Jackson, 1963: 80–1). As for the last element, defensive sites in early society were usually named after a person or local feature (stream, wood, hill, and so on; Watson: 365–72; Breeze, 1997a: 99). It is possible, then, that Carluke was called after the nearby stream. This is now called 'Jock's Burn', but its original name may have been *Lug* 'bright one'; compare the Welsh rivers Lugg and Loughor. The most likely meaning of *Carluke* is, therefore, 'fortified settlement by the stream called "Bright One" '.

3. CARNWATH

Carnwath, near Carstairs Junction, is recorded as *Karnewid* in 1179, *Karnewi[t]* in 1172, *Carnewithe* in 1315, *Carnwythe* in 1424, and *Carnewith* in 1451. Watson takes these forms as equivalent to Welsh *carn gwydd* 'cairn of (the) wood' (Watson: 386). But this is not persuasive. Cairns rarely occur in or by woods; nor can *carn* refer to a hill or mountain, as at Carn Fadrun in west Gwynedd (SH 2735), since there is no prominent hill by Carnwath, the oldest part of which (with church and medieval motte) is in a

low-lying place where the A70 crosses Carnwath Burn. There is also the major problem of persistent *e* in early forms of the name.

Another explanation is possible. The early forms probably correspond to Welsh *caer newydd* 'new fort'. In other Brittonic languages, Welsh *newydd* and its equivalents (now stressed on the first syllable) had the accent on the last syllable until perhaps as late as the eleventh century, not long before Cumbric became extinct (cf. Jackson, 1953: 682–9). This accords with the derivation proposed here, where *Carnwath* suggests a stress upon the last syllable. If stress had been on the first syllable of Cumbric **newith*, the modern name would probably be **Carnewth*, not *Carnwath*.

Carnwath thus probably means 'new fort'. It is evidence for settlement in early Clydesdale. If the new settlement was mainly agricultural, settlers may have come from Carstairs three miles west. So the name would reveal something about the cultivation of new land in medieval Strathclyde, when both population and economy were expanding. However, another interpretation may be likelier. A major road crosses a stream at Carnwath to this day; the original settlement may thus have been military. The name would suggest a defensive stockade at a strategic ford near the south-east border of Strathclyde. The military significance of the spot is underlined by the medieval motte at Carnwath (now on a golf course). The interpretation proposed here may accord with archaeological data for settlement at Carnwath. If it does, the name of Carnwath is best understood as providing evidence on defence in Strathclyde in the days when it was an independent British state, ruled by kings at Dumbarton, who spoke a language closely resembling Welsh.

NOTES

1 For further place-name parallels, some of them on the Continent, see Evans: 221.

2 Cf. MIr. *loch* 'black, dark' which, on the evidence of Sc. Gael. *Loch Lòchaidh* (Watson: 50), contained /o:/.

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Geikie's *A Blind Fiddler* and Two Associated Traditions

KATHERINE CAMPBELL

Walter Geikie's etching entitled *A Blind Fiddler*[1] (Fig. 1) gives us an interesting insight into two traditions associated with fiddle playing in Scotland: the blind fiddler and playing the fiddle and singing at the same time. Geikie (1795–1837) was born in Edinburgh and must have sympathised with the character here portrayed, since he himself also suffered from disability, being deaf and dumb. A page of commentary can be found adjacent to the etching. The text of this page is reproduced in its entirety below:

> It was not to be supposed that Mr Geikie's keen and observant eye would overlook the sightless street minstrel of our Scottish towns and villages. He is an important personage, and his presence is indispensable at 'kirns', fairs, trystes, and penny weddings; he is often in request at casual merry-makings, and by no means to be sneered at, even by the aristocracy of a decayed burgh; but when some feudal lord, in the plenitude of his goodness, gives his numerous retainers an annual feast, 'tis then he shines forth in all the glory of his profession, imparting happiness, and receiving that applause which is only due to genius.
>
> The musician, on the present occasion, is performing in an ancient street of some large city; this we know from the acute wooden gables over his head. He is surrounded by an heterogeneous group, who appear to be fascinated by his musical efforts, and is labouring in his vocation with an untiring energy. His whole soul seems concentrated in his bow-hand, whose every joint appears instinct with musical enthusiasm; there is animation in his rayless countenance, and the parted lips bespeak the ardour of his spirit more fluently than words. The dulcet notes of the violin has attracted the ear of a vender of ginger-bread, whose wife has recently coaxed him out of a dram-shop; he is groping in his capacious pocket for the change of his last sixpence, to be given in guerdon to the harmonist, while a nondescript, with a 'shocking bad hat', is patting him on the shoulder for his generosity. Two truant boys, who were trundling their hoop, have been arrested in midway career by the 'concord of sweet sounds', and are listening with breathless attention. A musical dog has joined chorus with all his might, but it would appear, that, like all intruders, he is marring, instead of adding to the interest of the performance, for 'the mistress' has elevated the family staff over poor collie's back, which, when it descends, will produce a *cadenza*, or rather a *finale*. A fishwife and her customers appear at a little distance, but they are so intent upon overreaching each other, that the strains of a Paganini would fall discordant on their ears. Such is the subject of this excellent etching.
>
> We have now to inform our readers, that the principal figure in the group is a faithful portrait of the Glasgow Homer, Alexander M'Donald, *alias Blind Aleck*, who for many years

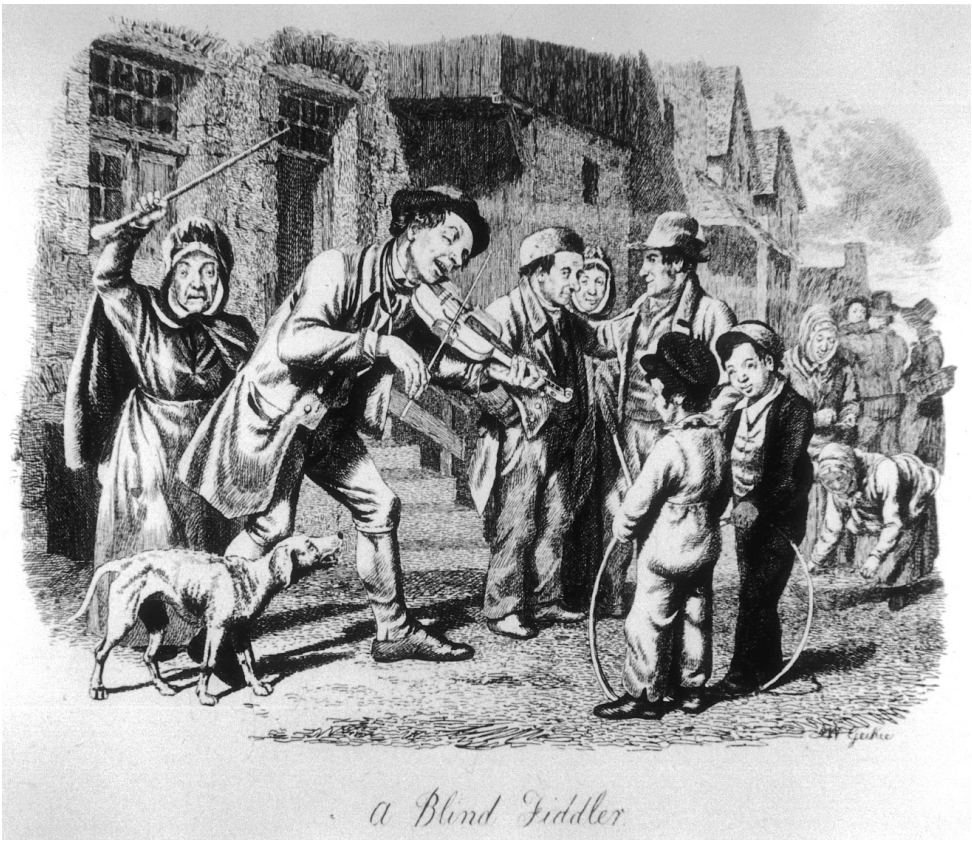

Fig. 1. *A Blind Fiddler*, from Geikie (1841), no. XXXV.

perambulated the streets of Glasgow, and with dexter hand directed the movements of his violin, while his lips gave out the *measured* accompaniment.

Aleck was, perhaps, one of the readiest improvisatores of his class, and it was, says a contemporary, 'greatly to his advantage that he was not distressed by a very delicate ear for either numbers or harmony. Whether his lines had a greater number of feet than consisted with ease and grace, or limped in their motion for want of the due proportion, these defects were amply compensated for by a rapid articulation in the one case, and, in the other, by a strong dash or two of the bow.' To illustrate the truth of the above quotation, we shall give a specimen of Aleck's extemporaneous effusions:-

I'm the author of every word I sing,
And that you may very well see;
The music alone excepted,
But just the poetree.

Only *one* specimen more and we have done.

(*Blind Aleck Loquiter*) – 'Ladies and gentlemen, any of you that has a friend in the army, just give me their Christian name and the regiment to which they belong, and I'll mak' you a song as fast as my tongue can repeat it.' (*Voice from the crowd)* – 'Well, Aleck, try your powers on the Glasgow Volunteers, Colonels Hunter and Geddes, and Major Paterson.' (*Symphony*) – Fierce dash or two of the bow!

RECITATIVO STACATTO

'For they're the men, I do declare,
I mean the loyal Lanarkshire volunteers.'

AIR – '*O'er Bogie*'

The first comes Colonel Hunter,
In a kilt see he goes;
Every inch is a man,
From the top to the toes:

He is the loyal Editor
Of the Herald news-pa-per,
And no man at the punch bowl,
The punch can better stir.

Like the fiery god of war,
Colonel Geddes does advance,
On a black horse that belonged
To the murdered king of France.

And then comes Major Patterson,
You'll say he's rather slim,
But it will take a clever ball
For to hit the like of him!

I've travell'd the world all over,
And *many a place beside*;
But I never did see a more beautifuller city,
Than that on the banks of the navigatable river, the Clyde!

The turf has recently covered the remains of the 'Glasgow Homer', but he will live in Mr Geikie's inimitable etching for ever. [2]

THE BLIND FIDDLER

The fiddle seems to have been commonly played by blind people in Scotland both historically and in times nearer to the present day. David Wilkie depicts such a musician

in his well-known painting entitled *The Blind Fiddler* dated 1806. Duncan Macmillan (1996: 171) describes the scene:

> Wilkie's blind fiddler, the heir of Orpheus as of Homer, can only find an audience among the very poorest members of society and is himself beyond even that margin. He is homeless and so impoverished that, for his family, luxury is the simple warmth of a fire around which they huddle, oblivious to the music. The simple pleasure of his audience on the other hand, including the children, is a further reminder of Wilkie's belief that it is sophistication that has corrupted taste.

One of these children is mimicking the fiddler using a bellows for a fire in place of the instrument and what appears to be a poker for the bow, emphasising the impact that the fiddler is having on his audience. A blind fiddler also appears along with a bagpiper and a boy playing a jew's harp in Wilkie's *Pitlessie Fair* (ibid.: 170). Macmillan notes that Pitlessie was Wilkie's home village and states that, according to Wilkie himself, 'most of the figures are portraits of the inhabitants' (ibid.), which suggests that the blind fiddler was a real rather than an imagined person.

There are also a number of written references relating to blind fiddlers. Robert Hutton was one who, along with a number of other musicians, was hired by the Edinburgh Assembly in 1746. Reference is made to him in the Assembly Minutes of 1750 regarding the question of having his salary augmented, his playing apparently having improved through study with a teacher for several years:

> The directors considering that the said Robert Hutton was blind and had no way of living and that their funds were designed for charity agreed to give him the same allowance with the rest of the music.[3]

Playing the instrument, then, served as a way of making a living for this particular fiddler. Further reference to a blind fiddler comes from Thomas Macqueen, a nineteenth century folksong collector:

> In looking back upon the days of our boyhood we remember an old man familiarly known by the name of 'Blind Harry' – who for many years sat daily (Sundays excepted) upon the 'New Brig' of Ayr torturing cat-gut to the old quaint Scotch tune 'Keep the Whigs in Order'. And when the mischievous school-boys would insist upon the propriety of changing the tune the poor good-natured fiddler would smile and reply, 'Weel I was ay thinkin o' learnin anither, whan I was young, but time gaed by and I'm now ow're auld to learn onything new.'[4]

Whilst there is no mention of money being given to the fiddler by passers-by, one suspects that this was the reason for his almost daily performance in the town.

Greater detail exists regarding payment to blind fiddlers in the instance of John MacGregor. He is mentioned in the work of Margaret Fairweather Michie (1905–1985) who founded the Glenesk Museum and made a large collection of materials regarding life and people in the Glen (Fenton and Beech, 2000). MacGregor, who died in 1916, was a very tall man who always wore a kilt of the MacGregor tartan, and was a well-

known figure in Glenesk in Angus. He was an itinerant fiddler who travelled as far as Braemar, Glenshee and Dunkeld and commonly carried the instrument from place to place by hanging the fiddle round his neck with a piece of rope. MacGregor, who was known as the 'Blind Fiddler', was thought to have been blinded by an explosion in the quarry where he worked, although there is some doubt whether he was in fact completely blind (ibid.: 212). A photograph clearly shows a tin box in his possession, and the following extract relates to this:

> Alex. Robertson met him one day just as he was preparing to go [from the quarry at Gleneffock where he slept], and lifted up the tin box which he found to be extremely heavy. Noticing that this did not please, Alex. asked what was in the box, to which the Fiddler replied, 'Oh, some things for makkin' sovereigns!' Probably he had meant the pennies he had collected. (Michie, n.d.: 34)

Presumably, these pennies had been collected from his performances in the locality, although he also received payment in kind, such as food and drink, from people in the glen.

Blind itinerant fiddlers were also to be found in northern parts of Scotland. Charles A. Mollyson, in his description of the parish of Fordoun in Kincardineshire (1893), for instance, mentions blind fiddlers playing at Paldy Fair (Morris, 2000: 96). Peter Cooke discusses the visits made by George Stark of Dundee to Shetland, where he was known as 'Da Blin' Fiddler' (Cooke, 1986). Stark was often accompanied by a guitarist, and commonly played out of doors in the summer months (ibid.: 17). Bobby Peterson, a Shetland fiddler born in 1916 recollected that, when he was young, 'he [Stark] stood in the street . . . and then he passed aroond the hat' and that he apparently made 'a lot o' money' from his efforts (ibid.: 17–19).[5] He also played for dancing during winters. Stark must have been a very good fiddler since Peterson mentioned that he 'would have a great audience', and he clearly inspired other players.

Other references to blind players include the blind writer, J. Haldane Burgess (1862–1927) who used Shetland dialect in many of his writings and who was a self-taught fiddler (Cooke, 1986: 9); John Riddell of Ayr (1718–95), 'the earliest-known fiddler-composer to have issued his own works in Scotland' (Alburger, 1996:137) who was believed by some to have been blind from infancy, and the father of the fiddler-composer Archibald Morrison (1820–1895) of Falkirk. Morrison's father was blinded by an explosion during the Peninsular War, and he supplemented the pension he received from the army 'by playing the fiddle at various functions, particularly for entertainment on the canal boats which were a feature of the [Falkirk] area at the time' (Neil, 1999: 181). A judge at a competition in which the famous Perthshire fiddler Niel Gow (1727–1807) took part was also blind. Collinson notes that blindness was quite common in Scotland amongst competition judges, and in my opinion it is probable that the judge was a fiddler, given that 'he could distinguish the stroke of Niel's bow among a hundred players' (1966: 214).

One possible reason why the fiddle has commonly been played by the blind in Scotland is that the instrument is portable, which is particularly important if one is travelling from place to place and earning a living by playing to onlookers (what we might nowadays call 'busking'), as many of these blind fiddlers appear to have done. Another is that fiddles were relatively inexpensive and would thus be within the price range of many people.

A further reason for the popularity of the instrument amongst the blind may relate to the harp tradition. It is well known that the harp was played by blind people in Scotland. Sanger and Kinnaird (1992: 56) suggest that one reason why it was common was that the nail-playing technique used on the wire-strung clarsach, common to the Highlands of Scotland, was particularly suited to blind people who were able to keep their finger nails long through not being engaged in manual labour. Many of these harpists were employed as professional musicians and received patronage from the great Highland families. However, by the eighteenth century, there were only a few such musicians still in existence. One reason for this was the disappearance of patronage 'linked with the waning fortunes of a number of the great Highland families who were involved in the Jacobite Risings' (ibid: 153). This is best exemplified in the case of the blind harper, Rory Dall (Roderick Morison, c.1656-c.1713), who was in the service of the MacLeods at Dunvegan in Skye and was one of the last professional harpers (ibid.: 129). His poetry survives, giving us an important record of what it was like to be a harper in the clan household (see Matheson, 1970) as well as of his departure from Dunvegan. Another reason for the decline in harp playing was changes in musical fashion (Sanger and Kinnaird, 1992: 153). Indeed, in the sixteenth century, the viol was becoming popular, and in the seventeenth, the fiddle or violin, both having an impact on the harp tradition (Grant and Cheape 1987: 180). Thomson (1968: 70) also notes that the piper had 'usurped the place of the harper' well before the 1730s.

It seems possible that harpists in the Highlands of Scotland, particularly blind ones unable to work in some other professions, may have taken up another instrument such as the fiddle as a way of making a living. There is further likelihood of this as Sanger and Kinnaird note that it was relatively common for harpists to play a number of instruments (1992: 168–9). Ranald MacAilean Og (c. 1662–1741) of Cross on the Island of Eigg, for instance, could play harp, fiddle and pipes well (ibid.: 153) as could Alexander Grant of Shewglie (c.1675–1746) (ibid.: 154). Rory Dall Morison (already mentioned) was also a multi-instrumentalist (Collinson, 1966: 236). The fact that a number of writers note the likelihood that the harp repertoire was taken on board by other musical instruments (Collinson, 1966: 243; MacDonald, 1784: 3–4; and Matheson, 1970: lxxiv), particularly fiddle, which was becoming more popular at the point when the harp playing was in decline (Sanger and Kinnaird, 1992: 133), also suggests the possibility that harp players may have moved to the fiddle in order to make a living.

Mrs Judith Dean, a retired music teacher at The Royal Blind School, Edinburgh, with some twenty years service at the school, has given some insight into the playing of musical

instruments by the blind and partially sighted.[6] She has found that blind children tend to enjoy music very much, particularly singing, which to them is the most accessible and social form of music making. As a result of being without sight, the visually impaired child tends to have highly developed senses of touch and hearing, which together with an excellent sense of rhythm, pitch and harmony, means that there is in place a lot of innate musical potential. Mrs Dean made the following observations:

> Visual impairment is frequently accompanied by a wide ranging set of additional disabilities, so while there are indeed pupils who very successfully learn to play a variety of instruments, for many, the obstacles to be overcome may be too great to allow the skills to develop which will enable the pupil to independently play instruments. The fiddle does present practical problems concerning the care, handling and management of the case, bow and instrument. The playing position and relationship of the bow to the instrument are difficult, together with the obvious difficulties of co-ordinating fingers as well. Visually impaired children, perhaps as a result of the advanced level of aural skills, are able to anticipate what comes next in the music, so the ear can lead the fingers to find the correct sounds. The child may find his best way to access the notes he wants (even if in a very idiosyncratic and unorthodox way) but at the same time may find it very difficult to learn 'sighted' technique, which in the longer term will lead to greater fluency.
>
> In an ideal world, a lot of teaching with constant reinforcement and supervision are therefore of great importance, but realistically these are difficult to achieve in a school when there are so many other demands made on a child. Everything does take longer and is more difficult for visually impaired children, despite the innate skills they may have.
>
> The fiddle is an instrument, which presents problems before the practice even begins! Until such time as the pupil is able to manage the tuning etc., it is necessary to have someone on hand who is able to either do it for the child or help him with the preparation and the practice.

However, Mrs Dean suggested that, historically in Scotland, blind fiddlers might have had a tradition of fiddle playing in their families or in their local communities, that made it quite easy for them to learn to play the instrument. In such a context, learning would be part of 'ongoing life' rather than a more formal activity. Blind fiddlers learning in this way would also have the advantage of knowing their home environment, and possibly of knowing the location of a fiddle in the home if there was an instrument present. Mrs Dean also suggested that they might have begun learning simply through someone handing them a fiddle and showing them how to hold it. In addition, she noted: 'There must have been a lot of time to fill for a blind person in a rural community and I would think that the fiddle could have been a lifeline – something that he could do with others and also something that others could not do.'

Whilst playing the fiddle has constituted a means of livelihood for a blind person historically in Scotland, welfare legislation in Britain in the early years of the twentieth century (Ford and Ford, 1969) would have signalled the end of the period when it was essential for the blind to support themselves financially.

PLAYING THE FIDDLE AND SINGING AT THE SAME TIME

Another tradition illustrated by Geikie's etching is that of singing and playing the fiddle at the same time. The commentary tells us that Blind Aleck is improvising song at the instrument and, rather surprisingly, aspects of his bowing seem to have been used as a way of covering up problems inherent in the poetry. These are taken to the point where 'defects were amply compensated for . . . by a strong dash or two of the bow.' This style of playing also suggests that Blind Aleck was a rather flamboyant character when performing; something that would no doubt have helped to attract him an audience. Interestingly, too, the commentary implies that the singing is an accompaniment to the violin rather than the other way round, stating: 'with dexter hand [he] directed the movements of his violin, while his lips gave out the *measured* accompaniment'.

The etching goes some way to showing us how singing and playing simultaneously is physically achieved. The fiddler plays standing but leaning heavily forward towards his audience and his head is tilted slightly to the left so that his chin rests on the fiddle. His mouth is open as though he is singing at that very moment. This position is particularly noteworthy for one might expect the fiddle to rest further down on his chest, thus freeing up the head and neck for the purposes of singing.[7]

There are further references to this practice among fiddlers. Miss Minnie Lindsay of Glenesk noted, for instance, that John MacGregor would 'play on the fiddle and sing, "The Lass of Glenshee" ' (Fenton and Beech, 2000: 212), suggesting the possibility that this was done simultaneously. Indeed, singing and playing the fiddle simultaneously appears to have had a long history in Scotland. The description by the French historian Pierre de Brantôme of Scots musicians playing for Mary Queen of Scots at Holyrood in Edinburgh, for instance, mentions that there 'arrived under her window five or six hundred scoundrels from town to serenade her with unrefined violins and small rebecs, which are not wanting in this country; and then they started to sing psalms, ever so badly sung and badly in tune.'[8]

The following quotation from *Vox Borealis*, *or the Northern Discoverie* (1641), a pamphlet satirising English bishops, particularly in their dealings with the Scots, also mentions this possibility. The account tells of a fiddler and a fool who are employed by General Rathwen, governor of Edinburgh Castle:

> When he [General Rathwen] and they are almost drunke, then they goe to singing of *Scots jigges*, in a jearing manner, at the *Covenanters*, for surrendring up their Castles. The Fidler he flings out his his [sic] heels and Dances and Sings: Put up thy Dagger Jamie, and all things shall be mended, Bishops shall fall, no not at all, when the Parliament is ended.[9]

A more recent Scottish reference comes from Miss Anne Graham Horsburgh, of Kirkton Farm, Manor, Peebles, originally from Stobo, who was born in 1901 and lived in Manor Valley from 1914. She remembered Adam Horsburgh, her father's cousin's son who lived in the area, playing the violin and singing at the same time. Part of her

recollections are presented below, taken from an interview conducted by Emily Lyle of the School of Scottish Studies and Catherine Shoupe[10]:

EL: And did he sing and play the violin at the same time?
AGH: The same time, yes.
EL: Burns songs?
AGH: Mostly Burns songs. Of course, you see, there were none of these other . . . songs writers and people like what you get nowadays. . . .
EL: And would he be standing up while he was playing the violin and singing?
AGH: No, he usually was sitting on a chair.
EL: Just, in a room?
AGH: Yes. . . .
EL: Yes. And did other people do this, sing and play the violin?
AGH: Oh yes.
CS: Was it just men you were saying?
AGH: Oh no. There was the odd woman. Yes. I remember I had a schoolteacher and she was a very good violinist. . . .
EL: And did it affect the singing when they played with the violin? . . .
AGH: Well, they always sung in harmony with their violin. Their voice was in harmony with what they were playing.
EL: And how did this affect the way they sang?
AGH: Well, it usually made the song sound sweeter or sadder or whatever the music was.
EL: Yes. Were you saying something about it being a higher . . .?
AGH: Women . . . who sing to a violin. You'll always find their voices are high set.
CS: Just the women?
AGH: Just the women, yes. Because, you know, I always say violins are horrid, screeching things. Well voices are just the same . . .

This interview illustrates several points. Firstly, instead of the voice and fiddle being in unison, the two were in harmony, meaning that the fiddle was playing different notes to that of the voice. Secondly, this practice was engaged in by both men and women, although Miss Horsburgh indicated there was something about the pitch of women's voices that changed when they accompanied themselves. It is possible that women had to sing a little more loudly, and perhaps pitch the song a little higher than normal (pitch is often associated with loudness in music; the higher one sings in one's comfortable range, the louder one tends to get) in order to cut through the sound of the fiddle. This is especially true given that the fiddle has a similar lower range to the lower range of a woman's voice (beginning on the note G below middle C). In the case of a man's voice, however, the fiddle usually would be playing higher than the voice for most of the time. Thirdly, the accompaniment enhanced the mood of the song, indicating that fiddle accompaniment added an aesthetic dimension to the performance.

We also have a present-day example from Scotland of singing and playing the fiddle

at the same time. Tom Spiers, who was born in Aberdeen in 1947, is well known for giving this type of performance, both whilst he was in a band called 'The Gaugers' and nowadays in groups called 'Harestane' and 'Flash Company'. Tom was brought up in Aberdeen and now lives in Fife where he is a technical manager in the paper industry. He received lessons in classical violin at school, and then at the age of about fifteen or sixteen began attending the Aberdeen Folk Song Club, having been invited along to the club by a friend who knew that he played the fiddle. He described how he began singing and playing the fiddle at the same time, which came about primarily through playing in groups which performed at the club:

> I think what happened really was because the groups I was playing with were singing groups as opposed to instrumental groups, . . . I just started joining in the choruses. And the fact I was playing the fiddle didn't matter, I could still sing along in the choruses and then it just sort of went on from there. And I discovered I quite enjoyed singing and started learning a few songs, and to begin with I would just sing the songs without accompanying myself and possibly take the fiddle in for a chorus or something like that. [It] just seemed a natural progression that I just carried on playing the fiddle and singing. It didn't seem as though – there was no conscious decision made to actually play fiddle and sing.[11]

When Tom is performing, the instrument sits loosely on his shoulder, just touching his neck, and he does not use a chin rest. He finds that this position does not restrict his breathing whilst he is singing. The fiddle works best, he maintained, in accompanying songs from the North East of Scotland such as 'Grat for Gruel' from the singing of Jimmy MacBeath which have 'very simple melodies but . . . quite good going songs and choruses'. Tom also sings songs from *The Greig-Duncan Folk Song Collection*. He has two fiddles, one tuned normally (G D A E) and one tuned in the key of B flat. He explained that, with the pitch of his voice, B flat is a very natural key in which to sing, and is also useful for performing pipe tunes (which are in B flat), since tuning the fiddle in this way allows for drones which are sympathetic to the tune. Instead of playing in harmony to the melody (i.e. playing a different set of notes, perhaps those which lie a fifth below the tune itself), Tom normally plays the notes of the tune. His accompaniment could be described as very harmonic, however, since it utilises double stops and what he termed 'chording' at every opportunity. This is clearly illustrated in the transcription of his playing of 'Grat for Gruel' (Fig. 2). Indeed, this style of accompaniment points up the harmonic potential of an instrument which is normally associated with playing the melody.

Tom mentioned that there was no change in pitch in his singing when he accompanied himself on the fiddle, but that there was probably a change in the sound of the voice: 'I think I possibly push my voice a little more when I'm singing over the top of the fiddle.' Interestingly, the primary function of the fiddle for Tom was as a tool for accompaniment rather than as a solo instrument.

Playing the fiddle and singing at the same time in public performances often evoked surprise from audience members, however. Tom explained that at the end of a concert,

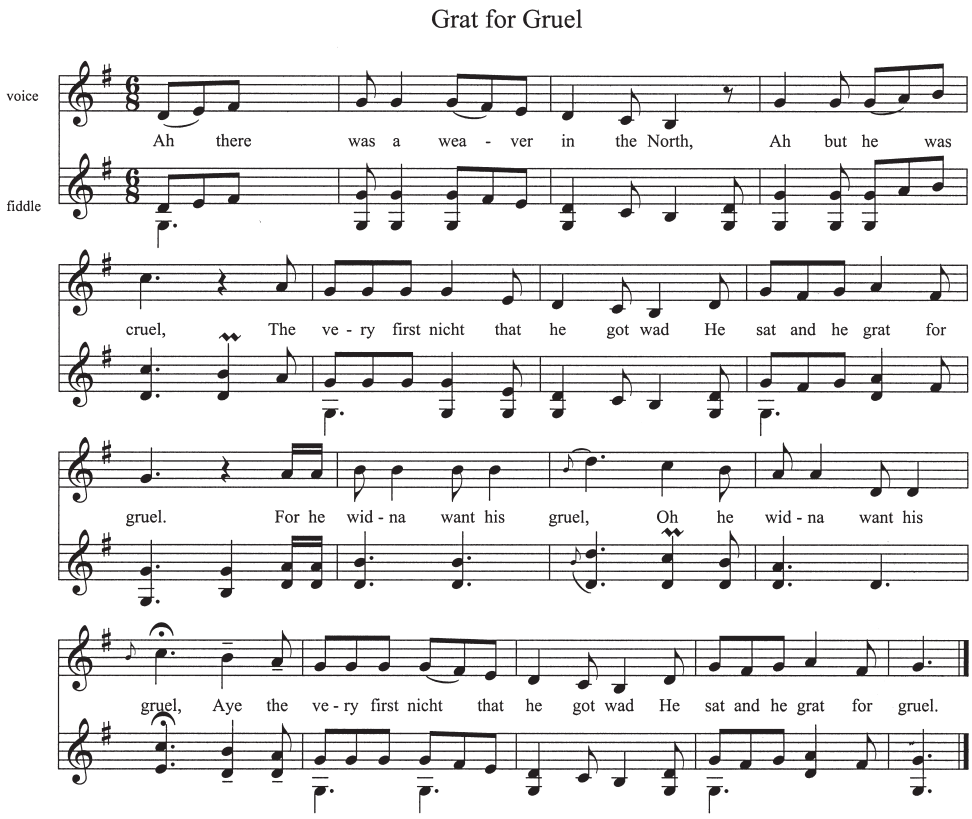

Fig. 2. 'Grat for Gruel', from the playing and singing of Tom Spiers.

people might come up and say '"Oh, how are you able to do that, . . . I've never seen anybody doing that before, how can you possibly play fiddle and sing at the same time?"' He felt that it was nevertheless a 'fairly natural thing to do' and did not consider it to be different from, for instance, playing the guitar and singing simultaneously. However, Tom knew of few others who employed the fiddle to accompany their own singing and, although he mentioned examples from England (for example, the Dransfield Brothers[12] that he remembered playing in the 1960s and 1970s), and from North America, he did not name any from Scotland. He continued:

> So, it doesn't appear to be very common. As I say, I can't really understand why. Maybe it's because fiddle's not considered to be . . . a particularly good instrument for accompanying voice. I suppose guitar has a much fuller sound and I suppose is more versatile in terms of the type of accompaniments you can do, so . . . maybe that's the reason that the fiddle's never been very popular for singing with, because it's I suppose fairly limited in terms of the sounds you can get from it.

Tom's comments are interesting since they highlight the fact that the practice of playing the fiddle and singing simultaneously is unknown as a Scottish tradition to many fiddlers in present-day Scotland. By contrast, in North America, singing whilst playing the fiddle appears to be common. Burman-Hall (1984: 169), for instance, states that in American traditional fiddling, the performance of the fiddle has often been accompanied by vocal verses, and notes that these are characteristically sung in a 'rapid-fire tense style' (ibid.: 170). A reference from *The New Lost City Ramblers Song Book* (Cohen and Seeger 1964: 11) alludes to the practice of the fiddle being used to accompany the voice of a blind musician: 'In "The Old Fish Song", as done by Blind James Howard, the fiddle and the voice move in unison.' The song was collected from Howard in Harlan, Kentucky, by John and Alan Lomax in 1933, and in this particular instance, the fiddle is clearly playing much the same notes as the voice, rather than harmonising with it. The role of the fiddle as an accompanying instrument is found in other countries too. Cooke (1992: 236) mentions this practice amongst the epic singers of Yugoslavia, Albania and Macedonia and amongst gypsy singers of southern Romania. He also cites a southern Yugoslavian example of singers using a violin tuned to a rather lower pitch to provide such accompaniments. Other examples include the Chianuri, a two- or three-string spike fiddle, from the country of Georgia which, although not common nowadays, was used to accompany song, playing in unison with the voice against a bass drone (Sadie 1984: 1.349) and the Kemençe (ibid.: 2.372), the short-necked fiddle of Turkey which sits on the performer's knee and has amongst its functions that of accompanying song.[13] Larsson (1977: 88) also gives an example of singing to a bowed harp in Sweden, a similar instrument to the fiddle which in this case is played on the performer's lap.

The example of Tom Spiers drawn from the present-day folk song and folk music tradition in Scotland is particularly interesting since here is an individual who is inadvertently carrying on a tradition – that of singing and playing the fiddle at the same time. Tom has acquired this style of performing not by listening and imitating others in the tradition itself, but instead though his own efforts, performing solo and with other musicians in groups. Further, he has not made a conscious decision to actually play the fiddle and sing simultaneously. The instance of singing and playing the fiddle at the same time also illustrates how closely the song and fiddle traditions can be intertwined in Scottish tradition. In addition to the use of fiddle tunes for song melodies and vice versa, one instrument can complement the other successfully and, as Tom Spiers illustrated, be performed simultaneously by one person with relative ease.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Tom Spiers and Judith Dean for taking part in interviews and to the AHRB (Arts and Humanities Research Board) for sponsoring this research as part of a Fellowship in the Creative and Performing Arts.

NOTES

1 Reproduced from Geikie (1841). Commentary adjacent to etching no. XXXV.

2 Unfortunately, I have been unable to determine who the author of this commentary is. The publisher gives some clue, however, as he gives thanks in his preface, with respect to the letter-press, 'for the valuable assistance of numerous literary friends'. He continues: 'To Mr Thomas Smibert he is indebted for several of the opening pages. His acknowledgements are also due to Mr Alexander Campbell for one or two contributions, chiefly of a humourous character; to Mr James Ballantine for his graphical poetical illustrations of "the Grassmarket" and other subjects; and to Mr W. Skene, Mr A. M'Laggan, Mr James Murray, Mr J. Alexander, and Mr W. Hunter, for occasional articles.' Mr David Vedder is also thanked for prose and verse that he has contributed. It is likely, then, that one of the aforementioned is the writer in question. Further, it is likely that the writer drew on 'The Life of Blind Alick' printed in the *Scots Times* on 6 March, 1830 which was reprinted and privately circulated. Strang (1856: 249) notes that this article was frequently used by writers as a source for material, and there are considerable similarities between the piece cited here and the article that appeared in the *Scots Times*.

3 Alburger (1996: 51), quoted from *Edinburgh Assembly Minute Books,* No. 1, Edinburgh Public Library, Y/ML/28/A.

4 Lyle (1996: xx), quoted from *The Huron Signal*, 11 February 1848, p. 3, col. 1.

5 SA 1977/121/8.

6 Interview, 21/3/2000, The Royal Blind School, Edinburgh.

7 Cooke (1992: 263) indeed notes that 'it is one of the virtues of the violin that it can be played resting along the left arm or propped against the chest, leaving the player free to sing (if he chooses) while playing.' Several examples of this style of holding the fiddle are pictured in the book on old-time fiddling in Alabama by Cauthen (1989), and the picture of Andrew Poleson (in Cooke, 1986: 30) from Shetland also demonstrates this hold.

8 I am grateful to Aude Le Borgne for her translation. The full version in French of this text can be found at Mérimée and Lacour (1890: 127).

9 Glasgow University Library (Special Collections), Mu10-i.31.

10 SA 1974/171/A10. The initials 'EL' stand for Emily Lyle, 'CS' for Catherine Shoupe, and 'AGH' for Anne Graham Horsburgh.

11 Interview, 20/2/2000, Auchtermuchty, Fife, SA 2000/01.

12 Further information on the Dransfield Brothers can be found at http://www.futuris.net/linen/feature/72sheets.html

13 Another instrument, the function of which, like the fiddle, is normally considered to be that of playing melodies rather than providing accompaniment for song is the Scottish small or border pipes. There has recently been a revival of this instrument in Scotland headed by the Lowland and Border Pipers' Society, who run a category for self-accompaniment on pipes to singing in their annual competition.

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Gaelic Names of Pibrochs: A Classification[1]

RODERICK D. CANNON

1. INTRODUCTION

The classical music of the Highland bagpipe, usually called pibroch, or piobaireachd, but perhaps more correctly *ceòl mòr,* consists of a large number of extended compositions in the form of air with variations. They were written down from oral tradition, mainly in the first half of the nineteenth century. Although pibrochs have continued to be composed since that time, especially in the last few decades, it is the pre–1850 pieces which are generally accepted as the classical canon.[2]

It is safe to assume that all the pibroch players who noted the music in writing spoke Gaelic as their first language.[3] Certainly the great majority of pieces have been recorded with Gaelic titles as well as English. There can be little doubt that the English titles are generally translations of the Gaelic rather than the other way round. This is most obvious in those cases where the English is stilted, or poorly expressed, or even practically meaningless: 'Too long in this condition', 'The Unjust Incarceration', 'Scarce of Fishing', 'The Finger Lock'.[4]

Actually, these rather comical names, though notorious, are exceptional, and most tunes are best known under names which are strictly functional – 'MacLeod's Salute', 'Lament for Donald Duaghal MacKay', 'Clan Chattan's Gathering'. It is these names which most clearly tell us the circumstances under which the old composers worked: making ceremonial music to honour patrons, or to commemorate victories (and defeats) in battle in the age of clan warfare.

The purpose of this article is to review the Gaelic names of the pibrochs, as recorded in the original sources. The focus is on the forms of the names, and the use of a small number of key words, rather than on wider implications or historical background. In further studies it is planned to review names which apparently refer to historical traditions, and to the texts of songs.

In some ways the study of tune names is like the study of place names. The meaning may be quite obvious, telling us something of the history of the tune (or place) to which it is attached; or it may be completely obscure. But even if a name seems to be clear, it may be misleading when looked at in isolation. The safest approach is to consider all available records of a name, and to consider each name in the context of other names. In this way we can hope to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources,

and to understand the principles which the givers of the names followed, consciously or unconsciously.

2. SOURCES

2.1 Pipe Music Collections

Most of the data for this survey are names noted in collections of pipe music. These are listed in Table 1 below, and the names themselves, with their variant spellings and references to sources, have been published on the Internet.[5] As a rough estimate, there are about 320 distinct pieces of music, recorded in about 600 independent versions; and 250 distinct names, in about 500 instances. The differences between the first and second pairs of figures are accounted for mainly by tunes recorded without names: the number with names in English only is relatively small.

For the present purpose, the sources can conveniently be divided into two main groups. Group A consists of pipers whose knowledge of the musical tradition was very extensive, and who knew Gaelic but had evidently not been taught to write it. They spell some of the commoner Gaelic words in an orthodox way, but generally they adopt English spelling conventions like 'v' for 'bh' or 'mh', 'porst' for *port,* 'ken' for *ceann,* and so on. Some of the spellings can only be elucidated by a good Gaelic scholar, but most are easily recognisable.[6] The largest collection of this sort is the two-volume Campbell canntaireachd manuscript (C1, C2), containing 168 tunes, 66 of them named in Gaelic. The Hannay-MacAuslan Manuscript (H) is small but valuable. Two other collections are the manuscript of Donald MacDonald, junior (DJ), and the 'Specimens of Canntaireachd' (SC), noted or at least copied by Angus MacKay. The last four provide more than sixty Gaelic names, and to them we can add a small book of twenty tunes, published by Niel MacLeod of Gesto (G), with an associated manuscript of historical notes mostly concerned with explaining the names, the 'Skeabost MS'.

Group B consists of writers who were evidently fully literate in both Gaelic and English. It is dominated by the two pipers who effectively started the tradition of notating and printing bagpipe music as we have it today, Donald MacDonald and Angus MacKay. Donald MacDonald published a book of 23 pibrochs in 1820 (D0), and compiled a second volume in 1826, which he was unable to publish but which is still available in manuscript (D1). Angus MacKay published a book in 1838 (K0), and wrote several manuscripts of which the two largest are in effect a continuation of the book (K1, K2/K3). Between them his collections amount to no fewer than 250 tunes, and the recently discovered Kintarbert MS (KK) adds five more which had been known only through later copies. But although MacKay's is the most impressive collection, and by far the most influential, for the present purpose we have to treat it with some caution. This is partly because MacKay had access to most of the previous works, but also because he was clearly an editor who aimed at completeness in all respects. His

names are often more elaborate than those of the same tunes in other sources, and it seems likely that he extended or rationalised some of them, rather than merely recording what he learned orally. A manuscript by Angus' brother John, which largely overlaps him, is valuable not only for a few additional names, but more especially because it seems less eclectic and more centred on the MacKay family traditions (JK). Two earlier small sources are Patrick MacDonald's collection of 'Highland vocal airs', 1784 (PD) which includes four pibrochs actually noted from a piper, and the manuscript compiled by Elizabeth Ross at Raasay House in 1812, which includes six pibrochs (ER). These two are included here because the writers, although not pipers themselves, were in close touch with piping and also had a good knowledge of written Gaelic.

2.2 Other Sources

Besides these compilations we have a diverse but valuable group of smaller sources, some of which are listed in Table 1 as group C. The MacFarlane manuscript (F), written as early as 1740, contains two pibrochs, thought to be based on fiddle rather than pipe sets. Daniel Dow's book of 'ancient Scots music' (DOW), c. 1783, contains more of the same type and in addition several pibrochs which seem to be arrangements from the pipes. There are other sources too which contain pieces of pibroch character, some of which appear to be independent compositions, others transcriptions.[7] The Gaelic names in these sources date from a period when spelling had not by any means been regularised.

A number of important lists of tunes, without music, have survived. Two are lists of duty tunes ordered to be played in Highland regiments (L1, L6), two are handbills (L4, L7) published in connection with the competitions for piobaireachd playing which were held in Edinburgh from 1783 onwards, and three are newspaper reports of such competitions which happen to name the tunes played by each competitor (L2, L3, L5). The latest of these sources (L7) however has relatively modern spellings and is to be considered along with our group B. The records of the competition organisers also contain lists of tunes played. These have not been edited or published in full, but they have been extensively quoted by Iain MacInnes (1988).[8] There must be many more reports of competitions in contemporary newspapers but these are still to be tapped. Finally, several nineteenth-century writers who were not pipers also recorded traditional material. Although this needs to be sifted carefully, some of it at least seems authentic. The most important are two books by James Logan, *The Scottish Gael,* first published in 1831, and *The Clans of the Scottish Highlands*, first published in 1845. A later writer who contributes a substantial amount of apparently oral tradition is Henry Whyte who, under the pen-name of 'Fionn', published a book entitled *The Martial Music of the Clans* (1904), and also wrote the historical notes to David Glen's collection of piobaireachd (1911).

This article is concerned with pibrochs, but the literature of other Gaelic music is also relevant. Keith Sanger and Alison Kinnaird (1992) give comprehensive listings of

A. 'Vernacular' sources

Date*	Source*		Tunes	Gaelic names
1797	C1	Campbell Canntaireachd MS Vol 1	83	29
<1814	C2	Campbell Canntaireachd MS Vol 2	86	34
>1811	H	Hannay-MacAuslan MS	10	9
1820	A	MacArthur MS	30	4
1826	DJ	MacDonald, Donald (junior). MS	40	17
1828	G	MacLeod, Niel. *Collection of Piobaireachd . . .*	20	10
<1853	SC	'Specimens of Canntareachd'	48	38

B. 'Learned' sources

1784	PD	MacDonald, Patrick. . . . *Highland vocal airs . . .*	4	4
1812	ER	Ross, Eliza J. The 'Lady D'Oyly MS'	6	4
1820	D0	MacDonald, Donald. *Ancient Martial Music*	23	23
1826	D1	MacDonald, Donald. MS	50	47
1826	R	Reid, Peter. MS	45	30
1838	K0	MacKay, Angus. . . . *Ancient Piobaireachd . . .*	61	61
c.1840	K1	MacKay, Angus. MS vol 1	112	98
c.1840	K2,K3	MacKay, Angus. MS vol 2	72	57
c.1841	KK	MacKay, Angus. 'Kintarbert MS'	88	73
1848	JK	MacKay, John. MS	63	28
1854	KS	MacKay, Angus. 'Seaforth MS'	11	12

C Other sources

1740	F	MacFarlane MS	2	2
1778	L1	List of tunes . . . Argyll Regiment#	5	5
1783	L2	Report of competition#	11	6
c.1783	DOW	Dow, Daniel. *Ancient Scots music ...*	4	4
1784	L3	Report of competition#	14	14
1785	L4	Competition handbill#	19	18
1790	L5	Report of competition#	11	0
<1831	L6	List of tunes, 72nd regiment#	9	9
1835	L7	Competition handbill#	16	16

For further details see bibliography, and for sources in groups A and B (except KK), see also Cannon (1997).

Titles in italics indicate published books. # Names only: no music.

Table 1. Classification of sources.

music of the harp, and some of the pieces are named partly or wholly in Gaelic. Some of the tunes published for fiddle in the eighteenth century also have Gaelic titles. A much wider field, which will not be touched on here, is that of the titles of songs, and of older 'bardic' poems. Some of these resemble pibroch names, and a few actually coincide, but there are difficult questions as to how the names came to be attached, whether by composers, tradition-bearers or later editors.[9]

Some examples of tune names taken from the 'vernacular' sources will illustrate the quality of the material available, and how well the odd spellings can reflect the original sounds of the words:

Spatcharach dolgruamach (SC)	*Spaidsearachd Dhòmhnaill Ghruamaich*
Pibroch-gonnel[10]	*Pìobaireachd Dhòmhnaill*
Kiaunidize (G)	*Ceann na dèise*
Kiaunma Drochid a Beig (G)	*Ceann na drochaide bìge*
Colin a Ruun (DJ)	*A Cholla mo rùin*

3. A CLASSIFICATION OF PIOBAIREACHD NAMES

The majority of names fall into one of four types. Type I, the most numerous, are what I will call 'functional' names: 'Lament for X', 'X's Salute', 'X's March', 'The Gathering of Clan X'. Type II is a small group, which I will call 'technical'. These appear to refer to strictly musical characteristics of the pieces, and some of them seem to preserve technical terms in music. Type III, 'textual', are evidently quotations from songs, usually the opening words. Type IV are names, usually quite short, which are not easy to define except to say that they are – just names. They cover a similar range to the names we find attached to the smaller music, jigs, reels, etc – place names, names of people, names which suggest a story. Here is a selection of typical names of the four types, as they appear in the current publications of the Piobaireachd Society:[4, 11]

Type I. Functional

Fàilte Uilleim Dhuibh Mhic Coinnich
Cumha Iain Ghairbh Mhic Gille Chaluim
Cruinneachadh Chloinn Chatain

Type II. Technical

A' Ghlas Mheur
Port na Lùdaig

Type III. Textual

Thàinig mo Rìgh air Tìr am Mùideart
Is fhada mar seo tha sinn
Dastirum gu seinnim pìob

Type IV. Short names

A' Bhòilich
An Daorach Mhòr
Màl an Rìgh

The relative frequency of occurrence in the main sources is as follows:

I	Functional	'X's lament'	65
		'X's salute'	55
		'X's march'	12
		'The gathering of clan X'	9
		The battle of X'	18
		sub-total	**159**
II	Technical	'X's pibroch'	19
		'The X-tune'	9
		sub-total	**28**
III	Songs		**47**
IV	'Short names'		**18**
	Total		**252**

This article will concentrate on names of Types I and II, emphasising points of grammar, and meanings of words which are common to relatively large numbers of names.

Almost all names of these two types have the same grammar: noun (or noun phrase) nominative + noun (or noun phrase) genitive; and usually of course the reverse order in English, thus *Fàilte Mhic Leòid* = MacLeod's Salute, etc. It is convenient to borrow the terminology of place name studies and call the nominative and genitive elements 'generic' and 'specific' respectively. But a word of caution is necessary. It is by no means clear that the various 'generic' terms that we find in use actually correspond with different genres in a strictly musical sense. There are no clear-cut rules of composition that distinguish a lament from a salute. If there once were such rules, they have ceased to be handed down traditionally and are now waiting to be rediscovered. Usually however the general musical character of a piece is felt to be appropriate to the title, and on this basis it is reasonable to adopt the term 'generic' if only for want of anything better.

4. CONFLICT AND CONFUSION?

Many tunes are known in different sources under different names, and some names recur attached to different tunes. This is only to be expected in an art which worked by oral tradition over a wide area and a long period of time. But it needs to be stated clearly

that some of the confusion of names is apparent rather than real. In the first place there may be diverse English translations of the same Gaelic original – 'The Vale of Sorrow' for 'The Rout of Glenfruin', the place name being understood as *Gleann a' Bhròin*; or titles picking up different points from the same tradition – 'Black Donald's March', 'The Battle of Inverlochy', 'Donald Balloch's March'.[12] These and other examples were collected by Iain MacInnes (1988: 162) from early records of competitions, where pipers no doubt gave the names of their tunes in Gaelic only and the officials had to translate them as best they could.

But more importantly it would be perfectly possible for the same tune to have as many as three 'original' names, one each from among the above types, even in the mind of the same person. Several clear cases have already been recognised. The tune which has the functional title of 'Glengarry's March' was also called *Cill Chrìosd*, and it had associated with it a set of words beginning *Chì mi thall ud an smùid mhòr,* 'Yonder I see the great smoke'.[13] The connection between the three names is that the tune commemorates the atrocity alleged to have taken place at the Church of Kilchrist, near Muir of Ord, Ross-shire, when the worshippers were burned alive as the church was fired by a raiding party of MacDonells of Glengarry.[14] Another example: in 1829, when the Highland Society was making an effort to establish names of tunes, the Secretary, Mr George Robertson, enquired and reported that 'the tune of Ribean Gorm is called by all pipers The Robertsons' Gathering' (PS 5: 128). In the same way, 'The MacKenzies' March' was and is called *Tulloch Ard*, taking its name from the traditional gathering place of the MacKenzies, a hill close to the seat of the clan chief (MacKenzie (1998: 88). In the latter two examples we have a functional title and a given name, but no song text.

A story told at a later date shows how the informant neatly, and no doubt unconsciously, distinguished two types of name. It is a tale of how Raonull Mac Ailein òig (Ronald MacDonald of Morar) made the tune *An tarbh breac dearg*. The Camerons had trapped Ronald into an encounter with a bull. 'Ronald killed the bull . . . He composed a piobaireachd by the side of Lochiel, and . . . when he went home, he went to see MacDonald of Keppoch, and played the tune to him. The Laird of Keppoch asked for the tune to be a Welcome tune for himself, and Ronald gave it.'[15] Presumably then, the tune could have been additionally titled *Fàilte Mhic Raonuill,* and thence 'MacDonald of Keppoch's Salute', though it has not entered the literature as such. Another well documented case is the tune *Ceann na drochaide bige,* 'The End of the Little Bridge'. The tune was noted by Niel MacLeod of Gesto, from Iain Dubh MacCrimmon, together with a story of MacLeods and Camerons fighting on the same side, and he adds 'Macleod of Macleod calls this tune his gathering or battle tune, and the Camerons call it their gathering tune or battle tune, and . . . they both seem to have an equal right to it . . . '.[16] Whatever the 'rights', it seems that the tune could have been called something like *Cruinneachadh* [or *Port tionail*] *Mhic Leòid* by some people, and *Cruinneachadh Chlann Chamshròin* by others, while both sides could have agreed on *Ceann na drochaide bige.*

Evidently then a tune can simultaneously have a functional title, a given name, and a song text. A few more examples will be enough to make the point (spellings and punctuations modernised):

Functional	Short	Textual
Fàilte Mhic Gilleathain(F)		*Slàn gun tig Seonachan* (K2)
Lochnell's Lament (K1)	*Spìocaireachd Iasgaich* (K1)	*Tha spìocaireachd iasgaich am bliadhna . . .* (K1)
MacLachlan's March (H)	*Moladh Mairi* (H)	*'S moladh mu da thaobh . . .* (H)[17]
The Grant's Gathering (Do)	*Craigellachie* (Do)	—
Lord Breadalbane's March (Do)	*Bodaich nam Briogais* (Do)	*Tha bodaich nam briogan a nise gar fàgail* (Ko)
The Camerons' Gathering[18]	*Pìobaireachd Dhomhnuill Duibh* (Do)	*Pìobaireachd Dhomhnuill . . .* [18]
—	*An daorach mhòr* (K1)	*Tha'n daorach ort, s' fhearr'd thu cadal . . .* (K1)

Table 2

It is also entirely possible that a piper could have been aware that a tune which he knew by name was the gathering of a certain clan, without ever having having to put it in so many words. This could explain the wording used by MacLeod of Gesto in a document of historical notes,[19] where he refers to 'a very old battle tune *called in Gaelic* 'Druim Thalasgair'' (my italics), as if to suggest that in English it would be called something else. It is even worth pausing to consider whether Type I, 'functional' titles should be classed grammatically as proper names at all. Might they not be purely appellative, as if to say

1 MacKenzie's gathering is called 'Tulloch Ard'

with exactly the same syntax as

2 MacKenzie's house is called 'Castle Leod'?

Or to put it more concisely, should 'gathering' have a capital G or not? A point which might be urged in favour of this extreme view is that in the Campbell canntaireachd manuscript nearly all the type I titles are in English, in contrast to the other types which are nearly all Gaelic.[20] But equally this could be explained on the basis that the writer was not confident in translating Gaelic to English, and the Type I titles would obviously be easier to handle. A safer conclusion to draw would be that Type I titles were generally regarded as relatively formal, so they would tend to be put into English

when writing, while the other names were commonly used in speech. (It has been aptly remarked that in modern times the high register of Gaelic is English).[21]

If we need reassurance that Type I names have genuine Gaelic roots we can find it in the fact that they do occasionally turn up in Gaelic in sources which are generally biased towards English, e.g. 'Cunah Mic Cui' (= *Cumha Mhic Aoidh*) in the MacArthur manuscript (A); and also in the handful of names which have the form of Type I but do not refer to aristocratic patrons, or even to human subjects at all (see below, Section 5.1). We can also refer to a significant number of songs which have *Cumha . . .* or *Fàilte . . .* names; though as noted above we need to beware of names which might have been attached by later editors. Best of all, though rare, are instances where Type I names are found embedded in a text:

> Bu bhinn do mheòir air a cliathaich
> 'Nuair a dh'iarrainn Cumha 'n Easbuig,
> Cumha Nì Mhic Raghnaill làmh ris,
> Cumha Màiri 's Cumha Ghill-easbuig.

'Your fingers were sweet on its [the harp's] side when I would ask for *Cumha 'n Easbuig, Cumha Nì Mhic Raghnaill* as well, *Cumha Màiri* and *Cumha Ghill-easbuig*'.[22, 23]

There are of course plenty of instances of genuinely different names being attached to the same tune, and some of these undoubtedly reflect traditions based on different clans or regions. A well known example is the 'Lament [for] Patrick More MacCrummen' (D0), published under that name by Donald MacDonald, who came from Skye, but called 'Couloddins Lament' (C2) by Colin Campbell, who lived in Argyll. There are also instances of names originating from different historical periods – 'The Battle of Maolroy' (D1), fought at Mulroy in 1688 (Gregory [1836] 1881: 415) being the same tune as 'Isabel Mackay' (K0), a name dateable to about 1745 (Grimble 1979: 31).

In some cases even the same piper would accept different names for the same tune. The famous tune now best known as 'MacIntosh's Lament' is recorded in early sources under what look like variants of the name *Cumha Mhic a h-Àrasaig* (one variant is 'O Hara's Lament'[24]). John MacCrimmon had a version which MacLeod of Gesto noted as 'Caugh Vic Righ Aro' (G). Gesto's comment is worth quoting in full (L. MacDonald, 1883):

> *Caugh Vic Righ Aro, alias* the son of King Aro. Who this son of King Aro was I could not understand from John Maccrimmon, further than that he considered the tune was played in consequence of the death of one of the first chiefs of Mackintosh, killed in battle (perhaps the battle of Largs) with King Alexander against Haco, when a brave chief of Mackintosh fell.

In other words John MacCrimmon knew the 'Aro' name but also accepted the MacIntosh connection. For all we know he might have called the tune *Cumha Mhic an Tòisich* or *Cumha Mhic a h-Àrasaig*, interchangeably according to context. But that seems to have been exceptional: in the majority of cases where names reflect distinct traditions, they have come from independent sources, like the previous examples. The

converse situation, of the same name being attached to more than one tune, is less common, and will not concern us here. In some cases at least it seems to have happened simply by mistake at the point where the tune came to be written down; in other cases it may be a result of the same song text being sung to more than one tune.

5. TYPE I: FUNCTIONAL NAMES

5.1 Cumha

This is the standard word for 'Lament.' It is not used in ordinary contexts in modern Scottish Gaelic (any more than 'Lament' is used in ordinary contexts in modern English) but it is well known from its use in titles, especially of pibrochs, but also of harp tunes and songs or poems. It is a strong, high and formal word, and in those parts of the Gaidhealtachd where it does remain in use it has still not lost its power. In Irish it can mean 'homesickness' and more generally it conveys the sense of irreparable loss. Recently a lady from the Aran Islands explained it thus 'If you lost fifty pounds, that would be *bròn;* if you lost your dearest relative, that would be *cumha'*.[25] A rare appearance of the word in a Scottish context other than a tune title is entirely consistent with this:

Cha b'è cumha mo leannain
Ged a dh'fhanadh è bhuam,
Ach a cumha mo bhràithrean
Tha cnàmh anns a' chuan,
Cumha Eachainn is Lachlainn
Dh'fhàg tana mo ghruag.

'It is not because of mourning for my lover, / though he were to stay away, / but lamenting for my brothers, / who are lying dead in the sea. / Grieving for Hector and Lachlan / has thinned my hair.'[26]

The high sense of *cumha* comes through also in the explanation of what is evidently a pipers' joke. 'Cumh na coshag', i.e. *Cumha na còiseag* is the name found in one source (DJ) for the tune otherwise known as 'Sir James MacDonald of the Isles' Salute'. The story of the tune is that Sir James was on a hunting excursion in North Uist when another member of the party, Colonel John MacLeod of Tallisker accidently shot him in the leg. He recovered, and their host, William MacDonald of Vallay, composed the tune for him, to celebrate.[27] (Celebration was doubly in order as the incident had almost sparked an ugly uprising among the local people who thought the shooting was deliberate). The official title may or may not have been *Fàilte Ridir Seumas nan Eilean* (Ko), but the name recorded by Donald MacDonald junior has a ring of authenticity, combining the high seriousness of *cumha* with the playful diminutive of *còiseag*.[28]

The word *cumha* is masculine, though the number of pipe tune names in which we can tell this is small. There is only one occurrence of the word followed by an adjective, in the name 'Cumhadh dubh Shomhairle' (Do) which Donald MacDonald

(1820) prints and translates as 'A doleful lament for . . . Samuel', and one instance of it preceded by the definite article 'An Cumha' which is the heading of a pipe tune (not a pibroch) printed by Angus MacKay in 1843.[29]

The mh is silent according to present-day speakers, and one indication of this in the old sources is an English name, 'Samuells Black dog' (C2), which looks like a misunderstanding of the Gaelic name just quoted, the author having heard *cumh'* as *cù*. On the other hand, MacAlpine's dictionary, first published in 1832, offers the pronunciation ku$^{v2'}$-a, the symbol $^{v2'}$ meaning that 'the v is only slightly sounded, the object of mh being chiefly to give the nasal twang to the preceding vowel'.[30] (There are other symbols, not shown here, to indicate that the u is short, the a is obscure, and the accent falls on the first syllable).

Orthodox modern Gaelic would have *cumha* with two syllables as standard, modified when the next word begins with a vowel, either by contraction to *cumh'* or by insertion of *dh-* to divide the syllables. A review of the spellings in our sources gives a different picture. The 'vernacular' writers generally reduce it to one syllable in various spellings, 'cumh', 'chumh' or 'chumbh', regardless of the following word (only in one case out of 12 does that word happen to begin with a vowel). Of the 'literary' writers, Donald MacDonald has the one-syllable 'cumh' for the first four occurrences in his book (D0), then 'cumhadh' for the last two, and 'cumhadh' again throughout his manuscript (D1) – except for 'chumhadh' and 'cumah', once each. Angus MacKay (K0, K1–K3, KK, KS) writes 'cumha' every time, that is, 89 occurrences, several of them before a vowel. It seems clear that in actual pronunciation the terminal a was always weak, if present at all, and the spellings *cumhadh* and *cumha* reflect book-learning rather than speech. It is not clear when if ever the final dh is meant to be pronounced, though we do have the strange spelling 'caugh' in one tune name (G), as quoted above.

In almost every instance the word following *cumha* is the name of a person, and as already noted, this name is in the genitive case. It is certainly so in Angus MacKay's spellings, and usually also in Donald MacDonald's. But to establish a point like this it is better to look at the earlier records where the writers tried to represent the sounds of the words and were probably not influenced by a formal knowledge of grammar. Here is a selection out of many instances where the initial consonant of the specific element of the name is lenited, or the vowel is slenderised, or the form of the article is that of the genitive case:

Cumh' Mhic-o-Arrisaig (F)	*Cumha Mhic a h-Àrasaig*
Chumh Mhic Caoie (C1)	*Cumha Mhic Aoidh*
Cumh Alister Yeerich (DJ)	*Cumh' Alasdair Dheirg*
Cumhadh 'n aon Mhic (D1)	*Cumh' an aona mhic*[31]
Cumhadh na Cloinnidh (D1)	*Cumha na cloinne*
Cumh na h-ithinn (JK)	*Cumha na h-inghinn*
Cumha na Mbrathar[32]	*Cumha nam bràthair*

Among other points of grammar, we note that when the following name is feminine it is not always lenited, thus 'Chumbh craoibh na Teidbh' (C1) or 'Cumha Ban-righ Anne' (K1). According to the grammar books this is a rule, i.e. feminine names do not change their initial consonants in the genitive;[33] but in practice this rule is not always observed today, and it seems not to have been observed in those days either. Even the careful Angus MacKay gives *Cumha Chaitrine* (K1); and he gives *Cumha Ban-tighearna Anapuil* in one place (K1), but *Cumha Bhan Thighearna Mhic Dhòmhnuill* in another (K0, also *Bhan-tighearna* in K0 index).

Another twist in the rule of the genitive affects the pronunciation of *Fear* in a laird's title. The form 'Cumha Fear Chountullich' as given by Angus MacKay (K2), is considered correct, at least by some present-day speakers, though Peter Reid has 'Fir' in 'Cumh Fir Ceanloch nan Eala' (R). The use of *fear* rather than *fir* is a matter of formal, high-register diction in contrast to common speech.[34] It is perhaps not stretching the point too far to note that it is Angus MacKay who uses it, and he might have thought it the more appropriate choice in writing.

One reason for emphasising these details (which can seem perfectly obvious to a native speaker) is that there is a real difficulty when it comes to translating some of these names into English. In practice, the old writers almost invariably render the Gaelic genitive into the English possessive, at least when a person is involved, thus 'Lochnell's Lament' (R), 'The Bard's Lament' (A), 'Lord Kentail's Lament' (JK). No distinction is made between the person who is the subject of the lament and the person who is doing the lamenting. The only cases where we can be sure what is meant are those where there is an explanatory tradition, or at least a more explicit English translation of the title, recorded in the same source, as in 'Lament for Patrick òg MacCrimmon' (K0), ascribed to a known composer, Iain Dall MacKay,[35] or 'Lament for an only Son'(L3), rather than 'The Lament of (= made by) the Only Son'. (In the latter case there is some other evidence of a tradition, for we have a variant name 'Lost the Only Son' (C1) which sounds like an imperfect translation of the opening words of a song[36]). There is a more modern pibroch name in which the distinction is explicit, but only in English – 'His Father's Lament for Donald MacKenzie.' The tune was made by John Bàn MacKenzie, for his son who died in 1863, and was first written down by his nephew in 1866.[37] John Bàn was certainly a Gaelic speaker, but we have no record of what name he himself gave to the tune, nor do we have a version of the existing name in Gaelic.[38, 39]

This ambiguity of reference can puzzle a native speaker as much as it puzzles anyone else. The poem quoted above (p. 31) is a case in point.[22] Sorley MacLean noted the difficulty in the course of his attempt to date the poem from one of the tune titles mentioned in it: 'is 'Cumha Nì Mhic Raghnall' a lament by or for some daughter of a chief of Keppoch?'[40] It seems possible that we still have this tune, under the name of *Cumha na Peathair,* 'The Sister's Lament', for Donald MacDonald gives its story in an extended headline to the piece in his published book ([1820]: 53):

> Allister Macdhonnil, Ghlaish, a chief of the Macdonalds of Keppoch, was cruelly murdered in his own house with his brother, a youth of 16[,] at the instigation of the next in succession. Their natural sister, frantic with grief, expired at their side, swallowing their blood. The air was composed on this melancholy event.

It is true that Donald MacDonald's last sentence favours a lament *for* rather than *by* the sister but if there had once been a text which purported to be her dying words that could swing the balance in favour of 'by'.

The grammar of nominative + genitive is the same in the few examples of laments attached to places or inanimate objects. The English titles are in various forms, some possibly representing traditions which would have explained the names, but the specific elements in the Gaelic titles are still in the genitive. Here are a few examples, listed first in the original spellings, then in modern versions:

Cumh Chlaibh (D0)	*Cumha chlaidheimh*
Cumha Casteal Dhunaomhaig (K1)	*Cumha Chaisteal Dhùn-Naomhaig*
Cumadh Chraobh na'n' Cheud (DJ)	*Cumha craobh nan teud*
Cumh na Coshag (DJ)	*Cumha na còiseag*
Cumha na Suipeirach Big (K2)	*Cumha na suipearach bige*
Cumha na Cuideachd (K1)	*Cumha na cuideachd*

5.2 Fàilte

This is the other common 'function' word in pibroch names. In everyday Gaelic it means 'welcome' and we find it with that meaning in song texts – 'Failte dhuit a Dhuntreoin' = *Fàilte dhuit a Dhùntreòin* '[You are] welcome, Duntroon',[41] *Thàinig Eòbhan . . . Fàilt' air Eòbhan,*[42] 'Ewen has come, Welcome Ewen' – see also the story about a Welcome for Keppoch, above; but in translations of tune names it is invariably 'Salute'. Like *Cumha* it also occurs in some of the older names of harp tunes, such as *Fàilte Mhic Coinnich,* 'Seaforth's Salutation' (DOW). Like *Cumha* it almost always stands unqualified at the beginning of the name, though we do have an occasional adjective – *Fàilte bheag Mhic Leòid,* 'MacLeod's less [= shorter] Salutation' (another harp tune from Daniel Dow). And finally, as the following examples show, *Fàilte,* like *Cumha*, is attached to a noun, usually a personal name, in the genitive case:

Failt' a Phriunse (ER)	*Fàilt' a' Phrionnsa*
Failt Dherse Oig (H)	*Fàilte Dheorsa òig*
Failte mhic-Gilleóin (F)	*Fàilte Mhic Ghill' Eathain*
Failte Bhodaich (D1)	*Fàilte Bhodaich*
Fhailt na Misk (C2)	*Fàilte na misge* [43]

Again we have the failure to distinguish between a salute made by someone, and a salute dedicated to someone. We can assume that most if not all the actual names on record are

actually the second case. In present-day Gaelic there would be nothing wrong with an expression like *Fàilte dhan a' Phrionnsa*, meaning 'A Salute to the Prince' or 'Welcome to the Prince', but the tune name is always *Fàilte a' Phrionnsa*, in various spellings.

5.3 Cruinneachadh

This is now the standard word for 'Gathering', but although clan 'gatherings' were reputed to be a very important part of the piobaireachd repertoire, there are not many actual tune names containing the word *cruinneachadh,* and its authenticity is not clear.

We should note first that the military usage of the English-language word 'gathering' itself seems to be more Scottish than English. According to H. G. Farmer, it was used in 17th- and early 18th-century Scottish military writings to denote a drum beating which in southern English parlance would normally have been 'The Assembly' (Farmer, 1950). A quotation which supports this is from T. Urquhart in 1653: 'Immediately the soldiers had done with eating and drinking . . . a gathering should be beaten for bringing them together.'[44] The earliest writer on piobaireachd, Joseph MacDonald, used the word freely, and he made it clear that to him it was a generic term both in terms of function and musical content (Cannon, 1994: 75):

> The Gatherings . . . consist chiefly of Allegros diversified with very curious Cuttings, & Different Time also. They are the most animating of Pipe Compositions, as they were originally intended to assemble the Highlanders under their respective Chiefs upon any emergency . . . Evry Chief had a Gathering for his Name . . . The MacLeans & MacDonalds Gatherings are good Examples . . .

Joseph's remarks are largely borne out by the later records which contain a large number of 'Gatherings' named in the way he indicates, and many of them, though by no means all, feature the repeated low-hand notes now known as triplings. The problem is to know what was Joseph's Gaelic word for them. In a short glossary he lists just five expressions which are apparently genre terms: 'Cuairst', 'Slighe', 'Poirst Tinail', 'Cumhe' and 'Failte' (Cannon 1994: 81). Only the last two are still in use. An anonymous editor in 1803 glossed 'slighe' as 'a march' and 'poirst tinail' as 'a gathering for the Highland clans', and for 'cuairst' attempted a definition which is obscure and may have been mutilated by the printer (Cannon, 1994: 99, 108). All that is clear is that *cuairt* had something to do with playing a group of tunes in a sequence without a break. But it does seem clear that 'poirst tinail', i.e. *port tionail*, is a 'gathering tune' in Joseph's sense. Does this mean that the names of the tunes mentioned by Joseph would have been *Port tionail Mhic Gilleathain* and *Port tionail Mhic Dhòmhnaill?*

On the basis of modern usage it could be argued that *port tionail* is preferable to *cruinneachadh.* For some speakers at least, the word *tional* has the stronger transitive sense of gathering in the sense of calling or bringing together units which are scattered, whereas *cruinneachadh* tends to be used of an assembly of people who have already come together of their own volition, or a collection of inanimate objects.

The facts remain, that no tune name containing *tionail* has come down to us from any source; that none of our 'vernacular' sources uses any Gaelic generic term for 'gathering', and that when *cruinneachadh* first appears in a piping context it is used by a non-Gaelic writer who quite possibly gets it wrong. This is Ramsay of Ochtertyre who contributed the introductory dissertation to Patrick MacDonald's collection of 1784. There in two pages he used the word four times, in ways that strongly suggest that he did not distinguish it clearly from *pìobaireachd* – e.g. 'a *pibrach,* or *cruineachadh* . . . still rouzes the native Highlander'.[45]

Turning back to the tune names in the piping literature, prior to Angus MacKay we have just four examples of *cruinneachadh*, two noted by Donald MacDonald, two by Peter Reid.

Cruimeachadh Chlaun Raonuill (D0)	D. MacDonald, 1820
Cruimeachadh Mich Chille [sic] Chaluim (R)	P. Reid MS, 1826
Cruimeachadh Chlan Nab (R)	P. Reid MS, 1826
Cruineachadh Chlann a Lain (D1)	D. MacDonald MS, 1826

It is also odd that in his published book, MacDonald spelled the word with a letter m, but in his later, unpublished manuscript, changed over to the letter n. The fact that Peter Reid also has the letter m is less significant, as Reid evidently knew MacDonald's book, and his music writing practices are also heavily indebted to MacDonald. But Donald MacDonald's initial effort looks very much like a mistake, which would imply that he himself had not been brought up to use the word.

In Angus MacKay's works the spelling is always *cruinneachadh,* with two n's as in the usual dictionary spellings. He has seven names, all with 'clan' or similar plural references:

Cruinneachadh na'n Grandach (K0)
Cruinneachadh Chlann Choinnich (K0)
Cruinneachadh Chlann Domhnuill (K1)
Cruinneachadh na Suthearlanach (K2)
Cruinneachadh na' Fineachan (K3)
Cruinneachadh Chlann Raonuill (K1)
Cruinneachadh Chlann a Leain (K3)

The quotations from Ramasay of Ochtertyre do suggest that *cruinneachadh* had some traditional basis,[46] and of course it is possible that there was a regional dfference, with *port tionail* as the usual word in the North and *cruinneachadh* in some other area.[46A] But ever since the time of Walter Scott the concept of the 'clan gathering' has been a highly charged and romantic one, epitomised in Scott's poem 'The MacGregor's Gathering', first published in 1818 (Alex. Campbell, 1816–18, ii: 91–97). It is also clear that Angus MacKay was constrained to find and publish pipe music for as many clans as possible.

These are two more reasons for wondering how many of his 'cruinneachadh' names are authentic.

5.4 Rowing Tunes

This example is a negative one. There are traditions of tunes being played at sea, particularly in a galley, *birlinn,* to keep the rowers in time, and several tune names seem to reflect this. But we do not know of any generic term for a 'rowing tune', corresponding to *iorram* for a rowing song. The nearest we can come is one example, 'Porst Iomramh Mhic Leod' recorded by Donald MacDonald with English title 'MacLeod of MacLeod's Rowing Piobaireachd' (D1). Did other maritime chiefs have particular rowing tunes alongside their salutes and gatherings? If we had even one other *port iomraimh* we would be justified in calling it a generic or functional term, but for the present we must leave it there.

We do have 'Bior-linn Tighearna Cholla, The Laird of Coll's Barge' (K1), and 'Vuirlin Corrich Chaoil' (C2) which is presumably a rendering of *Bìrlinn Choirechoille* or some similar name. In the same source 'Tharrin Mach bhat Mhic Cload' (C2) is presumably *A' tarruing a-mach bhàta Mhic Leòid,* 'the landing (literally, pulling out) of MacLeod's boat', and 'Porst na Lurkin' (C1) has been read as *Port na Lurgainn,* and called 'The Boat Tune' (MacIver, 1966). There is also a tune actually named 'The Boat Tune', *Port a' Bhàsta* (K1). Names like *Togail o Thìr,* 'Weighing from Land' (K3), and *Fàgail Ceann-tìre,* 'Leaving Kintyre' (K3) might also signify rowing tunes, but as regards their verbal forms, all these names belong more easily in our other categories.

5.5 Words meaning 'March'

The term 'march' has been a source of much confusion in connection with piobaireachd. First, as is now recognised, we must avoid thinking in terms of soldiers marching in step on a parade ground: that was not the way soldiers marched even in regular armies before the mid-eighteenth century (Murray 1994: 11) and it certainly has no place in Highland armies or clan battles. The earlier meaning of the word in English was certainly movement of troops, but it would be movement over whatever terrain was necessary, at whatever speed could be maintained. But piobaireachd was 'martial music', and presumably included music to play while a march was in progress. In fact 'march' was Joseph MacDonald's standard English word for 'pibroch', and a number of tunes were listed in the earlier records as 'marches' but tended to be redesignated later on as salutes, laments or gatherings.

There is a Gaelic word *màrsadh* or *màrsail* but it is not common in pibroch names:

Marshall Mhic Allain	(L3)
Marsah na shisalach	(C1)

Mairsall Na Grantich	(C2)
Mairsail Alastair Charich	(D1)
Marsal na Suherlanach	(D1)

The word seems a fairly obvious borrowing from English (the letter pair rs denotes a distinct phoneme with a sound like /rʃ/ which very often stands in for English /rt/, /rtʃ/ or /rʤ/)[47] and to it we can add other examples, also from vernacular sources, where the English word is imported without change into the Gaelic name: 'March Chlan Lean', i.e. 'The MacLeans' March' (SC) and 'March i Dubh Lord Bradalban' (DJ). Angus MacKay also noted (K3) the form 'March a Mhorar Breadalban', which was given to him by one of his informants, the blind piper Ronald MacDougall. It seems clear that 'march' whether Gaelicised or not, was a fairly recent borrowing from English.

The word *siubhal* is found in two early lists of tunes i.e. 'Siubhal Mhic Allain' (L4), translated in the same document as 'Clanranald's March', and 'Siubhal clann Choinnich' (L6). It is common enough in other contexts, with the sense of travel or movement, and it seems to have this rather than any technical sense in *A' siubhail nan Garbhlaich,* 'Crossing the rough hills', the name of a pipe jig,[48] and 'Suihel Shemes' (D0), i.e. *Siubhal Sheumais*, the 'Lament for the Departure of King James'. It does of course have the technical meaning of a variation in music, but it is not found in any other traditional tune names and it seems to have been avoided by later editors.

The word which Angus MacKay regularly used for 'march' was *spaidsearachd* but there is reason to question its authenticity in all but a few cases. The one that holds up best is *Spaidsearachd Dhòmhnuill Ghruamaich.* This is in the 'Specimens of Canntaireachd' in the spelling 'Spatcharach dolgruamach' as well as in three other sources in more orthodox spellings (H, D0, K1).[49] The other occurrences of the word amount to five names, but each is recorded once only, and all are in the works of Angus MacKay, with corresponding English titles using the word 'march'. It looks as though he is translating from English to Gaelic rather than Gaelic to English. This is not to say that he was personally responsible for giving the word its wider currency. Iain MacInnes noted[50] that already by the 1820s *spaidsearachd* was displacing other words like *màrsail* and *pìobaireachd*. There is also a very interesting tradition of *spaidsearachd* being used in a place name. According to Henry White, the MacDougalls, pipers to MacDougall of Dunollie, had a school for pipers at Kilbride, and 'a flat strip of green sward behind it is called *Iomaire na Spaidsearachd* – the Marching Furrow' ('Fionn', 1904: 140).

One early record seems to confuse *spaidsearachd* with the rarer word *spaidearachd.* The latter features in the title of a song, aptly translated 'The Barra Boastfulness'[51] and in two pibroch sources as 'Spaddarich Bharach' (C1) and 'Spadaireachd Bharra. The Pride of Barra' (KK). The error is in the MacArthur manuscript (A) which has 'Spaidsearachd Bharroch, or the pride of Barroch.' The case for *spaidearachd* as a separate word has been set out by Frans Buisman.[52]

Another rare word to add in here is *faicheachd* in *Faicheachd Chlann Dòmhnuill,*

'The Parading of the MacDonalds' (K2). It is related to the noun *faiche*, meaning a field, especially a flat field such as a meadow, and hence a parade ground; but it is only known in this one name.

5.6 Words meaning 'Battle'

We have about a dozen different tunes named 'The Battle of X.' The English word 'battle' itself occurs in 'Batail an t-Sraim' = *Batail an t-Sròim,* (K1, now called 'The Battle of Strome'), but the usual Gaelic word is *blàr,* and indeed we have what is probably the name of the same tune noted as 'Blar Strom' (L6). The *blàr* names mostly come from the book and manuscripts of Angus MacKay, but two are recorded before him: 'Blar Bhatarnis. The Battle of Waternish' (R, 1826), and 'Blare Vuster' which is taken to mean 'The Battle of Worcester' (C2, 1797).

It is worth asking how and when a particular battle came to be enshrined in folk memory as 'The Battle of X'. In modern times, it seems to happen as a result of military propaganda working through journalism or other mass media. The soldiers who suffered in The Battle of the Somme, surely did not care to think of it in such poetic terms, but later on the survivors may have been ready enough to accept the label. In earlier days, perhaps the 'Battle' names came into circulation from songs composed after the event. We have at least one tradition that confirms that a *Blàr* name was once in common use. One of the MacRae chiefs, who took part in the Battle of Park, in 1485, was remembered by the epithet *Coinneach a' Bhlàir,* 'Kenneth of the Battle' and the singular form suggests that the battle was indeed known as *Blàr na Pàirc,* perhaps even just *Am Blàr* to the local people, since it was claimed, as late as 1904, that the site of the battle, near Kinellan, Strathpeffer, was 'still pointed out.'[53]

Another word often associated with battles is *là* or *latha,* 'day'. Although it does not occur in musical sources, literary and historical commentators seem to like it. The name 'Drum Thalasgair' may actually be a contraction of *Là Dhruim Thalasgair* or *Là Blàr Dhruim Thalasgair,* 'The day of (the battle of) Druim Thalasgair' ('Fionn' 1904: 107). Also there are songs and poems containing another word for 'day' in the same sense, as in *Chaidh an diugh òirnne,* 'The day went against us' ('Abrach' 1875: 18). and the same usage was once normal in English, if only in poetry.

The word *cath* for 'battle' is rare and it always has an antique or poetic feel. We have tunes commemorating two old heroes, *Eòghann Càthach,* 'Ewen of the Battles' (K2, though *càthach* is actually an adjective 'warlike' or 'military'), and *Eachann Ruadh nan Cath,* 'Red Hector of the Battles', otherwise Hector Roy MacLean (K2).[54] But it occurs twice only in the nominative position, in 'Cath na'n Eun na An Càth Gailbheach. The Birds['] Flight or The Desperate Battle', two names for the same tune in the same source (K2).[55, 56] The first name may refer to an old folktale, the second to a relatively early historical event. The tune probably has a long history behind it, as it is melodically connectable to a previous piece, 'The Battle of Harlaw'.[57]

Another Gaelic term, not common but well attested, is *ruaig,* translated 'rout': *Ruaig Ghlinne Freòin* (variously spelled) is in four sources (C1, H, D0, K2); 'Ruaig Ben Doeg' (R) and 'Ruaig air Chlann a Phie' (K3) in one each. In one case the term is applied to an individual, as 'Ruaig air Caiptean nan Gall, The Retreat of the Lowland Captain' (K2) – but this sounds like a relatively recent coinage. (The word is regularly followed by the preposition *air* when applied to persons, but not to places.) No doubt all these names were coined by the winners rather than the losers of the respective conflicts!

6. ENGLISH AND GAELIC

The thinly Gaelicised words *batail* and *màrsail* have already been discussed. This is perhaps the place to mention other names which contain mixtures of English and Gaelic.

One source contains a 'Failt Mr Martin' (SC), and two have 'Failte Lady Margaret' (SC, DJ). Although 'Mr Martin' has not been identified there was a family of that name in Skye, one of whom was the factor of the MacLeod estate who wrote the well known 'Description of the Western Isles' at the end of the seventeenth century.[58] 'Lady Margaret' is Lady Margaret MacDonald (Haddow 1982: 139), the wife of Sir Alexander MacDonald of Sleat, whom she married in 1739.[59] She was a daughter of the ninth Earl of Eglinton. It seems more than likely that these two individuals were known even to the Gaelic speakers in their neighbourhood by their English titles. Mixing of English into Gaelic has been a common practice at least for the last three centuries, and these examples are surely authentic. But we can understand that the publishers of piobaireachd collections, patronised by the nobility and gentry, in the era of Celtic romanticism, would avoid these mixings. Sure enough, Angus MacKay changes 'Failte Lady Margaret' into 'Failte Bàn-tighearna Mhic Dhomhnuill. Lady Margaret Mac Donald's Salute' (K3).

7. TYPE II: TECHNICAL NAMES

Although not numerous, and not always easy to interpret, these are of particular interest since they offer a glimpse into the working methods of the old composers. Grammatically they mostly follow the pattern of Type I, i.e. two nouns, the second in the genitive case.

7.1 Pìobaireachd

This word, although well known, still presents problems. A common view among modern Gaelic speakers is that it means simply 'piping', and this is certainly true as far is it goes. In present day usage among English-speaking pipers however it is a genre term meaning a piece of music of the kind we are dealing with here, just as another piece of music might be a march, a jig or a reel. Since pipers usually also insist on spelling the word in the Gaelic way (though not with the length-mark), this has the effect of creating a plural form in the English way, 'piobaireachds'; bizarre in writing but not a

problem in speech. In standard English dictionaries it is 'pibroch', a form dating back to the early eighteenth century,[60] and first attested in works of Scottish writers. Few pipers who are not native Gaelic speakers make any difference in pronouncing these two forms.

By the time the pibrochs themselves came to be written down, this word, however spelled, was being used by pipers, at least when writing in English. Colin Campbell used the expression 'one of the Irish piobarich' (C1); John MacGregor wrote the heading 'Peobaireachd' over many of the tunes in the MacArthur manuscript (A); Peter Reid has 'The Earl of Ross's Pibrach' (R) and Donald MacDonald (D1) has 'MacLeod's Rowing Pibrach' (also spelled 'piobaireachd'). Angus MacKay uses the word in this sense too many times to mention.

None of this is surprising. Obviously a word is needed; and it is normal for words to change their range of meaning when they cross from one language to another. The problem is to know what was the corresponding word in Gaelic.

Contrary to what has been thought, the word *pìobaireachd* does seem to exist as a generic in the Gaelic names of some tunes. And contrary to what we might expect, it is not a neologism introduced by Angus MacKay. There are no fewer than seven names beginning with this word. They are not documented as far back as the earliest English/Scottish literary usages, but two are recorded in the 1780s, and they all predate MacKay. In one case the word is followed by an adjective, thus 'Piobrachd Ereanach', glossed as 'An Irish Pibrach' (L4). In the others it is followed by a noun or a noun phrase, and several of the spellings indicate that, just as with *cumha, fàilte,* etc, the following noun is in the genitive case. Two of these following nouns are personal names, Donald Dubh (several occurrences) and the Earl of Ross (R); one is a clan name, Clan Ranald (DOW); one is an object, the White Banner of MacKay (R); and three are place names, the Park (C1, K1), Dunyveg (SC, K0), and *aon Cnochan* (C1). The two involving personal names could, at a stretch, be translated as 'The piping of Black Donald' and 'The piping of the Earl of Ross', but it cannot be suggested that either of these individuals was actually doing the piping. At the very least we have to admit that *pìobaireachd* in these names is a true noun meaning 'a piece of pipe music' and we might reasonably go further and propose it for admission to the dictionaries as a genre term thus: *pìobaireachd,* noun (fem.), 'a pibroch'.

7.2 Port

This is a well known term for a piece of music, and specifically instrumental music. It is recorded in the titles of sixteenth and seventeenth century harp pieces, all of which are distinctively instrumental and non-vocal in character (Sanger and Kinneard 1992: ch. 14). It is not universal in present-day Gaelic[61] except for the term *port-à-beul*, and significantly this means a vocal performance in which the tune is paramount, since traditionally it was a way of providing music for dancing when no instrument was

available. There are at least thirteen pibroch titles beginning with *port*, most if not all followed by a noun in the genitive, so the natural translations are 'Mary's Tune' (C1), 'The Tune of Strife' (K1, KS), 'The Boat Tune' (K1) etc. In some cases the English translation simply omits the word 'tune', and this too seems natural, as for example Port a' Mheadair, 'The Bicker' (K1). For one tune Angus MacKay has two alternative titles, *Port nan Dòirneag*, and *Blàr nan Dòirneag* (K1). We can suspect that there once a good deal of flexibility, and that other tunes named after places or events could have been called *Port* . . . , interchangeably with *Blàr* . . . , *Pìobaireachd* . . . , etc.

Finally among *port* names we highlight those which seem to point to features of the music itself. We have *Am port leathach,* 'The Half-finished Piobaireachd' (K0), also recorded as 'leacran' (C2). We have *Port na lùdain* (JK), otherwise *Port na lùdaig* (DJ, K3, KS), 'The Little Finger Tune' (K3, KS). It is not quite clear why the tune is so named, though it does feature movements of the little finger, and also the note low G which is made by closing the lowest hole of the chanter with the little finger. The name 'Port a Chrun-luath' (K2) is easily translated 'the Crunluath tune' though again it is not obvious why this tune and no other should be so called.

The most intriguing names in this group are two which appear to feature the word *ùrlar,* which is the usual Gaelic term for the opening theme of the pibroch. It is normally translated into English as 'ground', and has been so at least since 1760 when it appeared in Joseph MacDonald's *Compleat Theory*.[62] This does not agree with standard musical usage since in the classical European tradition a 'ground' means a bass part which is repeated throughout a piece, while various airs or variations are played over it. Bagpipe music of course does not have a bass in this sense, but there is a sense in which a pibroch has a true ground, in that there is an underlying sequence of notes on which all the parts are founded, even though those notes may be implied rather than played explicitly. But the two names referred to here – both from the Campbell manuscript – rather recall earlier English use of the word 'ground'. They are 'Porst Ullare' (C1) and 'Porst Ullar mhic Eachin' (C1). In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a piece of music founded on a ground bass could itself be titled a 'ground'. There are nameless pieces called simply 'A ground' (one in a Scottish manuscript)[63] or 'The Irish Ground',[64] and others named after composers such as 'Farinelli's Ground', 'Mr. Reddin's Ground'.[65] Our two pibroch names might therefore be translated as 'A Ground' and 'MacKechnie's Ground'. If this is true it reminds us that piobaireachd has its connections with a wider world of music – a thesis for which there is other evidence, and which deserves to be explored elsewhere.

7.3 Gleus and Glas

The verb gleus has general meanings of 'prepare' or 'put into trim', and in music, to tune an instrument. *Deuchainn-ghleusda* or *Deuchainn-ghleusadh* is on record as a piping term, i.e. a tuning prelude, attested by Joseph MacDonald in 1760 (Cannon 1994: 59, 96) and repeated or copied by subsequent writers (D0, K0). We have it as the generic part of a tune name in *Deuchainn-ghleusda Mhic O Charmaig*, the title of a harp piece

referred to in a poem by Donald MacVurich.[66] The same, or a similar expression has an earlier history in Irish, as a scribe's term for a pen-trial (Donnelly 1984, 1989). *Gleus*, in any grammatical form, has dropped out of piping literature and tradition, but it seems that a memory of it survives in a most interesting observation made by Bridget MacKenzie in her recent book, *Piping Traditions of the North of Scotland* (1998: 261). She quotes Mr Eric Murray, of Rogart, on the compositions of Donald Sutherland, a pibroch player of the late-nineteenth/early twentieth century, who used to make what he called 'wee' or 'light' piobaireachd:

> He [Mr Murray] calls such a work by the term 'aglase': this word seems to be derived from Gaelic, probably the Gaelic *a'ghleus*, meaning an exercise, often in the sense of a musical exercise. The term 'aglase' was often used of the finger movement which was characteristic of the work . . .

In pronunciation the 'a' was obscure and the stress was on the second syllable; in other words the expression rhymed with the English 'a place'.[67] It would be even more fascinating to know what finger movement was referred to, but Mr Murray himself is not a piper, and all we have is, to complete this quotation from Bridget MacKenzie:

> he describes this as 'Doublings backwards'. It was peculiar to this type of work, and not played in any other. People used to compose these wee piobaireachds, which were not as wild or heavy as the 'full' piobaireachd. They seem to be a form of composition which has been lost to us today.

Three tunes in the Campbell Canntaireachd are titled 'A Glase' (C1), 'A Glas' (C2), 'A Glass' (C2). They have been read as *A' ghlas* and translated as 'a Lock'[68] – though of course it should read '*The* Lock' if the Gaelic 'A' is taken into account. But the first spelling suggests again a connection with *gleus.* On this basis we would take the first title as having been written in English, with 'A' as the indefinite article, and the full expression, again, rhyming with 'a place'. It would imply that the writer realised that 'glase' was a generic musical term, without necessarily implying that he knew what it meant. But it does not explain the other two spellings, which rather support the suggested translation 'lock'.

That suggestion was undoubtedly based on the present day understanding of another tune name, one of the most frequently recorded in our sources:

1778	L1	Glaisvair	
1784	PD	A' ghlas mheur	A bagpipe lament
1784	L3	Glasmhear	A Principal piece
1785	L4	Glais-mheur	A favorite piece
c.1800	C2	Glass Mhoier	
>1811	H	'Ghlas Mheur	Lock on fingers
1820	D0	A Ghlass Mheur	The Finger Lock

1840	K1	A Ghlas Mhiar	The Finger Lock
<1853	SC	Glas Mhir	

It has been pointed out (MacInnes 1988: 232) that the earliest writers seem to have been unable to suggest any English translation. Perhaps the name was obscure even to pipers themselves. It has also been argued (ibid.) that the 'lock' names were put into circulation by Donald MacDonald following the publication of his book (D0) in 1820, though it must also be noted that there are piping folktales which explain the word in terms of a piper under an enchantment who could could only play when the 'lock' was taken from his fingers (Haddow 1982: 81). We cannot discard these traditions insofar as they provide evidence that the identification *glas* = 'lock' was understood at least by some pipers. It is tempting though to suggest that for others the word was in fact *gleus*. This is supported by two of the four pre–1800 spellings which have it as 'glais'. Could it be that behind this name there lies an expression which at one time meant nothing more than 'the finger exercise'?

7.4 Cor

This word is obscure and doubtful. It appears as a genre term in connection with harp music in Scottish, Irish and Welsh sources.[69] We have one tune name in the Campbell canntaireachd that might contain it, 'Cor beg mhic Leain'.[70]

7.5 Caismeachd

This word is found in three names, all from Angus MacKay, who translates it 'warning' in each case:

Caismeachd Eachainn Mhic Ailean na Sop	(K0)
Caismeachd a Phiobaire da Mhaighsteir	(K0)
Caismeachd da Dhuntron	(K1)

I suggest that the first of these is largely genuine, the second spurious, the third dubious at best. *Caismeachd Ailean nan Sop* is a poem whose text dates back to 1537, but the title may be no older than the earliest written text, which is of the eighteenth century. Although we are used to deriving pibroch names from songs, in this case Colm Ó Baoill (1996, 1998) makes the opposite suggestion, that the title involving the word *caismeachd* was applied to the song on the basis of the title of the pibroch.[71] It does at least seem that Angus MacKay had a Gaelic source, as his English at this point is stilted, and even his punctuation is out of control – 'Hector MacLean (the son of Alan na Sop)'s Warning'.

In contrast, the second name in the list sounds like a translation from English into Gaelic. The tune is firmly linked to a song, *A Cholla mo Rùin*, the text of which conveys a story about a piper warning his master against falling into a trap. Significantly,

Angus gives it two Gaelic titles, and the full heading in his book reads 'Caismeachd a Phiobaire da Mhaighsteir na Piobaireachd Dhunnaomhaig. The Piper's Warning to his Master or Piobaireachd of Dunyveg. About the year 1647 (K0).' It is hard to imagine pipers habitually using a name which refers to one of themselves in the third person, and with a word like 'master'. It is easier to believe that Angus was following the English part of the title written in Peter Reid's manuscript, 'Colla mo' Run. The pipers warning to his master' (R), and that the common names were *Pìobaireachd Dhùn Naomhaig* and *A Cholla mo Rùin*, the second of which is confirmed in other sources (D1, DJ). As for the third name in the list, the tune is another one that has much the same story attached to it.[71] It is one of several tunes that Angus learned from Ronald MacDougall, the blind piper of Dunollie, and not from his father, and there is room for some uncertainty as to what exactly his informant called it. Angus wrote 'Caismeachd da Dhuntro[n.] Duntron's Warning' as a heading to the tune, but 'Caismeachd Dhuntroìn' and 'Duntroon's Warning' in the indexes of the MS. In the first of these four the last letter is unclear but there is no doubt about the word 'da', so the title is not in the standard form of nominative + genitive. Presumably it means 'A warning to Duntroon'. It is equally clear that the Gaelic title in the index is meant to be in the standard form, even though modern usage would put the length-mark on the letter o and write *Caismeachd Dhùntreòin*. It is at least possible that Angus MacKay was told what the tune was about, but never heard it given a proper name as such.

It would not be worth spending so much time on this uncommon word were it not for the fact that it turns up regularly in Gaelic literature with a musical sense. Among the songs of Mary MacLeod we find *Sàr mhac Mhic Leoid . . . bu bhinn caismeachd sgeoil* translated as 'MacLeod's excellent son . . . who was a melodious theme of story'.[72] Admittedly this is a figurative use, but Duncan Bàn MacIntyre is more explicit:

> Pìob is bratach ri crann
> 'S i caisimeachd ard mo rùin

'Pipe with flag on staff, playing the loud march which is dear to me'.[73] Presumably it is on the strength of quotations like these that the word *caismeachd* is glossed in dictionaries as, for example, 'the quick part of a tune on the bag-pipes; an alarm to battle; a war song.'[74] Later the word seems to have acquired the meaning 'pipe tune', or specifically 'march' in the modern sense, if only among non-pipers,[75] and the Victorian song 'The March of the Cameron Men' was Gaelicised as 'Caismeachd Chloinn Chamrain' in 1912.[76] The latter has been condemned as 'rank bad Gaelic' (A. MacLeod, 1955), but this did not stop the Piobaireachd Society from adding yet another instance in 1980, 'Caismeachd nam Frisealach, The Frasers' March' (PS 13: 418).

7.6 Aon-tlachd

This word can be written off as spurious, or perhaps we should just say, relatively modern. Angus MacKay used it in Aon-tlachd Mhic Neill, 'Lachlan Mac Niell Campbell Esqr.

of Kintarbert & Saddle's Fancy' (K1) but there is strong evidence that originally he had no name for the tune.[77] The name is in line with a large number of fiddle and pipe tunes called in English 'X's favourite', and indeed Angus MacKay uses that phrase himself, abbreviated, in the index to his manuscript 'Lachlan Mac Niel Campbell Esqr's Fav.'

Another name which has caused puzzlement might be mentioned here: in the Campbell MS is the name 'Fannet' (C2) which has never been satisfactorily translated. Archibald Campbell suggested ([1948] 1953: [2]) that it might be equated with the Gaelic *fanaid,* which means 'mockery' or 'scorn'. Besides the obvious meaning just mentioned, the word 'Fancy' had an earlier history as a musical term, the English equivalent to the Italian Fantasia, meaning simply a piece of instrumental music in relatively free form. (A known Scottish example dates from c. 1600).[78] Could *fanaid* have been influenced by 'fancy' in this musical sense? Unfortunately there does not seem to be much chance of verifying this one way or the other.

8. CONCLUSIONS

Our review of the data has suggested that pibroch names fall, fairly neatly, into four classes, and it may be suggested further that these go into two broad categories: on the one hand functional titles (our Type I) together with titles (Type II) based on generic words like 'march' or 'gathering'; and on the other hand names which refer in some way to history or local tradition, embracing our Types III and IV. This article has of course been concerned mainly with names of the first category. It has also emerged that the same tune can bear names of more than one type, simultaneously and without inconsistency.

It is now necessary to point out however that this multiple naming is not by any means spread evenly over the various functional types. It is far more characteristic of the 'gathering' and 'march' names than of the laments and salutes. In fact, in Table 3, the first two items were almost the only examples of 'salute' and 'lament' names that could be found, whereas the list of marches and gatherings could easily have been extended.

The unevenness of this distribution is underlined by some other points which were mentioned above: the diversity of titles for gathering/march/battle tunes; the doubt about the authenticity of *cruinneachadh;* and the fact that in Joseph MacDonald's list of five genre terms the only two which are still in use are *cumha* and *fàilte.* We might even conjecture that Joseph's expression *port tionail* was mainly used to form simple appellatives of the sort suggested in Section 4 above (page 29).

A strong statistical trend like this must be telling us something, but what? One distinction which is suggested is that Salutes and Laments would tend to be commissioned specially, and might even be jealously guarded in the sense that it might be felt that no one but the musician and the patron would need to know them. On the other hand, and obviously, a gathering tune to be used as an actual call signal on

the battlefield would have to be known to every person involved. And not just known, but familiar by tradition: it is hard to imagine the chief's followers being required to sit down and memorise pieces of music as part of their martial training. But the distinction between private and public can never have been absolute, and indeed our data show that it was not. The diversities of naming which we have accepted as genuine show this: in the supposedly private category we have noted that the tune known to one piper as 'Couloddin's Lament' was known to others as 'The Lament for Patrick Mòr MacCrimmon', while in the 'public' category there are numerous examples where different authorities seem to agree on the same name.

We should qualify this point in another way too. Tunes for use as Laments would not all be private, any more than 'Lochaber no more' and 'The Flowers of the Forest' are private today. The tune *Cha till mi tuille* is subtitled in one source 'a lament played at funerals' (R); and there are tunes with unspecific titles *Cumha na Mairbh*, 'Lament for the Dead' (K1), or awkwardly but revealingly 'One of the Deads Lament' (C2).

But the basic distinction remains as one which must have been inherent in the social context in which *ceòl mòr* was played. And from this we may suggest, even more tentatively, a further distinction. It could be that the formal, privately commissioned salute or lament was once the province of the harper, while the piper was concerned primarily with public and especially military music. The social history of bagpiping in the late mediaeval to early modern times is still very much a field for research, but some broad generalisations are now widely accepted. It does seem that pipers rose in status in the course of the seventeenth century, and that harpers, whatever their status, declined in numbers, until by the eighteenth century the ceremonial music of the Highlands was almost entirely piobaireachd. Again the distinction is to some extent obvious. A harp would not be much use on the battlefield, though it could have its place in camp, the night before the battle. The bagpipe does not seem the obvious choice for a ceremonial tune indoors, though it certainly became so in time. The suggestion that the *ceòl mòr* of the pipes owes a lot to previous harp traditions has often been made, but hard evidence is inevitably difficult to find.

One way to support such a suggestion would be to examine the musical character of bagpipe laments on the one hand, and gatherings on the other, and to try to demonstrate that the former do still retain idiomatic characteristics of the harp. That is work for the future, but to anticipate one possible difficulty, we must be prepared to allow for the facts that, whatever their origins, compositions for either instrument have been handed down and modified over several generations, and that in the later part of our period there were piper-composers of genius who could adapt old conventions perfectly to the new instrument. So although 'The Battle of Harlaw' (DOW) may have originated as pibroch, we actually have it as a fiddle piece, while on the other hand majestic pibrochs like the laments for the Laird of Anapool (A, G, K1) and for Lady MacDonald (A) are attributed to known pipers in the eighteenth century. But these speculations take us further afield. It is hoped that this article has at least succeeded in demonstrating that

the study of tune names can lead to new historical insights and a better understanding of the music.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Little of all this could have been done with out the help of many friends over a long period of time. I thank especially Ronald Black, Frans Buisman, Peter Cooke, Ian Fraser, Neil Fraser, Allan MacDonald, Iain MacInnes, John MacInnes, Morag MacLeod, Anne MacQueen, William Matheson, Colm Ó Baoill, Mícheál Ó Geallabháin, John Shaw, and Margaret Stewart. As always, but here especially, I have to insist that the responsibility for errors is mine.

NOTES

1 Early versions of this article were included in lectures at the 11th International Conference on Celtic Studies, University College, Cork, Ireland, July 1999, and at the School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh, Scotland, February 2001.

2 For general accounts see MacNeill (1968); Cannon (1987).

3 Some titles in the Campbell canntaireachd MS (C1, C2) suggest that the author was not completely at home in Gaelic, but there are others that suggest lack of fluency in English and it may well be that more than one person had a hand in completing the document. These questions are best deferred until the manuscript has been edited and published in full.

4 The standard repertoire of the present day is contained in the current series of books published by the Piobaireachd Society. See PS 1–15.

5 http://www.piobaireachd.co.uk

6 The most extensive study to date is that of MacIver (1966).

7 I am grateful to Frans Buisman for a preview of an essay on transformations of piobaireachd in 18th-century music collections, which includes a comprehensive review of non-bagpipe sources of the type referred to here.

8 See especially chapter IV, Section 2. Besides extensive discussions, and citations of tune names, MacInnes gives (1988: 327–331) a concordance of all tunes mentioned in extant competition records, 1783 to 1841 and (1988: 316–320) a tabulation of the sources.

9 I thank Dr Wilson McLeod particularly for stressing this point. His recent study, which includes (2000: 212–258) a comprehensive list of Scottish bardic poems, avoids names and titles altogether and uses only the opening words to identify the pieces.

10 Sharpe MS (c. 1790), NLS Ing. 153, quoted D. Johnson (1984: 141, 249).

11 Several length-marks have been added and one spelling updated.

12 The name *Pìobaireachd Dhomhnuill Duibh* has been attached to different Black Donalds and different battles. We need not take the historical details seriously but Donald

MacDonald, whose ancestral roots were in the Trotternish (MacDonald) district of Skye, gave the tune to Clan Donald, whereas John MacCrimmon and/or his patron Niel MacLeod of Gesto, who came from Duirinish, gave it to Clan Cameron (the MacLeods not having been involved in either of the rival traditions). See D. MacDonald ([1820]: 106) and Alex. Campbell [1815].

13 J. F. Campbell (1880: 34); K. MacDonald (1888–9: 34). The spellings are Campbell's, with the addition of the length-mark on *chí.*

14 For accounts see the Skeabost MS, in L. MacDonald (1883: 434–435), note on Tune XX; K. MacDonald (1888–9); and other sources summarised by Haddow (1982: 123). The story was told to Johnson and Boswell when they visited Armadale in 1773 and evidently heard the tune played (S. Johnson [1775] 1924: 71).

15 Story from Mr Peter MacDonald, Sheil Bridge, Acharacle, communicated in 1909 (PS 4: 106).

16 Skeabost MS, note on Tune XII. See L. MacDonald (1883: 434–435).

17 The text is from a footnote in the source manuscript (H) which reads in full 'This Peobrach was Composed by M^{c}Lachlan's Lady Praising a Natural Production. Viz S: Molach mu 'da Thaobh &c.' There are extended titles and text fragments in other sources as well, none of which have yet been edited.

18 Music transcription and song text in Alex. Campbell [1815].

19 Skeabost MS, Note on Tune XV. See L. MacDonald (1883: 434–435). The name is misprinted as 'Druim Phoulscon' but another version of the tune is titled by Angus MacKay 'Druim Thalasgair (na) Blàr Bhaterneish. The battle of Waternish' (K1).

20 In C1 and C2, about half the titles are Type I, and about half are in Gaelic. But the Type I titles are 85 per cent English, the other types 95 per cent Gaelic.

21 I thank Ronald Black for this observation.

22 The song is *Cumha Lachlainn Daill,* by Sileas na Ceapich. See Ó Baoill (1972: 108–113), and Mac Gill-eain (1985: 247–8).

23 To this we might add the story, or joke, of how Iain Dall made the lament for his tutor, Patrick òg, only to find that the latter was still living. ' "Indeed" said MacCrummon, "Cumha Phadruig òig 's e f'hein beò fhathast! . . . I shall learn then the Lament for myself!" '. See Note XXXV in *Historical and Traditional Notes* (1838: 9).

24 Titles in early music collections are as follows. 'Cumh' Mhic-o-Arrisaig. O Hara's Lament' (F); 'Cumha Mhic a h Arasaig. McIntosh's Lament' (PD); 'Cumhe Mhichdintósich' (ER); 'Cumha Mhic a'h Arasaig. M^{c}Intosh's Lament' (R); 'Cumhadh Mhic a'h Arasaig. Macintosh's Lament' (D1); 'MacIntosh's Lament' [no Gaelic] (DJ); 'Caugh Vic Righ Aro' (G); 'Cumha Mhic an Tòisich. Macintosh's Lament' (K0). Also '*cumha* fir Arais, *the elegy of the Chief of Aros',* in the entry for *cumha* in MacAlpine (1832); *Cumha Fear Aros* mentioned by A. D. Fraser (1907:144); *Cumha Mhic a Arois[,] no cumha Mhic-an-Tòisich*, title of text in 'Abrach' (1873); *Cumha Mhic a Arisaig*, alternative title of text in A. & A. MacDonald (1911: lvi and 336).

25 I thank Mícheál Ó Geallabháin for information on modern Irish usage, in several letters with citations from Donegal, Monaghan and Kerry.

26 *Cumha Bhràithrean,* 'Lament for brothers'. Tolmie Collection (1911: 202).

27 See Note XLI in *Historical Notes . . .* (1838: 10).

28 My thanks again to Ronald Black for this observation.

29 MacKay (1843: 85). The tune is entitled 'An Cumha. Mac Gregor's Lament'. It is the same air as *John MacGregor's Strathspey* (Cannon 1979).

30 N. MacAlpine (1832: page [v] and s.v. *cumha).*

31 John MacInnes points out that the second two words can be considered as one, hence *Cumha an aonmhic,* the a of *aona* as written above being thus an epenthetic vowel.

32 Poem: Turner MS (1894: 333). The text of the poem makes it clear that this is plural, 'The Brothers' Lament'. In the pipe literature, Angus MacKay has a pibroch which he titles in the (more modern) plural in one MS, singular in another, 'Cumha nam Brathairean. The Brothers' Lament' (K1); 'Cumha Bhràthair. The Brothers Lament' [no apostrophe; length-mark in index but not in text] (KK).

33 In line with this, John MacInnes points out the place name in Raasay, *Uamh(a) Catriona duibha,* which Angus MacKay, born in Raasay, would presumably have known.

34 I thank John MacInnes for this point.

35 The fact that earlier sources name the same tune after Patrick Mòr MacCrimmon – see MacInnes (1988: 192) – makes no difference to the point at issue here.

36 A referee suggests the reading *Call an aona mhic* 'The Loss (Drowning) of the Only Son', which would suit the name of a song rather the first line. (On the spelling *aona mhic* see note 31).

37 PS 9: 273; and editorial notes, p. 275. The original documents are filed in the Kilberry Papers, folder 163, now bound in NLS MS 22112.

38 Two analogous non-pibroch names are 'Ossian's Lament for his Father' in J. & A. Campbell (1909: 1) and 'The Boy's Lament for his Kite [or Dragon]', two names for the same tune, in MacPhee (1876 [1978]: 9) and Glen [1903: 8]. These may be traditional but they do not occur in the piping literature in Gaelic.

39 Relatively modern editions of poems sometimes distinguish between maker and subject, in titles like 'Cumha maighdean air son a leannan', MacVean (1836: 56, 62); 'Chumadh a bhaird an deigh a leannan – The bard's lament after his love', D. Campbell (1862: 189); *Cumha le Iain Ciar, bràthair Fear Thaighinnis, air do nighean Righ Spainte bhi air a tilgeadh . . . ,* first published c. 1890, possibly from an earlier MS source (McCaughey 1996).

40 Mac Gill-eain (1985: 247–8) goes on to say 'Normal Gaelic usage would indicate a lament for, . . . ' but he still leaves the question open. Older writers MacPherson (1868: 22) and 'Fionn' (1904: 96) had said that the lament was composed *by* the sister, but Colm Ó Baoill (1972: 179) quotes the Rev. William Matheson as stating firmly that the title should mean 'Lament *for* not *by* Nì Mhic Raghnall'.

41 First published by Kennedy (1835: 176); discussed by Black (1972–4: 233).

42 Unsigned item in *An Gaidheal* (1875: 310). Lines 8–10 read Thàinig Eóbhan, / Faoilt air Eóbhan, / Failte air Eóbhan. 'Fionn' (1904: 4) quotes it but amends *Faoilt* to *Failt.*

43 This spelling assumes that the meaning is 'Salute to drunkenness', following MacIver (1966).

44 Sir Thomas Urquhart [Laird of Cromarty, 1610–1666], *The first book of the works of Mr. Francis Rabelais,* 1653. Cited, *OED.* s.v. 'gathering', 4.b.

45 Ramsay (1784: 13). The next reference is unexceptionable, 'the pipers being ordered to play a favourite *cruineachadh,* the Highlanders, who were broken, returned'; but the third reference repeats the apparent error, 'the poetry of the northern Scalds . . . differs as widely from other poetry . . . as the *pibrach,* or *cruineachadh,* does from the music of the nations around' (1784: 13), and finally (1784: 14) 'the Irish are said to have no *pibrachs*, or *cruineachadhs* among them.'

46 As also does Donald MacDonald's mistaken spelling, since m for nn could suggest that he had misread a handwritten source, which we no longer have.

46A A further conjecture would be that *port tionail* would tend to govern a personal name in the singular while *cruinneachadh* would govern a plural, thus *Port tional Mhic Leòid*, but *Cruinneachadh nan Leòdach.*

47 Examples: *Dheòrsa* = George; *Marsail* = Marjory; *sporsail* = sporting. The fact that 'rs' is a phoneme distinct from /rs/ is shown by the fact that in spelling it is flanked by broad vowels, but in speech it still comes across to an English ear with a soft /rʃ/ sound.

48 Gunn ([1848] 1867: 99, and index, p. VI). In the text the spellings and wordings are 'Shuibhail na Garbhlich. Traverse the rough hills'; in the index 'Shiubhal nan Garbhlich. Traversing the hills.' Compare a couplet from the song *Oran an t-Sealgair:* Fhir a shiubhlas an garbhlach, / 'S a thig dhachaidh 's an anamoch.' MacDonald and MacDonald (1911: 225).

49 These three sources are not independent, as K1 incorporates almost all the material of D0, and D0 incorporates almost all of H; but at least we can say that the later authors did not go against their predecessors.

50 MacInnes (1988: 177). Iain counted the occurrences and time periods of the four generic terms for march in competition records (i.e. not in musical scores), as 'siubhal', 2, 1785–6; 'marshal', 5, 1783–1823; 'piobrachd', 3, 1785–1844; 'spaidsearachd', 12, 1824–1838.

51 'A Spaidaireachd Bharrach, The Barra Boastfulness', MacDonald and MacDonald (1911: xxxviii and 230); 'An Spaideareachd Bharrach, The Barra Boasting', Campbell and Collinson (1977: 124–129, 232–237, 322–324).

52 F. Buisman and A. Wright (2001: 76, editorial note on Tune 7). Also two different tunes are involved but that does not affect the point under discussion.

53 'Fionn' (1904: 80). A referee points out other names of battles surviving in folk memory in legends or clan sagas, e.g. *Blàr Traigh Ghrunnart* in Islay, and *Blàr na Lèine,* in the Great Glen.

54 'Eòghann Càthach. Ewin of the Battles' (K2), 'Ewan Cauch' (JK); 'Cumh Eachann Ruaidh na'n Cath. Hector Roy Mac Lean's Lament' (K2), 'Cumha Eachann Ruaidh na'n Cath. Hector Roy of the Battles Lament. (A. MacLean)' (KS).

55 MacKay's headline reads 'Cath na'n Eun na An Càth Gailbheach. The Birds Fight or The Desperate Battle.'

56 There was also a Hebridean folk dance called *Cath nan Coileach* 'The Bickering of the Cocks' see Flett and Flett (1952–5: 117).

57 Cannon (1974); D. Johnson (1984: 135, 142). If the Harlaw name was ever current in Gaelic it would have sounded very similar: the form *Là Chatha Gharbhaich* is in the heading of the Harlaw Brosnachadh in McLagan MS 222, though MS 97 has *La Tharlà* which well represents the Aberdeenshire Scots pronunciation of 'Harlaw'. See Thomson (1968: 147, 153).

58 Martin ([1703] 1934). The tune is now best known as 'The MacLeods' Salute'.

59 *Burke's Peerage*. See under (Bosville-)MacDonald. I am grateful to Frans Buisman who traced this information.

60 The earliest known occurrence of the word in print is in 1724, in a stanza added by Allan Ramsay (1724, 2: 256) to the ballad 'Hardyknute': To join his King adoun the Hill / In Hast his Merch he made, / Quhyle, playand Pibrochs, Minstralls meit / Afore him stately strade. The ballad is not considered to have been old at the time of first publication (c. 1710). It is attributed to Lady Elizabeth Wardlaw (1677–1727) but the quotation stands as a sample of what Lowland Scottish literati knew or thought about piobaireachd. See *OED,* 'pibroch' (but the date 1719 is incorrect) and Roy (c. 1984).

61 That is to say, not all speakers use it; but it is on record in an eloquent spoken passage on the subject of Highland music, from Joe Neil MacNeil of Cape Breton (born in 1908), with the clear meaning of 'tune' as distinct from the words that might be sung to the tune. See Shaw (1992/3: 41).

62 Cannon (1994: 81, 107). It appears in a glossary entry, 'Callip, Eurlair a Phuirt' which I have read as two alternative names for the same thing, i.e. *Calp', ùrlar a' phuirt,* 'The head [or] ground of the tune'. The spelling of the first syllable may reflect Joseph MacDonald's North Sutherland pronunciation. I have heard the word pronounced **/ju:la:r/** by a present-day speaker from the same district.

63 *Ane Ground,* in Elliott (1964: 198).

64 In Playford's *Dancing Master,* 11th ed. (1701); reprinted in Barlow (1985: 102).

65 See Sadie (1980: s.v. 'Ground'). Earlier detailed studies with numerous examples include Greenhouse (1945–6), Miller (1948), McGuinness (1970).

66 Matheson (1970: liv–lv). The title itself may be satirical rather than actual – it occurs in a poem attacking the blind harper Roderick Morison, but it would lose its point if 'X's tuning prelude' were not a *possible* title of a harp composition.

67 B. MacKenzie, private communication.

68 PS 11: 320, evidently following MacIver (1966).

69 Sanger and Kinneard (1992: 190), quoting e.g. the expression 'puirt is cuir is orgain'. In another context Colm Ó Baoill suggests (1972: 179) that *Do chur chiùil* may contain a technical term.

70 On the other hand Ronald Black points to the meaning of *cor* as 'condition or state', suggesting a derisive title 'the low state of MacLean', which is perhaps in keeping with the fact that the source is a Campbell compilation.

71 Black (1972–4); Haddow (1982: 38–55). The tune is nowadays better known as 'The sound of the waves against the Castle of Duntroon'.

72 *Marbhrann do Shir Tormoid Mac Leoid . . . 1705*, line 1082 in J. C. Watson (1965: 88).

73 *Oran do'n Eideadh Ghaidhealach,* lines 3538–9 in A. MacLeod ([1952] 1978: 240).

74 MacAlpine (1832); cf. W. J. Watson (1932: 344) 'an alarm of battle, march tune, signal.'

75 Colm Ó Baoill (1998: 91–2) suggests a popular etymology connecting *caismeachd* with *cas* = 'foot'.

76 Unsigned musical item in *Celtic Monthly,* 19: 240.

77 Lachlan MacNeil Campbell of Saddell and Kintarbert, himself a piper, lived until 1852 (MacKenzie 1999). Angus MacKay wrote the manuscript KK for him, including this tune without a name; but the name is entered in Angus' own manuscript (K1) and in that of his brother John (JK, dated 1848). The inference is that the tune was nameless when KK was written, but that Angus (or his patron) named it shortly afterwards.

78 See S. Sadie (1980: s.v. 'Fantasia').

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A Study of Scottish Gaelic Versions of 'Snow-White'

JOY FRASER

In an article published in 1972, Heda Jason sets out to 'confront Propp's analysis [of folktale structure] with the concept of the 'tale-type'' and concludes that ''type' disintegrates under . . . synchronic structural analysis' (37, 53). Jason argues that the relationships among '*the concrete texts narrated in the society*' can be more appropriately conceptualised as a continuum (which she terms a 'tale-field') than as a series of self-contained units each with 'an independent 'life' in time and space' (39; emphasis in original). In his recent study of 'Snow-White' (AT 709), Steven Swann Jones follows Jason in pointing out the need for a new approach to the concept of the tale type. In Jones' thesis, however, the concept of the tale type remains essentially intact, but is viewed not as a 'self-contained unit' but rather as a system open to influences brought about by contact with other, similar systems. Unlike Jason, Jones argues that the historic-geographic and structural approaches to folktale research may 'be usefully combined into one synthesised methodology for the study of the formal features of folk narratives' (20), and moreover that this 'structural approach to typological analysis' allows the researcher to 'investigate the fundamental paradigm underlying the fairy tale in all its versions' (22, 26). This 'fundamental paradigm', 'a subliminal narrative code' which 'gives the story form and structure' and 'makes a significant contribution to the communication of meaning to the audience', can be uncovered through structural analysis at two distinct levels, the typological and the generic (78–9, 21). Although Jones focuses primarily on the typological structure of 'Snow-White', he also discusses the tale in the wider, generic context of the Persecuted Heroine cycle to which the tale belongs. Constituent tales of this cycle, he argues, though they 'follow their own distinct typological pattern of episodes . . . also share a generic pattern of action', which he terms the 'persecution pattern'. This pattern consists of four stages, 'threat, hostility, expulsion, and resolution', which 'coincide with . . . the most crucial trials or transitions in the heroine's life – menstruation, marriage, and childbirth' (30, 32). Significantly, Jones demonstrates that there is a strong 'semiotic resemblance' between tales belonging to the same cycle and posits that 'the persecution pattern is an empirically verifiable unit of dramatic structure apparent to narrators' (32, 29). This suggests that the generic paradigm functions as the primary means by which cultural meaning is communicated in narratives belonging to the Persecuted Heroine cycle. Because 'different tale types in the Persecuted Heroine cycle may alternately focus on

different stages of the heroine's development', Jones argues that such tales 'should be told and read as a group, as possessing *a larger composite meaning* that is only partially revealed in any particular tale type' (33–4; emphasis added).

Analysis of Scottish Gaelic versions of 'Snow-White' presents an ideal opportunity to test this theory by applying it to a single case within a particular tradition. Jones makes reference to just one Scottish version of AT 709, collected in Eigg by Kenneth Macleod in the late nineteenth century (Macleod).[1] Crucially, he appears to be unaware of both a second version from Eigg, referred to by Macleod in a footnote, and a unique version from Lochaber already studied by Alan Bruford (Bruford[2]). According to Bruford, the latter version is 'a conflation of elements from 'Snow-White' (AT 709) with a framework from 'The Maiden without Hands' (AT 706)' (Bruford and MacDonald: 448n). Since the latter tale type also belongs to the Persecuted Heroine cycle, Jones' concept of generic paradigms may be useful in accounting for the appearance in Scotland of a composite version of two differing but related tale types. In this paper I examine this hypothesis through an analysis of the three known Scottish versions mentioned above, as well as a story of related form collected in South Uist by John Francis Campbell. The latter is catalogued in the School of Scottish Studies Tale Archive under AT 706 (Campbell: 439n).[3] Summaries of these four narratives can be found in Table 1. Campbell's story exhibits clear parallels with Bruford's Lochaber version of 'Snow-White' and contributes significantly to our understanding of the process by which this type (AT 709) assumed its distinctive Scottish form. By tracing within these stories aspects of structure and theme which span tale types AT 709 and AT 706, I argue that the structuralist view of the tale type as an enclosed, sealed unit fails to address the often complex processes by which types may become interwoven. I use the case study of 'Snow-White' in Scottish Gaelic tradition to demonstrate how Jones' concept of generic paradigms may bring us closer to a conception of the relationships among tale types as a continuum or 'tale-field' (Jason: *passim*).

Jones devises a model of two parts and nine episodes to describe the typological structure or 'essential paradigm of action' of AT 709. Each part (or 'move') comprises one instance of the 'persecution pattern' (threat, hostility, expulsion and resolution), with each resolution being effected 'in a way that appears to alter [the heroine's] situation, status, and environment' (28–9). In part one, 'the heroine is expelled from her home and adopted by someone else'. This part involves four episodes, which Jones terms 'Origin', 'Jealousy', 'Expulsion' and 'Adoption'. In the 'Origin' episode, 'an introductory etiological motif explains the creation or conception of the heroine or describes [her] familial situation'. In the 'Jealousy' episode, 'the persecutor . . . becomes jealous of the heroine's beauty', and, in the 'Expulsion' episode, 'orders the heroine's death or otherwise expels her from home'. In the 'Adoption' episode, 'the heroine is rescued from her homeless plight'. Part two involves 'a repetition of the pattern of rivalry, attack, rescue, and relocation . . ., but with more serious consequences'. This part involves five episodes, which Jones terms 'Renewed Jealousy', 'Death', 'Exhibition', 'Resuscitation'

and 'Resolution'. In the 'Renewed Jealousy' episode, 'the persecutor hears that the heroine has survived the ordeal of expulsion, has been adopted by someone else, and is still more beautiful', and 'again becomes jealous of her'. In the 'Death' episode, 'the persecutor apparently kills the heroine despite the interference of her companions', and in the 'Exhibition' episode, 'the heroine's companions prepare and exhibit the corpse'. In the 'Resuscitation' episode, 'the heroine is revived', and, finally, the 'Resolution' episode 'details the outcome of the drama', which 'generally includes the heroine's marriage and the persecutor's punishment' (22–4).

In the left-hand column of Table 1 are listed the episodes of AT 709 according to Jones' model as outlined above. The unshaded sections of the table illustrate the application of this model to the four Scottish Gaelic variants (including Campbell's), which are ordered from left to right according to degree of conformity to Jones' model.[4] Apart from Campbell's South Uist variant which, as already noted, seems to belong to a separate tale type (AT 706), the table illustrates that the Scottish versions each incorporate all of Jones' episodes in sequence, and that where they deviate from the pattern of action he describes, these deviations occur in addition to the episodes of his model rather than replacing them. In the far right-hand column of the table is a similar breakdown of episodes for AT 706, adapted from that given by Aarne and Thompson (240).[5] The shaded sections of the table represent elements within the Scottish Gaelic variants which cannot be accommodated within Jones' model, and might therefore be classified as deviations. However, if we are to revise the notion of the tale type as sealed unit then, as the table illustrates, it is possible to view these apparent deviations as influences from AT 706 and thus important points of contact between the two types. From right to left each Scottish variant incorporates fewer elements from AT 706. Thus the table illustrates a process of interweaving between the two tale types, AT 709 and AT 706, as exhibited in four Scottish Gaelic versions of 'Snow-White'. We can test this theory of the interweaving of types by examining in greater detail one of the versions summarised in the table. The Lochaber version is the fullest and most documented available and, as noted above, has already been recognised as 'a conflation of elements from 'Snow-White' [and] 'The Maiden without Hands'' (Bruford and MacDonald: 448n). If the points at which this narrative deviates from Jones' model for AT 709 can be identified as points of contact with AT 706, and parallels identified in Scottish versions of the latter type[6], this will offer some insight into the process by which these two tale types have become interwoven in the Scottish case.

The Lochaber version's first deviation from Jones' model occurs between the 'Jealousy' and 'Expulsion' episodes. This first deviation involves the *eachrais ùrlair*[7] who has, in the preceding episode, incited the stepmother's jealousy of the heroine. It can be posited that the figure of the *eachrais ùrlair* and the block of associations surrounding her character were incorporated wholesale into the Lochaber version from AT 706, thus playing an integral part in the process by which the two types became interwoven. Certainly, she makes no appearance in the first Eigg version, which incorporates least

influence from the latter type. The 'witch or wise woman' in the second Eigg version is, however, almost certainly the equivalent of the *eachrais ùrlair*, who appears in most Scottish Gaelic versions of AT 706 (Nic Iain; SA 1970/44/A; SA 1971/43/A3-B1). This character now persuades the stepmother to kill, in turn, her husband's greyhound bitch, his 'graceful black palfrey', and her own eldest son. She is instructed to lay the blame for each incident on the heroine, who is made to swear 'three baptismal oaths, that she will not be on foot, she will not be on horseback, and she will not be on the green earth the day she tells of it'.[8] Bruford (170n) states that '[t]his motif is apparently borrowed from AT 706' and it is paralleled, including the oaths, in Buchan's and McKay's Scottish versions of that type (Buchan: 25–6; McKay: 308–11) and omitting the oaths in SA 1971/43/A3-B1 from South Uist. It can be categorised under the 'False Accusations' episode of AT 706 and is a clear point of contact between the two types.

The Lochaber version's second deviation from Jones' model directly follows the 'Expulsion' episode, during which the stepmother has demanded the heroine's heart and liver as a cure for a feigned sickness. This second deviation is the logical sequel of the first, as, in it, 'the end of one of [the heroine's] fingers' is cut off by her father for each crime of which she is accused. Again, according to Bruford (172n), '[t]he mutilation of the daughter is part of the borrowing from AT 706'. Indeed, as we will see, it is crucial to the narrative structure of that type, occurring in all Scottish versions. Some Scottish versions of AT 706 also feature the motif of the thorn in the king's foot, which usually results from a curse uttered by the heroine following her mutilation and can only be cured by her own two hands or those of her son (Buchan: 27; McKay: 313; Nic Iain: 49n; SA 1956/181/1; SA 1958/68/A2; SA 1971/43/A3-B1). Traces of this motif remain in the deviating second half of Campbell's South Uist version as summarised in the table, in which the heroine returns home to find her father with a wounded leg which can only be cured by her two hands, which have meanwhile been restored. Thus the 'Mutilation' episode and, in fragmented form, the curse which results from it, represent additional points of contact between AT 709 and AT 706.

The Lochaber version's third deviation from Jones' model consists of three elements, designated A-C in the table. The first of these elements (A) involves the renewal of the stepmother's jealousy for a second time. The second element (B) involves a pursuit, in which the stepmother journeys with her husband to Lochlann, where the heroine is now living, in order to kill her. Both of these apparently deviating elements can in fact be accommodated into Jones' model if we regard the Lochaber variant as one of 'certain oicotypal versions of 'Snow White' [which] go on to include a third instance of the persecution pattern'. According to Jones, these oicotypal versions incorporate 'a third repetition of hostilities', which 'follows the heroine's marriage'. In this third repetition of the pattern, '[w]hen the persecutor hears that the heroine has revived and is now married, the persecutor tries once more to dispatch her rival, attacking her in the husband's house' (Jones: 29). Thus the first two elements (A and B) of this third deviation can be regarded not as anomalies but as evidence of the Lochaber version's

	AT 709 (from Jones)	EIGG 1	EIGG 2	LOCHABER	SOUTH UIST	AT 706 (adapted from AT)
PART 1	ORIGIN	Persecutor is heroine's natural mother.	As Eigg 1 [?].	Death of mother; father remarries.	Death of mother; father remarries.	ORIGIN
	JEALOUSY	Agent: Trout in well. Jealousy is of heroine's beauty.	[Implied]. Agent: Witch / wise woman.	Agent: *Eachrais ùrlair*. Jealousy is due to heroine's larger share of inheritance.	Heroine's right to inheritance over stepmother's own daughter.	FALSE ACCUSATIONS/ SLANDERING
	EXPULSION	Queen demands heroine's heart and liver as cure for feigned sickness. A he-goat's organs are substituted. Heroine not expelled but taken in marriage by prince.	**FALSE ACCUSATIONS** Wise woman bewitches heroine and 'tries to make her kill': A) king's horse: B) king's dog; C) king's cock. Queen later commits the killings herself, laying blame on heroine.	**FALSE ACCUSATIONS** *Eachrais ùrlair* persuades stepmother to kill: A) king's greyhound bitch; B) king's graceful black palfrey; C) own eldest son. Blame is laid on heroine. She is made to swear 'three baptismal oaths', that she will not be on foot, on horseback or on the green earth the day she tells of it.	**FALSE ACCUSATIONS** Stepmother: A) gives away three greyhound pups to ship's captain, accusing heroine of killing them; B) breaks candlesticks and lays blame on heroine.	
			Queen suggests punishment of eating heroine's heart. A goat's heart is substituted. Heroine runs away.	Stepmother demands heroine's heart and liver as cure for feigned sickness. A suckling pig is substituted. King smuggles heroine into forest, with help of cook.	As result of stepmother's deceptions, king takes heroine to 'a moss' to punish her.	MUTILATION OF HEROINE
				MUTILATION OF HEROINE Father cuts off one finger for each crime of which she is accused.	**MUTILATION OF HEROINE** Father cuts off one hand; one breast; one knee.	
	ADOPTION	Marriage to prince; they go abroad.	Heroine hides with prince's hen-wife. Prince discovers and marries her.	One-eyed leader of band of cats is King of Lochlann's son. They are married, and have three children, who remain unchristened.	Heroine staggers to house occupied by three princes, who are 'under spells'. Has two sons by 'finest looking' prince.	MARRIAGE
PART 2	RENEWED JEALOUSY	Agent: Trout in well.	As Eigg 1.	Agent: Trout in well. This time jealousy is motivated by heroine's beauty.	**RESTORATION OF LOST MEMBERS** Achieved with help of 'old woman' and through the 'agency of a well'. **CURING OF FATHER** Heroine goes home to find father with wounded leg, only curable by her two hands. She cures him.	PERSECUTED WIFE (Eigg; Lochaber)
	DEATH	Queen goes to visit heroine with intention of killing her. Heroine locked in room, but puts little finger through keyhole; Queen puts a 'poisoned stab' in it.	As Eigg 1.	Stepmother's maid sent with box containing poisoned 'grains of ice'.		
	EXHIBITION	Heroine locked in room where 'nobody would get near her'.	As Eigg 1.	Heroine placed in leaden coffin inside locked room.		RESTORATION OF LOST MEMBERS (South Uist)
	RESUSCIT-ATION	Prince's second wife gets hold of key and takes stab out of finger.	As Eigg 1.	Prince's second wife steals key to room and picks out the grains of ice with a pin.		
		PERSECUTED WIFE A) Renewed jealousy: as before. B) Pursuit: Queen journeys to foreign land again in order to kill heroine. C) Evasion: Prince's second wife makes Queen drink from poisoned cup.	**PERSECUTED WIFE** As Eigg 1.	**PERSECUTED WIFE** A) Renewed jealousy: as before. B) Pursuit: stepmother journeys to Lochlann with king in order to kill heroine. C) Evasion: 'Baptismal oaths' evaded by telling unchristened children.		CURING OF FATHER (South Uist)
	RESOLUTION	Queen carried home and buried. Prince and two wives 'were long alive . . ., pleased and peaceful'.	As Eigg 1, except that 'the king relieves the prince of his second wife'.	Stepmother caught and burnt in fire. Heroine's father is married to prince's second wife.	Stepmother burnt in fire. Marriage.	

Table 1. The interweaving of AT 709 and AT 706 as exhibited in four Scottish Gaelic versions of 'Snow-White'.

status as an 'oicotypal version' of 'Snow-White' as defined by Jones. However, the final element (C), which comprises the heroine's evasion of the 'baptismal oaths' and fulfilment of the impossible conditions, is 'borrowed from . . . AT 706' and is 'the logical sequel' (Bruford: 173n) of the first deviation (see above). It therefore represents a further point of contact between the two tale types, part of the process by which elements from AT 709 and AT 706 have become conjoined in the Scottish Gaelic version of 'Snow-White'.

In seeking further explanation for the peculiar structure of the Lochaber version, it is necessary to turn to Irish evidence. Ó Súilleabháin and Christiansen (140–2) list 63 versions of AT 709 and 101 of AT 706.[9] Bruford (154) states that many of the Irish manuscript versions of the former type are 'combinations of AT 709 with other international tales'. Yet although Bruford does cite some key parallels between the Lochaber and Eigg versions and a 'solid core' of the Irish ones, Ó Súilleabháin and Christiansen list no combinations of AT 709 with AT 706. Moreover, a Scottish Gaelic version exists (Eigg 1) which conforms almost in its entirety to the broader international pattern for AT 709, suggesting that the process by which this type became interwoven with AT 706 did not begin until some time after both tales' arrival in Scotland.

I therefore posit that what the Scottish Gaelic versions of 'Snow-White' inherited from Ireland was not their peculiar structure but rather a series of Gaelic oicotypal characteristics which are thematic rather than structural. The first of these characteristics is the trout in the well who incites the stepmother's jealousy of the heroine in the two Eigg versions. Jones comments that 'the omniscient trout in the well represents the magical forces of nature that operate according to the primal wisdom of the cosmos'; however, he describes this motif as the 'imaginative' product of 'poetic licence', not the result of 'the migration of the tale to different cultures and ethnic groups' (45, 79–80). While Bruford agrees in essence with Jones in classifying the trout (or salmon) 'as a metaphor for truth or poetic inspiration', he accounts for its appearance in the Lochaber and Eigg versions of AT 709 by citing its status as 'a basic image of early Irish mythology'. He comments that '[t]his archaic motif is not likely to be a recent substitute for the usual speaking mirror' in 'Snow-White' but is rather the story's 'most typically Gaelic feature' (172n; Bruford and MacDonald: 449n). Thus the motif of the trout or salmon in the well can be seen as an oicotypal characteristic probably originating in Ireland[10] but retaining cultural significance in Scotland. For example, Bruford states that 'the trout was often kept in drinking-wells in Scotland and Ireland up to recent times to purify the water', while Banks (163) includes reference to an Islay well called '*Tobar a'bhric* . . . because it has never yet been seen without a trout in it. Long ago offerings used to be made to it, and old people treated it with much respect, under the belief that it possessed healing properties'.[11] Jones, reviewing an article on 'Snow-White' by Alfred Nutt (Nutt 1892), agrees that the inclusion of the motif of the omniscient trout in Macleod's narrative (Eigg 1) 'possibly points to an oicotypal version, that is, a locally specialised version, which may be of some antiquity' (Jones: 86).[12]

The second Gaelic oicotypal characteristic exhibited by the Scottish Gaelic versions is the lack of the 'companion' characters (dwarfs, robbers, and so on) who typically befriend the heroine during the 'Adoption' episode and are central to Jones' model of the type. The lack of the characters which Jones terms 'companions' means that the 'Adoption' episode as manifested in the Scottish versions of 'Snow-White' appears to bear closer resemblance to AT 706 than to AT 709. The former type 'follows a double pattern of hostilities directed against the heroine, first in her parents' home and then in her husband's home' (Jones: 30). In the case of AT 709, however, the persecution pattern almost always occurs in the parental home and then in the home of some 'companions'; only in its 'oicotypal extensions' does this type include a third repetition in the marital home. Apart from Macleod's, Jones lists no versions of AT 709 which omit the heroine's companions in favour of an immediate progression to her meeting with her future husband, and it is curious that Jones makes no comment on this distinguishing feature of Macleod's narrative. Bruford (173n) comments that '[e]vidently the Gaelic oicotype departed from the usual European pattern of the story where the heroine is poisoned when staying with the dwarfs or robbers, and later found in her coffin by the prince who revives her'. He adds that '[t]he prince in cat form, replacing the dwarfs or robbers, is in Irish versions of AT 709', and that in the Lochaber version the prince 'is as usual disenchanted by sleeping with the heroine' (Bruford and MacDonald: 449n). Although the connection between the prince's sleeping with the heroine and his disenchantment has been confused, this last motif is clearly paralleled in the manuscript of the South Uist version (f. 415v.), corroborating the Gaelic oicotypal theory and probable Irish connection. The enchanted state of the prince and his squires (in the Lochaber version, where '[t]hey had been bewitched by his stepmother') or brothers (in the South Uist version, where they are 'under spells') provides a link to the 'companions' of Jones' model. Their enchanted state is arguably equivalent to the 'quasi-human nature' of the 'companions', which Jones (35) sees as 'evidence of their role as liminal mediaries, . . . fictional shaman'. Thus the prince in the Lochaber and South Uist versions performs a double role, first as companion and later as the heroine's husband, a duality which has presumably been lost (or perhaps was never included) in the shorter Eigg versions.

The 'third instance of the persecution pattern' in the heroine's marital home can itself be viewed as a further Gaelic oicotypal characteristic incorporated by the Scottish Gaelic versions, this time structural rather than thematic. This feature is described by Jones as an oicotypal extension of the tale; he states that '[t]he persecution of the heroine in the husband's house is more commonly a part of a number of other folktale types', including AT 706 (29), but that it also occurs in around one fifth of the versions of AT 709 which he includes in his study. Moreover, because the Scottish Gaelic versions lack the 'companion' characters central to Jones' model of AT 709, the action proceeds more or less directly from the heroine's parental home to her marital one, so that both the second and the third repetitions of the persecution pattern take place within the marital home. Thus the persecution of the heroine in her husband's house can be seen as part of

the generic paradigm of the Persecuted Heroine cycle, equally suitable for incorporation within AT 709 and AT 706. A final Gaelic oicotypal characteristic incorporated by the Scottish Gaelic versions is the revival or resuscitation of the heroine by her husband's second wife[13] and 'the bigamous resolution of the drama' (in Eigg 1).

I have argued above that the process by which AT 709 and AT 706 became interwoven within the Scottish Gaelic versions of 'Snow-White' did not begin until some time after both tales' arrival in Scotland. As evidence, I have cited a Scottish Gaelic version of 'Snow-White' (Eigg 1) which exhibits virtually 'no trace' of influence from AT 706. Indeed, this version's only deviation from Jones' model probably represents, like the corresponding deviation in the Lochaber version, an oicotypal extension of the tale as discussed above.[14] Meanwhile, a second Scottish Gaelic version exists (Eigg 2) which closely resembles the first, except where it makes one additional deviation from Jones' model. Bruford labels the second Eigg version 'an intermediate form' of the story. Like the Lochaber version, it 'seems to have borrowed' from AT 706 the episode of the false accusations and extraction of oaths from the heroine. However, the ending of this version is 'as in the version [Macleod] printed [i.e. Eigg 1], without the other borrowings from AT 706' incorporated by the Lochaber and South Uist versions (Bruford: 171n). Thus although the heroine's evasion of the oaths and fulfilment of the impossible conditions is 'the logical sequel' of the false accusations made against her, 'apparently Macleod had heard a version with the one and without the other' (Bruford: 173n). The fact that the second Eigg version thus contains a significant structural 'illogicality' would seem to indicate that it represents an 'intermediate' stage in the transmogrification of this tale type in Scotland, part of a process whereby AT 709 gradually became conflated with elements from AT 706. While there is no apparent evidence of this process in the first Eigg version, there is considerably more in the Lochaber version than in Eigg 2. I therefore posit that preexisting Scottish versions of AT 709 were at some point influenced by elements from AT 706 which they adopted to greater (Lochaber) or lesser (Eigg 2) degrees.

The significance of the South Uist version lies in its suggestion of a possible source for these influences from AT 706. This version represents the most complete available conflation of AT 709 with the latter type, to the extent that the second half of the story constitutes a total deviation from Jones' typology. Several key links can be drawn between the deviations exhibited in this version and those of the Lochaber version. The first such link concerns the extraction of the oath from the heroine. As discussed above, the Lochaber version has the heroine forced to swear 'three baptismal oaths' that she will not be on foot, on horseback or 'on the green earth' the day she exposes the stepmother's false accusations. Similarly, in Campbell's version, the stepmother has given away each of her husband's three greyhound pups to 'a sea captain', accusing the heroine of killing them; she later breaks 'a candlestick of great price', again laying the blame on the heroine, and '[makes] her [step]daughter swear that she would not tell or she would kill her' (f. 415r.). In the manuscript of Campbell's version, the stepmother

herself has a child 'and she was wishing her own to have the kingdom'; this parallels the 'Jealousy' episode in the Lochaber version, in which the stepmother's jealousy is due to the fact 'that the day the king dies, your share of the inheritance will be a small one compared to your stepdaughter's share'.[15] This is in contrast to the pattern found in most of the versions of AT 709 studied by Jones, in which the stepmother's jealousy is usually incited by the heroine's beauty.

The second link between the South Uist and Lochaber versions concerns the mutilation of the heroine. As we have seen, the Lochaber version has the heroine's father cut off one of her fingertips for each crime of which she is accused. The threefold mutilation of 'half [one] hand', 'half breast' and 'half knee' in the South Uist version may similarly correspond to the three greyhound pups she stands accused of killing (although this does not account for the fourth alleged crime, that of breaking the candlestick). In some versions of AT 709 studied by Jones one of the heroine's fingers is similarly amputated, to be sent as proof of her murder to the stepmother (Jones: 45–6; 105–6). However, the threefold nature of the mutilation in the Lochaber and South Uist versions makes clear that in these cases it is the direct consequence of the crimes of which the heroine is accused. The more drastic mutilations in the South Uist version conform more closely than those in the Lochaber version to the narrative structure of AT 706, much of which hinges on the 'crippling' of the heroine. The 'Mutilation' episode in the South Uist version therefore determines that the second half of the story must closely follow the structure of AT 706. In the Lochaber version, however, the significance of this episode to the latter sections of the narrative is lost, because those elements of AT 706 which result from the heroine's crippling are irrelevant in this case (see Bruford: 172n).

The 'Mutilation' episode leads in turn to a third key link between the Lochaber and South Uist versions, a link which concerns the means by which the heroine is discovered by her future husband (Jones' 'Adoption' episode). In the Lochaber version, the 'one-eyed grey cat' sends his twelve squires up the tree one by one to investigate the source of the 'king's blood or knight's blood [that] was falling into the cauldron'; the squires are bribed by the heroine not to tell that she is there, and eventually the one-eyed cat himself climbs the tree and brings her down. This is clearly paralleled in the South Uist version, in which the 'finest looking' prince sends each of his two brothers outside to search for the heroine after discovering 'a drop of king's blood on the Board'; they do not find her, and eventually he goes out himself and brings her in (f. 415v.). The motif of the discovery of the heroine by the drop of king's blood stems logically from the preceding 'Mutilation' episode and is a borrowing from AT 706 in which 'the heroine is sometimes found by her future husband in a tree' (motif N 711.1; see Bruford: 172n). Significantly, however, it is this same motif which 'serves to introduce the 'Snow-White' elements' in the Lochaber version (Bruford and MacDonald: 449n). Despite the heroine's occasional wounds in the versions of AT 709 studied by Jones, none of those versions contain this motif. It can therefore be posited that it is a key point of

integration between the two tale types which is peculiar to Scotland and results from the unusual structural amalgamation of AT 709 and AT 706 exhibited by the Scottish narratives studied here. In the detailed Lochaber version, the borrowing from AT 706 extends to the heroine's threefold mutilation as punishment for her alleged crimes, but not to her actual crippling. This motif therefore provides a key link back into the narrative structure of AT 709 which, unlike that of AT 706, requires the continuing mobility and physical beauty of the heroine. The motif also bestows an artistic fluidity upon the juncture of the two types.[16]

In his paper, the application of Jones' model of tale type AT 709 to a single case within a particular tradition calls into question not so much the concept of the tale type itself but rather the structuralist view of tale types as enclosed, sealed units entirely separable from one another. In light of this conclusion, Jason's modelling of the relationships among tales as a continuum or 'tale-field' may prove central to future folktale scholarship. I have explored the existence of common themes, images and structural features underlying two different but related tale types, AT 709 and AT 706, as they are found in Scotland. Rather than a sealed unit, I have shown that the tale type may be viewed as a system which exchanges key characteristics and thus interweaves with other, related systems. The significance of the episodes which appear to have served as key linkages between the two tale types discussed in this paper lies in the realm of meaning. It can be argued that the wider generic paradigm of the Persecuted Heroine cycle, rather than the typological structure of the individual tales which belong to it, functions as the primary carrier of cultural meaning in these narratives. It is the persecution pattern itself, not its specific manifestations in individual tales, which corresponds to the 'symbolic timing' of the transitional development of the young female heroine and the 'ritualistic organisation' of separation, liminality and reincorporation accompanying such transition (Jones: 34). Thus an amalgamation of elements from AT 709 and AT 706 could have taken place without significant alteration of the cultural or symbolic meaning of the tale. The study of 'Snow-White' in Scotland suggests that exclusive focus on single tale types rather than on the processes by which they interrelate may blind oral narrative scholarship to the significance of apparently anomalous local deviations. These may be far more profitably explained by extending the scope of study to the realms of ethnography, generic correspondence, and meaning.

NOTES

1 Jones' source is an 'edited' version of Macleod's story, in Joseph Jacobs' *Celtic Fairy Tales* (1883). An examination of Jacobs' text (1883: 88–92) reveals that minimal changes were made to the language of Macleod's translation.

2 Also in Bruford and MacDonald: 98–106.

3 It has been possible to consult Campbell's field-notes for this story, which are housed in the manuscript division of the National Library of Scotland, NLS 50.1.13: ff. 415–6, and

contain several details omitted from the summary published in *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*. Appendix A includes a full transcription.

4 'Eigg 2' is the version referred to by Macleod in a footnote to his printed version ('Eigg 1'). Unfortunately, Macleod's footnote, detailing only the points of divergence from Eigg 1, is the fullest available account of this version. For purposes of this paper the story has been reconstructed by combining the details provided with those sections of Eigg 1 with which it must be assumed to have shared fundamental characteristics.

5 This model is based on the episodes most commonly found in Scottish versions of AT 706, and is not intended to delineate a definitive structure of the type.

6 For Scottish versions of AT 706, see McKay 1940: 308–29; Nic Iain 1934: 46–9; SA 1970/44/A; SA 1971/43/A3-B1; Duncan J. MacDonald MS 15 p.1376; SA 1956/181/1; SA 1958/68/A2; Buchan 1908: 25–8.

7 'The *eachrais (eachlach) ùrlair*, 'floor groom', apparently a sweeper, is a female character who replaces the hen-wife as the stepmother's evil genius in many Gaelic tales' and who, in this case, 'first inspires the stepmother to wickedness' (Bruford and MacDonald: 448n; Bruford: 170n). McKay (492–499) provides a detailed discussion of this character, positing that '[the] Eachrais-Urlair was probably at one time an important member of the royal retinue . . . [and] probably continued in the discharge of her duties, whatever they were, until some social change occurred when the status of sorceress began to suffer loss' (494–5). Her role in the Lochaber version of 'Snow-White' is typical in that 'the terms she demands for her services in getting rid of the second queen's stepchildren are sometimes very curious and extortionate' (McKay: 498); in this case she asks for 'a seemingly small quantity of food and wool which then turns out to be immense', a demand which is 'part of the convention' of the character (Bruford: 170n).

8 '. . . 'baptismal oaths' (*briathran baistidh*) – apparently meaning a vow not to tell a Christian soul' (Bruford and MacDonald: 448n). Elsewhere Bruford compares McKay: 327 (AT 706), in which 'the Queen made the lassie swear that whatever she saw her do, she would not tell to any man who had ever been baptized. Child! I am telling thee, for thou hast not yet been baptized'.

9 Includes related stories ('Cf.').

10 O'Rahilly (319) states that according to some Irish accounts, 'the source of all wisdom and occult knowledge is the Otherworld Well. This well, known as the well of Segais, was . . . situated beneath the sea in *Tír Tarngire* (the Otherworld). Around it were hazel-trees, the fruit of which dropped into the well and caused bubbles of mystic inspiration (*na bolcca immaiss*) to form on the streams which issued from the well' (O'Rahilly: 322; see Gwynn *Metrical Dindshenchas* iii 286–288). Some accounts state that 'there were salmon in the Otherworld well, and as the wisdom-full hazel-nuts dropped into the water the salmon ate them'. This is one of several instances in which 'the Otherworld salmon [is] associated with wisdom' (O'Rahilly 1946: 323; see *Metrical Dindshenchas* iii 192). See also Rees and Rees: 161.

11 A link may be posited between the well of the trout in the 'Jealousy' episodes in the Eigg and Lochaber versions and the well through the agency of which the heroine's members

are magically restored in the deviating second half of the South Uist version (from AT 706). McKay (318n) states that 'we may suppose that in some remote version [of AT 706] the restoration of the lost members is ascribed to the fairy or goddess of the well'. Compare 'the virtues of the water of a particular well' in Buchan's version of AT 706 (27), by which her future husband's mother 'restored to [the heroine] the full use of her amputated limbs'. A version of the *Ceudach* story collected in Cape Breton by Margaret MacDonell and John Shaw (53–68) also contains '[the] motif of the life-restoring water (*uisge aith-bheothachaidh* [E80])'. The authors comment that '[in] some Irish (Munster) versions *Ceudach* is restored by water or lowered into a well' (89n). Meanwhile, in a version of AT 613, 'The Two Travellers', collected from Donald Alasdair Johnson (Shaw 1991: 98), Suil-a-Sporan and Suil-a-Dia are given 'news of a well that will cure all afflictions, including blindness. Suil-a-Dia …. finds the well, applies the water to his eyes and his sight is restored'. Such examples suggest that the healing water or well may be as much an active motif in Celtic tradition as the trout or salmon. In Donald Alasdair Johnson's versions of AT 706 (from South Uist), the well is replaced by a loch (SA 1970/44/A; SA 1971/43/A3-B1). The healing water motif appears in Scottish Gaelic versions of the type but not in Scots versions, which suggests that Buchan's version may be based at least partly on a Gaelic source.

12 Jones adds that '[w]hen we couple this with the considerable popularity in Ireland of 'Snow White'…, Nutt's argument for Gaelic origin becomes intriguing', but qualifies that 'Nutt's preoccupation with identifying a historical origin . . . is methodologically anachronistic' (86).

13 Bruford (173n) notes that in Irish versions of the tale '[the] second wife is always responsible for saving the heroine'.

14 This statement also applies to the identical deviation in Eigg 2.

15 Compare SA 1971/43/A3-B1 (AT 706), in which [summary] '*Eachlair Urlair* tells new Queen stepdaughter will inherit if King dies'.

16 It would be interesting to discover whether any of the Irish versions incorporate this motif, which I have been unable to find in Thompson's *Motif-Index*. Compare 'I see a young woman in the top of a tree, and moreover, blood is dripping from her body' (McKay: 313), which McKay classifies as N 711.1.

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APPENDIX A:
TRANSCRIPTION OF NLS 50.1.13.*

f. 415r.
In the evening at [?Polacheth] walked into the kitchen of the Inn and sat
down with a whole tribe of black haired girls of all ages. barefooted and barelegged.
sitting on benches round the fire with their arms twined round
each other and their eyes and teeth glancing in the fire light [over each others' shoulders].
An old man on a bench smoking. an oldish woman with black
witch like elf locks returning from durance [?vile] for having
sold unlawful whisky. the [?landlord] and the [?poultry] –
Commenced operations with a song. got one from the liberated
Lady which was a [?lively] wild monotonous love song set to the tune for
[~~waulking~~ ?stamping] clothes. – Next got a story. –
A king somewhere "I don't know where – but it was long ago"
lost his wife and he had by her one daughter. Then he married
again – he was always out hunting. – His second wife had
a child and she was wishing her own to have the kingdom. –
so she was hard on her step daughter. – The king had a hound
which he was very fond of and he gave his wife charge of
the dog and it had three pups and no one was to get leave to
touch them. – Now there was a captain of a ship who was
always coming to see the Queen and she let him have one of
the pups but she made her daughter swear that she would
not tell or she would kill her. and when the king came home
he found that one of the pups was gone. Then the step mother
said. Thy daughter killed it. There is the knife on the board
red with the blood. – So the king was very angry – on the

next day it was the same and on the next. Then the
Queen broke a candlestick of great price and when the
king had come home he was wrath and the Queen said
again that his daughter had done it – Then the king took
his daughter out to a moss and he said – Whether
wouldst thou rather that I killed thee outright or that I
should take off. thy half [~~one~~] hand. and thy half breast and thy half knee
(here the narrator used action and great emphasis and a shiver of horror ran round
the junior part of the audience who were intently listening)…
Then the daughter said. I would rather that you should do that same
to me than kill me outright. And so he [?cut] off her half hand

f. 415v.
and her half breast and her half knee – and he flung her
into a peat hag and he left her there bleeding – Then she
went staggering and [?trailing] herself along as best she might
down the course of a burn and she came to a kind of small
bothan [?of] a house – and she went in and there was a
table spread with all kinds of meat and no one in –
Then she heard people coming and hid herself – and
there came in the three finest looking men she ever saw
and they put off their cochal for they were under spells
then one of them said. Some one has been here since we
went out. Then the youngest said. No one has been here
and the Eldest said the same but he who was finest looking
of them said. There is here a drop of king's blood on the Board
and I will not rest till I find out what it means. – Go out
[?thou/there] said he to the younger brother. go out said he and look
without said he and see if thou canst not find someone
who is bleeding and wounded said he. – Then the younger
went out and found nothing and he sent out the Eldest
in the same way, and he came in and he said [?are you not]
silly. Let us sit down and eat. – Then the other brother said I
will go myself. and he found the very spot where the woman
was and he brought her in between his two arms (here
the narrator stretched out her own) and he washed
and dressed her wounds and dried her himself with
a towel and she told him all that befallen [sic] her. and he
gave her food and he said. – Whether would you rather
sleep in a bed by yourself or would you like better to sleep
with me. and she said. I would rather sleep with

yourself and so they went into the same bed. And so it
was for 3 quarters and then she had a lad son –
and after a time she had another. Then one day as
she was [?striving] to wash there came an old woman
on the road and she said (something here [?I have] forgotten[)]
and she made her as she was before. – and [?~~then~~] the

f. 416r.
brothers came home. The finest woman that ever
they saw was before them. – After a time one day she
heard one of her boys saying (something which I forget) and
she asked him where he had learned that and he said he
had heard his uncles saying to his father that he had better
go and leave her for that she had lost her arm [sic] in
the moss and had got them again no one knew how.
Indeed said she they said that. – so she left the house
herself and came home to the king's [?parish] and came
into the kitchen. and she said What is your news here today and
they said We are in grief and sorrow and all about the [?place]
are in grief and [?sore] for the king's leg. – Indeed said she and
what is the matter with the king – and so they told her that
ever since the day when the daughter went away the
king had lost [?the] use of his leg and many a doctor and
many a leech and many a wise woman had been to see
him and they could do no good at all. – for nothing would
do him good but that his daughter should heal him with
her two hands. and that she will not do for ever. – So she
asked leave to go up and try if she could do good. And they said
thou thou dirty poor woman. What couldst thou do where
so many [?doctors and leeches, etc.] have done nothing. and so at last she
got leave to go up. and she said to the king put out your
leg and he did so on the bed side and it was all [?swelled/swollen]
so she asked him how it had happened and he told. And he
said. and nothing will ever cure me but my daughter
with her two hands and that she will never do. –
Then she laid her two hands on her father's leg and it was
as well as ever it was and he cut a caper on the floor. –
Then she told her Father all that the Queen had done how she
had given the pups to the sea captain and how she had broken
the candlestick. and the king was very sorry for what
he had done to her and he [?caused] the queen to be seized

f. 416v.
and they made a great fire and burnt her and they
sent for the three lads and the lad bairns and
then they made a cheery light wedding. And that's
all I have of the Senachas. –
This was given without the fluency of the male narrators and
was confused in parts. There was a vast deal of dialogue and
many more details but this is the pith of the story. The
worthy woman was amply rewarded with a couple of glass[es]
of [?raw] whisky which she drank with the usual ceremonies
first a [?small] sip then a wry face. – Then a longer one
and the glass returned. – [~~Then~~] Oh! Take it out. Another long
pull. – [?_____] Scoop it out. and it goes down. And so
at the end of the story. – Da Capo. –

The Gaelic Rèiteach: Symbolism and Practice

NEILL MARTIN

1. INTRODUCTION

In Scotland, ritual dialogue as part of a betrothal ceremony is found in the Gaelic-speaking Highlands and Islands. The ritual occasion is the formal betrothal contract usually called *rèiteach*, and besides the dialogue, which in many cases is allegorical in form, there is also evidence of the ritual refusing of 'false brides' and of the 'hidden bride' custom. There is an initial verbal exchange between the suitor's representative and that of the girl's family, in which the girl is asked for or discussed allegorically in a ritualised way. This is followed by the presentation of a selection of female relatives who must each be refused through similarly indirect means. Finally, the bride-to-be appears, or if hidden is located, she is accepted, the ritual concluded and the betrothal pledged with whisky.

The terms *rèiteach* and *an rèite*, whilst denoting a formal contract to marry and the feast accompanying it, also mean 'agreement' or 'reconciliation', 'a plane or level place', and are related to terms denoting 'harmony', 'peace', 'union', and the acts of 'clearing', 'putting in order' and 'unravelling' (MacLeod and Dewar: 467; Maceachen: 233; Dwelly: 754; Fr Allan MacDonald: 200). The *rèiteach* was an important event, sometimes as important as the wedding feast itself, and although normally a prelude to the publishing of the banns and official marriage, it was a solemn and binding contract which could not be broken (cf. Fr Allan MacDonald's note to the dictionary entry). Before examining the nature and importance of the ritual, it must be placed in the context of the marriage laws of Scotland.

Pre-Reformation Canon law required four elements for a regular marriage:

> consent of the parties expressed in their betrothal; the consent of the parties at the beginning of their joint married lives – this consent was the heart of the whole matter – but although there was a marriage in existence after these two sets of consents, it was not a perfect marriage until *copula carnalis* took place . . . and [finally] the blessing of the Church on the marriage, but this was never essential to the complete, legal and perfect marriage (Mackechnie 1: 291).

The espousal was a formal contract preceding the marriage celebration and might be entered into by the parties themselves, or their parents and guardians on their behalf, and was regarded as irregular unless performed in the presence of a priest and before

witnesses. A normal espousal was *per verba de futuro*, a promise by each to proceed to marriage in the face of the church. A breach of this promise led to church censure as well as the legal penalty of breach of contract. A betrothal *per verba de presenti* was a promise that they now consent to marry. The essential difference being that

> A contract of future espousals, however regular, did not amount to marriage; a contract of present espousals, where the man said, 'I take thee for my wife,' and the wife said, 'I take thee for my husband . . . was a legal marriage; although *copula carnalis subsequens* in either case made a valid (though irregular) marriage (Patrick: 72).

These 'clandestine' or 'irregular' marriages, amounting to a formal betrothal with consummation, were thus 'valid' in the eyes of the law, and, one assumes, the local community. The early church did not interfere greatly with what were largely continuations of pre-Christian practices; in the eleventh century, 'Irish monasteries were perceived as lax, eccentric and worldly, and Gaelic church leaders tolerated practices (especially a casual attitude to marriage) which the rest of Christendom regarded with horror. Part of the solution was the introduction of continental monastic rules' (Warren: li). The persistent nature of the practices the church tried to eradicate, including well-known customs such as 'handfasting' can be seen in early church statutes. In 1242, the Bishop of St. Andrews ordained that 'no one contract marriage or betrothal unless in the presence of lawful witnesses, by whom the marriage can be proved should any doubt arise about it' and that 'marriage must absolutely not be contracted between persons who are unknown' (Patrick: 63–4). The thirteenth century synod in Aberdeen stated 'no espousals must be celebrated without trustworthy and lawful witnesses'; 'no promise of marriage to be contracted be made to any one save in presence of the priest and of three or four trustworthy witnesses' and 'we also forbid the clandestine contracting of marriages, and ordain that no priest shall presume to have anything to do with such marriages' (Patrick: 39). A century later, the synod in St. Andrews were still engaging robustly with the problem, again in 1551–2 (Patrick: 71–3, 142–3), and in 1559 they observed:

> Since it is ascertained that two evil customs or rather corruptions, by the enemy of the human race, have increased . . . namely, that to the hurt of their souls, many . . . make secret compacts and a kind of espousals privately and in a concealed manner, followed by carnal union, before marriage is contracted . . . that many contrary to the laws, after espousals made *per verba de futuro* and before the contraction of marriage and its solemnisation in the face of the church . . . do not hesitate to pass to carnal union. All priests . . . shall strictly prohibit those who have contracted them from having carnal union until marriage has been contracted and solemnised . . . let this be strictly observed by widows as well as others (Patrick: 267–8).

Priests who were still 'not afraid even publicly' to solemnise clandestine marriage were to be suspended and fined. The parties involved, under threat of excommunication, had to be separated for a month and also fined.

The events leading to marriage in Gaelic society formed a three or four-part structure.

First was the 'agreement' to become betrothed, which was sometimes the first time the parties had met, and called *còrdadh* or *rèiteach beag* (small betrothal). This was an intimate meeting between the parties to be espoused and their immediate family, at which the girl's father's permission was sought. A formal betrothal followed, the *rèiteach* or *rèiteach mòr* (big betrothal). This was a ceremony attended by the main parties involved as well as less close relatives and friends. It was at this meeting that the customs involving ritual dialogue and the 'false' or 'hidden bride' customs took place. Following this was the wedding itself, the *banais*, and in certain regions a *banais-tighe*, 'house wedding', at the home of the groom. From this arrangement, one might consider the second stage as a form of 'pre-contract', or 'first consent' with the marriage forming the contract itself, the 'second consent'. However, given the typical ceremonial elements of the second; having hands joined together, consent uttered in front of witnesses, sharing a single glass; one could conclude that this was the main event, the 'contract' with the *còrdadh* or *rèiteach beag* forming the 'pre-contract'. As we shall see, strong emphasis is placed on the consent of the girl herself, who typically defers to her father, or he to her, often using a formulaic device. T. C. Smout remarks 'consent made a marriage – the consent of the couple, not the consent of the parents, who in the last instance have no right of veto . . . on the other hand the expectation is . . . that the children will consult their parents and not act without their blessing' (Smout: 205). The presence of non-kin witnesses, the semi-public nature of the event and the conspicuous role consent plays in the proceedings leads one to conclude that the legal, as well as the traditional significance of the ceremony was understood by the participants. In addition to these components, there is some evidence that the sealing of the contract at the betrothal extended further than sharing a glass of whisky; a minister recalls:

> about thirty years ago I knew a man at that time perhaps forty years of age – the last man in the parish of Kilfinan who immediately after the 'contract' – *reite*, Gaelic – of marriage, was formally bedded with his wife. Proclamations of the banns was made on the Sunday following the *reite* and the marriage was solemnised forthwith.[1]

Although the minister stresses that the marriage followed swiftly, this may not always have been the case – as is suggested from the church statutes – and perhaps many couples did not progress to marriage in the eyes of the church at all. A betrothal followed by consummation was not an uncommon practice. In Shetland the betrothal custom of the 'speiring night' had the same significance; 'the couple were expected to sleep together that night as a seal of the contract, but not to have intercourse again until after the wedding' (Smout: 216). Similarly in Germany, 'protestant authorities . . . prohibited popular mating customs which held that sex between betrothed couples was not sinful' (Scribner: 62). 'Handfasting' might be thought of as a marriage *per verba de futuro* with an option to solemnise after a 'trial' of a year and a day; it may be that, as in Breton tradition, the betrothal ceremony was, at one time, a 'marriage' in the eyes of the community.[2] Nineteenth-century commentators estimated that 'up to one-third of

Scottish marriages in the eighteenth century had been contracted irregularly' and by the eighteenth century the Church had given up its insistence that marriages be contracted in a church building or at its entrance (Boyd: 51). In 1847 a commentator noted;

> In this session [of parliament] Registration and Marriage bills failed, but they *must* succeed soon . . . I did not imagine that clandestine and irregular marriages could have had any respectable and avowed defenders. Yet almost every presbytery in Scotland has disgraced itself by standing up for them (Cockburn: 190).

Whatever the attitude of clergymen, we must not assume that secular marriage persisted in the Highlands because of a generally prevailing 'lax' attitude to such matters. As in Ireland, 'with a low ratio of priests to people it cannot have been easy to organise even an informal priestly ceremony in the more remote areas of the country, to impose regulations relating to consanguinity, nor to supervise patterns of sexual behaviour' (Clarkson: 241). J. L. Campbell observes that 'some of the couples charged with fornication, e.g. in the Argyll Synod Minutes may in fact have been Catholics so married [by *per verba de futuro*] and awaiting the possible coming of a priest at a time when there were very few priests in the Highland mission. Later observers attested to the superior moral standards of the Highlanders; a nineteenth-century survey on 'licentiousness' revealed that 27 of the 38 parishes reporting 'little or no' examples of the 'vice' were in the Highlands. Four hundred others reported it was 'lamentable' (Boyd: 101). When the *Church of Scotland Commission on the Religious Condition of the People* visited the Highlands in 1891 and 1896–98, they reported that illegitimacy was 'comparatively rare' on Skye, 'rare' in Lochcarron and 'extremely rare' in Tongue. In Tain, 'the moral life of the people' was 'remarkably pure' (Boyd: 116).

It was not until 1834 that an Act was passed which allowed priests and ministers other than the Established and Episcopal Churches to solemnise marriages again, and the Highlands was in any case poorly-served by ministers considering the geographical area to be covered and the communication difficulties involved. The cost of publishing the banns could pose another disincentive to prompt solemnisation.

For comparison, in Ireland 'Celtic secular marriage' was the norm until the end of the old order in 1603, and 'Christian matrimony the exception grafted onto this system' (Nicholls: 73). No more than one in twenty were married in church, and the tenets of the canon law were followed that 'the mere declaration, or even intent of the parties, followed by consummation, constituted a permanently valid and binding, though clandestine marriage' (Nicholls: 73). One commentator remarks that 'the main reason for the continuation of clandestine marriage was the deep-rooted belief that matrimony was a private rather than a public affair, of concern only to the individuals involved and their families (Cosgrove: 40). The three-part structure of the *rèiteach* may be seen as a conscious attempt to reconcile this ancient belief with the obligations placed upon those intending to be married by the law and the church. Another factor may have been the anxiety surrounding consanguinity, where 'the canon law was much more demanding

than common law thinking' and, especially in more isolated areas, 'partners were likely to be related by either blood or marriage' (Corish: 68). The prohibition was perhaps even more irksome for the upper classes; in the fourteenth century Highlands it was claimed that 'there is such a dearth of nobles that it is hard for them to marry except within the prohibited degrees' (Cosgrove: 30). Although tradition held that a marriage was a public affair, it seems likely that a degree of publicity – in many cases the whole community or island was invited – was encouraged in order to avoid accusations of secrecy. The ritual use of eulogy, aside from the honouring of ancestors, may also have functioned to remind community members of degrees of consanguinity. One informant observes, 'it was a tradition – you didn't marry any of your cousins'. This was regarded as some form of incest if it happened; nobody argued about it, there were no rules written for it, but just – it was in the psyche; its roots go back to ancient tradition, it was fear of incest, it just couldn't happen' (Murdo Ewan MacDonald). Another informant is more blunt; 'But in olden times they were all getting married in the home. Mostly some relation of their own they were marrying. That was not right. Not right either' (Donald Sinclair SA1968/248/A1).

As an acknowledgment of their new status special restrictions applied between the *rèiteach* and the wedding. One commentator notes that between the 'contract night' and the Sunday after marriage, 'the bride and bridegroom must not attend a wedding or funeral otherwise their first-born will break Diana's pales or never be married'.[3] In South Uist a man was not allowed out on his own at night between his *rèiteach* and his marriage, as it was said a *fuath* (spectre) would chase him.[4]

2. ASKING FOR THE BRIDE

2.1 Matchmaking

In early times, young men seldom looked outside the community for their partners, and one informant from South Uist observes that girls were plentiful because they did not go to the mainland to work (D. J. MacDonald MS 57: 5369). Matchmakers were used and verbal skill was a prerequisite. Tailors often featured as matchmakers:

> It was generally considered necessary that a third party, in sympathy with the couple and possessing influence with the minister, should be let into the secret. There were one or two men who proved so successful in carrying out such arrangements that they were recognised as almost professional matrimonial agents. One such was Alexander Mackerchar, known locally as the Cripple Tailor (Stewart: 156–7).

The mobile nature of the tailor's trade gave access to information on prospective partners:

> One would have expected that, when so many things were made at home, the people would have made their own clothes, but especially in the case of the men, this was not so. They invariably employed a tailor, who used to make the round of the countryside, staying in

> one township after another to make the people's clothes and generally bringing a welcome budget of news and gossip (Grant: 244).

Walter Gregor describes the scene in the home:

> The tailor was summoned to the house, and great was the preparation for him. He was treated with more than ordinary respect, and on his arrival was installed in the *room*. The goodwife produced her webs, and her orders with many an injunction not to make any *clippans* . . . The tailor handled the cloth knowingly and praised it; and the goodwife looked pleased, and ceased to say one word about *clippans* . . . The tailor set to work, and plied his needle and thread early and late – sometimes assisted by the females (Gregor: 57).

We may note from this account the tailor's verbal skill in praising the object under his attention and in overcoming the resistance of the woman of the house. It is of interest that he is set to work with 'the females'. This perhaps goes some way to explain his marginal status; he is a feminised male, although treated with respect on this evidence, at least by the women-folk. The opportunity for gossip and exchanging information about potential marriage partners is clear. There may also have been an anxiety that the tailor, left alone with the women, may have had an opportunity for activities beyond his remit.

The encounter between two representatives who knew one another could be light-hearted and friendly, if robust; J. F. Campbell remembers:

> In the Highlands, a man used to go on the part of the bridegroom to settle the dower with the bride's father, or some one who acted for him. They argued the point, and the argument gave rise to much fun and rough wit. For example, here is one bit of such a discussion, of which I remember to have heard long ago.
>
> 'This is the youngest and the last, she must be the worst; you must give me a large dower, or I will not take her.'
>
> 'Men always sell the shots first when they can; this is the best – I should give no dower at all.'
>
> The first knotty point settled, and the wedding day fixed, the bridegroom, before the wedding day, sent a best man and maid to look after the bride, and gathered all his friends at home. The bride also gathered her friends, and her party led the way to church (Campbell 2: 23).

The go-between's neutral status gave him a certain freedom of expression:

> Say Angus went to ask for my daughter, and most of these old men were very witty and the man that was going to ask for the daughter very often he might be a shy man and he used to take this witty man with you . . . And he used to have an answer whatever the old man asked he wanted for his daughter. 'Are you this or that?' The witty man had an answer for everything he could say. Well, that's the man that was after the girl, [he] might be shy or be . . . might be word-stuck. But this witty man he'd nothing to do with him so he usually got stuck into the old man. He had to be a witty man; he had to win the old man over so

> that he could give the daughter away, otherwise he might . . . put the daughter away you see (Roderick MacKillop, 1977).

One informant describes the qualities necessary in a good 'master of ceremonies' – the local bard who would take part in the *rèiteach:*

> They got together and the two parties . . . the family of the bride – and they'd discuss it. My father and his cousin Big Donald, they were in great demand because they did it well . . . It was an intuitive selection in the community . . . a good sense of humour, a good use of language . . . politeness and drollery mixed up. There are natural bards; natural bards have a facility with words . . . there's a hereditary streak in it. I knew one family in Berneray, Harris who had that facility and it was passed on . . . some of them were lay preachers and their facility with words was very apparent in that arena, and they would also take part as M.C.'s at weddings . . . not educated in the formal sense of the term but a large vocabulary and a bit poetic (Murdo Ewan MacDonald).

Across the water on the Isle of Man, 'it was formerly usual for the lover to employ a go-between called a *dooinney-moylee*, a "praising man" . . . to get the parents to consent to the match and to arrange the marriage portion with them'.[5] The following Manx song indicates both the importance of verbal skill in wooing as well as communicating the immense weariness of the unfortunate suitor, who perhaps should have hired a *dooinney-moylee*:

Nancy t'ayns Mannin

Nancy t'ayns Mannin t'ee boirey mee-hene
As er y hon eck ta mee fiojit as creen
Sooree as moylley as ginsh reddyn bwaagh
She gialdyn da rheynni nagh gooilleen ee dy bragh

Yinnin urree daanys as geddyn woie kiss
As yiaragh ee room, t'ou maarliagh gyn-yss
Yinnagh she shin gys focklyn, as bee ginnsh shin cooish
Ve thousane dy chowag dy reall shinyn dooysht

Megh er yn oie tammylt beg roish y laa
Rew riett as ansooryn cha man aym dy ghra
Irrin dy lhiastey neayr as y chorneil
Goll shiar lesh y darras kiart sheeley myr snail

O less boy, nagh treih eh goll magh ayns yn oie
Reih dangeyr mooar moddee as drogh aegny sleih
Goll trooid thoo as thanney shen brishey my chree
Vea just goll-rish maarliagh veagh geid fud ny hoie

Gys smooinaght er sooree te cur orrym craa
Vea shooyll fud ny hoie as faint fey ny laa
As share dou ve laccal ben choud as beeym bio
Cha vel troublit as seaghnit eishtagh myr shoh.

[Nancy in Man, she troubles me so
And because of her I'm withered and wizened
With courting and praising and saying pretty things
She made me a promise she'll never fulfil.

I'd be bold with her and get from her a kiss
And she'd say to me, you're a sly thief
That would bring us to words and we'd have a chat
There'd be burble and chatter to keep us awake.

Out at night till a short while before day (break)
Ever running out of answers, I'd not have much to say
I'd get up sluggishly over in the corner
And make for the door just sneaking like a snail.

Alas boy, how wretched it is to go out at night
Running the great danger of dogs and people's ill-will
Going through thick and thin, that breaks my heart
To be just like a thief
That steals all through the night.

The thought of courting makes me quiver
To be walking all night and tired all day
It's better for me to be lacking a wife as long as I'm alive
And not troubled and bothered then like this.] (Broderick: 14–15).

One informant from Argyllshire confirms another quality desired in a matchmaker – his physical appearance.

Calum MacLean: Agus a nise am biodh am fear a bhiodh ag iarraidh na mnatha am biodh e toir duine leis, no biodh iad a . . .?

Mrs MacLucas: Bha daonnan fear còmh ris.

CM: Agus bhiodh e bruidhinn air a shon.

Mrs M: Airson bruidhinn. Bha e car *shy*. Tha t-seans an duine òg bha e *shy*. Agus am fear bha e toirt leis bha e daonnan feum a bhith uamharraidh caran math air bruidhinn a sineach, sunndach dheth fhèin.

CM: Agus a robh iad ag ràdh gur e duine a bhiodh crùbach no bacach no meang sam bith ann, nach dèanadh esan a' chùis?

Mrs M: O cha robh feum idir air-san. Cha robh. Cha robh feum aca air.

CM: Cha ghabhadh meang sam bith a bhith a's . . .

Mrs M: A chionn bha feum seasachd suas air son an duine òg.

[**CM:** And now, would the man asking for a wife take someone with him, or . . .?

Mrs M: There was always someone with him

CM: And speaking on his behalf.

Mrs M: To speak on his behalf. He was rather shy. It seems the young man was shy. And the one he took with him always needed to be rather terribly good at talking, and good-humoured.

CM: And did they say that a man who was lame or crippled or had any blemish would not be right?

Mrs M: Oh, he would not do at all. No. They did not need him.

CM: Any kind of blemish would not be tolerated . . .

Mrs M: Because it was necessary to stand up for the young man.][6]

We may contrast this account with that of the 'cripple tailor' described above, active around Fortingall in the 19th century. The informant's explanation is that the matchmaker required a strong physical presence, in order to put over his case successfully. We may speculate that his physical perfection also had a ritual significance; he was, after all, embodying the young man's youth, strength, capability and determination; his representative not just in words but in physical manifestation.

The following account from Uist provides a good picture of the background to marriage a century ago, including information on 'night-visiting', matchmaking, and a suggestion that participants in a *rèiteach* were indeed aware of its legal implications. It is of interest that the custom is already described as being 'out of fashion'.

Bha a leithid a rud ri rèiteach ann. A nis 'se rud a th'anns a rèiteach a th'air a dhol a mach a fasan ann an Uidhist. 'Se glè bheag a tha pòsadh an diugh a tha deanamh rèiteach idir, ged a tha feadhainn ann 'ga chumail suas fhathast. Faodaidh sinn cuideachd iomradh a dheanamh air mar a bha na càraidean a taghadh a chèile aig an àm a bha sin. Mar bu trice, nuair a bhiodh fear airson pòsadh, shealladh e timchioll air air feadh nam boireannach a bh'anns a nàbachd aige fhein, feuch cò an tè bu fhreagarraiche a chitheadh e air a shon fhèin. Mur a deònaicheadh i sin a phòsadh, cha bhiodh ann ach gum feuchadh e tè eile, agus mu stadadh e gheibheadh e tè. 'S ann gu math ainneamh a bhiodh duine a dol a mach as a' choimhearsneachd aige fhèin anns an àm ud a dh'iarraidh mnathadh.

Bha na daoine – fireannaich agus boireannaich pailt gu leòr anns an dùthaich, cha robh na boireannaich a falbh a dh'iarraidh cosnaidh gu Galldachd an uair ud mar a tha iad an duigh, agus mar sin bha an sluagh gu math na bu liònmhoire. Bha àiteachan ann an Uidhist 's an àm ud agus dà theaghlach air feadhainn dhe na croitean.

Nuair a bhiodh fear don teaghlach a pòsadh, thogadh e taigh dha fhèin agus dhan bhean òig air pìos eile dhen chroit, agus rachadh iad a dh'fhuireach ann a sin. A nis, bha gu leòr ann a bha a suirighe agus a deanamh suas ri chèile cuideachd, ach bha an seòrsa eile gu math pailt air a shon sin.

Nuair a bhiodh iad a suirighe anns an àm sin, 's ann mar bu trice ann an taigh a'bhoireannaich a bhiodh am fireannach, agus bha gu leòr do chaithris na h-oidhche a dol air adhart.

A nis, ged a bhiodh e suirighe air nighinn agus e eòlach gu leòr oirre, agus fios aige cuideachd gu robh i deònach a phòsadh, dh'fheumadh e an toiseach a'"dhol 'ga h-iarraidh." Bha a toil fhèin aige ri fhaotainn ann an làrach fhianuisean, agus cuideachd toil a h-athar. Chan e e fhèin a bhiodh a deanamh na h-iarraidh idir. Dheanadh e suas ri araide dha fhèin, an oidhche a bha e am beachd a dhol a dh'iarraidh a bhoireannaich, agus gheibheadh iad gnothaichean air dòigh ar rèir sin. Dh'fheumadh e botul uisge-bheatha fhaotainn co-dhiubh, agus nuair a thigeadh an oidhche a chaidh a chur air leth, dh'fhalbhadh e fhèin agus am fear bha còmhla ris, agus ruigeadh iad taigh a' bhoireannaich.

Mar bu trice, bhiodh fios aig muinntir an taighe gu robh e a tighinn a cheart oidhche bha seo, agus bhiodh gnothaichean deiseil aca air an coinneamh. Bhiodh an nighean a bha e tighinn a dh'iarraidh air a còmhdach anns an aodach a b'fheàrr a bhiodh aice, agus an còrr do mhuinntir an taighe air a rèir sin. Ach cha bhiodh sin mar sin ach far am biodh fear is tè a bha a deanamh suas ri chèile greis roimhe sin. Am fear a rachadh a dh'iarraidh tè air an eanalas, cha bhiodh deisealachadh sam bith roimhe, a chionn cha bhiodh dad a dh'fhios aig muinntir an taighe, neo aig a nighean fhèin gu robh e ruighinn.

Co-dhiubh, nuair a ruigeadh e fhèin agus a charaide taigh a' bhoireannaich, rachadh iad a staigh. Theireadh iad greis ann a sin an toiseach a bruidhinn 's a seanchas. Gheibheadh bean-an-taighe biadh air dòigh agus chuireadh i gu bòrd iad. Rachadh dram a chur mun cuairt, agus dh'innseadh caraide an fhir a bha 'g iarraidh na h-ighinn an turus air a robh iad. Bheireadh a h-athar dha cead a nighean a phòsadh mu bha i fhèin deònach, agus rachadh beagan uaireannan a chur seachad ann a sin le dram is òrain. Dheanadh iad suas an uairsin an oidhche bhiodh rèiteach ann.

Ann an àiteachean 's e "còrdadh" a chanadh iad ris a cheud oidhche – an oidhche bhiodh an duine agus a charaide ag iarraidh a' bhoireannaich. Agus os déigh a' chòrdaidh bha a rèiteach a tighinn. Ann an àiteachan eile bha an còrdadh agus a rèiteach air a ghabhail na aon rud. Agus tric gu leòr ann an Uibhist cuideachd, 's ann aig a rèiteach a bhiodh caraide an duine ag iarraidh toil a' bhoireannaich agus a h-athar.

. . .

Nuair a chruinnicheadh na daoine, rachadh an cur gu bòrd. B'e seo bòrd a' rèiteach. Bhiodh feadhainn air an taghadh air son suidhe aig a' bhòrd seo, càirdean is daoine dhen t-seòrsa sin. Agus 's ann aig a' bhòrd seo a dh'innseadh caraide an fhir a bha dol a phòsadh an reusan anns an robh iad cruinn air an oidhche seo. Bha athair na h-ighinn a toirt seachad a chead agus a bheannachd dhan chàraid òg an sin a breith air làmhan air a chèile agus bha dram ga chur mun cuairt, agus a chuile duine timchioll a' bhùird ag òl deoch-slàinte na càraid òg a bha a dol a phòsadh.

[There was such a thing as a *rèiteach*. Now the *rèiteach* has gone out of fashion in Uist. Very few who get married today have a *rèiteach*, though some people still keep it up. We may mention how the couples chose each other at that time. Usually, when a man wished to get married he would look around among the women who were in his own neighbourhood, to see which one was most suitable for himself. If she was not willing to marry him, he just had to try another one and in the end he would find one. Very seldom did a man go out of his own neighbourhood at that time to find a wife.

Men and women were plentiful enough in the country; women did not go to the Lowlands to seek work as they do today, and so the population was more numerous. There were places in Uist at that time where two families lived on some of the crofts.

When a man in the family was going to marry he would build a house for himself and his young wife on part of the croft and they would go to live there. Now there were several who were courting and going out together as well, but nevertheless there was the other kind [of marriage] as well.

At that time when they were courting it was usually at the woman's house that the man was to be found, and there was plenty of late-night revelry going on.

Now, though a man who was courting was well-acquainted with the girl and knew that

she was willing to marry him, he had first of all to ask for her hand. He had to get her own acceptance in the presence of witnesses and also her father's consent. He himself did not do the asking. He arranged with one of his friends which night he intended to go for the woman and they planned things accordingly. He had to get a bottle of whisky anyway – and on the night that had been decided he and the friend who was going with him would set off for the woman's house.

Usually the people in the house knew beforehand that he was coming that very night, and things would be prepared for him. The girl for whom he was coming would be dressed in her best clothes, and the rest of the household accordingly. But that was the case only when the man and the woman had been going out together a while before that. The man who went for the girl 'on spec' had no preparations made for him because neither the household nor the girl had any knowledge of his coming.

However, when he and his friend reached the house they went in. First of all they spent a while talking and discoursing. The woman of the house would prepare food and invite them to the table. A dram would be passed around and the friend of the man who was asking for the girl would tell them the reason for their visit. Her father would give him his permission to marry the girl if she was willing, and a few hours were then passed with a dram and singing. Then they arranged a night for the *rèiteach*.

In some places the first night the man and his friend came to ask for the woman was called the *còrdadh* or agreement, and after the *còrdadh* came the *rèiteach*. In some places the *còrdadh* and the *rèiteach* were the same thing. And as often as not, in Uist as well, it was at the *rèiteach* that the man's friend would ask for the woman's and her father's acceptance.

. . .

When the people gathered they were invited to sit at the table. This was the table of the *rèiteach*. Some were chosen to sit at this table, friends and people like that. At that table the intended bridegroom's friend intimated the reason for their gathering this night. The bride's father gave his consent and his blessing to the young couple. The young couple then shook hands and a dram was passed around, and everybody at the table drank to the young couple's health.](D. J. MacDonald MS 5368–79).

This account provides evidence that a father's permission could be sought 'on spec'; on such an occasion both the girl and her family were unprepared for the visit, and the reference to a matter-of-fact 'looking around' the neighbourhood for suitable partners suggests a distinctly unsentimental attitude to the obtaining of a wife. There is also confirmation that the participants were aware of the legal implications of the *rèiteach*; the consent of the girl, *in front of witnesses*, was one of the purposes of the ritual along with obtaining the father's permission. The two stages of the ritual are also clear, as well as the element of 'replaying' in the second meeting, where the groom's representative's statement of intent, the father's consent and blessing, the couple's symbolic act of union and the communal incorporation rite are performed for the second time. The wider community is also incorporated, with all the guests having a meal and a drink at the 'table of the *rèiteach*' even if this involves several sittings.

Further confirmation that the girl and her suitor may be complete strangers is found in the following account from Cape Breton; it is also of interest that a suitor could find himself rejected.

> In a lot of cases, it might be the first time the groom had ever seen the prospective wife – and in a lot of cases it wasn't a very happy episode for the girl, but it turned out quite happily after that for most of them. [In] one particular case . . . it happened the girl had never seen the man brought before her this particular night for the Reiteach. This man had got the marriage garb to marry another, and she had jilted him. It was the custom then the man bought the apparel for his wife to be married in along with his own . . . but the young fellows wanted to have the wedding, by hook or by crook . . . so they concocted a scheme to take him another night and ask for the hand of a girl he had never met ('Reiteach': 21–2).

The following song, also from Cape Breton, captures the atmosphere surrounding a matchmaking visit.

Mo Rùn an Cailin

Air faill ill eó 's na hó ro hù o
Hiùraibh o 's na hó ro hù o
Faill ill eó 's na hó ro hù o
Rùn nan cailin 's gura tù i

Latha dhomh 's mi falbh 'nam ònar
Suibhal gharbhlach agus mòinteach,
Nuair rànaig mise 's gun mi eòlach
Chaidh mi thaigh nan daoine còire.

Labhair bean an taighe coibhneil
'C ò as a thànaig an strainnsear?
Deanaibh suidhe 's lasaibh coinnlean;
Bidh sinn cridheil ré na h-oidhcheadh.'

Labhair mise mar bu dual dhomh
Ann am briathran sìobhalt', suairce,
'C'àit' a nist a bheil a' ghruagach
Fhuair sinn cliù oirr' mun do ghluais sinn?'

'Fhir an taighe na biodh sprochd ort,
Cha tànaig sinne gun bhotal;
Co-dhiu gheobh 's nach fhaigh sinn tochradh
Cha bhi deur air clàr nach cosg sinn'.

'Bhithinn dhut mar bhiodh do mhàthair,
'S cinnteach mi gum biodh i blàth riut.
Thréiginn mo chinneadh 's mo chàirdean
'S reachainn leat thar chuain am màireach'.

[*The Pick of the Young Girls*

Air faill ill eó 's na hó ro hù o
Hiùraibh o 's na hó ro hù o

Faill ill eó 's na hó ro hù o
Of all the young girls you're the favourite.

One day as I walked alone
Over rough country and moors,
Arriving in an unfamiliar place
I went to call on the kindly people.

The woman of the house addressed me kindly,
'Where has the stranger come from?
Have a seat and light the candles;
We'll spend the night in good cheer.'

I replied according to hereditary custom
In words both mannerly and friendly,
'Where is the young girl
Whose praises we heard before we set out?'

'My good host, be not dejected
For we have not arrived without a bottle.
Whether or not we obtain a dowry
We won't leave a single drop on the table.'

'I'd treat you as would your mother;
And surely she regards you warmly.
I would leave behind my clan and relations
And cross the ocean with you tomorrow.'][7]

Although it is not clear whether the matchmaker is alone or accompanied by his charge, we may note that the place he travels to is unfamiliar and he is greeted as a stranger. The characterisation of the visitors as 'strangers' may, however, be a convention. The visit is not made 'on spec', as information, in the form of 'praises' was available to the groom's side beforehand. The reference to 'hereditary speech' clearly alludes to a particular social 'script' appropriate to the situation, and although negotiations, including the discussion of a dowry, would not appear to be conducted allegorically or even indirectly, a degree of what may be special vigilance is suggested – the employment of words 'both mannerly and friendly.' Great stress would appear to be laid on the 'kindly' and 'friendly' nature of the visit; the bringing of a bottle of whisky is, of course, mandatory, and the final stanza would appear to indicate that the bride-to-be is well-disposed to the offer.

An account in the manuscripts of Calum MacLean suggests that the suitor and his representative could be unsure of the reception awaiting them at the woman's house.

> Bho chionn ùineachan air ais 'n uair a bhitheadh feadhainn a' dol a phòsadh na paidhir a' dol a phòsadh bhiodh iad daonnan a' dol a dhèanadh rèiteach. Bha sin a' dol a choimhead air a' bhean òg anns an taigh 's an robh i, co dhiubh bha i aig seirbheis na nighean fear an taighe na an t-àite 's an robh i. Ach thachair an rud seo anns an dùthaich gu h-ìosal fodhainn a seo [i.e. Ionbhar Ruaidh]. Fear Mac Phàil a bh'ann is an tè a bha sùil aige oirre bha i aig seirbheis air taobh eile na h-aibhne. Fhuair e gille còmh ris is ràinig iad an taigh. Thuirt

e ris a' ghille gu fuirigheadh esa' a mach is esa' a dhol a staigh leis bha e gu math giar 'san teanga agus e a dh'fhaighinn a mach co dhiubh bha iad *welcome* gus nach robh. Chaidh an gille a staigh is chuir e an cèill a ghnothach. Is thuirt i ris gun gabhadh i an duine uair sam bith is thill e a mach.

"O!," thuirt e, "nach i tha *ready*".

Chaidh am pòsadh a dhèanadh ann an ùine glè ghoirid an deadhaidh sin.

[Some time ago when people were going to get married, or a couple was going to marry, they always had a *rèiteach*. That meant going to see the young woman in the house where she lived, whether she was at service or whether she was the daughter of the house, or wherever she was. But this affair happened in the country below us [i.e. Inver Roy]. He was a MacPhail, and the one he expected to marry was at service on the other side of the river. He got a lad to go with him and they arrived at the house. He told the lad that he would stay outside while he went in – he was very sharp-tongued – to find out whether they were 'welcome' or not. The lad went in and explained what his business was. And she told him that she would accept the man anytime, and he went back out.

'O,' said he, 'isn't she *ready!*'

The marriage was arranged shortly after that.] (Calum MacLean Notebook).

We note the reluctance of the suitor to enter without an indication that his presence would be welcome. This in turn suggests that the occasion could be highly charged, particularly if the young man was not well known to the woman's family. In this example, it would appear that she does not have her family around her; she is a domestic servant. Presumably her ready acceptance is, to some extent, frowned upon; although one could speculate that this had more to do with her circumstances than any defect in her character. Unfortunately, we are not told who 'defends her' or negotiates the marriage in the absence of her own father.

The following example, from the same source, again indicates how, despite the distinctly unsentimental approach, passions ran high when it came to the personal honour of the suitor:

Bha tè eile dhen aon seòrsa ann na b'fhaide air n-adhart 's an dùthaich car mu na h-aon amannnan. Chaidh fear a nunn thar a' mhonaidh is gille math leis. Chaidh iad a dh'ionnsaigh taigh an duine chòir a bha seo. Dh'innis a' fear a bha leis dè an turus air a robh iad. Thug e sùil bho mhullach gu bonn air an fhear eile is e eòlach gu leòr air. "O tha sin glè mhath," thuirt e. Cha robh am boireannach aig an taigh. "Tha sin glè mhath is tha an duine glè choltach mar a h-eil giamh ann," thuirt e. Ach a' fear a chuala seo, leum e air a' chois is a mach an dorust a bha e. Is thuirt e: "Dè tha cearr ort?"

"O thuirt e gun robh giamh annam [umam]."

"Cha duirt an duine còir nicheann dhe leithid, ach thuirt e mar a robh giamh unnat [umat]."

Chaidh an rud air adhart is phòs iad ann an ùine glè ghoirid.

[There was another one of the same kind farther on in the same country, about the same time. A man went across the moor along with a good lad. They went to the worthy man's house. The man who was with him explained what their errand was. He eyed the other man from head to foot, though he knew him well enough.

'O, that is very good,' he said. The woman was not at home. 'That is very good, and the man is very suitable unless there is any defect in him,' he said.

But the man who heard this leapt to his feet and was out of the door.

And he said, 'What is wrong with you?'

'O, he said that I had a defect'.

'The worthy man never said such a thing, but he said *unless* there was any defect in you'.

The affair went on and they got married very shortly.] (Calum MacLean Notebook).

Although this may be viewed simply as an amusing story, the mishearing of the words produces an immediate and rather extreme response which serves to indicate that for the suitor, pride and honour were near the surface during the arduous, and potentially humiliating task of asking for a girl's hand. The father of the house exploits this to the full, looking the suitor up and down 'though he knew him well enough'.

2.2 Allegorical 'asking'

In the above examples the 'asking' is done directly, and, as we have seen, could lead to potentially unpleasant situations. The request for the girl could be framed allegorically, as the following account from Tiree illustrates, and perhaps one of the functions of this device is to provide a method of refusal which would preserve the dignity of the suitor, regardless of the outcome.

Eric Cregeen: Did they have in-between men to arrange marriages at all?

Donald Sinclair: Sometimes, yes . . . if this man were thinking of marrying this girl, his chum was coming with him, you know, a good talkative man and a clever man . . . and it was this talkative man . . . the groom-to-be took with him. It was him that was speaking first . . . In my younger days when a man was thinking of getting married he would tell a *sensible* man in the neighbourhood, and 'will you come with me to ask the hand of the lady?' This old witty man would go with him, and he would have a bottle of whisky of course, and maybe the old man of the house knew well enough their purpose. This old man that the bride-to-be [sic] took with him, he would turn around and he says to the old man, 'I heard that you had such and such a thing in the house'. The old man of the house would say 'Yes'. Well this man that's along wi' me is asking you will you give him that thing'. The old man in the house was *sensible* enough and he would say, 'Yes. By all means he will get whatever he asks of me. Whatever I manage to give him, there will be no refusal'. So they knew all then what happened and what was going on. And the man that was speaking on behalf of the bride they would come out with a bottle and ask for glasses. And then the young lady of the house was preparing a feast (Donald Sinclair SA 1968/247 B7, 248 A1).

The indirect nature of the request and consent is clear; the girl is represented by a 'thing' or object possessed by the father; the go-between has 'smoothed' the way for a favourable request for it by the suitor. The father's consent, which may be the 'green

light' for a formal request by the suitor himself, is expressed in a formulaic phrase. Although there has been no open discussion, 'they all knew then what happened' and the pledge is sealed. There is a suggestion that the young man would not make his request without first knowing the attitude of the girl's father. This may be seen as an important function of the matchmaker; the provision of a mechanism whereby the possibilty of conflict between the two parties is avoided.

In another account, the informant describes an allegorical exchange in more detail:

> Bha an duine seo dol a phòsadh agus 's ann a mhuinntir baile a's a' bhaile seo a bha an tè a bha e dol a phòsadh, agus 's e ban-Ileach a bh'innte air taobh a h-athar agus a màthar, faodaidh mi ràdh cuideachd, ach bha i air a togail ann an Tireadh. Agus 's e seo an tè bha an duine dol a phòsadh. Agus bha posta làmh ris a' fantail, agus bàrd a bha 's a' phosta cuideachd. Bha e fhèin 's am bàrd, am posta mòr aig a' chèile, 's dh'innis e don phosta gu robh e dol a phòsadh. "An tèid thu còmhla rium?" ars esan, "a dh'iarraidh a' bhoireannaich?"
>
> "Thèid," ars am posta.
>
> Dh'fhalbh iad le chèile a dh'ionnsaidh taigh a' bhodaich a bha seo. Shuidh iad aig teine 'gan garadh. Agus Dhia!, bha am bodach Ileach a chaidh iad far a robh e, bha e gleusta gu leòr cuideachd. Thuig e gu math gu dè bha dol a ghabhail àite. Ach thuirt am posta . . . 'Se saor a bh'ann gu ciùird, "Tha mi trang ag obair air a leithid seo de rud a dhèanamh," ars esan, "agus chuala mi," ars esan, "gu robh maide agaibh-sa, agus nan creiceadh sibh . . . nan toireadh sibh dhomh e," ars esan, "maide eile agam fhìn," thuirt esan, "a dh'fhaotas e."
>
> "Bheir mi sin," ars am bodach eile. "Gheibh thu agamsa maide gun teagamh, agus tha mi glè chinnteach nach eil a' dry-rotten ann. Cha chuir e dragh ort ri d'mhaireann."
>
> 'S math tha cuimhnam air banais na tè nach robh dry-rotten innte! Cha d'fhuair mi leithid a chearcan riamh nam bheatha agus a fhuair mi aig a' bhanais sin.
>
> [This man was going to get married and the girl he was going to marry belonged to a village in this township, and she was an Islay girl on her father's side – and on her mother's too, I may say, but she was brought up in Tiree. And this was the one the man was going to marry. And there was a postman staying near him, and the postman was a poet as well. He and the poet . . . the postman – were friendly, and he told the postman that he was going to get married.
>
> 'Will you go with me,' says he, 'to ask for the girl?'
>
> 'Yes,' says the postman.
>
> They went off together to this old man's house. They sat down at the fire to warm themselves. And God! the old man from Islay whom they went to see he was pretty cunning too. Fortunately, he understood what was going to take place. But the postman – he was a joiner to trade – he said, 'I'm busy working at such and such a thing,' says he, 'and I am short' says he, 'of wood, and I heard,' says he, 'that you had a piece of timber, and if you would sell or give me it,' says he, 'I'd be much obliged to you. 'I will indeed,' says the other old man. 'You will certainly get a piece of wood from me, and I am very sure that there is no dry-rot in it. It will not bother you as long as you live.' I well remember the wedding of the one who had no dry-rot in her! I never in my life got as many hens as I got at that wedding.] (Donald Sinclair, Tiree. SA 1968/248.A1).

It will be noted the the matchmaker is a mobile member of the community – the postman – as well as a 'poet' and a joiner to trade. As well as the obvious symbolism of the two halves of the 'couple', and their union providing mutual support for a 'roof over their heads', the interdependence of the two families, and the community in general, is emphasised in the father's willingness to help the 'buyer' at his door. The tradition of mutual aid, or 'thigging', is an ancient one. A seventeenth century observer notes:

> To thig is to beg assistance of Friends which is very ordinary among persons of every Quality. Men thig horses and corn; women thig cows, sheep and goats. When young men of the common sort are to plenish they thig corn, both in seed time and harvest. (Kirkwood: 76).

J. L. Campbell adds a reference to the poem *Mor an feidhm freagairt na bhfaighdheach*; 'to answer the demands for aid . . . is a big effort' (Watson: 66–81). Besides the assistance extended to the unlucky crofter 'thiggin the seed', Walter Gregor (1881: 88, 178) notes that the tradition also applied to a young man setting up a farm, where 'it was usual for friends and neighbours to lend a helping hand. Aid was given in ploughing . . . they contributed at least part of the grain to sow the fields.' This may lend meaning to the nature of the enquiry at the door of the girl, when those outside appeal for help in the completion or donation of some object connected with 'building a house' or agriculture. Gregor also notes the practice in connection with weddings; 'in the interval between the final contract of marriage and its celebration the young women were busy getting in order all her *providan*[8] for her future home. One or more days were given to the *thiggin* of wool from her friends and neighbours. The informant knew of no other approach other than asking for the other half of a couple. Another account of this method of asking is provided by Morag MacLeod:

> When the company has had a dram out of the bottle, tea follows, after which the friend contrives to introduce the subject of their visit, in the best form possible. If he is a man of wit, or eloquence, he has the advantage in the use of these gifts, in discharging his delicate task . . . After a few words by way of introduction, the friend went on thus:- 'We have been building a house, and have got it all ready for the roofing, but we find we are short of the leg of a couple, to match another we have already got. We know you have got such a thing to spare, and as we are wishful to have the best that can be had, and being assured of the good quality of those you have got beside you, we have come to request the favour from you. If you can see your way to oblige us, you will contribute greatly to our house and to our happiness.' The girl's father replied in such terms as he considered suitable, signifying his willingness to meet their request. Thereupon, the suitor's friend (having an eye to the *tochar*), further said, 'We are very much obliged to you, and highly delighted to get the couple leg, but, of course, it will be somewhat expensive to take it out of here, and place it where it is to be put, besides, that afterwards, everything would require to be kept in a condition worthy of the excellent couple, that are to be over the house.' When the consent of the parents or guardians of the girl has been obtained, the *dram* is put round again, and the young couple are betrothed, by taking each other's hand, retaining the hold, while they

> share the glass between them. The glass having been handed to the young woman first, she drinks a portion of it and then hands it to the young man who drinks what she has left (Morag MacLeod 375–76).

This account suggests how complex and flexible the allegorical exchange could be; the suitor's representative first praises the 'quality' of the stock in the father's possession, then, once consent has been obtained, shifts his emphasis to the tocher – the expense of relocating the goods and the future 'condition' of their joint project. This clearly shows that it was possible to discuss another potential source of conflict – the dowry – allegorically. In his stressing of the father's role in ensuring the future prosperity of the pair, the device of the 'couples' as symbolising marriage as joint work and mutual aid can be seen to apply both to the young people about to be united and to the two families, who are also embarking on a future together. The 'couples' motif occurs again in an account in the Dewar Manuscripts of an encounter on the mainland:

> There were, some time, persons of the Clan Vicar dwelling in a place called Dail-chruinneachd, in Glen Ara, and they were desirous that their son should marry the daughter of a man of the Mackellars, who dwelt in Mam in Glen Shira. Young Mackellar in Kilblaan was courting the same maiden. Macvicar of Dail-chruinneachd and his son and others along with them went to see if a marriage arrangement could be made between young Macvicar and the maiden . . . They knocked at the door and Mackellar cried, 'Who is there at the door?' Macvicar replied, 'A friend. Let us in'. Mackellar said, 'If you are friends I will let you in,' so he opened the door and let them in . . . One of those that accompanied Macvicar took a bottle of whisky out of his pocket and said to the goodwife, 'Have you a quaich?' She said, 'Yes,' and she got a quaich for him. He filled the quaich and offered it to her, saying, 'Here, goodwife, drink to us.' She said, 'But I shall know first before I drink, why I am going to drink?' Macvicar of Dail-cruinneachd said, 'We are building a house in Dail-chruinneachd and putting a couple in it; we have one side of the couple, and we have heard that Mackellar of Mam has a tree that would make the other side of the couple: so we have come to try whether he will give it to us.' Mackellar inquired of what kind of wood the half-couple that he had was. 'It is oak,' said Macvicar. 'The couple that I have,' remarked Mackellar, 'is ash, and these two kinds of wood do not fit each other. Oak lasts much longer than ash'. 'Ash,' rejoined Macvicar, 'lasts long also, if it is kept dry, but I rather suspect that your half-couple is oak too. I do not think you have looked after it properly'. The man of the bottle inquired of the good wife where Euphemia her daughter was. The goodwife replied 'Euphemia has gone to bed. What have you to say to her?' 'I wish,' said he, 'to give her a quaich-full of whisky, as it is going at all events. Where is she?' The goodwife said, 'She is in that room there then,' extending her hand in the direction of the door of the room. 'It would be better for her to rise that we might see her,' said Macvicar's son. Effie arose and put on her clothes; and the man who had the bottle and the young Macvicar took the lamp and went into the room where Effie was. The man of the bottle first gave the full of a quaich of the whisky to Effie and he conversed for a little with her in a low tone; then he went off and left herself and Macvicar together, and these were for a while speaking low and whispering to one another. During this time Dail-chruinneachd and Mam agreed about the piece of timber that was to make the half-couple.

> Young Macvicar and Effie now came out of the room and sat with the rest of the company. 'Oove, Oove! Have you got up?' said her mother to Effie. 'Yes,' said Effie. 'I have been hearing much merriment among you, and I am for having my share of it'. Said he that was putting round the whisky, 'We are for putting another couple in the house, and it is young Macvicar of Dail-chruinneachd that we are going to put in one side of it; and how would it please you, goodman and goodwife, were Effie your daughter to be the other side of the couple? Would you give her?' The old folk did not say a word. The divider of the whisky then said to the goodman, 'How would it please you, goodman, to give your daughter to the son of Macvicar of Dail-chruinneachd?' 'She is there herself,' said the goodman, 'and ask her, first, if she is willing'. Macvicar's spokesman then said to Effie, 'And are you willing yourself, Effie?' Effie replied, 'If I had the goodwill of my parents, I should be very willing myself'. Her mother rejoined, 'If you agree yourselves I will not put between you'. 'And, indeed, I will not between them either,' said her father.
>
> Then they fixed a day for the agreement, and the place they fixed on for the agreement-meeting was the top of the moor between Mam and Dail-chruinneachd, where people were wont to cast the peats.
>
> The day of the agreement had come; and the two parties . . . with their friends met at the place appointed. Each party had a horse and creels with them, carrying a cask of whisky and plenty of food. They sat on the *grianan* where they were wont to spread the peats. A round of whisky was put about, and the terms of the agreement were declared. Many words were spoken and the details of the agreement were settled in a manner satisfactory to both parties. The two young folk were brought before the company and asked if they were of their own accord willing to marry. They both said they were; and they joined hands in the presence of the company. So the agreement was made. Then they fixed the day for the marriage, and invited all those who were at the agreement to come to the wedding (Mackechnie 1: 62–4).

The story ends with a mass fight between the supporters of Mackellar of Mam, the girl's family, and those of Mackellar of Kilblaan, the family of the spurned suitor 'who had been courting . . . Effie before Macvicar'. The entry exchange at the door and the allegorical exchange take place between the two fathers. The proceedings are, however, presided over by the 'man of the bottle', the suitor's non-kin representative, who addresses the woman of the house and the girl herself, but not her father until the moment of consent. During the preliminaries the two fathers appear to be silent. This may be an example of a young man represented by two intermediaries; his father, the serious, 'male' principle, duty-bound to expressing vigour and persistence, whose verbal contribution symbolically joins the two together; the other the 'feminine'; conciliatory, more affable and sociable, whose duty is to physically bring the couple together through a 'master-of-ceremonies' role, less dependent on verbal skill than ritual expertise, for example the procuring of a quaich. Their counterparts are the girl's father, who expresses robust resistance symbolically through verbal jousting, and her mother, who acts as facilitator, physically bringing about the meeting between the two.

The girl's mother does not know why she is asked to drink; this may be true, but given that the young couple know one another, and the unusually late hour of the visit,

we may assume she has at least an inkling. Her ignorance may be formulaic; in the Borders of Scotland, on being invited to a wedding 'it was good manners to pretend that the object of their call was quite unsuspected, and the simple little fraud was kept up until the couple rose to take their leave' (Hyslop: 86).

The exchange between the fathers shows that refusal was possible within the allegorical framework; oak and ash 'do not fit each other'; in other words, it would not be a match of like with like. Macvicar's reply gives him the upper hand, and the onward movement of the encounter reveals Mackellar's objection to have been merely a ritual hindering of progress. The editor of the manuscripts is surely mistaken when he comments 'Mackellar at first does not understand what the speaker has in view' (Mackechnie 1: 291). The consent of the girl is heavily stressed, and this may be further underlined by the couple's silence when the proposition is first formally put to them allegorically. A direct question follows, which elicits the response that the girl must be asked 'first, if she is willing'. Her response is formulaic, properly deferring to her parents, who in turn offer not direct assent, which, like the girl's ready consent, may be taboo, but a passive statement of non-intervention.

This meeting is equivalent to the *rèiteach beag*, the 'agreement', *rèiteach mòr*, being fixed for a later date. It is of interest that this takes place outside, on a high, neutral space halfway between the two 'camps'. At Lochbroom, Wester Ross, the two camps observed one another with mutual suspicion:

> Owing to distance, a trysting place is arranged, where the bride's party meets the clerical celebrant. The bridegroom's house is a little further away than the bride's home from the trysting place. While the bride's party is at breakfast on the morning of the wedding day, a scout is sent out every few minutes to see what is doing at the bridegroom's house, and to guard against surprise by him and his party. The bridegroom's party in the same way are watching the bride's home. When the bride and her party set out, there immediately arises an appearance of great stir and bustle about the bridegroom's house. Presently he and his party are seen to come out, and, as though they were in hot haste to overtake the bride's party, they take a straight line through fields and over streams and fences. They do not overtake the party in front, however, but keep about two hundred yards behind. When the bride's party sits down to partake of a refreshment by the way, the pursuers still keep at the same respectful distance, and sit down to take their refreshments by themselves. While waiting for the minister at the trysting place, the two parties keep at a distance the one from the other, and even when they are obliged to approach for the performance of the ceremony, they still keep distinct. Immediately on conclusion of the ceremony by which bride and bridegroom are made one, the two parties mingle together and are associated throughout the remainder of the day's proceedings (Rev. C. Robertson, quoted in Henderson: 247–8).

In this account we will note the implicit threat of kidnap as the bride's party 'guard against surprise'. The maintenance of spatial boundaries, whether in the open air, over a threshold, or at different ends of a table, is a recurring feature of the ritual. The 'casting of the peats', it should be added, is a luck-bringing practice commonly associated with weddings and 'such as goes about any other work as Hunting, Fishing &c.' (Kirkwood:

60). Although the supposed dispute surrounding the material suitable for the 'couples' is between oak and ash, other evidence suggests that the choice of wood may have a greater significance than is at first apparent. In describing the construction of a 'black-house', Alexander MacDonald states that 'the couplings were a certain crooked form of tree from the forest, called "na suidheachan", or "na maideanceamhail" ' (Alexander MacDonald: 48). *Suidhe* is the 'beam or supporter of a house'; *maidesuidhe* is 'the couple of a house' and *suidheachadh* has the meaning 'settling, arbitration, betrothing, arranging terms of marriage' (Dwelly: 913). This may explain why the couples were closely associated with weddings, quite apart from the more obvious symbolism of joint work. It was also held that roofing materials must not touch the ground when they are being transported; a further indication of their special status (Henderson: 306). A similar taboo surrounded the carrying of the whisky used for sealing the agreement, which must not be allowed to fall, and the holy water used for sprinkling in the house (Henderson: 306). There may also be a link between the couples and the sacred 'need-fire' or virgin flame, produced by friction between two pieces of wood. The ritual kindling 'was one of the main ceremonies at the great fire-festivals [and] the most potent of all charms to circumvent the powers of darkness, and was resorted to in any imminent or actual calamity, or to ensure success in any important undertaking' (MacNeill 1: 59).

Thomas Pennant, in his *Tour in Scotland* of 1769 describes another hill-betrothal similar to that described in the Dewar Manuscripts:

> The courtship of the highlander . . . after privately obtaining the consent of the fair, he formally demands of the father. The lover and his friends assemble on a hill allotted for that purpose and one of them is dispatched to obtain permission and wait upon the daughter; if he is sucessfull, he is again sent to invite the father and his friends to ascend the hill and partake of a whisky cask, which is never forgot: the lover advances, takes his future Father-in-law by the hand, and plights his troth, and the Fair-one is surrendered up to him (Pennant 1769: 160).

The hill 'allotted for that purpose' is most likely a sacred mound, common all over the country, and the site for regular assemblies, the performance of religious rites, the enacting of laws and punishment. The courts of the Brehons, judges, were held on the side of the hill. These sacred lands were the *neimheadh*, 'the name given to a Druidical grove in which there was a stone shrine, a magic tree or well, or a fairy mound' (MacNeill 1: 56). We may compare this with the ancient sanctuary and assembly place of Tailltiu in Ireland, linked with sacred and secular marriage. The latter were celebrated at the *Tulach na Coibche*, the 'mound of the buying', where the bride-price was paid, and where irregular marriages continued until 1770 (Westropp: 121). Moorland between two communities was also used for betrothals; a Reverend Lamont of Strath reported that 'so notable for matchmaking was a moor between Strath and Sleat, that on the O.S. map it is still called *Airidh na suiridh*, the bothy of lovemaking'.[9] The following account describes another Highland betrothal of the eighteenth century, where the notion of the two camps being in a state of military readiness is made explicit.

> The marriage contracts of the Highlanders were settled in a singular manner. The men of both families assembled, attended by a number of their friends, and the chieftain or landlord was commonly present to do honour to his dependants. While it was the custom to go armed on all occasions, they sometimes went to the place of meeting in a sort of military parade, with pipers playing before them. A hill or rising ground was always chosen for this purpose, generally halfway between the parties. As soon as the bridegroom and his retinue appeared, an embassy was despatched to them from the other party, demanding to know their errand, and whether they meant peace or war. The messenger was told in turn that they attended their friend, who came to demand a maid in marriage, naming the young woman. This being reported, her father and those of his attendants who were advanced in years went aside and considered the demand in form, though that matter was commonly settled beforehand. After weighing the young man's circumstances and connections, they sent to let him know that her father agreed to the match. This, however, produced a second message from the bridegroom, intimating that he expected a portion with the bride, upon which a conference was proposed and accepted. The two companies joined, and many compliments passed between them . . . business began . . . there was no small address shown, and much time spent, in adjusting the articles; though, perhaps, a parcel of sheep or goats, a few cows, or a horse or two, were the subject in dispute . . . A people who transact their business verbally are commonly more tenacious of their word than those among whom writ or oath is requisite. In such a case a breach of promise would subject the party that failed to infamy and shame. And besides, in the Highlands, where the laws were little powerful, he would have been liable to private vengeance . . . (Allerdyce 2: 418–9).

We note the ritual quality of the supposed martial encounter; although the principal business is 'commonly settled beforehand', the bride's family demand to know why the groom's party have assembled, and what their intentions are. This is reminiscent of ritual formulas previously noted, and we suspect this meeting amounts to a conspicuously public, and rather grand, 'replaying' of the earlier, more intimate encounter. The posture of the bride's side is one of strength; it is they who ask if it is to be peace or war, knowing, of course, that in this contest it is they who must inevitably 'lose'. We may compare the structure of the encounter with the dialogues described above; there is a form of dialogue between the intermediaries of the two camps which takes place at a neutral venue with a 'safe' distance between the two parties. Communication is through intermediaries, and the whole conducted in the idiom of the preliminary to a battle. In this ritual 'tug-of-war', honour dictates that the bride's party make a strong showing; and it is just this – a show which presupposes an equality which in reality does not exist. The groom's party will carry off the prize; the only 'dispute' lies in the number of sheep or goats to be 'adjusted'.

With regard to agreements in more modern times, Isabel Grant (363) notes of the *rèiteach* 'this interview is nowadays a pleasant formality but there are older traditions of hard bargaining and the interview sometimes took place outside and was attended by a number of male kinsfolk'.

Promises are also recorded as being exchanged in another liminal space; handfasting

through a holed stone where the man made his choice solely on the appearance of the woman's hand (Westropp: 125). Holed stones also feature in secular marriage in Scotland; Rogers notes that:

> lovers pledged themselves to mutual fidelity by joining hands through the perforated Stone of Odin, near Loch Stennis, in Orkney. Even elders of the Church recognised the sacredness of the vow. The married women of Srathearn passed their hands through the holes of the bore stone of Gask, to obtain children (Rogers: 215).

Another liminal space, the joining of two rivers, is also noted in connection with handfasting. Guthrie (46) observes 'a spot at the junction of waters known as the black and white Esk, was remarkable in former times for an annual fair . . . it was customary for the unmarried of both sexes to choose a companion, according to their fancy, with whom to live until that time next year'. Vows were also exchanged across running water: 'When the damsel had accepted her lover's offer, the pair proceeded to the nearest stream, and there washing their hands in the current, vowed constancy with their hands clasped across the brook' (Rogers: 111). Buying and selling may also have taken place over a liminal space; for example, it was held that a bargain made over running water was indissoluble, and in the following description it would appear that a threshold was the location: 'In buying a Horse the Seller holds him by the Bridle without and the Buyer within with a wisp in his hand, which the seller giveth him going sun-gate about [deiseal]' (Kirkwood: 62).

The following account of a *rèiteach* from Marion MacLeod of Lewis describes the couple being united across the centre of a table, the space carefully delineated, as in earlier examples:

> At the *rèiteach* the prospective bridegroom chose a speaker from the community, usually a friend, to ask the bride's father for the daughter's hand in marriage. At the actual *rèiteach* a long table was prepared which stretched the whole length of the house. The prospective bride and groom sat at opposite ends of the table at the head. After grace was said, the prospective bride and groom were told to stand up and clasp hands across the table while the *gille-suiridhich*, that was the man who spoke for the groom, addressed the bride's father asking him if he had any objections to the marriage taking place. On being told that everything was approved there was great applause.[10]

The search for the other half of a 'couple' is an example of the 'incomplete object' device; other motifs are noted below. Morag MacLeod knows of another example, although without detail:

> A person well-known for his wit (usually an old man) was chosen to represent the groom, and another to represent the bride's parents. I wish I could remember details of one in Scalpay when the ploy was that a weaver was looking for yarn with which to finish the tweed he was making (MacLeod: 384).

Accounts from elsewhere in Scotland provide further evidence of the 'asking' conducted in the idiom of buying and selling, or thigging, though not employing the 'incomplete object' device. Peigi Grant, born in Sheildaig, Torridon, describes her memory of the procedure at a betrothal:

> The *rèiteach* was as big a thing as the wedding . . . but I don't think they were such open affairs. I think they were friends of the bride and bridegroom that went to the *rèiteach*. It was to ask the father for the bride, for his consent . . . they approached it in an out of the way habit. They said 'I believe you have a very precious jug' or something in the house like that, and they would go on arguing about this jug, or a car, or something they had. They would never say the girl first – until the whole thing was ironed out and came to an agreement. And then the bride was taken out. I think she was in the other room, and she was taken in and handed to the man . . . And there was singing . . . a little party (Bennett: 141–2).

Although it is not explicitly stated, the most likely interpretation of this account is that the young man's party came to negotiate for the possession of the 'jug' or other object. The 'thing' that needed to be 'ironed out' was surely the financial or material arrangements; in this case what was effectively a 'bride-price'. It is to be noted that the girl is hidden, as in many other European analogues, and that she is brought out and symbolically handed over, signifying nothing less than a change in ownership. The informant stresses that 'they would never say the girl first'; a clear indication of the taboo surrounding any direct reference to the main parties involved. It is of interest that the informant mentions the possibility of using a car to stand for the girl; a remark which places the existence of the ritual firmly in the twentieth century.

An account from 1895 by Constance Taylor describes the custom in Ullapool where the young man's party arrive expressing the wish to buy an animal. They are shown a 'selection'; a dramatic sequence which corresponds to a wider tradition of the ritual refusing of 'false brides':

> The betrothal takes place some weeks before the time fixed for the marriage. The relations and friends assemble at the house of the bride's father: and last of all the bride-groom arrives in the character of a would-be purchaser of a cow or a sheep. He is assured that he has come to the right place to have his want supplied; and one by one the sisters and young friends of the bride are presented to him, he making a point of finding some fault with every one, until at length the bride herself appears, when he declares himself entirely satisfied and anxious to conclude the bargain. Whisky is then brought in, and two glasses of it are poured out for the couple, the woman only raising the glass to her lips, while the man empties them both. A man not a native of the place gave me lately a different version of this custom, in which the bridegroom, instead of coming to buy, comes to seek a lost lamb (Taylor: 94).

We may note from this account a ritual sealing of the contract which differs from most in that the girl merely *pretends* to drink from the glass. This strikes the observer as surprising; the sharing of the cup is a powerful symbol, and it seems that most probably the girl would have been obliged to drink, her avoidance tantamount to an insulting

refusal. It may be that the custom had changed in the more temperate Victorian era, or that the author was sparing the reader the blushes which would doubtless accompany an account of what may have been considered un-ladylike behaviour.

We will also note that Constance Taylor mentions use of the 'lost animal' formula in another district. This introduces another of the allegorical devices associated with the *rèiteach.* Symington Grieve describes the tradition on Colonsay and Oronsay:

> A short time before the couple intend to get married, the prospective bridegroom makes an appointment to meet the parents of the bride at their house to obtain their consent. Upon the night that is fixed, a company generally attends at the home of the wooer. When he starts upon his errand he has old shoes and burning peat thrown after him for good luck. He generally attends the place of meeting with several of his friends. Upon their arrival they are asked to be seated. Then one of the young man's party begins by informing the parents of the young woman that they have come a long way in search of something their young friend has lost. It might be a quey, or a hog, and he would express the hope that he might find it where they then were. It is now the turn of a friend of the parents of the young woman to speak. He would ask what kind of marks were upon the beast they had lost. This information having been given, the friend of the parents would reply that there was a stray beast among their stock, and that they would produce it to see if they could identify it. The stray beast was then introduced, who was one of a number of young women who had come to join in the fun. The lady was severely criticised by the would-be bridegroom and his friends. One lady after another is produced and criticised in the same way and set aside, until at last the right lady is brought forward, when no fault is found with her and she receives nothing but praise. The betrothal then took place, the young man, taking the right hand of the young woman, gave her a kiss which sealed the engagement. The future bride then sat down beside her young man at a table among her friends (Grieve 2: 280).

In this example, non-kin representatives begin the ritual, the young man's spokesman employing the motif of the 'long journey' as well as the 'lost animal' formula. The request for a description requires the expression in zoomorphic terms of the girl's distinguishing features. The family affirm the presence of a 'stray'; the girl is evidently already in transitional state, that is to say agreement has already been reached, and on this 'night fixed' she is presented as an alien creature who does not belong in their 'stock'. After the refusal of the 'false brides', she signifies the joining of the young man's 'stock' by taking her place beside him. The refusal sequence is 'fun'; the other women have come to the house to 'join in', and it is not only the young man's representative who 'severely criticises' but the would-be bridegroom himself. The rejected women are 'produced', perhaps by the girl's representative, and 'set aside'; presumably remaining in the room to form a growing audience at this dramatic show of verbal skill. The 'right lady' is found to be beyond criticism and is praised by all.

Grieve confirms the suggestion made above that secular marriage existed partly as a result of the lack of clergy to carry out a religious service. The islanders choice of location is also significant:

> After the Reformation, when there were no clergy of any persuasion in Colonsay and Oronsay, the people had to devise other means of tying the nuptial knot . . . instead of continuing to use one or other of the old churches which were still standing [they] took the strange course of reverting to what was probably the custom in pre-Christian times. It may have been that among the islanders there was a strong element of the Cruithne who may never have entirely abandoned their claim as magicians, as descendants of the Tuatha de Danann. It was with that people that the green mounds of sand, known as *Sithean*, were associated originally . . . it is therefore not very surprising that the people of the islands living in a superstitious age threw overboard the teaching and practice of the Christian Church. They could think of no way more binding upon the individual, as regards marriage, than to have it celebrated in a site supposed to be the dwelling place of the mysterious people. It was a distinct reversion towards paganism, but it was accepted and adhered to until the beginning of last century . . . The spot chosen for these island marriages was at Sithean Mor, Ardskenish, Colonsay, which was the largest mound of a group of three. As far as I can ascertain, the custom regarding the going to the Sithean Mor was similar to what now prevails in going to or from the church. However, the actual ceremony at the Sithean, without priest or parson, was simplicity itself. The man and woman married themselves by publically agreeing in the presence of their friends to take each other as man and wife. Such a ceremony would be quite valid in Scotland in the present time (Grieve 2: 326–7).

This description is further evidence that sacred mounds were used for marriages, and Grieve asserts that this was revived between the mid-sixteenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries. We may speculate that the betrothal custom described above also formed part of the pre-Christian marriage rites, and that while the location of the public declaration may have shifted, the betrothal remained an essential and more intimate, binding 'pre-contract', which was, in a sense, 'replayed' in front of the whole community at a later meeting. This arrangement thus resembles analogues outlined above where a public 're-asking' followed a private, but perhaps equally binding agreement.

Another allegorical device found in connection with the *rèiteach* is that of the 'transplanted object'; the girl is requested to form part of the 'stock' of the young man's party. Dolly Wallace from Harris, interviewed by Margaret Bennett, recalls the tradition, which she revived for the wedding of her daughter in 1985:

> **DW:** What I remember about it is it was an informal gathering where the bride's hand was asked for in marriage. A third party asked . . . He talked about something quite different. He didn't ask for the woman. When Morag's *rèiteach* was here Iain MacDonald from Milivaig asked for her hand, it was a ewe lamb . . . He got up and he said that he had heard that Jim [her father] had a ewe lamb that was inclined to stray, and that he would be glad to take the ewe lamb off his hands and put it into a safer place, and that we wouldn't need to worry about the ewe lamb then because it would be in his own fold as it were. Jim replied 'Yes', he was quite happy to let him have the ewe lamb because he knew it was going into good hands.
>
> **MB:** Back to the first *rèiteach* that you were at in Harris, can you remember what was asked for there?
>
> **DW:** No!, but it was something on the same lines. He would have – whatever it was he

> had asked for, a boat or whatever was the case, he would have replied that he had this boat that had never been used by anybody else . . . and that he was welcome to take her, and sail her in calm waters . . . I suppose it goes by the trade of the bride's family. I was at one earlier but I was only eight. And that was my cousin that was getting married . . . It ran along the same lines. Her father was asked for the bride and he replied 'Yes'. Now I'm sure it was a sheep that was asked for there; he was a crofter (Bennett: 98).

The motif of the 'ewe lamb which strays' may suggest a perception of the young woman as having begun the process of moving towards the 'fold' of another; a state of transition, explicitly linked with danger, or as we shall see, the notion of being 'unsettled'. Alternatively, it may reflect a personality trait; a rebellious spirit, for example. The allegorical device is flexible enough to permit both readings; the articulation of the mingled resistance and anxiety of leaving the safety of the family, common to many examples above; or as a device which reveals information specific to the individual context. These two interpretations could, of course, occur simultaneously. Similarly, the 'boat which has never been sailed' enables the girl's virginity to be affirmed without the offence such intimate enquiry would cause if directly expressed. The allegorical device in the *rèiteach* provides the vehicle for the communication of this delicate information without the young man's party being obliged to request it; an enquiry which, even in past centuries, could easily have been construed as a grave insult to the whole family. The girl's father can also use the formula as a way to warn the suitor that he expects the destination to be 'calm'; an expression, perhaps, of kin solidarity which will follow the girl wherever she is 'sailed'. It is plausible that the 'boat never sailed' could mean 'never married'; but since remarriage was rare in Highland society until recent times, this reading must be considered unlikely.

Another device noted is the suitor's party presenting themselves as travellers seeking accommodation. Alexander MacDonald describes the betrothal custom in Glenmoriston:

> Our wedding of the olden time was invariably preceded by the 'contract' – an institution of long standing and great importance. This function took place in the house of the bride's father, to which the bridegroom and a small party of chosen friends repaired, usually on a certain appointed Friday evening . . . One of the party, probably a near relative, introduced himself and his companions as wanderers, seeking a night's lodgings, and the bride's father, if matters were agreeable to all concerned, received the would-be strangers hospitably. In due time a mere form of contract was entered into by the prospective bride and bridegroom, in the course of which proceeding they for the first time that evening saw each other. On those occasions, as a general custom, there was excellent cheer, all of which was supposed to be provided by the bridegroom. It was not common to have a dance at those contracts, but songs were sung, tales were told, and there was also much good-natured fun (MacDonald, Alexander: 144).

Although the girl's father is expecting the visit, it having been 'appointed' in advance, the suitor and his supporters present themselves as strangers. We may note that the

groom-to-be has a spokesman, and does not make the request for entry himself. Entry would appear to be conditional on 'matters' being 'agreeable to all concerned', which itself presupposes that refusal was a possibility. This mode of 'asking', since it takes place on the threshold, is much more in the character of an entry ritual than the allegorical devices outlined above, where entry itself is not explicitly requested; indeed, in many it seems to have been a foregone conclusion. The motif of the 'wanderers' is, however, as flexible as other devices; if negotiations fail, the father could conceivably state that there was no room inside for the party, and they could thus be turned away without causing offence. One feels, however, that for this to be possible, discussions would have to be carried out using some indirect formula from which the father could then go on to make his refusal; reverting to the allegorical mode from direct matter-of-fact negotiation would defeat the purpose of the custom. Since MacDonald gives no indication of the nature of these discussions, this must remain open to interpretation. In all examples of betrothal customs where the father must be 'asked', the groom's party find themselves in an 'inferior' position despite being the dominant 'male principle'; this is acknowledged through ritual submission to testing and other trials, and the provision of whisky being their responsibility. It may be that a request for entry as travellers expresses the due amount of humility, without sacrificing the equality of status this implies – to present themselves as beggars would, of course, be quite impossible. The 'wanderers' of Glenmoriston adopt a deferential, passive posture, as tradition demands; they do not expect immediate entry and resistance must be made by those inside if they consider their honour worth defending. There is a clear link between this spatial relationship and examples in which the visitors – those 'outside' and 'below' are 'unrecognised' by those 'inside' or 'above'. We may compare this to the near-universal custom of the groom's party being kept waiting at the church, or a race or other device to ensure the bride's party arrive there first. We also note from this example that it is not until business is concluded that the couple are allowed to see each other; a clear statement of priorities and further indication of continuous pressure exerted by the girl's family. A possible relationship between entry rituals and traditions of hospitality will be discussed below.

Some accounts of betrothals make no explicit reference to ritual entry, ritual exchange or a 'false bride' sequence, but contain elements suggestive of these. One example is from Roderick Mackillop of Berneray, who describes how the girl's father deliberately made it difficult for those who had come for his daughter, the conscious prolongation of the event fuelled by more than a love of language and the force of tradition:

> Chaidh Seonaidh Choinnich sìos a thaigh Sheumais Thormoid. Agus ò, bha feadhainn eile ann cuideachd, ach 'se m'athair agus Tormod Lachlainn 's iad an fheadhainn . . . Agus nuair a dh'fhoighneachdadh m'athair de Sheumas, dè na bh'aige a chrodh, 's chanadh Seumas, 's dòcha, gu robh sia mairt aige. 'S theireadh Tormod Lachlainn nach robh sin ceart idir, nach robh crodh idir aige, air dìreach airson a dhèanamh doirbh dha nighean Sheonaidh Choinnich fhaighinn airson a pòsadh. Sin a nist mar a bhiodh oidhche a' rèitich. 'Sann.

> Agus bhiodh am botal a' dol mu chuairt. 'S mar bu mhotha gheibheadh na bodaich 's ann . . . 's ann a b`fheàrr a bhiodh an spòrs. Sin agad a nist a' rud a theireadh iad ri Oidhche a' Rèitich. Ach cha chuala mi riamh bodach sam bith, ann am Bearnaraigh co-dhiù, nach tug a nighean dhan fhear a thigeadh g' a h-iarraidh.
>
> [Seonaidh Choinnich went down to Seumas Thormoid's house. Oh! there were others there too, but it was my father and Tormod Lachlainn were the ones . . . And when my father would ask James what cattle he had, James would say perhaps that he had six cows. Tormod Lachlainn would say that was not right at all, that he had no cattle at all, just to make it difficult for him to get Seonaidh Choinnich's daughter in marriage. That, now, is how the betrothal night was. And the bottle would go the rounds. And the more the old men drank the better the sport. That now is what was called the betrothal night. But I never heard, in Berneray anyway, of any old man who did not give his daughter to the man who came to ask for her.] (Roderick MacKillop, 1978).

An example from the MacLagan manuscripts alludes to the formula and indirect preamble which, as we have seen, commonly preceded the formal asking:

> Both in North and South Uist, the common custom is when a person wishes to obtain the consent for marriage, of the parents or guardians of his intended, he arranges to come to their house on a certain night for the purpose. This night is called *Oidhche an rèite.* He brings along with him a friend or two. Their coming of course, is known beforehand and they are received cordially and treated to supper. Bye and bye one of the friends who has accompanied the Bridegroom expresses himself highly gratified by the kind entertainment, but would like to know what does it mean. This leads to freer conversation, and after a little beating about according to the mood and ingenuity of the party the object of the gathering is allowed to eke out. The friends of the young man indicate their hearty good will, and the friends of the young woman indicate that they have no objection, whereupon a glass of the whisky that has already being doing duty is handed to the young man, who drinks the half of it, and then hands it to his intended, in token of his willingness to share his lot with her; she drinks the other half in token of her acceptance, and forthwith they shake hands and the contract is complete. (Donald Ferguson, North Uist. MacLagan MS 2: 216).

We note once again the formula expressing surprise; feigned bafflement as to the purpose of the visit. More indirect discussion is necessary before the purpose of their visit 'ekes' out. This account is a vivid example of the obligation to avoid haste; the visitors must endure a meal and varying levels of discourse, scrupulously avoiding the main topic, before this can be raised. It is of interest that the informant stresses that 'of course' they are expected, the meal is prepared in advance and the groom's party are received cordially. This suggests that although the informant realises his account resembles the confrontation of relative strangers, he is at pains to point out that this is not the case. In the following account from Lewis, again taken from the MacLagan manuscripts, the same emphasis is made:

> On the contracting night (Oidhche na reite) the bridegroom, accompanied by one or two of his most intimate friends goes to the bride's home, where, of course, the fact of his coming

> is known beforehand, as well as the object of his coming, and they are prepared to receive him. There is tea and a dram, and when they get the length of talking about the business of marriage, and it is understood that all are agreed, the principal actor on the bridegroom's part – usually the one who is to be the best-man at the wedding, when it comes, takes the bridegroom's right-hand and holds it up. Similarly the chief actor for the bride – usually the one who is to be best-maid, lifts the bride's right-hand and places it in the bridegroom's. This is called *Car laimh* (MacLagan MS 39: 8806).

Although ritual language would appear to be absent, the pressure to avoid unseemly haste is obvious. This account is remarkable for the presence of a female ceremonial counterpart to the best-man or master-of-ceremonies role; the only instance found where the moment of union is effected by third party, non-kin representatives of each sex.

Similar rules of engagement applied to marriage customs elsewhere in Scotland. In the Borders, 'bidding' the guests was accompanied by the same awkward decorum:

> After the 'crying' came the 'bidding', when the shy young groom, accompanied by his equally shy best man, had to go round inviting his relatives and friends to the marriage . . . the couple would come awkwardly into the house, where they had been nervously expected for some time, and would be furnished with seats near the fire. It was good manners to pretend that the object of their call was quite unsuspected, and the simple little fraud was kept up until the couple rose to take their leave. It was probably when his hand was on the sneck that the prospective bridegroom would make a sudden dash at the object of his visit, which during the interview had been uppermost in every mind, excepting in that of the gudeman who, when the conversation seemed to be heading straight to the point, had a perfect genius for diverting the talk into another channel. The invitation was not a formal one, and it was good manners to express great surprise at receiving it. Sandie Thomson, who was always an awkward man, instead of giving a definite 'bid', said 'he supposed they would be comin' to this turn-owre.' But that was recognised as a clumsy way of doing the business. (Hyslop: 86).

Walter Gregor's description of a betrothal is remarkable for the presence of a particularly terse ritual dialogue:

Two men, called the *sens*, were dispatched from the house of the bridegroom to demand the bride. On making their appearance a volley of fire-arms met them. When they came up to the door of the bride's home they asked:

> 'Does — bide here?'
> 'Aye, faht de ye wint wee ir?'
> 'We wint ir for —,' was the answer.
> 'But ye winna get ir.'
> 'But we'll tack ir.'
> 'Wil ye come in, in taste a moofu o' a dram till we see aboot it?' (Gregor 1874: 114–5).

This is a good example of marriage negotiations taking place in the idiom of a battle. Guns are fired, and the threat of abduction is explicit. From this account, it appears

that the shots are fired by the girl's side, since the groom's party are those being 'met'. The tradition of the 'courting shot', however, is described in the *Scottish National Dictionary* as 'a shot fired by a wooer to indicate his arrival to ask formally for the girl's hand' and it may be the signal is fired by his representatives, who have gathered at the young woman's house in advance. It would, of course, be quite in keeping with the tradition of mock hostility and resistance for the girl's family to fire the shot themselves. According to the same reference source, the term *sens* is derived from the *send*, the individual whose task it was to announce the groom's arrival. However, there may also be a link with the Italian *sensale*, the name given to the marriage broker who specialised in 'the initial negotiations and the preliminary agreement between the two parties' (Klapisch-Zuber: 183).

The ritual surrounding the 'fetching the bride' in Shetland may be interpreted as a form of ritual dialogue. The scene last century is described by Robert Jamieson:

> About six o' clock, the 'aff gang', or bridegroom's breakfast, is put on the table, and his men, who have been invited, assemble; and about the same time the bride's maidens, twelve or fifteen in number, meet at her house. Breakfast over at the bridegroom's (generally a work of three hours), he and his men walk to the bride's house, draw up in line before the door and fire a shot. The door is shut, and no response is made. A second shot is fired; still silence. After a third shot, the door is opened, and the bride, leading all her maidens in single file, walks to the spot where the bridegroom is standing, when every lad must kiss every lass. On re-entering the house, an ancient and peculiar custom is observed. The bride, with her maidens, on coming out of the house, does not walk direct to the spot where the bridegroom is standing, but turns to the left, and goes so as to form a half-circle, following the course of the sun; and on re-entering, the circle is completed. Observing a custom as old as the hills, they walk to the manse. There is a married couple at every wedding, called the 'honest folk', whose duty it is to walk before the bride and bridegroom in procession, and attend to the comforts of the whole company (Reid: 60–62).

The closed door signifies resistance; the 'request for entry' at the door is made through gunfire rather than poetry; and the groom's party are ignored until finally the bride and her supporters appear. The ritual has the character of a 'battle of the sexes', where division and resistance to union are presented dramatically, leading to eventual union. This union is not only between the couple at the centre of the ritual, but all the supporters, who are unmarried. The 'honest folk', the master and mistress of ceremony, who perhaps represent the ideal partnership, also perform the incorporation ritual, the man dispensing wine or brandy and the woman biscuit or cake. A similar picture of mass 'pairing off' is described by Jessie Nicholson and took place before a wedding on Skye in the 1930's:

> On the wedding day they would all gather to the bride's home and there were couples there, boys and girls were partnered and they would go arm-in-arm to the church for the marriage and when it was over, they would walk home together again.[11]

2.3 Eulogy

As in Brittany and Wales, the bards were involved in the celebration of marriages, at least those of the nobility, and in which eulogy played an important part. Martin Martin notes:

> The orators, after the Druids were extinct, were brought in the preserve the genealogy of families, and to repeat the same at every succession of a chief; and upon the occasions of marriages and births, they made epithalamiums and panegyrics which the poet or bard pronounced. (Martin Martin: 115).

In certain areas, the formal asking for the bride is characterised by the exchange of eulogies, rather than indirect discussion of the girl. F. G. Rea recalls the occasion he and his three brothers were invited to a betrothal on South Uist:

> I was rather interested, as well as amused, at learning that the Uist people were very careful as to what family they married into. I was told that the Mac X's were sly, the Mac Y's were wild, the A's bad tempered, the Mac Z's were liars, and so on, and no one would marry into a family whose ancestors had ever done a bad turn to theirs. Sandy duly called for us the next evening, and I with my two brothers accompanied him across the braes to the widow's house. With solemn decorum we were motioned to take seats on a bench beside a long table, near the end further away from the fireplace. At this end of the table sat two men, one brown-bearded about fifty years of age, the other, seated beside him, considerably younger, and clean-shaven with the exception of a dark moustache. Round the fire were gathered the widow and her family, and at the end of the table near them sat a huge man who I knew well, the brother of the widow. I felt rather ill at ease for there seemed to be two camps, Sandy, I, my brothers, and the two silent men at our end of the table forming one group, while the others formed a whispering group near the other end.
>
> Then there came a dead silence which seemed to be a signal, for the bearded man at our end stood up and, in a mixture of English and Gaelic, began a eulogy of the younger man beside him. He spoke of his companion's strength, his skill with a boat, of his knowledge of farming, and his success as a fisherman; he praised the man's parents and forefathers and their achievements. He then intimated that his friend asked for the hand of the youngest daughter in marriage, and wanted to know what would be given along with her in the way of dowry. He then sat down, and the widow's brother stood up and eulogized the girl, her family, her qualities, honest, clean, kind, and so on. Then followed a contest between these two men as to what would be given with the girl, one trying to obtain as much as possible, and the other endeavouring to part with as little as possible. As far as I can remember a bargain was made at last that a stack of corn, a calf and some fowls should be given with the girl.
>
> All this time these two men had held the field, and no one else had spoken a word: the would-be bridegroom had sat with bent head and downcast eyes throughout, while I and my two brothers had sat and listened with very mixed feelings. At this stage the widow's brother left the table and joined the group at the fire, whence there then ensued much emphatic talk but in subdued voices; we sat at the table in silence. Eventually the man from the group at the fire returned to the table and announced that the girl refused the offer of marriage, but that her eldest sister would be willing to accept it. The spokesman at our end bent down

> and consulted the would-be bridegroom, who looked up for the first time, nodded, and said: 'Ach, aye! It's all the same.' Immediately all came and stood around the table; a bottle and a wine-glass were produced; and, in turn, each drank to the health of the pair who in due course were to be married (Rea: 141–3).

The hosts' 'solemn decorum' is the first indication that this is no ordinary visit, but a clearly-structured ritual event. The spatial separation of the two 'camps' is clearly delineated; the girl's family are gathered round the fire, physically aligning themselves with their representative who occupies the 'superior' end of the table. The table is a 'male' space which becomes the 'duelling-ground', and the visitors are conducted by their hosts to their 'inferior' place at the end of the table furthest away from the hearth. This arrangement is comparable to the separation of the two 'camps' by the threshold, where those inside occupy the 'higher', 'regulated' space, and those outside the 'lower' and 'unregulated'. This may seem rather inhospitable; the rules of hospitality are, however, modified in order to satisfy the demands of the ritual. Indeed, the normal rituals associated with hospitality; unrestricted entry, welcoming words and drink, position by the fire, are *inverted* for the ritual occasion. Silence plays an important part in Rea's description, and it is this which contributes most to his discomfort; in another violation of conventional norms they are guests, but not spoken to. The 'signal' of dead silence which begins the verbal battle is evidently a customary one; the two men engage in solo combat while the others remain silent; and the groom, like Chaucer's *Troilus*, sits in ritual silence with 'bent head and downcast eyes'. The ritual is clearly structured, and the representatives' verbal skills are centred on two distinct areas. The first is the bardic tradition of eulogy; solemn, creative and self-consciously 'poetic'. Then the spokesmen shift registers to a much more prosaic mode of expression; the cut-and-thrust, hard bargaining of the mercantile world.

Margaret Fay Shaw provides another example from South Uist:

> One old custom still kept up was the *rèiteach* or formal betrothal. The young man took an older friend with him to call on the parents of the young woman. After conversation about many things, the friend would begin to extol the young man's character and his qualities for making a good husband for their daughter, while she would make her feelings known by staying in their presence with obvious pleasure or by leaving the room. Whatever the opinion of the parents, unless there was some serious reason for their refusal, the daughter made her own decision. If she stayed, she would seat herself at the table opposite the young man. Her father would say '*Ma tha ise deònach, tha mise ro-dheònach, agus mura bi sin mar sin, cha bhi so mar so*' (If she is willing, I am very willing, and if that weren't so, this wouldn't be so). The young man would catch the girl's hand, and they would divide a dram between them, drinking from the same glass (Shaw: 15).

It is interesting to again note that there is some preamble, 'conversation about many things', before the eulogy of the young man begins. This suggests that another feature of the structural form of the ritual was the deliberate prolongation of the trial; the young man's representative cannot simply arrive and begin his task; he must introduce

the purpose of his visit in an artful way, after a seemly period of small-talk. Haste, on either side, would be indecent, perhaps even risky. In the previous example, this prolongation was achieved by a period of separation and of being ignored, finally broken by the signal of absolute silence.

In the former example the girl's representative offers a corresponding eulogy, indicating an acknowledgment of a degree of equality which is the basis for the contestatory situation which results; a verbal battle. In Shaw's account, no eulogy of the girl takes place; indeed, her family have total control over the proceedings. Her consent is heavily stressed, and it is clear that the couple have not met before. It is of interest that both refusal and agreement are expressed non-verbally; to refuse, she removes herself physically from the situation; to accept, she sits opposite (but not next to) the young man. This may be said to illustrate two of the main recurring features of the betrothal ritual; the ritual silence of the girl and her suitor removes them from the verbal interaction, the discussion, and emphasis is placed instead on the expressive gesture – from downcast eyes (in the former example) to simply leaving the room. Such non-verbal communication is no less potent than words, but it has clear advantages. As with the allegorical exchange, no offence could be taken by the young man – the fiction could be maintained that the girl had simply left the room. Of course, the significance of such a symbolic action in this highly-charged context is understood by all; but what seems important is that *no words were spoken,* an action which also serves as another example of the inversion of traditional hospitality. Whilst the suitor's silence ritually removes him from direct confrontation, possible or actual, the girl's silence fulfils another function; the articulation of the taboo against ready acceptance, which, it appears, is as undesirable as open refusal. Even the father's response – clearly formulaic – avoids the direct expression of acceptance. The tone is one of acquiescence – indeed, one commentator states that he 'capitulates' – the father is no longer actively resistant, but neither is he openly welcoming.[12] Typically, the girl defers to her father, who in turn defers to her; a rather ambiguous and unemphatic expression of assent. Only after the ritual sharing of the same cup can normal traditions of hospitality be resumed. Although the free consent of the girl is central to this account – we are told that the family would have to have a 'serious reason' for their refusal – arranged marriages were known, as one informant (John MacDonald, Kyles Paible) confirms:

> **Q:** Who were the people who came with the bridegroom to the house?
> **John MacDonald –** Oh, his very close relatives, such as his uncle or cousins or . . .
> **Q:** Male relatives, were they?
> **JM:** Male relatives, yes, and well, his near closest neighbours too, whether he was related to them or not. Always one of his closest neighbours was taken along.
> . . .
> **Q:** Now, were marriages arranged, arranged without regard to the wishes of the parties concerned, the young people?
> **JM:** Yes, at times it was, in the old days.

Q: Before your time, it would be, would it?

JM: Before my time, yes.

Q: In your father's time.

JM: Yes, definitely in my father's time. Oh yes. Marriages were arranged between the parents of the groom and maybe the parents of the bridegroom. [sic]

Q: What other considerations would they have in mind when arranging these?

JM: Oh they would just . . . say, now, if there was a . . . a girl was looking at . . . in those days a boy had a good piece of land or anything like that, they were just looking . . . that's the only thing they could look for in those days.

We may note that it was important that a non-kin member be among the suitor's supporters; perhaps another method of 'insulating' the two sides from one another.

Another account of a *rèiteach* involving the exchange of eulogies is described by Annie Sinclair, a native of Barra:

(Nuair a bha) rèiteach dol a bhith ann bha fear na bainnseadh a' dol a dh'iarraidh caraid dha fhèin, agus bheireadh e leis e a dh'ionnsaigh a' rèitich gu taigh na tè a bha e dol . . . dol a phòsadh. Agus bhiodh . . . bhiodh ann a shin bòrd air a sheatadh 's biadh gu leòr 's dram, agus na càirdean aicese mun cuairt ann. Agus bha esan a toirt leis, an duine bha seo, caraide dha fhèin a bha ri bruidhinn air a shon, mar gum biodh, dol a dhèanamh *speech*. Agus nuair a rachadh iad a thaigh a' rèitich bha . . . bha iad a' suidhe sìos aig bòrd, agus bha dram a' dol mun cuairt. Agus nuair a bha . . . dram no slàinte a thoirt seachad bha an gille bha seo 'g èirigh suas agus ag ràdh gu tàinig e le charaide às a' bhaile seo eile agus airson cead nam pàrantan fhaotainn airson 's gu toireadh iad seachad nighean, canaidh sinn Tormod, do Thormod a seo. Agus as a dheaghaidh sin thòisich e ri moladh Thormoid ann an dòigh shònraichte, 's bhiodh e 'g innse na deagh bheachdan 's an deagh dhuine, ghille bh'ann, 's gu robh e o dhaoine matha, 's mar sin. Agus bha an uair sin fear an taighe, athair na h-ighinn, ag èirigh suas agus a' toirt taing dhaibh airson cuireadh a chur air airson bruidhinn airson na h-ighinn, 's bhruidhneadh e airson na h-ighinn aige fhèin. Agus bheireadh e seachad cead. Agus chanadh an uair sin am fear a bha 'g iarraidh na mnatha dha . . . dha charaid, chanadh e, "Eiribh a nist 's beiribh air làmhan air a chèile." Agus dh'èireadh i seo far a robh i agus dh'èireadh esan. Thigeadh e nuas agus bheireadh e air làimh oirre. Bha an dà . . . an duine, an gille bha dol a phòsadh, an duine a bh'air an taobh eile 's shuidheadh iad sìos 's thòisicheadh . . . nuair a chaidh an drama mun cuairt rachadh a' rèiteach a dhèanamh mar sin.

[When a betrothal was to take place the bridegroom would go to a friend of his own and take him along with him for the betrothal to the house of the girl to whom he was to be married. And there a table would be set with plenty of food and drink, with her friends gathered round. And he, this man, took a friend of his along with him to speak for him, to make a speech, as it were. And when they went to the betrothal house they sat down at a table and a dram was passed round. And when they had had a dram or toasted good health, this lad got up and said that he had come from this other village with his friend to get the parents' permission to give away the daughter – let's say Norman – to this Norman. And after that he began to praise Norman in a special way, and he would relate the good opinion people had of him and what a good man . . . lad he was, and that he came of good people, and so

on. Then the man of the house, the girl's father, would get up and thank them for inviting him to speak for the girl, and he would speak on behalf of his own daughter. And he would give permission. And then the man who was seeking a wife for his friend would say, 'Rise now and shake hands'. And she would get where she was and he would get up. He would come down and shake her hand. The two . . . the man who was going to get married and the man on the other side would sit down, and a dram was passed around and the betrothal was celebrated in that way.]

In this account the ritual hostility and resistance of the girl's family is absent, although some time must pass before the subject can be broached. Again, the girl is represented by her father, the young man by a non-kin representative. Unfortunately, the 'special way' of praising is not described, but we may speculate that this referred to a particular, specially marked form of language, a rhetorical style appropriate, perhaps reserved for the occasion. His eulogy evidently ends with an invitation for the father to respond, who thanks the visitor for the 'invitation'. In addition to delivering the eulogy, the young man's representative performs the role of master-of-ceremonies, co-ordinating the final movements of the young couple towards union. Once the father's consent is secured he abdicates his 'higher' ritual position; control and ritual responsibility pass to the groom's side. The groom would appear to approach the girl, who may be sitting in a 'separate' space; at the end of the table or nearest the fire. Their union is reinforced by the symbolic union of the two families as all sit down and share the glass of whisky.

Another *rèiteach* on Barra is recalled by Kate MacColl:

Mary MacDonald: Cò nist, an rèiteach mu dheireadh air a robh sibh, a' Cheit?
KM: Rèiteach Màiri Nèill.
MM: Agus cò dh'fhiathaich sibh?
KM: Flòraidh.
MM: Seadh. Bha ise fia . . . fiathachadh air a taobh fhèin?
KM: Bha, 's bha esan air a thaobh fhèin. Bha.
MM: Agus co mheud a bhiodh ann?
KM: O bha sguad mòr ann. Bha sguad làn an taighe ann.
MM: Làn an taighe?
KM: Seadh.
MM: Agus cò na bha tighinn còmhla ri fear na bainnse?
KM: *Well*, bha cuideidin ri bhith ann a bheireadh seachad ise.
MM: Seadh.
KM: Agus bha fear aigesan 'ga h-iarraidh.
MM: 'Ga h-iarraidh.
KM: 'Ga h-iarraidh. Agus bha . . .
MM: 'S dè bha tachairt an toiseach? Robh iad a' faighinn . . . `N e am biadh a bha . . . a bha tachairt . . . a bhathar a' dèanamh an toiseach, neo robh . . . robh a' rèiteach 'ga dhèanamh mu faigheadh iad am biadh seachad?
KM: Bhathar 'ga h-iarraidh nuair a bha iad aig am biadh, tha mi 'm beachd.
MM: Seadh, seadh.

KM: Nuair a bhiodh . . . bha iad 'nan suidhe aig a' bhòrd, 's bha iad an uair sin a bruidhinn. Am fear bha 'ga h-iarraidh-s bha e bruidhinn.
MM: Bhiodh an dram a' dol mun cuairt?
KM: O bha an dram a' dol mun cuairt. Bha, bha. Bha an dram a' dol mun cuairt.
MM: Agus an e a h-athair bu trice bhiodh 'ga toirt seachad?
KM: *Well*, nam biodh a h-athair ann.
MM: Ann.
KM: Mur a biodh, an duine bu dlùithe.
MM: Agus bhiodh cuid athar-san neo cuideigin air a thaobh fhèin aigesan.
KM: Bhiodh.
MM: Nach ann a sin a bhiodh am moladh air an nighinn?
KM: O, m'eudail! 'S ann-san a bha sin.
MM: Agus tha mi creidsinn gum bithte 'ga mholadh-san cuideachd?
KM: O bhiodh, bhiodh. An aon rud.
MM: 'S a robh danns ann as deaghaidh . . .?
KM: As deaghaidh sin? Chan eil mi am beachd gu robh. Cha robh, oidhche rèitich.
MM: Robh òrain ann?
KM: Orain 's bruidhinn. 'Se.
MM: Agus oidhche na bainnse 's ann a bhiodh an dannsa?
KM: Seadh.

[**MM:** Now, Kate, which was the last betrothal you attended?
KM: Mairi Neill's betrothal.
MM: And who invited you?
KM: Flora.
MM: Yes. She invited those on her own side?
KM: Yes. And he on his side.
MM: And how many would be there?
KM: Oh, there was a big crowd. A crowd that filled the house.
MM: A full house?
KM: Yes.
MM: And who all came with the bridegroom?
KM: Well, somebody had to be there to give her away.
MM: Yes.
KM: And he had someone to ask for her.
MM: To ask for her?
KM: Yes. And . . .
MM: And what happened first of all? Did they get . . . was it food that was . . . that was prepared first of all, or did the betrothal take place before the eating was over?
KM: She was asked for while they were eating, I think.
MM: Yes, yes.
KM: When they were . . . they were sitting at the table, and then they were talking. The man who was asking for her was talking.
MM: The dram would be passed around?
KM: The dram was passed around. Yes, yes. The dram was passed around.

MM: And it was usually the father who gave her away?
KM: Well, if her father was there.
MM: There.
KM: If not, the nearest relative.
MM: And he would have his father's relatives or someone on his side?
KM: Yes.
MM: What praises would be bestowed on the girl!
KM: Oh! my dear, yes. Indeed, yes.
MM: And I suppose he would be praised also?
KM: Oh! yes, yes, similarly.
MM: And was there a dance after . . .?
KM: After that? I don't think so. No, not on the betrothal night.
MM: Were there songs?
KM: Songs and talking, yes.
MM: And the dance took place on the night of the wedding?
KM: Yes.]

In this account one may detect a further movement away from the solemn and highly charged betrothals of earlier times. Invitations are made, a crowd is gathered, and the meal taken together is the occasion for the exchange of eulogies rather than the symbol of the successful outcome. Apart from the use of third parties to speak for the couple, the lingering ritual significance of the occasion is suggested by the fact that no dancing took place at the *rèiteach*. Perhaps in this communal act of censorship the participants, whether consciously or not, acknowledge the former solemnity of the ritual.

Another example which would appear to suggest a 'one-way' eulogy is from Cape Breton. In this account we also have evidence for the motif of the 'buyers', a ritual preamble, eulogy, and the 'false bride' sequence. The presence of all these ritual elements may indicate one of the most 'complete' examples of the custom .

> The bridegroom-to-be and an older friend, someone respected in the community, would come to the home of the girl he hoped to have for a bride. The father would usually know why they had come, but nothing would be said outright. Instead, they would pretend they had come to buy a cow or a horse or a boat – and everything they said had a double meaning. If it was a boat they were claiming they were wanting to buy, they would ask such a question as, Is she broad in the beam? Eventually they would get down to talking about the real purpose of the visit, and when the older friend had finished speaking well of the bridegroom-to-be and asking for a certain girl's hand, the father would then go through the formality of first offering his other daughters. Sometimes, in fact, the offer was quite serious, as he perhaps wanted to marry off a particular daughter and would actually refuse to give up the girl the young man had come for.
>
> Malcolm Angus Macleod of Birch Plain remembered having seen only one Reiteach. He said the table was prepared for a little feast, and everyone except the young girl herself sat at the table. Her chair was left empty at the table. And the young man who wished to marry her had brought an older man to speak for him, and this older man described the future groom's qualities and love for the girl and asked for her hand. And when all the other

> arrangements were made, as the final act of agreement, the young girl would come to the table and sit – and strong drink was available, and the feast was served ('Reiteach': 20).

It is of interest that the girl is hidden during the eulogy and the discussions which follow, and makes a highly dramatic appearance at their conclusion, to fill the empty chair – another essentially 'dramatic' element. There is an acknowledgment that the dialogue carries a 'double meaning', and that the presentation of women for refusal could carry a serious as well as comic intention. On the level of joking, the bride may be 'broad in the beam', but the clear suggestion is that her father could use the ritual as a way of refusing to allow the match. We have previously described a jilted suitor from the same source.

Writing of the Western Islands in 1782, Rev. John Buchanan described a betrothal in which, as with these examples, only the groom is praised:

> Marriages among the gentlemen are attended with no greater pomp than among the better sort through Great Britain; they are commonly attended by their friends, who make merry on this happy occasion. Contracts are only known to a few. But it is not so with the common people. They invite the friends on both sides, to make up the contract of marriage and as all the poor people retain that part of their former importance that entitled them to the honour of gentlemen, *duine uasal*, at least in words, it is supposed that the lady's parents will not make a trifling offer of portion to their intended son-in-law. A pompous promise, if they fail in the performance, adds much to the dignity of the match. Being present at one of these meetings of friends, I observed that the friends of the young man began with a set speech, by informing the parents of the cause and design of their meeting, which was, to pave the way for an alliance with the family to which the woman belonged; and then launched out at considerable length on the great and good qualities of the young man who aspired at the connection. Meanwhile, they remarked, that the friends of the young gentleman were such as ought not to be received with indifference. It ought, they proceeded, to be esteemed a very happy turn of Providence to cast such a hopeful youth, and good friends to back him, to solicit their friendship. They hoped, therefore, they would make an offer of such a portion to the young woman, as might do honour to themsleves, and worthy of so promising a man. The portion formerly was paid in cows, sheep and goats, these being more valuable to them than money; and this old practice is continued in full force. Even if the family should have none, they must name a number of cows, and a handsome number too, otherwise the young man would think his dignity suffered in the eyes of his neighbours. Twenty cows are among the most moderate portions promised, and many of them considerably above that number. If the young couple had reason to be satisfied with each other during the courtship, the affair is generally settled to the satisfaction of the parties, after which they began to make merry . . . as their cows are but few, they must take, at the time of payment, a kind of representative value of it. Accordingly I was told that a year old cow stood for one; three ewes for another; a spinning wheel for a third; two blankets for a fourth; a small chest for a fifth; and so on until the number agreed upon was completed (Buchanan: 163–8).

This account is valuable for the light it sheds on the explicitly ritual aspects of the betrothal. The young man's representative delivers a 'set speech', suggesting the existence

of an unwritten script which formed the basis of the spokesman's task. The essential elements are revealed as an opening announcement as to why they are assembled; an expression of the desire for union; a lengthy eulogy; a veiled challenge, rather boastful in tone; and an offer of terms. This concluding challenge, almost a threat, seems designed to provoke a reply in kind, although the account provides no clear evidence of this. The 'paving the way' speech may be Buchanan's translation of the name given to the entire ritual; it was noted earlier that the term *an rèite* is linked to the idea of 'smoothing' and 'clearing' away obstacles. A veiled threat accompanying the proud boast is suggested by the friends of the suitor outlining the kind of reception they expect, defying the girl's family to treat them with indifference, and in a later reference to their 'support', of the young man's suit. The implication is that to scorn the suitor is to scorn the whole group – precisely the situation that indirect forms of expression seem designed to avoid. Whether this is a genuine challenge, or the combatants are merely following tradition, Buchanan's account is a most vivid picture of the two camps 'squaring up' for a verbal battle. The assertion of the equal worth of the two parties is stressed, and this is further underlined by the ritual system of equivalence surrounding the marriage-portion. As with the template outlining the script of the speech, custom dictates that cattle must be given, whether or not the young man is in possession of any. Unless he is a complete stranger, this information will be known to all; but, as with the suspension of normal hospitality, special rules of engagement apply, and those assembled are complicitous in the communal fiction of an ideal suitor, well endowed with wealth and noble qualities. This ritual behaviour, allied with the construction of an elaborate tariff outlining the value of objects in relation to the ideal currency of cattle, is indicative of an archaic relationship between a man and his property. Indeed, cattle were most probably the most common form of currency, as in Ireland. There, the basic unit was the milch cow (*lulgach* or *bó mlicht*) accompanied by her calf. A cow in calf was worth two thirds of this, and a *samaisc*, a three year-old dry heifer half the value.[13]

Just as the suitor's friends boast of his fine qualities, underscoring his masculinity and greatness with their own pride and strength, his potency, success and ability is also evident in the number of cows which make up his marriage portion. Whether he can make good this promise is not important; in the ritual world, the young man is the embodiment of ideal perfection; a match impossible to refuse, a worthy successor to her father in the care and protection of the girl. In the same way, every eligible woman is a laughable assemblage of imperfections except the chosen one, the perfect image of the ideal partner. As we have noted, a belief exists that even the young man's representative must be physically perfect; nothing can be left to chance.

3. THE REFUSAL SEQUENCE

Several accounts of the *rèiteach* give descriptions of what we have termed the 'refusal sequence' following a ritual dialogue; others are associated with a diminution or total

lack of the verbal elements of allegorical exchange or eulogy. The 'false brides' are either refused allegorically, as 'unsuitable animals', for example, or directly, by making reference to the personal qualities of the participant.

Flora MacCuish from Berneray (1969) gives two separate accounts of the meeting she terms *còrdadh*, equivalent to the *rèiteach beag*. The first has a short exchange preceding the bringing out of the women for refusal:

FM: An còrdadh a' cheud rud a bh'ann, 's bha iad a' coinneachadh aig an taigh an oidhche sin. Cha bhiodh ann ach dìreach corra dhuine, ò dìreach caraidean dhe na daoine air gach taobh. Bhiodh . . . ha . . . dithis no triùir aicese 's bhiodh dithis no triùir aig an fhireannach. Agus bha am fireannach a' dol a staigh, agus bhathar a' dèanamh biadh dha 's gnothaichean. Agus nuair a bha e nis a' suidhe aig a' bhòrd . . . tha . . . dh'innseadh . . . chanadh am fear a bha 'g iarraidh a' bhoireannaich, "Well, chan eil mise 'dol a dh'ithe greim no 'dol a dh'òl a seo a-nochd gus an toir . . . toir a mach an toiseach brath na h-Inid as an Ròimh gu bi fhiosam carson a thàna mi."

"Carson a thàna tu?" chanadh am fear air a robh e 'dol g'a h-iarraidh. "Carson a thàna tu?"

"Thàna mi dh'iarraidh . . . tha . . . searbhanta no bean a leithid seo a dh'fhear."

Agus nuair a thàinig e . . . Chaidh i nuair sin . . . Bhiodh na boireannaich air am fàgail a muigh.

Ian Paterson: Seadh dìreach.

FM: 'S dheadhadh fireannach a mach an uair sin agus bheireadh e staigh tè dhe na boireannaich. Agus: "Dè mu dheaghain na tè sa, ma's ann ag iarraidh boireannach a tha thu a leithid seo a dhuine? Dè mu dheaghain na tè seo?"

"O cha ghabh mi i sin idir," ars esan. "Dè dhèanadh," ars esan, "na pliutan beaga tha sin," ars esan. "Dè dhèanadh na pliutan beaga sin," ars esan, "dol a bhleoghan dà mhart no trì dhomhsa ann am bàthaich, no idir dol a chartadh bàthcha, no idir," ars esan, "dol gu cliabhadh feamaid? Cha dèan i càil dhomh," ars esan. "Dhèanadh i rud-eigin," ars esan, "nam biodh i aig Peigi Iain," ars esan, "gu spìonadh chearc 's rudan dhen t-seòrsa sin, aig do mhàthair."

IP: Agus nise, 'se . . . 'se rèiteach àraid a bha seo.

FM: O chan e. 'Se còrdadh a bha seo.

IP: An còrdadh.

FM: An còrdadh a bh'ann.

IP: 'Se. Se, 'se fear aig a robh sib' fhèin a tha seo, an e?

FM: 'Se. 'Se.

. . .

IP: Seadh dìreach. Agus cò bhliadhna mum biodh sin? A's na 1920's an ann, no . . .?

FM: 'S ann gu dearbh, tha mi 'creidsinn, no 1922 no 23.

IP: 22 no 23. Seadh. Ach bha sibh a 'ràdh bha iad a nise a' toir a staigh na clann-nighinn.

FM: Bha.

IP: Tè as deaghaidh tè.

FM: 'S bha . . . Thug e staigh a Nurse an uair ud. Agus thug e nuair sin a staigh . . . Chaidh

i sin a thilleadh air falbh. Thug e nuair sin a staigh Curstaidh ‘ic Ruairidh. Agus ò bha i sin glè mhath ‘s glè cholach air son bean do dh’fhear sam bith, ach “tha i car aotrom.”

“Och ma tha,” arsa Ruairidh, “ma tha i car aotrom leat,” ars esan, “chan fhaca tusa dad riamh as fhasa na dèanamh trom.”

IP: O dìreach.

FM: Agus ò cha ghabhadh e i an deaghaidh sin. Dh’fhalbh Ruairidh a mach an uair sin agus thug e staigh Raonaid Dhòmhnaill. Agus: “Dè mu dheaghain na tè sa?”

‘S ò bha i sin comharraichte math. Bha colas oirre gu dèanadh i snìomh ‘s gu dèanadh i clòithtean, ‘s bha i stòlda ‘s bha i stèidhte, ‘s cha robh mathas nach robh oirre. ‘S cha robh ach i sin a chur ‘na suidhe aig a’ bhòrd còmh ri Seonaidh Iain ‘ic Alasdair Bhàin. Chaidh an uair sin am botul thoir a mach, ‘s fear na . . . am fear-comhailtiche dh’èirich e, Dòmhnall Iain Chaluim, dh’èirich e nuair sin ‘toir drama dhan a chuile duine shìos.

IP: Bha sibhse ‘còrdadh còmh riutha.

FM: Bha. Mi-fhèin ‘s Dòmhnall Iain Chaluim.

IP: Agus ‘se nise, Ruairidh Alasdair a bha ‘g iarraidh . . .

FM: Ruairidh Alasdair, ‘se bha ‘g iarraidh a’ bhoireannaich air Ruairidh Dhòmhnaill Mhòir, ged a ‘se a bràthar a bh’ann.

IP: Bha fhios aige cò an tè bha . . .

FM: Bha fhios aige cò an tè bha e ‘g iarraidh. Ach bha na h-igheanan air an cur am falach gus an toireadh iad air tè mu seach aca.

[**Flora MacCuish –** The agreement was the first thing, and they gathered in the house that night, only a few of them, just friends from each side. She would have two or three and the man would have two or three. And the man went in and food and such like were got ready for him. And when they sat down at the table the man who was asking for the girl would say,

‘Well I’m not going to eat a bite or have a drink until first of all you bring news of Shrovetide from Rome, so that I know why I have come.’

‘Why you have come?’ the man for whom he was asking the girl would say.

‘I came to ask for.. a servant or a wife for such and a man.’

And when he came . . . the women were left outside.

Ian Paterson: Quite so.

FM: And a man would go out then and bring in one of the women. And ‘what about this one, if it’s asking for a wife for such and such a man you are? What about this one?’

‘Oh, I won’t take that one at all,’ says he. ‘What use would these small hands be for milking two or three cows in a byre, or for mucking a byre, or at all for gathering seaweed in a creel? She won’t do anything [be of any use] for me,’ says he, ‘She would do something if Peigi Iain had her,’ said he, ‘for plucking hens and things of that kind.’

IP: Was this a particular betrothal?

FM: No! This was an agreement.

IP: An agreement.

FM: It was the agreement.

IP: It was one you were at yourself, was it?

FM: Yes, yes.

. . .

IP: Yes, and which year would that be? 1920?

FM: Yes indeed, I believe it was 1922 or 23.

IP: 22 or 23. Yes. And you were saying that they were bringing in the girls.

FM: Yes.

IP: One by one.

FM: Yes. He brought in the nurse that time. And then he brought in ---, she was turned down. Then he brought in Corstaidh nic Ruaraidh, and oh! she was quite good and quite suitable for any man, but . . . 'She is light'. 'Och then,' says Ruairidh, 'if she is too light for you,' says he, 'you never saw anything easier than to make her heavy.'

IP: Just so.

FM: And oh! he would not have her after that. Ruairidh went out then and he brought in Raonaid Dhòmhnaill. 'What about this one?' Oh! that one was particularly good. She looked as if she could spin and make tweeds, and she was sedate and steady, and there was no good quality hat she didn't possess. And there was nothing but to put her sitting at the table along with Seonaidh Iain Alasdair Bhàin. Then the bottle was brought out and the best man, Dòmhnall Iain Chaluim then got up, got up to give a dram to everybody.

IP: You were at the agreement along with them?

FM: Yes, myself and Dòmhnall Iain Chaluim.

IP: Now, it was Ruairidh Alasdair who was asking for . . .

FM: Ruairidh Alasdair was asking Ruairidh Dhòmhnaill Mhòir for the girl, though he was her brother.

IP: He knew the one . . .

FM: He knew the one he was asking for, but the girls were hidden until they were brought out one by one.

The presentation of the women for refusal is preceded by a ritual dialogue in which both parties claim not to know why they are assembled, a feature common to several examples of betrothal rituals described above. The reference to 'news of Shrovetide from Rome' (needed to calculate the date of Easter) forms part of a traditional saying. As Ronald Black observes, 'Rome's authority has long been symbolised in the saying . . . 'knowledge of Shrovetide comes from Rome . . . as a proverb, *fios na h-Inid as an Roimh* is also used to describe any peremptory command' (Black: 94).

The refusal to eat and drink is another inversion of the norms of hospitality, and this is parried by the host's enquiry as to why they are there. The exchange again takes place at a table, and although the food is prepared, it would appear that the feast itself is reserved for the conclusion of the ritual. The asking for the girl is made in direct terms, and one can assume the reference to their seeking a 'servant' is meant humorously.

The women have been waiting 'offstage' in another room, which emphasises the essentially dramatic nature of this stage of the ritual, as well as indicating that the young man's representative had no opportunity to prepare his responses, since he would not know which women were to be brought in. The 'performer' may have a good idea of which women are likely to be in the room; but the notion of a 'trial' is clear – he must think on his feet. This task would, of course, increase in difficulty if the representative is confronted with women he does not know well, or at all. The first

woman mentioned is rejected because of a physical feature; her small hands make her an inferior worker. A joke follows; there is woman in the community who could teach her about hard work. The nurse follows, and then another woman, who receives praise but is also rejected, presumably because her 'lightness' makes her less able for physical work. There is a pun on the word *trom* 'heavy', which also means 'pregnant' – a good example of wordplay by the girl's representative. The bride-to-be is praised for both her potential as a worker and for her character, the emphasis being on the ideal feminine attributes of industry and mildness. The ritual is concluded in the usual way; she is brought to the table, placed symbolically beside the groom, and the dram is offered around by the 'master-of-ceremonies'.

Flora MacCuish (1967) described the bringing in of the women on another occasion:

> Bha an còrdadh an toiseach ann.. Readh duine agus 's dòcha an duine 'na ònrachd, readh e dhan taigh a dh'iarraidh a' bhoirionnaich. Agus bhiodh iad còrdte gu leòr air son gum biodh rèiteach ann. Bhiodh a nis an ceann – chan eil fhiosam dè an ùine. An e mìos no fichead latha – thigeadh rèiteach, 's bhiodh an uair sin, triùir na cheathrar air gach taobh a' tighinn a staigh. Agus bhiodh nigheanan a' tighinn a staigh. 'S bha na h-ighneanan bha seo a' tighinn a staigh, agus bhiodh fear ag iarraidh a' bhoirionnaich dhan an duine seo. 'S bheireadh iad a staigh an tè seo 's ò cha robh cron nach robh oirre sin. Cha dèan i sin. Cha tog i buntàta 's cha bhleoghain i crodh, 's cha dèan i siod 's cha dèan i seo, 's cha robh i brèagha gu leòr, no rud air choir-eigin ceàrr. A chuile tè bha rud ceàrr oirre, gos a tigeadh an tè bha iad ag iarraidh. Agus cha robh fhios gu dè na gothan èibhinn bha iad a' toir air na h-igheanan. 'S bha dìreach oidhche mhòr aca. Agus thigeadh a nis an tè bha iad . . . O bha i seo math. Cha robh math nach robh air an tè bha e dol a phòsadh. Nuair a bha an rèiteach seachad bha nuair sin partaidh aca le deoch is òl gu biodh e uaireanan 's a' mhadainn. Agus bhiodh a nis, . . . readh an oidhche sin, bhiodh a' fiathachadh cuin a bhiodh a' bhanais ann, 's cò bha ri'm fiathachadh 's an fheadhainn bh'air am fiathachadh robh am baile air fad 'ga fhaighinn, no cò na daoine bhiodh ann.
>
> [First of all there was the agreement. The man, and perhaps the man by himself, would go to the house to ask for the woman. And they would have agreed up to the point where there would be a betrothal. Then, at the end of – I don't know how much time – was it a month or twenty days? – the betrothal would take place and three or four from each side would come in. And the girls would come in, and a man would be asking for the woman on behalf of this man. And they would bring in this one, and oh! there was no fault not to be found in that one. That one will not . . . will not lift potatoes and will not milk a cow, and will not do that, and she will not do this, and she was not beautiful enough, or there was something wrong. Every one had something wrong with her, until the one they were asking for came in. And who knows what witty taunts they said to the girls. And they had a great night. And then the one they wanted would come. Oh! this one was good. The one he was going to marry had every good quality. When the betrothal had taken place they had a party, with drink and drinking until all hours in the morning. And then, that night the invitations, when the wedding would be and who was to be invited, and was the whole village to be invited, or what people would be there.]

In this account the informant clarifies the distinction between the various stages of the ritual sequence. First, there is a private meeting between the suitor and the father of the girl in which he formally asks for the girl's hand in marriage – the *còrdadh*. It is of interest that this could be accomplished by the young man alone. The second meeting, at which the verbal exchange and refusal sequence take place, is evidently more public, and clearly amounts to a public, 're-asking' custom of the kind noted elsewhere. The reasons for rejection in this example are centred on the woman's refusal to work. This can be understood as an affirmation of marriage as joint labour; the outlining of the responsibilties and conduct expected of the girl is, as we have noted, a recurring feature of the ritual. We may note that the 'witty taunts' are delivered by more than one individual on the groom's side; the criticising of the women was evidently a 'free-for-all'. It is also of note that the informant makes no mention of dancing, although the drink is flowing freely.

Another account of a *rèiteach* in Berneray is found in the nineteenth century MacLagan manuscripts. The informant is Ann MacLeod, 'domestic servant':

> The intending Bridegroom appoints a Friday night for visiting the parents or guardians of his intended, with the view of obtaining their consent, and making the arrangements for the marriage. This meeting is called *An rèite*. When the Fridy [sic] in question comes, the young man appears, accompanied by an unmarried male relative. They are received in an apartment of the house, while in another part, his intended, together with six other women conceal themselves. When the visitors are seated, the father or guardian of the to be bride asks 'What is the meaning of this?' To which the friend of the bridegroom replies 'We are come for a wife.' The young women are then introduced, one after another, with the question 'Will this one do?' The answer is always 'No', until the right one comes who is always purposely left till the last, and when she appears, the friend comes forward and says 'This one will do', and taking her by the hand presents her to her intended, who places her beside himself on his right hand, until refreshments are partaken by the whole company, after which they amuse themselves according to their inclinations until the following morning (Berneray, collected by Elizabeth Kerr, Port Charlotte, Islay, 1895. MacLagan MS 2: 213).

In this account the role of ritual dialogue is clearly shown. The visitors are shown in and seated, whereupon the father opens the proceedings in the now familiar way of asking the reason for their visit. The response is formulaic and extremely direct, as are the terse exchanges during the presentation and refusal of the women. These are remarkably blunt; no reason is given by the suitor's representative for their rejection, no mention of their physical or other characteristics. There is neither poetry, wit nor humour. One is left with the impression that the verbal element of the ritual has diminished, while the dramatic content has remained well-developed; the informant is quite clear in specifying six women. The artful refusal of six 'false brides' would indeed have been a considerable challenge and test of verbal skill, and it is interesting that the number should have remained constant while the verbal component is reduced, on one side, to monosyllables.

Several accounts from Harris show that the refusal of the women could also be effected allegorically. Morag MacLeod interviewed two sisters (Christina Shaw and Mrs. Peggy Morrison) from Bun Amhuinn Eadarra:

Peggy Morrison: . . .*Well*, nuair a phòs tè dha mo pheathraichean bha ceithir tursan, bha 'n rèiteach beag 's an rèiteach mòr 's a' bhanais a staigh againn fhèin 's a' bhanais a's an taigh aige-san. Bha na ceithir . . .

Morag MacLeod: Dè neise bha tachairt aig an rèiteach bheag?

PM: O cha robh càil ach mar gum biodh seòrsa do *pharty* dìreach. Cha bhiodh cruinn ach dìreach beagan dhaoine, air an rèiteach bheag. Agus a neise an rèiteach mòr – bhiodh iad a' cur air leth an oidhche – an latha bha am pòsadh go bhith ann. Agus mar bu trice 's ann seachduinn o'n a bhiodh e – mar gum bhiodh air Diardaoin, agus seachduinn o'n ath Dhi-Màirt bhiodh a' bhanais ann . . . Agus an rèiteach m ò r, bhiodh e cheart cho . . . a cheart urad do dhaoine air, 's do cheòl 's do bhiadh 's dha'n chuile seorsa 's a bhiodh air aig na bainnsean.

MM: Bheil cuimhne agaibh air rudan a bhiodh iad a' deanamh aig an rèiteach mh ò r?

Christina Shaw: Bhiodh dithis na triùir air an cur air leth, dha na gillean a bha staigh – bhitheadh 's na bodaich – a' falbh air feadh na cloinn-nighean agus iad a' breith air tè thall 's a bhos 's 'ga slaodadh suas a cheann a' bhùird, 's uaireannan 'ga riasladh. Agus bhiodh sinne dol falach leis an nàire man toireadh iad suas sinn go fear na bainnseadh. Agus nochdadh iad a's an dorus le tè a siod 's a seo, 's dh' fhoighneachdadh iad, 'An e seo i?'

'O chan i. O chan i, tha i sen ro dhuilich a geamhrachadh.'

Agus bha tè cho grända 's bha tè cho reamhar, 's bha tè ro chaol 's bha chuile càil ceàrr . . . coire air a chuile tè. 'S bha iad a' toir suas nan cailleachan cuideachd. Cha robh e go dibhear c ò choinnicheadh riutha, 's bha tòrr dha na h-ingheanan a' teiche 's a' dol a mach dha na bàthchannan mam beirist orra. Ach ma dheireadh a neise, bhathas a' faighinn greim air an tè cheart, 's bhathas a' dol suas leatha sen a cheann a' bhùird 's 'ga cur 'na suidhe ri taobh an fhir. 'S chanadh a' fear a bha 'g iarraidh na bean òige, 'O seo i, seo i. Gabhaidh sinn i sen.' Sen mar a bha iad. 'Ni i sen an gnothuich.'

. . .

MM: Agus a neise, nuair a bhiodh iad ag iarraidh bean-na-bainnse, robh càil sonruicht aca dha ràdha, na robh iad a' . . .

CS: *Well*, bha. A 'fear a bhiodh ag iarraidh bean-na-bainnse, bha fear-na-bainnse a' toir leis fear, 's fear a bha math air briodhann an còmhnuidh – duine èibhinn mar gun canadh tu, 'se sen ma bha e ri fhaighinn, a bha iad a' taghadh, airson gum biodh tòrr aige ri ràdha 's gum biodh spòrs ann. Chanadh e, 'Thàine sinne nochd ann a sheo,' na, can, rud colach ris a seo, 'ach a faiceamaid a robh boirionnach ri lorg dhan chulaidh-thruais a tha ann a seo.' 'C ò a tha sibh a' smaoineachadh – A bheil gion ann a sheo air a robh sibh a' smaoineachadh?' 'S dh'fhalbhadh iad an uairsin, dithis na triùir dha na gillean. Bhitheadh 's na bodaich . . . a muigh . . . air feadh nam boirionnach, 's bheireadh iad air tè a siod 's a seo, 's dòcha gun toireadh iad suas dusan mas beireadh iad air an tè cheart.

[**Peggy Morrison:** . . . Well, when one of my sisters married, there were four occasions, the small rèiteach, the big rèiteach, the wedding in our own house and the wedding in his house. There were the four . . .

MM: Now, what happened at the small rèiteach?

PM: Oh, there was nothing but a sort of party. Only a few people would be there for the small rèiteach. And the big rèiteach now – they used to decide on the night – the day on which the marriage was to be. And usually it was a week from when it would be – say it was on a Thursday, a week the following Tuesday would be the wedding . . . And the big rèiteach, it was just as – just as many people at it, and as much music and food and everything as there was at weddings.

MM: Do you remember any of the things they did at the big rèiteach?

Christina Shaw: Two or three were selected, of the boys who were in – yes, and old men – to go amongst the girls, grabbing one here and one there and dragging her along to the top of the table, and sometimes manhandling her. And we used to hide, from shyness, in case we were taken up to the groom. And they would appear in the doorway with this one and that one, asking, 'Is this her?'

'Oh no. No. That one's too difficult to winter.' And one was so ugly, one so fat, one was too thin, and everything was wrong – each one had a fault. And they took old women up too. It didn't matter who they came across, and a lot of girls hid and went out to the byres in case they were caught. But at last, now, the right one was got hold of, and she would be taken up to the top of the table and seated next to the man. And the man who was asking for the young woman would say, 'Oh, here she is, here she is. We'll accept that one.' That's how they were. 'That one will do.'

. . .

MM: And now, when they were looking for the bride did they have anything special to say, or were they . . .

CS: Well, yes. The man who was asking for the bride, the groom took a man with him, and always one who was a good speaker. It was a witty man, as you might say, that they chose, that is if he was available, so that he would have lots to say and there would be some fun. He would say, 'We came here tonight,' or, say, something like this, 'to see if there was a woman to be found for this pitiful object here.' 'Who do you think – is there anyone here that you had in mind?' And they would go off then, two or three of the lads, yes, and old men too, outside – amongst the women, and they would grab one here and one there, they might take a dozen up before they would catch the right one.

In this very vivid account allegorical and direct refusal appear to be mixed, and it may be that the informant has more than one *rèiteach* in mind. 'Too difficult to winter' is a zoological term, whilst the other criticisms could apply to the women themselves. The large number of women involved and the stress placed on the indiscriminate nature of their selection are indicative of a custom which has lost its formal and ceremonial character and has instead the twin aims of prolongation and entertainment. The women, whom we note are reluctant to participate, are presented for refusal at the doorway to the room in which the groom's party is gathered, or physically 'dragged' to the groom's end of the table farthest away from the door, to be turned down at close quarters. Part of the amusement (although the informant's choice of language indicates an ambiguous reaction, bordering on the negative) centres on this dramatic 'delivery' of the women. Theirs is a forced journey to and from the territory of 'one's own' to that of the 'alien';

further dramatising the choice made by the young bride as she is delivered and left to take her place by the side of the groom, whose representative has publicly accepted her. It is of interest that the *rèiteach mòr* is described as as an event equal in popularity with the official wedding, and it may be that the informant intended to say that the event was just as *important*, before correcting herself. As with other accounts, the verbal skill of the representative is clearly acknowledged, and a good example of his rhetorical ability is shown by the inverted eulogy with which he opens his performance on behalf of his '*chulaidh-thruais*', 'pitiful object'. This mocking opening gambit could, of course, only be appropriate in the context of a 'sort of party' where all the details of the marriage had been settled beforehand. Notwithstanding the reluctance of the women, it would appear from this account that any tension between play and seriousness has been lost; the atmosphere is convivial and informal, and a communal delight in the drama and wordplay is the surviving component of the archaic ceremonial sequence.

The following account is taken from the memoirs of F. J. MacDonald, a native of Harris. The *rèiteach* he describes took place around 1915, his father playing the role of master of ceremonies.

> Here now was Peter . . . in full flight with a wedding song which was, in today's terms, 'explicit' in the extreme, bringing half-hearted protests from the women and roars of approbation from the men. It went on for verse after verse, and it was beginning to pall on me because its innuendo (if that isn't too delicate a word) was far above my head . . . Song followed song. Somebody played the bagpipe, and somebody played the trump as the Jew's Harp was called. Now and again Donald John Murray was prevailed on to lay down his drink and pick up his melodeon and the company erupted into dancing which involved frequent lurchings into the table . . .
>
> 'Silence!' . . . the voice was my father's . . . he assumed to himself a strange and pompous voice which was untypically forceful . . . 'My friends', he said, 'the time has now come!' . . . my father, by dint of reason and persuasion and hectoring managed to divide the motley throng into two groups . . . Mary's old father . . . stood erect and patrician looking. My father, having got the company ordered to his satisfaction, launched into a measured, flowery, speech. On behalf of himself and everybody within and without the parish he thanked the old couple for their hospitality, and for 'the use of their roof', as he put it, for one of the best parties he had ever attended. Now, he wondered if they would extend their kindliness and good-will still further and receive a stranger who had arrived unexpectedly at the door.
>
> Mary's father bowed graciously and said that his home had ever been open to the stranger and asked that this one be brought forward. A man who was, indeed, a stranger to me stepped forward and bowed gravely to Mary's parents . . . if my father had been flowery, this fellow was worse. It turned out that he was a sailor home on leave and though he had been at parties in every corner of the globe this was, by far, the best he had ever enjoyed and he was sorry to be the one to introduce a note of solemnity into the proceedings.
>
> 'I am here', he went on, 'representing my good friend James, at whose shoulder I will be standing if and when the day comes that he gets married. James himself cannot be here tonight because he is practising the great art of looking after children, and it is to be hoped that he is learning well in case the day comes when he was to tuck in his own . . .' He went on

to explain that he had been sent, because of his great experience of boats and the sea, to buy a boat for James! It had to be a good boat – a boat that had not been ill-treated in any way; a boat that could stand a tall mast; a boat that would last well and would not be expensive to maintain . . . It was a long speech, made longer by the gales of laughter that greeted every apparently innocent sentence, and he described a boat that was out of this world.

'And finally', concluded the stranger in his smooth Gaelic, 'it must be known to you that my friend James is a man of great experience with boats (howls of laughter from the company) and a man who knows a good boat when he sees one and will not be taken in by paint and varnish! I am asking therefore, if you can sell me a boat that is sound from prow to stern (more laughter), one that will stand up to whatever weather comes her way, and will not ever drag her anchor'. The stranger gravely acknowledged the applause and stepped aside. Mary's father stroked his beard and held a serious whispered conversation with his wife. He then moved slowly forward and took my Great Aunt Rachel by the hand. She was creased with laughter and I noticed that she had put her teeth in for the party. 'Here', said the old man, 'is a boat which has weathered many storms, but she's good for a few years yet. As far as we know she's only ever had one mast (complete uproar) and only her present owner has hoisted her sails.' (Pealing laughter again.) 'This boat has been well cared for. She may look weather-beaten but her beam is sound!'

It was some time before the stranger could reply, but when he did it went something like this: 'A fine boat I have no doubt but not suitable for the shallow waters around these parts. Top heavy too unless my eyes deceive me. But, worst of all, old boats have characteristics of their own and they are not always obedient to a new hand on the rudder. No. If you can't do better than that I must look elsewhere'.

My Great Aunt Rachel squeezed herself back into her armchair with her bosom heaving and tears of laughter streaming down her face . . . Mary's father proceeded to bring forward, one after the other, four or five women from the neighbourhood . . . and one after the other the stranger turned them down – sometimes with ribald comment where the candidate was a buxom adolescent; with great graciousness where she was a modest matron. At last he seemed to lose patience and made as if to go, but before he could do so Mary's father took his daughter by the wrist and pulled her, protesting coyly, into the ring. 'Very well,' he said, 'this is my last offer to you. Here is a boat I have always meant to keep for myself. But if your friend James will promise to look after her I might consider letting her go'.

The stranger beamed. He took Mary and spun her round and round, pretending to be running his hands over her but not touching her at all. 'My friend,' he said at last, 'this is the very boat for James, and, if I mistake not, perfect for the kind of cargo he has in mind for her . . .'

I was not to realize till much later . . . that I had been privileged to witness an old Highland wedding custom that I was never to see again (MacDonald, Finlay: 87–92).

This account is remarkable for the vivid impression it creates of the ritual occasion. The master of ceremonies separates the audience into two groups, creating a 'ring' into which the women are brought. This image immediately calls to mind the ring into which animals are led for inspection by potential buyers at the cattle-market; in this case it is the girl's father who ushers them in, in other accounts there is an escort

to perform this task. The strikingly physical final inspection of the bride-to-be by the groom's representative reinforces the impression of a 'market-place'. It is also the space in which the speeches are performed. Those of the master of ceremonies and the 'stranger' are described as 'flowery' and 'long', and both are accompanied by a mock seriousness. The MC's voice is 'strange', 'pompous' and 'forceful', and this theatrical feature of the performance is mirrored by the representative's apology for his 'solemnity', his pausing for laughter to subside and his 'grave' acknowledgement of applause at the conclusion of his speech. Aside from the inflated rhetoric, creation of a performance space and provision for the audience, there are other dramatic elements; the motif of the stranger seeking hospitality is employed as a pretext for entry, and we may therefore consider the representative to be performing 'in character'; the father bows 'graciously', the stranger 'gravely' before their speeches begin; the 'buyer' twice makes as though to leave – another 'market-place' image; and the bringing forward of the women into the ring and the final inspection of the bride-to-be are highly theatrical in nature. The representative's opening speech is clearly a eulogy, and it is of interest that the motif of the 'boatsman' is employed at this point and not only during the rejection of the 'boats' themselves. He is the future best-man, and works a boastful reference to his own 'experience' into his speech. An air of pronounced sexual charge pervades the proceedings and the speeches and exchanges are replete with sexual innuendo. This finds physical expression in the concluding 'inspection' of the bride. Before the opening speeches there is a bawdy wedding song, 'explicit in the extreme'. The risqué nature of the content is, of course, made more amusing by the 'grave' and 'pompous' method of delivery. Reference is made, however, to a more 'gracious' tone adopted when the sensitivity of the woman to be refused warrants such treatment. Recurring features of the ritual other than the 'trader' motif may be noted; refusal of a woman is on the grounds of 'impossible transplantation' – she is not suitable for the water around the groom's location; the girl 'protests coyly' as she is brought to the representative, the groom himself being absent; the father reluctantly agrees to part with his favourite, on condition she is cared for (this recalls the proviso 'welcome to sail in calm waters' noted elsewhere); and her fertility is stressed – she will be able to bear the groom's 'cargo'.

The audience enjoy the occasion hugely; and their pleasure is mainly derived from the verbal skill involved in sustaining this prolonged allegorical exchange. The description of its ribald nature, preceded by spirited dancing, is in stark contrast to the sober ceremonial exchanges noted elsewhere in Scotland, and is rather at variance with the account by another Harris informant which stressed the lack of 'crudity' and the 'dignity' of the occasion (Murdo Ewan MacDonald: see below). Both informants are in agreement, however, that the *rèiteach* died out after the First World War.

That the function of the *rèiteach mòr* is a form of more public 'replaying' of the *rèiteach beag* is further suggested by the first lines of the following account from Scalpay:

> Nuair a gheibheadh e i, dh'fheumadh iad a cuir a nuas ach a faicist i. 'S dòch gur e chailleach bu mhotha bhiodh am broinn an taighe dhe'adh suas, bheireadh iad suas. Bhiodh iad toir

> suas té ma seach go nochdadh bean na bainnseadh. Nuair a dhe'adh bean na bainnseadh suas bha i 'na suidhe ri thaobh. Bha 'a fear comhailteach a' lìonadh glainn uisge-bheatha 's bha e dha thoir a dh'fhear na biannse 's chanadh e ris: 'Bheir a neis an còrr – dàrna leth – dha 'n duine 's fheàrr leat.' Bheireadh e dhì-se – dh'òladh iad a' ghlainne le chéile. Bha nuairsin an rèiteach a' dol air adhart.
>
> [When they had agreed that he could have her, they had to bring her in so that people could see her. It might be the biggest old woman in the house who would come in . . . they'd bring in. They'd bring them in one by one till the bride-to-be appeared. When the bride-to-be came in she sat down by his side. The best man would fill a glass with whisky and give it to the groom and he'd say to him: 'Now give what's left – half of it – to the one you like best'. He'd give it to her – they'd drink the glass together. Then the (rest of the) *rèiteach* went ahead (Catherine Morrison).

This account suggests that the formal consent of the girl and father, accomplished at the 'small betrothal', and the more open 'big betrothal' have been combined. Once the 'private' element is concluded, a further stage is necessary so that 'people can see' the bride-to-be. It would appear that the groom is placed at the end of the table ready to receive the 'false brides', and once she has taken her place, all witness the solemn incorporation ritual of sharing of the cup. The 'rest' of the *rèiteach* may refer to the feast and the discussion of practical arrangements with regard to the official wedding. It is of interest that the informant emphasises that even the old *cailleachs* are brought to the young man as potential brides, as if to express the indiscriminate nature of their selection. The informant acknowledges the distinctive logic of the ritual; *any* woman can be presented, even the oldest, who could not possibly be considered a rival partner.

The following account is also from Harris. The informant, Murdo Ewan MacDonald, describes the betrothals he attended in the 1920s and how young people met one another:

> [The] closely-knit community met often at various times . . . at spring, autumn, the fishing, the ceilidh; they met each other very often at the ceilidh . . . they took communion very seriously – it only happened twice a year . . . it was a festivity in a way . . . one of the signs was if you saw a young man or a young woman walking back from communion together – that was a sign . . . you were always watching for that. I remember my mother and my father saying 'They're going to get married – they always walk back from the communion' that sort of thing. It was done most discretely . . .

The informant goes on to describe who was invited to the *rèiteach beag* and *mòr*, and what took place:

> The *rèiteach beag* was very intimate; the nieces, the nephews, the uncles, the aunts and maybe one first cousin or so, and the next-door neighbour . . . a little meal, and the father of the bride would get up and thank them for coming . . . They would come to ask my father 'we'd like you to be the master of ceremonies at the *rèiteach mòr* . . .' [there were invited] close relatives . . . not so close relatives, second cousins or third cousins, close friends who were not necessarily related, not at all related – they may have been on the same fishing boat – and

> the neighbours, whether they were related or not . . . The whole community contributed to these feasts – it didn't fall on the family . . . It was at the *rèiteach mor* that they had this kind of acted drama; it was quite funny and some people specialised in it. They appointed a 'master of ceremonies' and they invited some women in and the M.C. 'interviewed' . . . 'No, No, you're not suitable . . . you can't weave, you're not good at it and you're not houseproud enough; och, there was all kinds of ridiculous reasons, and it's obvious from the way you dress that you're not dress-conscious and it was very funny . . . then the bride came; she was perfect, she was beautiful, she was well-dressed, she was houseproud, she could weave and do this and that . . . [it was] very good-natured and funny, everybody took it good-naturedly and the people who were dismissed took it even better.

The informant also recalled one of his father's methods of refusing the women; 'you're not going to be accepted, you're overweight and he just can't afford to feed you . . . she left the place roaring and laughing'. During the proceedings, there were 'some standing, some sitting; the older people sitting and we children stood around the wall and looked on'. The master of ceremonies was

> at a table where he could command the whole, he stood behind the table and harangued . . . one by one – there was an escort bringing them in – one by one dismissed for various reasons. [The groom-to-be] was watching and laughing . . . the M.C. was in sole charge and he dismissed those who didn't qualify in very charming, non-rude and humorous terms; it took an immense amount of skill, and everyone enjoyed it – it was very dramatic . . . my father was very good at that, he worked at it beforehand and he knew the people who were going to be escorted in . . . There was a *pattern* about the thing you see, the *rèiteach beag*, the *rèiteach mòr*, the drama – that comic thing – which was very amusing . . . it was never crude, it was humorous; whenever the woman was dismissed people were laughing, for it was so absurd the reason for dismissal, and she was laughing loudest . . . 'I remember when you were young, you were very good looking; but you're not young now' and he left the . . . he didn't say 'you're not good looking' – that kind of thing – it was very well done. They looked forward to that dismissal, and then of course we knew it would happen – the bride would come in dressed up 'Oh great! no wonder he asked you to marry him!' . . . This was the stage that they were accepted; the *banais* was going to proceed; the penultimate stage; there was that kind of formality, though not expressed – but it was there . . .They let their hair down at wedding times; that's another part of the institution. They can be solemn, religious and pious. I suppose that goes back to the medieval Catholic feast, where you were given, they were allowed certain . . . you were allowed to let your hair down for a short time. Now, the nearest equivalent in the Protestant Hebrides is the *rèiteach beag*, *rèiteach mòr* and the *banais* . . . people behaved in a joyful manner, but [with] dignity; marriage was taken very seriously; [the bridegroom] remained as modest as possible.

This account confirms the clear distinction between the stages of the ceremonial sequence. The *rèiteach mor* is attended by those who attended the earlier *rèiteach beag*, with the addition of those still considered as belonging to the 'inner circle' of the family, whether kin or not. This leads to the wedding, the *banais*, where the whole community, perhaps the whole island is invited, personally, by the bride and groom. The sequence

can be visualised as a series of concentric circles; at the centre the ritual couple and their intimates exchange consent and come to agreement on sensitive matters in a secluded, non-public space. Following this, these events are 'replayed' for the benefit of a larger number of kin and non-kin with an interest or stake in the marriage. This takes place in a space large enough to accommodate a crowd and allow the dramatisation of the groom's selection of a partner from among their number. The very act of refusing cousins, friends and neighbours acknowledges and articulates their perceived involvement in the process. This is also accomplished by leaving certain things undecided until this stage, such as who is to be invited to the church, allowing a wider range of opinions to be heard. The third stage involves travelling through the community dispensing invitations to the 'outer circle'. The informant describes how in Harris the bride and bridegroom invited the guests from door to door, and 'every house had someone represented'. Then the couple make their promises again; this time in full public view and in the eyes of God, outdoors and under the heavens. The informant describes the return of the couple from the church: 'they would prefer to walk . . . on the way back everybody waved towels, shouted at them and wished them well, and some people got up to the hills above and fired volleys; my father fired the shots and Donal John piped'. The elaborate provision for, and articulation of community involvement makes one certain that it was not the couple who 'preferred to walk' but custom which dictated that they did so.

This account confirms the participant's perception of the ritual as 'a kind of acted drama' which everyone looked forward to. There is a sizeable audience, and the verbally skilled main performer, described as a 'specialist' has prepared his witty retorts in advance, confirming our earlier suspicions that as he is of the community, he would have a good idea of which women were likely to appear. It may be that the women were selected some time in advance of the occasion, giving the 'master of ceremonies' time to prepare his 'script'. He has an assistant, the individual charged with escorting the women in. One suspects that some element of cueing and signalling would be necessary in order that the 'false brides' are delivered at the correct time. A large number and wide variety of women would obviously provide an opportunity for virtuosic verbal display, which is appreciated by all, and the informant acknowledges the level of skill involved. The refusals are, however, non-allegorical; rejection centres solely on physical characteristics. These are delivered without causing offence; the informant places great stress on the 'dignity' of the proceedings and the good cheer which prevailed, especially among those rejected. The example of verbal skill singled out for praise by the informant is of interest; the bard sets up the joke in such a way that he disclaims responsibility for the reading 'you are ugly', which is the logical conclusion of the joke: 'I remember when you were young and good looking. You're not young now . . .' As we may expect, the bride is accepted and praised as the ideal partner, lauded as 'perfect' in her appearance, house-making skills and ability to work. The tendency to indirect expression is suggested by the description of courtship, and the communal enthusiasm for fairly direct insult sanctioned by custom is tentatively compared to the licence allowed by the Catholic

church on saints' feast days. The final significance of the ritual is made plain by the informant; 'they were accepted; the *banais* was going to proceed'. This suggests another function of the ritual; with each movement away from the centre of the inner circle, and with each progression of the ceremonial sequence, the marriage becomes more certain to take place. As community involvement increases, momentum is gained and the breakdown of the betrothal progressively less likely. The second and third stages could be seen as mounting 'insurance' against the fickle humanity at the centre of this community drama, ritually 'acting out' the restructuring of social relations. The couple's new status brings restrictions, and the period between betrothal and marriage is closely policed in many cultures. This may be the prosaic aspect of the superstitious belief that the groom-to-be was in mortal danger between the *rèiteach* and his marriage.

The scrupulous invitation of the whole community is again suggested by the following account from Donald Morrison of Mull.

> Bha rèiteach aig cuid, aig cuid. Bha rèiteach, oidhche rèiteach ann.. Tha cuimhne agam gu math air, bhith air falbh aig rèiteach, 's mi 'nam bhalach. Bha iad sin oidhche aca, lathaichean mun tigeadh a' bhanais, agus ò tì is dram 's gabhail òran aca ann a sin a's an taigh sin. Bha. Agus nuair a gheibheadh tu cuireadh gu na banais, ann an cois cò thu 's e an aon ruith a bha chuile duine faotainn, on bhalach gus an duine bha cheann liath. Bha e faighinn an aon ruith. Bha e aig a' phòsadh. Ma bha am ministear gam pòsadh, agus nuair a bha iad aig bòrd na suipeireach mar a bhiodh iad ris bha e sin cuideachd. Bha iad cruinn còmhla a sin. Cha robh nì dealachadh air an darna h-aon seach an t-aon eile. Bha sin ann.
>
> [Some people had a *rèiteach*. Yes, some had a betrothal. There was a betrothal evening, I well remember it, going to a betrothal as a boy . . . And when you got an invitation to the marriage, it did not matter who you were, everyone got the same invitation, from the boy to the one who was grey-haired. They all got the same invitation. They were at the marriage. If the minister was going to marry them, when they arranged the supper as was their wont, he was there too. They were all there together. There were no distinctions made between them. There was that.]

The couple's incorporation into the community continued with rituals during and after the marriage, and at their 'kirking'. Marion MacLeod from Lewis recalls:

> The day of the actual wedding a piper came along and the piper preceded the procession to church. The bride on the way to the church was led by a groom's man. On the way back home the bride and groom led the procession, after the piper. The people were taken in to the wedding table in relays after which they would go out to the barn where the dancing went on till two in the morning . . . the bride and groom had to sit it out at the head of the table while relay after relay of guests sat at the table and toasted their health. Now the toasts were individual, so it took quite a while . . . it would have been a terrible disgrace if someone had gone away and not taken of the meal that had been prepared. The following night they had what was called the *banais-tighe*. Now that meant another celebration in the bridegroom's house for the elderly and for the people who just couldn't sit it out the night before (Kay: 94–5).

She also describes the kirking, the couple's first appearance in church, which was also carefully structured:

> On the following Sabbath they had what was known as the Kirking. This meant going to church; the bridegroom and his bride, the best-man and the best-maid . . . the best-man went into church followed by the bride and the groom and the best-maid and they sat in that order in the pew. The best-man led the way into church. He stood at the end of the pew while the bride and groom and best-maid went into the pew and he took his seat at the end . . . that was the Kirking.

In the following account from Scalpay, it appears the groom had to chase or find his bride, and catch hold of her hand before the ritual could be concluded. Billy Kay notes that the groom had to 'catch his bride from all the other young women in the room, who were often pushed in his direction. At first the bride is hidden, along with her bridesmaid, until brought up to the room where the groom is sitting with 'the old men'. These seem to dominate the proceedings, perhaps the 'ritual experts' who are responsible for the eventual union of the pair. The allegorical device employed would appear to be that of the 'couples'.

> The Friday before the wedding, all the old men and women gathered together in the bride's home. And the bride and the bridesmaid was in the bedroom, hiding in the bedroom, and all the old men were cracking away and in about half an hour they would say 'Oh well we'd better see about this *rèiteach* in the house'. And one of the old men would get up and go down to the bedroom and get a hold of the bride-to-be and the bridesmaid would follow her. And the bridegroom was sitting along with the old men and one of the other old men would get up and say 'Well, I think this bride will be well-fixed to this one'. And they would try and get hold of one another's hand, you know, the bride and bridegroom. And one of the old men would say 'that's fine, they're nailed together now'. They would carry on and sing songs and have tea until about two in the morning (Jessie Nicholson, Scalpay in Kay: 94).

4. HARRIS RÈITEACH, 1970 – EXTENDED DIALOGUE

The only recording of the procedure at a *rèiteach* is of a wedding in 1970 on Harris, and takes the form of an improvised allegorical dialogue and 'false bride' sequence. This recording was passed to Morag MacLeod of the School of Scottish Studies and her transcription and translation forms part of her essay 'Rèiteach'. The marriage is between Bella Morrison and Donald MacDermid. In her introduction to the text, the author notes:

> Bella's family all have curly hair and her father and only brother are nicknamed Curly. Bella is the youngest of Kenneth Morrison's seven daughters and all the others had already married. On the bride's side the speakers were Norman MacLeod, one of her brothers-in-law and a bard, and John Morrison, a neighbour who has always been a popular entertainer at weddings. John is a confirmed bachelor. On the groom's side the speakers are two neighbours, one a schoolteacher, Neil Campbell, the other a shopkeeper who, alas, died

> recently, Calum MacSween . . . the introduction of English words and of topical allusions adds to the causes for merriment. The prospective bridegroom sits at the top of the table, with the four protagonists facing each other across the table, two on his left and two on his right. Friends and relatives who have been invited are crowded round this group as closely as possible, so as to hear what is said. There may be as many as seventy to eighty people crammed into the room (Morag MacLeod: 385).

There are occasional contributions from those nearby, including Finlay MacDermid, the father of the groom, and Kenneth Morrison, father of the bride, but three of the four main protagonists are non-kin neighbours, whilst the other is a non-kin relative. It is to be noted that one of the bride's representatives is described as a 'bard' and the other as a popular choice at weddings – corresponding to the sought-after 'master of ceremonies' described by an earlier informant from Harris.

The dialogue opens with an overt acknowledgement of the two 'camps' symbolically arranged on opposite sides of the table with the groom between them. He is referred to by his representative as '*an duine bochd*', a 'poor soul', which inverted praise recalls the example above where the groom was described as a 'pitiful object'. The inversion continues as the subject moves to hospitality; the groom's side criticise what has been presented to them on 'the table', while the hosts defend the arrangements, which are complete '*co-dhiù cho fad 's a chì sinne*', 'as far as we can see'. What the table lacks, of course, is a partner for the groom-to-be. The inversion of hospitality, here represented by the guests' criticism – has been noted in other accounts. The game is continued by the hosts 'in a mock-defensive tone', according to MacLeod's marginal comment, and they thank the visitors for coming.

The hosts remark that their guests are lacking 'hogs', and that this must be the purpose of the visit. They do not have many left – a reference to the fact that of his seven daughters only Bella, the bride-to-be, remains unmarried. The guests are asked whether they are looking to start a new stock – in other words, to get new blood into their own. Transplantation as an allegory of marriage was noted earlier as a theme present in an account from Harris and will recur later in the dialogue.

The visitors make a reference to the 'good price' they are willing to offer, and a suggestion that they might find a suitable animal there is cut short by the host's retort that the 'selling' of his other beasts, his daughters, has cost him dear. His intervention, supported by his partner, ensures that the dialogue does not progress too quickly, and is a clear articulation of resistance and deliberate obstruction. The girl has been allegorised first as a hog, then a generic 'beast' and now as a dog, a favourite and irreplaceable pet. This is a form of eulogy, the praise and expression of reluctance to part with the girl placing further pressure on the groom's party. They counter hopefully that perhaps the cat could replace his pet, but this suggestion is emphatically rejected – it's not that easy – a remark that also refers to the task their adversaries face in winning them over.

The hosts confirm that they do have hogs for sale, and the 'buyers' confirm that they

are of same stock as the girl's father – they must have a curl in their wool, a reference to the curly hair shared by the members of the family. This remark demonstrates the flexibility of the allegorical mode; skilfully employed, a commonplace zoological feature can be used to reveal details of the specific context to which the dialogue relates, as well as articulating general qualities which are common to 'any animal' and 'any woman'. The bride's side link tightness of curl with youth, and the visitors confirm that they are looking for young stock, new blood for their part of the island. The hosts affect not to understand why they have come to their croft in their search; we have noted this as a recurring feature of the ritual, and it represents a further example of resistance and deliberate prolongation; the visitors must justify themselves again. They praise their hosts' land, and the stock that prospered there; a reference to the large family they have raised. The bride's representatives present another obstacle; there are many things with curly hair, including men; how can they tell the difference? (the dialogue was recorded in the 1970's, when the 'perming' of men's often lengthy hair was fashionable). The groom's party insist – they want a female. Her defenders counter with a bawdy pun; they are not going to start shearing the sheep to find out (the word '*rùsgadh*' can mean 'shearing' or 'stripping'). To 'go further' than stripping obviously carries a risqué meaning. The groom's representative states that in order to make a correct identification one must look for a 'tag'. The motif of the tag will later enable the groom's party to reject the women offered, quite apart from any other 'objections' which might be raised.

The bride's representatives are, for a moment, more encouraging; they invite the visitors to confirm they believe themselves to be in the right place to find good stock, and suggest that the visitors' own 'herd' is exhausted. That they have come to the right place is emphatically affirmed. Then follows another obstacle; the father has lost a lot of stock; he is reluctant to part with any more; and all that remains is 'a big dry ewe'. This is most probably a reference to the bride's mother, as Morag MacLeod points out. We will also recall the lower value that 'dry' animals represented in the currency of cattle noted above. Then there is a correction; they have a hog, but refuse to sell it; or they may, but point out that '*ghabh sùil oirre*', 'an evil eye has got at her'. This has made the beast 'terrible for wandering', which the groom's party may be able to cure. The animal is not 'settled', and cannot be described as 'sedate'. Aside from the suggestion of an initiation into sexual maturity, the animal motif also articulates what Lonsdale, speaking of Greek ritual, describes as 'a . . . transformation of a young girl from a wild, disorderly creature to a tame and nubile being'.[14] This in turn is linked to notions of domestication and submission; young women need someone to lead them, as well as belong to.

Perhaps it is the groom's influence, his excessive praise, for example, which has caused the 'evil eye', and results in her straining against the confines of her father's house. The situation can only be settled by her leaving for new pastures; the solution offered, we recall, for the 'ewe lamb that strays' in an earlier account from Harris. Another topical comment on society follows; young people are like this – they roam widely. They

might have a sheep, a 'dry', that is non-milk producing one. If it cannot produce milk, then they will not part with it. But it will not always be dry; even their own stock can dry up. This is just as well, replies his partner. In other words, their women are not always pregnant. They would not part with it if it were to remain dry; in other words a condition of sale is that it produces a new breed. The important issues of praise, the 'unsettled animal', milk-production and the evil eye are dealt with in detail below.

It should be noted that the reference to 'silver water' alludes to the common charm against the evil eye. George Henderson decribes the procedure:

> In the averting ritual water had to be lifted in a *wooden* ladle at a stream over which the living and the dead passed; it was not suffered to touch the ground, and when taken up it was done in the name of the Sacred Trinity; silver coins were put into the ladle and also a copper coin; the whole was blessed with the sign of the cross, and according to a ritual of divination it was thought that a wise person could tell whether it was a male's or a female's eye that had been the bewitching agent. Thereafter the patient was sprinkled with some of the lustral water, and what remained over was dashed against a huge boulder-stone not likely ever to be moved. Evil was thus transferred for ever to the stone, and the 'evil eye' was lifted from off the sufferer (Henderson: 301).

Another condition is raised by the girl's team; it depends on what meadow the sheep would be sent to. This provides the opportunity for the groom's side, who have been silent all the while, to praise the young man: '*cha bhi dìth innis oirre*', there will be no lack of grazing for it – if they can get hold of it. The bride's team reply with a maxim; 'it is easy to be generous in times of plenty, but in hard times . . .'; her defenders are still resisting every attempt at forward movement made by the groom's party. They repeat; the father had plenty of stock, but this has diminished; if he gives away the last, he will have no replacement. This remark turns into bawdy praise of the bride's father; when he was younger, he could have provided a replacement quickly. Now of course, his 'ewe' is also 'dry'.

The groom's side suggest that the bride's brothers-in-law could produce some 'reinforcements'. These reply that one of them, Finlay, is shy; Finlay replies that he has nothing to offer, which produces another bawdy remark from the bride's team.

They have a dog, they persist, continuing the defensive posture. The groom's party try to make progress, but the quick repartee gives way to a comic story from the bride's side, on the subject of late marriage and a man's reluctance and distaste for the institution. It includes a reference to a local woman who had recently got married in her seventies. It should be remembered that the audience at the *rèiteach* numbered between seventy and eighty people, and the occasion is perhaps used to provide the licence for a rather belated *charivari*. The point of the story is to offer an inversion of the ideal state; the forced marriage of a bachelor and the late marriage of an elderly woman are the antithesis of the marriage about to take place between the young couple. Other remarks – by both sides – relating to the misprizing of the institution of marriage and the absence of love are intended to express quite the opposite.

The story seems to have exhausted the patience of the groom's party, who press hard for progress. This is the signal for the beginning of the 'false bride' sequence, although the bride's side express doubt to the last possible moment: '*N toir sinn dhuibh an té a tha againn*?', 'will we give you the one we've got?' They express doubt that their visitors will be able to recognise the animal they want; the groom's side are sure – they have it 'tagged', the mechanism for refusal introduced earlier in the dialogue. Referring to the women, they are told that '*Tha crowd anns an fhaing*', there is a crowd in the fank. It is not clear whether the women are gathered in a separate space, perhaps through a doorway, or are simply taken and returned to their seats. As in other accounts there is an escort to deliver the women for inspection. Appropriately, he is a shepherd, and his experience is approved by both sides. The suggestion is that this is a role he has performed in the past.

The first 'sheep' is produced, and the salesman assures the buyer that it is 'dry', that is, not pregnant. She receives faint praise, followed by doubt that she has the identifying tag. The bride's side enquire as to whether she has the curly coat of their stock. The groom's side reply that she does not, and is therefore too closely related to their stock to consider for breeding. The woman is a relative of the groom, and the woman is therefore dismissed on thoroughly legitimate grounds. This is both skilful and humorous, although one will recall the reference made above by another Harris informant to the deep-rooted fear of incest shared by the islanders, and the remark may be said to have a more significant resonance than is at first apparent.

The groom's party are invited to try again, especially where the rebellious, that is, the young ones gather. The next candidate, Morag MacLeod notes, is, however, a 'confirmed spinster of middle age or more'. The reason for refusal employs the 'transplantation' motif; the sheep is used to a certain kind of pasture and would not remain with them.

Another woman is presented, this time an incomer. The hosts apply some pressure; the visitors cannot possibly refuse this creature. Their refusal is blunt; again, she is accustomed to life in the mainland, where it is not as wet as on the island. A comic episode follows when it is noticed that the beast has already been sold – she is married – and the hosts protest that they should not be thought dishonest. The observation '*tha marc oirre siod*', 'she is marked', presumably refers to her wedding ring.

The groom's side again show signs of impatience – they want to see a young animal, and the escort assures him that one is on its way. Such expressions of restlessness on the part of the groom's side find their parallel in the threats of the representative to leave and look elsewhere, as noted in the example from Finlay MacDonald above. The hosts remark that their visitors are difficult to please, and produce another incomer, to encouraging remarks reminiscent of animal herding. She is rejected for the same reason as the others; she is not of the right stock to thrive on the groom's land.

The hosts keep their resistance up until the end, claiming not to know what kind of animal the groom's party is seeking. The escort finally ushers in the bride-to-be; she

has the 'tag' and is a 'c*aora an earraich*', a spring sheep. The dialogue ends with the bride's party exhorting the production of a 'good breed' by the couple.

One of the most striking features of the dialogue is the relative passivity and silence of the groom's party in comparison with the bride's. Of 173 separate utterances, the groom's party make 53; a contribution of around 31 per cent. In character these are short, matter of fact, rather humourless and often made with the explicit intention of advancing the ritual to its conclusion rather than actively participating in the allegorical invention of the dialogue. It could be argued that this merely reflects the personalities involved, or their verbal skill; the most likely reason, however, is that the discrepancy between the two parties is entrenched in tradition. We have already remarked that the groom's party represent the male principle and are physically dominant; this finds expression in, for example, the firing of weapons. Despite having instigated the meeting and being relatively certain of success, they find themselves, however, in a lower, passive, submissive role as they are obliged to ask the father's permission to carry off the girl. She is the 'property' of her father, and we have noted the use of indirect forms including allegory and the motif of buying and selling in order to control and limit the discussion to 'safe' modes of expression. The ritual asking is not, therefore, a battle between equals. Like ritual entry, the girl's representatives are in total control of the discussion, which itself resembles a trial or ordeal more than a competition. The performance of the bride's party in this example from Harris is characterised by the exercise of control, obstructive verbal behaviour and teasing, as well as a variety of examples of verbal skill, such as puns, jokes, maxims, tale-telling, topical references, satire and praise. The groom's party have a far more limited range of expression, tending towards more reactive, prosaic language which is serious in tone. This is appropriate; the *rèiteach* is an occasion for the bride's family to indulge in a proud verbal display which reflects their (temporarily) superior position and aggrandises their 'stock'. The audience are gathered to watch not a bardic contest as such, but to appreciate the inventiveness with which the girl's family obstruct and frustrate the efforts of the groom's party to achieve union. The polar opposites of comic and serious represented by the two parties contribute much to the hilarity; if the groom's representative were just as funny, or worse, even more inventive, witty and amusing than the bride's, the result would be utter confusion. Final union is the purpose of the meeting, a 'clearing away', a 'disentanglement' which leads to an affirmation of 'harmony'; but this is achieved after a period of 'chaos' and disorder, from which 'cosmos' emerges. Such disorder is, however, carefully stage-managed; the natural hierarchy may be inverted, but the rules of engagement and the boundaries applying are known to all and are as durable as the four walls against which the audience are leaning.

This account also makes clear the desire of the participants to be entertaining. The audience, formerly quasi-official 'witnesses' are gathered mainly to the delight in wordplay and the ritual drama of the 'false brides', as well as witnessing the 'sharing of the cup' which surely followed. In this example, besides the working in of specificity to

the allegory, genealogy and social censure are also featured; the audience is reminded that *x* is related to *y*, as well as hearing an affirmation of shared community values in the form of a satire of an errant contemporary. These messages are communicated through burlesque inversion of normal codes, for example of modes of address and hospitality, and as such do indeed resemble the periods of licence afforded during certain religious festivals, as one informant remarked.

5. RÈITEACH AND THE EVIL EYE

5.1. Introduction

In the above account from Harris, reference is made to the availability of a 'hog' tainted by the evil eye, and we have interpreted the introduction of this topic as being related to lactation and milk produce generally. Closer examination of other evidence suggests that traditions surrounding a fear of the evil eye play a role in many, if not all the examples found. The impact of this anxiety is not confined to milk production, and the evil eye may be said to inform the ritual exchanges in the following areas:

a. threats relating to milk and other fluids
b. praise and dispraise
c. buying and selling
d. thigging
e. concealment, distraction and silence

5.2. The evil eye and ritual exchanges

5.2.1 Threats relating to milk and other fluids

The impact of the evil eye on lactation and the production of milk products such as butter, as well as crops and other products is well-documented and widespread. In Alan Dundes' *Casebook* (81, 86–106, 145, 216, 230, 264–6) for example, one can find references to the topic of milk produce and the evil eye from Hungary, Ukraine, Macedonia, Slovakia, Greece, Sweden, Spain, Lebanon and Islamic and Hindu cultures generally, as well as from Scotland and Ireland. In a cross-cultural survey, John M. Roberts found the highest correlation with milking and dairy production, and the highest incidence with the presence of bovine species (Roberts: 241, 243). The oral quality of the evil eye, 'devouring with the eyes' is evident; the act of looking too intensely, or the mere glance of an ill-favoured person is equivalent to the removal, redistribution or incorporation of the milk and the animal's future capacity for production. In the case of butter-theft, the potential for the fluid to become solid is removed – in other words, the evil eye results in the milk remaining at the liquid stage. In his *Evil Eye in the Western Highlands*, R. C. MacLagan (1902: 61, 92, 123) notes also butter becoming 'a kind of grainy substance', a mother's milk turned into water, and cows in addition to giving

no milk 'running and roaring like mad'. Henderson, in his *Survivals*, gives a variety of charms and countermeasures for the return of the *toradh*, or milk produce, and several such charms are to be found in Carmichael's *Carmina Gadelica*.[15] In this context, we may re-examine the Harris *rèiteach* exchange collected by Morag MacLeod.

The bride's father asserts that he has lost a lot of stock and retains only a 'dry ewe'. This most obviously is a reference to a woman past child-bearing age; it could, however, be a reference to the bride herself. This interpretation is suggested as a result of his next remark, which is that he has a hog for sale, but one *tainted by the evil eye*; the animal is prone to wandering, unsettled, but could be 'cured' by the 'sale' to the groom's party. He then refers to a 'dry sheep' that is for sale, an animal which, however, 'would not always be dry', again suggesting that the remedy for the 'dryness' is for the transfer of 'ownership' of the girl to take place. We have previously noted that reference is made by the speaker to a common cure for the evil eye, that of 'silvered water'. The girl is unsettled and prone to wandering, just as the animals are 'running and roaring' in MacLagan's account. She is also temporarily 'dry', another consequence of the evil eye. This is not to suggest that the participants in this *rèiteach* believe in such bewitching; the girl may be 'dry' because she is not breast-feeding, and this is the situation which can be 'cured' by marriage. The subtext of this may be, however, the quoting in a parodic spirit of an anxiety which was formerly widely held; the belief that the evil eye would affect fertility and result in the diminishing of the woman's or animal's capacity to produce milk. They may still 'believe in the old things', as one speaker remarks. We have noted above the structural similarity of the rites of milk stealing and those of 'stealing' the goodness of the house in the form of the bride. Indeed, a section of MacLagan's study is entitled 'Giving Away Milk Dangerous', and details how, once a person with the evil eye has been given milk, the remainder of the milk will be spoiled and the cow injured (MacLagan, 1902: 89). Gregor notes of the North-East of Scotland,

> When one entered the house during the process of churning, the hand of the one who entered had to be put to the churn. This was done to show that there was no evil intended against the butter-making, and to do away with all effects that might flow from the 'ill-e'e' or the 'ill-fit'. There were persons whose entrance was dreaded during the process of butter-making. If such did enter there was either no butter, or it was bad in quality, or less in quality than it should have been (Gregor: 1881: 194).

This may be a further indication that the groom's party are linked, however seriously meant, with those who would steal the *toradh* of the house. Their entrance meets with the same resistance which would also accompany those wishing to enter during a 'sensitive' time such as butter-making. Those who lacked a productive animal of their own were particularly suspected; an informant of MacLagan's reports

> The butter was taken from myself last year. We churned until Ronald and Donald and myself were running with sweat, but although we had continued at it till now we could not get a bit of butter. It is in the barn that we gather the milk, and a man who has not got a

> cow of his own came the way one day and he looked on the milk in the barn, and we were making out that it was he who had done the harm. The friends were advising me not to be allowing people to see the milk, but that I should remember that every person is not like myself. Well, from that time we are taking care that nobody will get an opportunity to go where the milk is, and now we are getting as much butter as we ought to get in every churning (MacLagan 1902: 82).

This not only recalls the girl's family's reluctance to let the stranger enter, the 'buyers' looking for a beast to purchase, but may also provide an explanation as to why the bride was hidden. As long as she remains secluded from sight, she is safe from the effects of the evil eye. The connection between milk, the evil eye, and animal and human fertility is further suggested in this fragment of a charm from *Carmina Gadelica* against bewitching:

> Calum caomh da m' sheoladh,
> Odhran naomh da m' dhion,
> 'S Bride nam ban buadhach
> Cur bhuadh anns an ni.
>
> Mar a dh' orduich Righ nan righ,
> Bainne chur an cich 's an carr,
> Mar a dh' orduich Ri nan dul,
> Sugh a chur an uth 's an ar.
>
> Ann an uth bruc,
> Ann an uth brac,
> Ann an uth murc,
> Ann an uth marc.
>
> Ann an uth urc,
> Ann an uth arc,
> An uth gobhar, othasg, agus caora,
> Maoiseach, agus mart.
>
> Le bliochd, le blachd, le bladh,
> Le bair, le dair, le toradh,
> Le laoigh bhoirionn, bharr,
> Le al, le agh, le sonadh.
>
> Gun fear mi-ruin,
> Gun bhean mi-shuil,
> Gun ghnu, gun tnu,
> Gun aon donadh.
>
> The kindly Colum directing me,
> The holy Oran protecting me,
> Whilst Bride of women beneficent

Shall put fruitage in the kine.

As the King of kings ordained,
To put milk in breast and gland,
As the Being of life ordained,
To put sap in udder and teat.

In udder of badger,
In udder of reindeer,
In udder of sow (?),
In udder of mare.

In udder of sow (?),
In udder of heifer,
In udder of goat, ewe, and sheep,
Of roe, and of cow.

With milk, with cream, with substance,
With rutting, with begetting, with fruitfulness,
With female calves excelling,
With progeny, with joyance, with blessing.

Without man of evil wish,
Without woman of evil eye,
Without malice, without envy,
Without one evil ('An Torranan' ['The Figwort']; Carmichael 2: 86–89).

That brides and bridegrooms were particularly at risk from the evil eye is mentioned by several commentators on other Indo-European and Semitic cultures. At a Hindu wedding in South India, the couple, sitting opposite one another, show each other, and then drop, salt, chillis and cakes. This is done because 'on account of their attractive appearance, and being the central figures in the ceremony, they are the subjects of the gaze of everybody, and particularly susceptible to the bad influence of the evil eye.' The rite is intended to 'avert any calamity from this source' (Woodburn: 64). In the Jewish tradition 'the new-born baby is is apt to be influenced by the evil eye and should, therefore, not be shown to strangers. The bride is exposed to the danger of the evil eye and should, therefore, be veiled during the wedding ceremony' (Brav: 49). This last reference further suggests a common link between the rituals surrounding infants entering human society for the first time, and the marriage couple who are undergoing a social 'rebirth'. MacLagan also details the importance of hiding new-borns from sight (MacLagan, 1902: 45). Whilst brides affected by the evil eye may lose their fecundity and so their ability to produce milk, grooms were also at risk from malign influence which could affect their potency. The following account is from Greece, collected in the early 1970s:

> Although [the couple] had carried such such prophylactics as blue against the evil eye . . . it was obvious to the villagers that the couple had been bewitched during the marriage service.

> The groom was unable to consummate the marriage . . . in a society where the wedding sheets are publicly displayed, this became a well-known fact. The groom took ill and was bedridden for four months. He began to waste away . . . (Dionisopoulos-Mass: 58).

As the bride 'dries up', so does the groom, whose equivalent milk-like product is also under threat of removal, as his impotence results in non-production. We may compare this to MacLagan's descriptions of the inability of a liquid to become solid, and of a solid becoming 'grainy', a condition which occurs again through a lack of liquid. This connection of the breasts and male genitals is further suggested in the charms of the Greek villagers in the above account, where evil is returned to the possessor of the evil eye with 'if it is a woman crush her breasts and if it is a man crush his genitals' (Dionisopoulos-Mass: 54). A charm from *Carmina Gadelica* against the evil eye ('Cronachdainn Sùla' ['Countering the Evil-Eye']; Carmichael 4: 158–61) calls for a redirection of the malign influence in a similar way:

> A laighe air am fearaibh sgothach,
> A laighe air am mnathaibh torrach,
> A laighe air am macaibh morrach,
> A laighe air an nigheanaibh comhach.
>
> May it lie on their potent men,
> May it lie on their pregnant women,
> May it lie on their virile sons,
> May it lie on their conceptive daughters.

Another ('Casgadh Beum Sùla ['Checking the Evil Eye']; Carmichael 4: 176–77) urges

> Masa sùil fir i,
> I a lasadh mar bhìth,
> Masa sùil mnà i,
> I bhith dh'easbhaidh a cìch.
>
> If it be eye of man,
> May it flare like pitch,
> If it be eye of woman,
> May she want her breast.'

Alan Dundes notes phallic gestures such as the *fica* used to ward off the evil eye, and the practice of males touching their genitals 'upon seeing a priest or other individual thought to have the evil eye . . . it is not unreasonable to assume that the evil eye threatened to make men impotent . . . the evil eye is as dangerous to female breasts (including cow's udders) as to male genitals . . . in symbolic terms, a pair of eyes may be equivalent to breasts or testicles' (Dundes: 264, 266). Dundes develops this 'wet and dry' theory to assert that 'wet' equals life and 'dry' death, and that

> if one individual possesses a precious body fluid, semen, for instance, this automatically means that some other individual lacks that same fluid. Life entails an equilibrium model.

> If one has too little wealth, one is poor or ill. Such individuals constitute threats to persons with sufficient or abundant wealth and health (Dundes: 266–7).

Dundes cites further evidence to suggest that the conception of the diminishing of the life force as the gradual loss of liquid 'probably made sense in light of what was empirically observable in the case of fruits, among other items' and the magic liquids which revive the thirsty dead (Dundes: 274). In this connection, perhaps the imbibing of 'silver water' is intended to counter the dessicating influence of the evil eye, and we may compare this with other liquid preventative measures such as saliva and urine.

We may conclude that there is a further suggestion that arrival of the groom's party is linked with the evil eye and the stealing of the *toradh*, analogous to the milk-stealing rites of May and the preventative measures taken to protect the fertile, wealth-giving members of the household. In this respect the bride in Highland tradition is clearly linked with the 'milk producing' higher mammals.

5.2.2 Praise and dispraise

During the ritual element we have termed the 'refusal sequence', the groom's representative is obliged to turn down the women presented to him before finally accepting the bride. Whether employing allegorical or non-allegorical language, the women are refused through a certain degree of dispraise. As 'animals' they may be unsuitable for transplantation or difficult to winter; as 'women' their hands are too small or they are too lazy or fat. In both traditions the ritual concludes with high praise of the bride.

This may appear quite straightforward; the verbal skill of the groom's representative is tested through his being obliged to refuse female relatives and friends in an entertaining way, without causing offence; it is appropriate that an assertion of the bride's superior qualities should precede her 'handing over'. Praise of the bride, is, however, also linked to the evil eye complex. Eugene S. MacCartney in his essay 'Praise and Dispraise in Folklore' (Dundes 9–38) finds the link among the ancient Greek and Roman cultures, besides more contemporary Mediterranean countries, Egypt, Scotland, Ireland, India, Malaya and among the Jewish community in Germany. Of traditional Gaelic society John Shaw observes

> both praise and dispraise subsume dual aspects according to the intention, positive or otherwise, of the speaker or bard. The presence/absence of benevolence opens up a level where the magico-religious effects of speech come into play and are duly reflected in the vocabulary (Shaw: 17).

In particular, the word *aibhseachadh* (making a loud report, exaggerating) 'has the more specialised meaning of 'overpraising' ('praising up' in Cape Breton English)' and 'would often be resorted to when a fine animal excited envy, and the result of the exaggerated praise was to bring the force of the evil eye (*droch shùil*) on the animal'.[16]

Walter Gregor, writing of the North East of Scotland, describes the vice of 'forespeaking':

> praise beyond measure; praise accompanied with a kind of amazement or envy was followed by disease or accident . . . it was not deemed proper to bestow a great deal of praise on a child; and doing so would have been interrupted by some such words as 'Gueede sake, haud yir tung, or ye'll forespyke the bairn'. Such a notion of forespeaking by bestowing excessive praise was not limited to infants, but extended to full-grown people, to domestic animals, and to crops' (Gregor 1881: 8–9, 220).

Gregor details the woes that follow over-praising. MacLagan, in his study of the evil eye in the Highlands, gives many such examples, including a description of its effect on a woman:

> An Islay man said: 'My late wife had a sister, and she was as pretty as you ever saw. Once a woman came in and commenced praising the girl excessively. Well scarcely was that woman gone out of the house when the girl began to yawn, and it was not long till she was so bad that they thought that she would be away' (die) (MacLagan 1902: 52).

Whilst the effects of overpraise could be dire, any degree of praise was unwise; MacLagan remarks, 'the mere expression of admiration should be avoided by those who wish to escape the accusation of the Evil Eye' (1902: 76). If an object was praised by another it was, to some degree, 'tainted' and had to be removed from the house if the malign influence was not to linger. MacLagan relates the story of a confrontation beween two neighbours, one credited with the evil eye which had killed a third neighbour's chickens:

> another neighbour came in carrying a growing plant, which she presented to the complainer, saying: 'Mrs. X. told me that you had your eye on this, and ever since it has done no good; the leaves have been withering and falling off. Now! – there it is to you! keep it' (MacLagan 1902: 9).

In the context of courtship and marriage, the expression of praise becomes especially problematic, since one may reasonably assume a positive, flattering, complimentary mode to be the one most appropriate and natural for the suitor or his representative, whether this is directed towards the girl or her family. Given that this is effectively forbidden, to freely indulge in praise of the bride at the conclusion of the betrothal rite is, in effect, to cast the evil eye upon her.

The bride is brought forward and explicitly praised; the result is that she can no longer remain under her father's roof, since she is now 'tainted' by their 'unwelcome' attentions. The eye is 'in' her; and him that put it there is not to be refused. Although dispraise could also be a method of hexing through the evil eye (MacLagan, 1902: 17), the women who are rejected, although criticised, are not desired. It would appear, therefore, that it is the notion of explicit praise in order to bring about the giving or selling of the object desired that is in operation, whether in a spirit of parody or in earnest.

Three methods to neutralise the harmful effects of praise are described by MacLagan (1902: 116–18). One is to immediately dispraise the object concerned, another to praise it even more highly, and the third to bless it when praised. From the available evidence, in no example collected does the bride's father or representative attempt to undo or reverse the effect that praise of his daughter will undoubtedly bring. If there is a blessing, it is one which unites the couple. Praise could be countered with dispraise or exaggeration; this one can identify as a ritual dialogic form, and one which could be integrated in the ritual dialogues described above. The absence of this verbal form indicates that once the bride appears, the time for ritual combat is over. The father's failure to counter the praise of his daughter confirms that he *wishes* it to happen, again, whether this is expressed in a spirit of play or not. Once she is praised, she must leave with the groom's party, a process that was set in motion as soon as they crossed the threshold, and perhaps from the day that she was admired by the groom himself.

That as a general rule direct praise was to be avoided is clear; yet the ritual exchanges from Barra and South Uist outlined above are plainly eulogies – a direct praising of the couple by their respective representatives. MacLagan (eg. 1902: 33) gives several examples of the need to avoid praising one's own stock, and although he does not mention these areas in particular, it seems unlikely that the traditions of the evil eye did not operate there in any form. One explanation may be that the rules governing praise were suspended for the period during which the two families had by necessity to form and cement the bonds between the couple and their families. The good qualities of each had to be articulated – this would be especially important if the families were relative strangers and had had no advance information from third parties. Indeed, one account from South Uist described above details the potential for just such a 'surprise attack' (from Donald J MacDonald, DJ MacDonald MS 5368–79). Although the author does not deal specifically with the subject of praise, an account of a temporary cessation of its prohibition appears to be suggested by a commentator on Greek tradition; commenting on the evil eye, Regina Dionisopoulos states:

> The village secretary once told us how difficult it was to levy taxes or take a census, as the people maintained they had nothing. Their lands were poor and few, their animals were diseased, old and dying, their health was so bad they were unable to work regularly. But when a peasant farmer is trying to impress another about the qualities of his children in regard to a possible marriage, he cannot praise his health and wealth enough. While the peasant's attitude may appear to be incongruous, there is an explanation. Concern about assessments and fears about evoking the evil eye are reasons for not bragging about one's wealth and health. However, when the issue is a match, modesty is out. This, of course, makes the potential couple an object of envy, since the dowry is in order and since they are considered to be desirable (Maloney: 56).

The author goes on to describe the various methods employed to defeat the 'eye'. The suggestion is that in order to secure a match, a degree of praise was thought unavoidable, even though this would inevitably attract the evil eye. A mutually beneficial union

could only result if the contents of one's 'shop window' were displayed; although this carried a degree of risk, it was the 'lesser of two evils' and worth the hazards entailed, especially since elaborate precautions were then taken 'after the fact' to protect the couple and their goods from malign influence. This in turn implies that the evil eye was thought to be, to some extent, manageable. Perhaps this was the view held in Barra and parts of South Uist, but not shared in other localities. There, the ritual forms seem to suggest that the avoidance of praise until the last moment, until it was 'too late' for the transfer of the bride to be reversed, indicates a very real belief in the risks posed by excessive praise.

5.2.3 Buying and selling

The groom's party who arrive at the bride's house posing as buyers are also 'acting out' a situation based on fear of the evil eye. Whilst praise of an object may force a change of ownership, the expression of a desire to buy could have the same effect. Among buyers, marginal figures were especially feared:

> Drovers are not, of course, complete strangers in the districts in which they do business, but as a class they are looked on with some suspicion. Thus we are told, 'Some drovers are possessed of the Evil Eye, and in consequence it is considered foolish not to sell any animals to them if they appear anxious to have them'. (MacLagan, 1902: 48).

Once an offer is made for an animal, refusal can lead to death:

> A man taking a valuable horse from the West coast of Kintyre to Tarbet was, after leaving Musadale, offered a considerable sum for it. He said he would not, could not sell the beast, and though the offer was raised to sixty pounds, he still refused and went on his way. Before he reached Tayinloan the horse fell dead on the road. (MacLagan, 1902: 88).

The following example is particularly reminiscent of the groom's party arriving to 'purchase' a father's valuable daughter:

> A native of Killean, Kintyre, tells of a fine cow his father had, and on which the family set a considerable value. A man who had known something about the cow came all the way from Campbeltown purposely to buy her, but the owner declined to sell her. 'If he did, he hardly got any good of her thereafter, for in a short time she became unwell, and lingering for a time, died. The neighbours thought it was a real case of the Evil Eye'. (MacLagan, 1902: 49–50).

We will recall an example from Gregor quoted earlier in connection with the concept of non-completion:

> there were those who were dreaded as buyers, if the purchase was not completed by them. In a short time the animal began to 'dwine', or an accident would befall it, or death speedily followed. Such had an 'ill-ee'. It was alleged that they were well aware of the opinion entertained of their power, and offered a price less than that of the market, fully aware that the seller would rather give the animal at a low price than risk a sale in the market, or no sale at all, for the same men were believed to prevent the sale to any other (Gregor: 1884: 184).

MacLagan describes a possible remedy for the curse that follows non-completion of a sale:

> The reciter's grandfather was a Stratherrick man (Loch Ness), and when attending the market there, was approached by another man to sell him a stirk. There was a good deal of bargaining. No agreement was come to, the offerer leaving as if dissatisfied. Before the market closed the stirk fell to the ground and could not be got to rise. F.'s suspicions of course fell on the rejected offerer. An acquaintance . . . drew the palm of his hand up the stirk's back against the hair, repeating words which the reciter, however, had never heard. The stirk got to its feet and was soon brisk and well (MacLagan 1902: 196).

There is a clear connection between an offer to buy an animal and the risk the seller runs if he refuses, and the attentions paid by a young man to his preferred partner. Even the look of a young man was enough to start in motion the chain of events leading to marriage, as MacLagan relates:

> A girl had taken suddenly ill. A young man in the neighbourhood was desirous of marrying her, but the suitor was not acceptable, and the girl took every opportunity of letting this be seen. A neighbour, supposed to have special skill and whose method of hanky-panky was the dropping of melted lead into water, was consulted. She went through her performance and showed the lead . . . in the form of a heart with a hole through it. She explained to the sick girl, 'Look at that, his eye is in you and you are far better to take him'. The match was made, and the girl recovered her health . . . the idea on the part of the reciter was that actual illness was brought on by the desirous eye of the young man, not merely that the lad had an eye to her as a satisfactory partner (MacLagan 1902: 198–9).

She became, one might say, 'settled'. The underlying pattern is the same as with the incomplete sale and the broader issues of 'non-completion' detailed above. Once the process has begun, only its resolution can bring about peace. The young man expresses the wish to obtain the girl just as the buyer does an animal. The extent to which he is 'uncanny' is unclear; but the result is the same as for the 'dreaded' buyers who possessed the evil eye. The groom's party may pose as 'marginal' and as 'buyers' to ensure the bringing about of this *fait accompli*; they want the girl, and once the demand has been made it is certain that she will be delivered to them. Not to do so would result in the same affliction that affected the girl in the above example. It is possible that unscrupulous individuals, perhaps like the young man in the above example, could play upon the evident fears of looking and praising in order to secure a match. In the examples we have obtained, however, it would appear that the groom's party's performance in the character of buyers with the evil eye is intended to provide amusement for all concerned. The similarity between the bringing in of the women during the refusal sequence and a cattle sale has already been noted. It would appear that this is more than merely a burlesque of a familiar situation that provides the opportunity for amusement. Beneath the 'horseplay' lies the belief that once an offer had been received for an animal, it was safer to let it go, since it would be 'tainted' and difficult or impossible to find another buyer. This obviously invites comparison with the situation of a girl and her preferred

'buyer' or suitor; if she or her family were to refuse the offer, particularly when already set in motion, this would reflect badly on her reputation and make her less attractive to other 'buyers', quite aside from the question of buying, selling and the evil eye.

Another feature of the *rèiteach* which would appear to be related to commerce and the evil eye is the effect of close examination of the bride, as if the buyer were inspecting her in detail. To do this, one must look intensely at the object under examination, which in turn leads to the evil eye. MacLagan provides several examples:

> he went for her and brought her home by Kessock Ferry, where some people examined her and admired her. She was a dun, and a fine looking animal. Having reached home the quey was tied in the byre, apparently in good health . . . after examining the beast [a woman with knowledge of the Evil Eye] told them it was blind.
>
> For a considerable time none of her cows had quey calves, but at length she got one, a nice beast, of which she was particularly careful . . . while she was watching this calf this neighbour came out of her own house, and putting her hands on each of her sides, stood and gazed for a few seconds at the calf. While she was staring at it the calf gave a 'loup,' rushed as if it were mad through the place . . . it seemed as if it could not rest . . .
>
> Recently a servant-girl in Islay, having the charge of attending to the feeding of a pig, requested a man who had never been suspected of possessing a hurtful eye to look at the pig to see how it was thriving. The man refused, adding quite seriously that he did not like to look at a beast that way, in case of any harm being done (MacLagan 1902: 58–59, 59–60, 33).

In the first example, reference is made to 'examining'; in the second, to 'gazing for a few seconds'; and in the last, another suggestion of 'examination'. These are acts clearly distinct from normal 'looking'; *closely* looking at an animal would appear to increase the resulting likelihood or degree of the evil eye to a level above that of the malign glance. The 'inspection' of the bride, as she is brought forward for the groom's party's perusal, seen, for example, in F. J. MacDonald's account of the groom's representative spinning the girl 'round and round, pretending to be running his hands over her' may be seen as a method of further guaranteeing that she will be 'sold'.

Reference may also be made to the belief that the jealous guarding of any object attracted the evil eye. MacLagan (1902: 45) remarks, 'without any suspicion of the owner of a beast having the Evil Eye himself, his desire to retain it is supposed to render it specially liable to the evil influence of any one possessed of the power'. In the context of a *rèiteach* exchange, the bride's father or representative's stated reluctance to part with the 'animal' and frustrating of the bargaining process can be seen perhaps to amount to the deliberate attracting of the evil eye in order to further secure the girl's departure.

5.2.4 Thigging

Examples of the ritual 'asking' were found where the groom's party were not 'buyers', but fellow farmers who requested assistance of some kind. The tradition of thigging has already been mentioned, and may now be included as part of the evil eye complex.

In our earlier discussion of thigging, we noted the obligation to observe this community norm, no matter how arduous. One may speculate that although drifters and strangers were most often suspected of having the evil eye, this may have extended to all 'non-producers'; it would appear that fear of the evil eye was part of the general anxiety which surrounded a visit from an itinerant beggar-bard aside from harm resulting from their maledictions.

If refusal of help to those starting up a croft was not an option, then turning away those suspected of being in possession of the evil eye was unthinkable. In his study, MacLagan offers a whole chapter entitled 'People Should Give When Asked'. Although this deals mainly with the perils of not proceeding with a sale, the same principle applied to those merely seeking assistance. Of one woman believed to be in possession of the Eye, MacLagan states plainly that 'the danger of refusing a request is great, not so much from the purely Christian-charity point of view, as from that of escaping the Evil Eye'. Describing a woman feared for her evil eye, MacLagan (1902: 48, 69) remarks 'people would do almost anything than offend her, so general was the impression that she could injure any person if she wished to do so . . . she could have almost whatever she chose to ask, so much were they afraid of her Evil Eye'. We may conclude that to refuse a request for assistance was to run an equivalent risk to the refusal to sell, or failure to complete a sale once an offer had been made. In other words, in terms of the evil eye, no distinction can be made between the groom's party employing the motif of the fellow farmers seeking assistance and those expressing an interest in buying an animal or other object.

5.3. Concealment, distraction and silence

The evil eye may also be in operation in connection with the customs of the 'hidden bride' and the procession of 'false brides' refused by the groom's party.

Although the effects of the evil eye may begin before the groom's party's visit, shown in the bride's 'tendency to roam' or 'unsettled state' we have noted many cases in which the bride is deliberately hidden before their visit. Hiding a prized object was a recognised preventative measure:

> There is one simple way of keeping your property safe from the Evil Eye: viz., by not letting it be known that you have what may be affected . . . a certain Calum Ban, having the name of the Evil Eye, others kept things out of his sight for fear that he might hurt them . . .
>
> My mother said that she . . . was not in the custom of showing the butter to any one . . . 'be sure that you do not let the whole of the butter be seen by anybody' (MacLagan, 1902: 37, 86).

An account from the eighteenth century Highlands would appear to confirm this link between the 'hidden bride', the visitors and the evil eye:

> If the preliminaries were adjusted, the whole company repaired to the bride's house, where an entertainment was provided. Then it was she made her first appearance, for before

> agreement it would have been reckoned indecent, and even ominous, to have seen her, or to have entered the house where she was. (Allardyce 2: 419).

It is of interest that 'agreement' has to be reached before the bride is seen. To have done so would have marked her in some way, although this could be in terms of her 'value', linked with the evil eye and trade, or with her fertility, linked with traditions of milk-spoiling. We may compare this with the account from the Dewar manuscripts where the suitor's representative not only enters the house, but the girl's bedroom. We have previously noted that this action is a violation of the norms of hospitality, normally only breached during specially licenced seasonal rites. We may now also speculate that this latter action is a deliberate violation of the norms of visiting a bride-to-be, and can be seen as a deliberate act which places the 'ominous' eye upon her, more or less ensuring her departure.

We might add that the bride's family's refusal to acknowledge that they are in possession of the object requested can also be seen as a method of protection from unwelcome eyes. Silence, another feature of the ritual, may also be effective; George Henderson (297) states 'It is not right at milking time if a person passes who is suspected of having the evil eye to *answer* him even though he addresses you. Your silence, or the animosity signified thereby, has an influence in checking any harm that may come from him'. This may also explain in part the hostility and lack of hospitality we have already noted. One account from Mull given by MacLagan would appear to centre on the refusal of entry; a woman's cow is sick, and she has approached a friend for help:

> he advised her . . . not to allow anyone to see the cow on any account, for three would soon pass, he said, and if she would allow them in to see the cow, the cow would be gone. The three were strong, and she would need to use all her strength to keep them out . . . Having got tubs she filled them with stones and placed them against the byre door with spades and everything she could think of to keep the door from being opened. She was not long there when a man passed with a horse and a dog. He came to the kitchen door and asked the children where their mother was, but they did not tell him. He then came to the byre door, lifted the sneck, and when it did not yield tried to force it open with all his might, saying.. 'Kate, John's daughter, are you there?' My mother knew his voice as that of a near neighbour, and answered: 'Yes, John, the cow is unwell, and she is lying behind the door and you cannot get in'. My mother had to tell the lie, or he would force the door open. The man went away . . . the man, the horse and the dog . . . and the cow got better (MacLagan 1902: 84–85).

In this account entry is resisted in order that the person in possession of the evil eye cannot lay eyes upon the stricken animal, and kill it. We might compare this to the girl-as-animal already afflicted by the evil eye, and her family resisting the stranger-neighbours as they attempt to cross the threshold. Once the groom's party have gained entry, the girl's fate is sealed. We may note the high incidence of cases involving the evil eye where the animal is female and the suspect either a stranger or near-neighbour. MacLagan (1902: 114) remarks that visitors to a house, if they do not wish to be suspected

of ill-will, should bless both the home and its occupants before entering – something the groom's party pointedly fail to do.

We must also consider the possibility that the purpose of the presentation of women other than the bride is intended to draw the evil eye away from the real one. In the first stage, all the women are hidden; then one by one, substitutes are offered. Since, according to one of MacLagan's informants it is 'always the best and prettiest of beast or body that was most liable to be injured by a bad eye', it seems reasonable that the 'false brides' are rejected because they lack just these qualities. Analogues from other cultures suggest this theory of concealment; the Shilluk of Sudan, whose beliefs and practices are 'almost certainly cognate to the evil eye complex found throughout the Indo-European and Semitic world' protect their cattle from the evil eye in the following way:

> A very fine appearing cow is not permitted to go into the village by herself but is kept with the herd, and she is to be kept in the middle of the herd so that she may not be seen, and the curse come on her. A very fine cow is always kept hidden. (Oyler: 81).

We will note that this is highly reminiscent of the constraints on the movement of brides and grooms previously discussed. In India, a royal wedding entailed the participation of false brides. A. Stewart Woodburn (63) reports that 'in 1906 when a royal wedding was in progress in Travancore, a group of Nayar girls, attractively dressed, went in procession before the royal palanquin to avert the evil eye from the wedding group'.

In *Folktales and Reality*, a study dedicated to tracing links between folktale motifs and actual practice, Lutz Röhrich details examples of tales which correspond to the hidden bride ritual, where discovery leads directly to marriage. In folk practice the bride need not actually be hidden; the groom may be faced with a group of identically-dressed women and be forced to identify the true bride from the false. Röhrich concludes that the purpose of the 'hidden bride' custom is 'to deceive the demonic and evil powers so they cannot identify the actual couple getting married, i.e., the people in danger because of their transitional status'.[17]

It is of interest that Juliette Wood has noted the motif of the hidden bride in Welsh versions of the Fairy Bride legend. In these the suitor must identify her from among her identical sisters, and in one example a pre-arranged signal helps him make the correct decision.[18]

5.4 Conclusion

The elements common to the *rèiteach* and linked with the evil eye may be summarised as follows:

1. the visitors are strangers, beggars, bards [marginals feared, especially as buyers]
2. they request assistance or express wish to buy [refusal is risky]
3. after denial or resistance they cross the threshold [the girl is hidden]
4. substitutes are revealed and dispraised [evil eye is on them, but they are not desired; attempt to distract or dilute evil eye]

5. the girl is revealed to them or she is located [impact of buyer's eye, produce or object now 'spoiled' if not previously compromised]
6. she is accepted [agreement of sale cannot be revoked without causing harm to object]
7. she is examined closely [intensification of impact of looking]
8. she is praised [further intensification of the 'eye' in her; she must now be transferred to buyers to avoid harm to both the girl and family.]

The tradition of the evil eye would appear to lie beneath many of the motifs and actions identified in the *rèiteach.* The overall sense is that the groom's party use this tradition not as a threat of any kind, but effectively 'quote' from it, in order to gain entry and secure delivery of the girl. One could argue that this absolves the girl's father of the reponsibility for *freely* agreeing to her departure; he lets his daughter go, not through choice but through necessity. The same logic could be said to underpin the dramatising of her departure as being the result of 'abduction'; again, the father is absolved of responsibility and so retains the highest possible status for himself, his family and his protesting daughter. This pattern provides a method by which the bride's family can preserve the maximum status, a means of presenting the loss of their daughter as a 'no-win' situation, just as the verbal contest incorporates a fixed outcome. The family do all they can; they do not welcome the visitors but resist them, but community norms on entry and/or fear of the evil eye dictate that they must enter, or be helped. They hide the girl or present substitutes, but once afflicted or the object is bargained for or praised it must be given away; to save the girl's life and the prosperity of the family she must be allowed to leave. We must see the tradition of the evil eye as providing another 'template' for action in a highly-charged situation which, unregulated, could lead to ill-feeling and conflict.

To some extent, however, and in some contexts, this anxiety may have been actual. For families who were not intimate with one another, in the context of a 'surprise attack', for example, community norms governing entry and hospitality, and fears of the evil eye, satire and cursing would give the strangers a distinct advantage.

NOTES

1 Rev. P. N. MacKichan, Inveraray. Letter 7, 3rd September 1893. MacLagan MS. From the unarchived MS in the School of Scottish Studies.

2 The Breton word dimézi denotes both 'betrothal' and 'marriage'.

3 Rogers: 220. Sometimes a 'cautioner' was needed who 'became bound that they would not cohabit before receiving the nuptial benediction' (367–8).

4 D. J. MacDonald MS 57: 5383. In a supernatural tale, a groom-to-be in this liminal state narrowly avoids death from a shape-shifting monster which is following him. Rev. Norman MacDonald, Skye. SA 1956/13/A4, SA 1957/97/A7. Recorded by James Ross.

5 Moore: 158. See also Killip: 78.

6 Mrs. MacLucas. This and all subsequent transcriptions and translations by Ms. Cathie Scott and Ms. Peggy MacClements, School of Scottish Studies. Spelling as transcribed.

7 Lauchie MacLellan, Broad Cove, Cape Breton. Source: Neil MacLellan. I am grateful to Dr John Shaw of the School of Scottish Studies for drawing my attention to this source. He notes that 'no other versions of the song are known to have been recorded in Cape Breton'.

8 The providan is the bride's marriage outfit.

9 Rev. D. M. Lamont of Strath, quoted by Ronald Black, article in West Highland Free Press 13.7.90.

10 Marion MacLeod, Lewis. Kay: 90.

11 Jessie Nicholson, Skye. Kay: 94.

12 Commenting on the same account, Isabel Grant (363) notes 'the girl would show her concurrence by staying in the room, and the father would capitulate'.

13 Kelly: 113–4. Below the three year-old heifer was the two year-old colpthach, worth a third of a milch cow, the dairt or yearling at one quarter, and the dartaid or yearling bullock at one eighth. Values below this are calculated in sheep, fleeces and sacks of grain.

14 Lonsdale: 184. The author details several female initiation rites in which the girls are given animal identities, and animal or bird metaphors are used to symbolise such attributes as submission – which presupposes a prior state of restlessness or lack of control (196–205).

15 See MacLagan, 1902: 114–176, 192–198; Henderson: 294–301; Carmichael 2: 43–71, 85–89.

16 Shaw: 17. In a footnote the author cites a Cape Breton informant who observed 'Ma tha thu 'gam moladh suas ro mhòrdh'faodadh an t-each sin gun sgath feum a dheanamh do dhuine'. 'If you praise them [animals] up too much that horse could be of no use to anyone'. The author also notes that 'the same debility could be brought about by an unreasonably high offer for an animal' and that 'the practice was also known to the Gaelic aristocracy' citing an example from the first quarter of the 18th century.

17 Röhrich: 101. The author mentions Grimm tales (KHM) 11 'Little Brother and Little Sister; 88 'The Lilting, Leaping Lark; 135 'The White Bride and the Black Bride'; 198 'Maid Maleen'.

18 Wood: 69. She identifies the motifs as H161.0.1 Recognition of person among identical companions, prearranged signal; H324 Suitor test: choosing princess from among identically clad sisters; H335.0.1 Bride helps suitor perform tasks.

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Differentiating the Gaelic Landscape of the Perthshire Highlands

JOHN STUART MURRAY

INTRODUCTION, OBJECTIVE AND METHODS

The stimulus for this study arose from various sources. Firstly, Nicolaisen's (1976) observation that '*the number of Gaelic words used as basic elements in hill and mountain names is, of course, considerable*'. Secondly, Gelling's (1984) plea that toponymy should not be studied independently of landscape qualities. Lastly, Hough's (1990) view that placenames are *'endemic to the perceptions and shaping of a locality, for names alone create a mental image of special significance.'* In the language of Lynch (1960) therefore, names are essential to the '*imageability'* of place. The study was also driven by the easily made observation that the general name, càrn, predominates in the granite Cairngorms, whilst sgurr does so upon the more glaciated gabbro of the Skye Cuillins.

Gelling has observed that there is not much left of the ancient variability and subtlety in the toponymic vocabulary of modern English. In the absence of fully distinctive English dictionary meanings therefore, the purpose of this study is to find out exactly what the diversity of Gaelic topographical names actually represents in terms of physical parameters, which are identifiable in the landscape.

The study area (figure 1 extends from Rannoch in the North, to the Trossachs in the South and from Breadalbane in the West to Strathbraan in the East. It was chosen because its toponymy is not only almost wholly Gaelic, but it also possesses a significant and representative diversity of topographic terms. It should be noted however, that meall and tom account for over 50 per cent of the names studied. It seems reasonable to assume that this proportion reflects the relatively rounded, rolling and unrocky nature of upland Perthshire when compared with other, more rugged areas of the Scottish highlands.

The choice of study area has one disadvantage however. As living Gaelic is absent, on site landscape investigation cannot be paralleled by a linguistic field study. Some of the last, but fragmentary attempts to do so were in Balquidder (Carnegie) and Breadalbane (Watson 1928).

The names studied and their frequencies were as follows: Beinn (76No), Bioran (8), Caisteal (11), Càrn (23), Cnap (5), Cnoc (34), Cruach (6), Dùn (33), Maol (10), Meall (193), Sgiath (22), Sgorr (8), Sìthean (13), Sliabh (4), Sròn (54), Stob(38), Stuc (16), Tom (89), and Tòrr (7) – 650 in total (see table 1). It is hoped that this large sample size should compensate for cartographic inaccuracies, omissions and inconsistencies. Creag

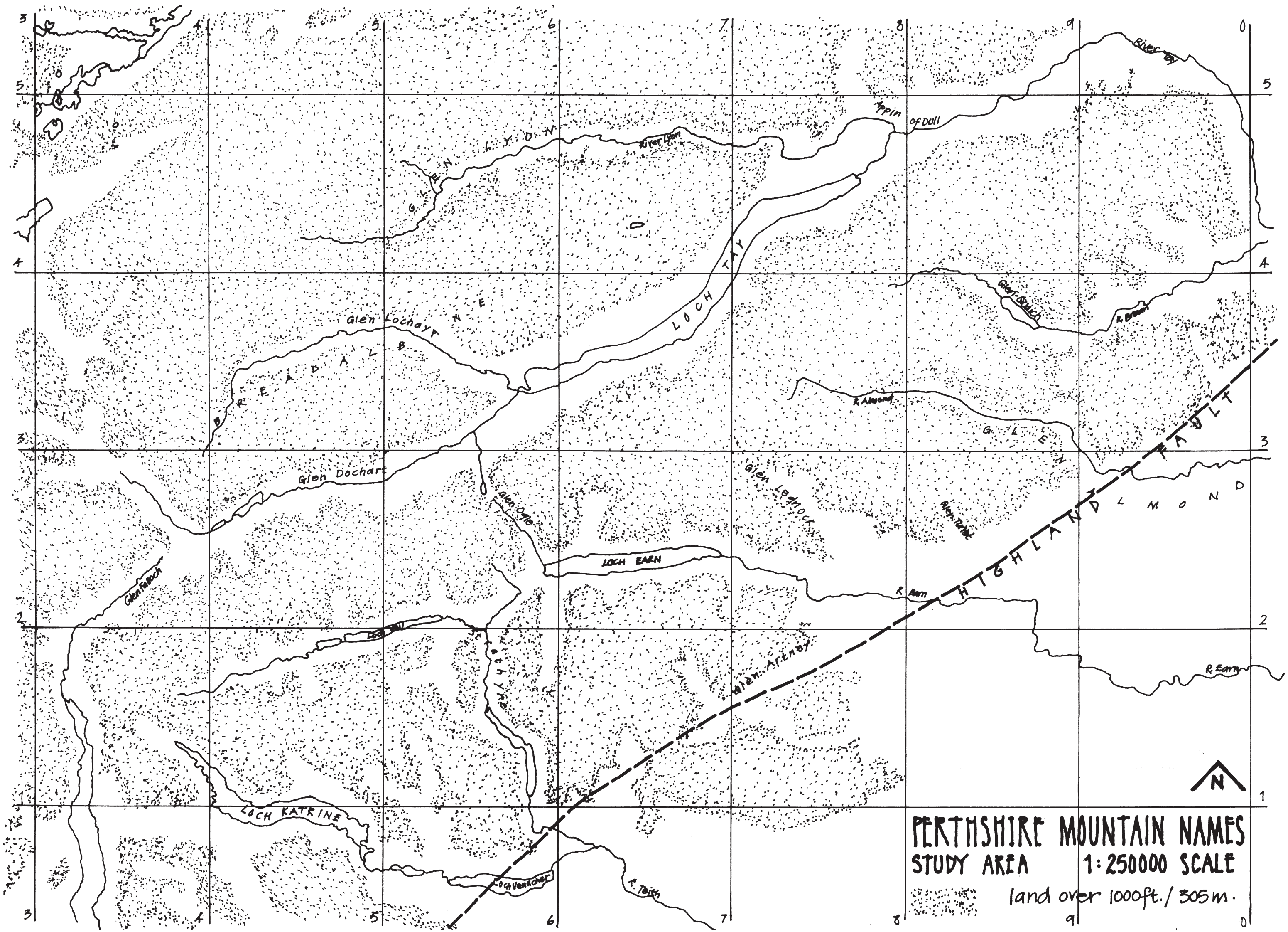

PERTHSHIRE MOUNTAIN NAMES
STUDY AREA 1:250000 SCALE
land over 1000ft./305m.
N
River Tay
Appin of Dall
River Lyon
GLEN LYON
LOCH TAY
Glen Lochay
BREADALBANE
Glen Dochart
Glen Quaich
R. Braan
R. Almond
GLEN ALMOND
Glen Lednock
Glen Turret
Glen Ogle
LOCH EARN
R. Earn
Glen Falloch
Strathyre
Glen Artney
LOCH KATRINE
Loch Venachar
R. Teith
HIGHLAND FAULT

Figure 1.

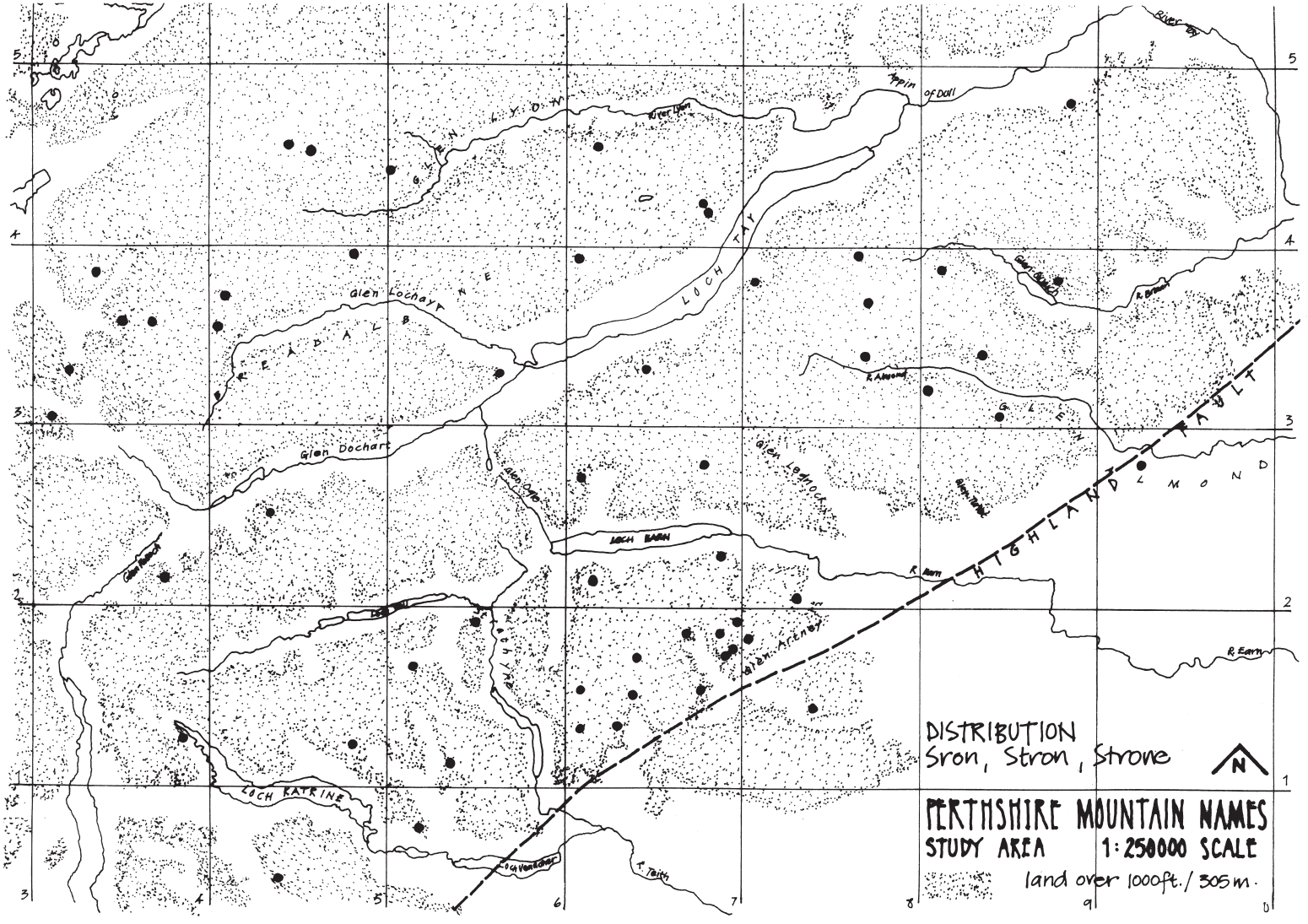
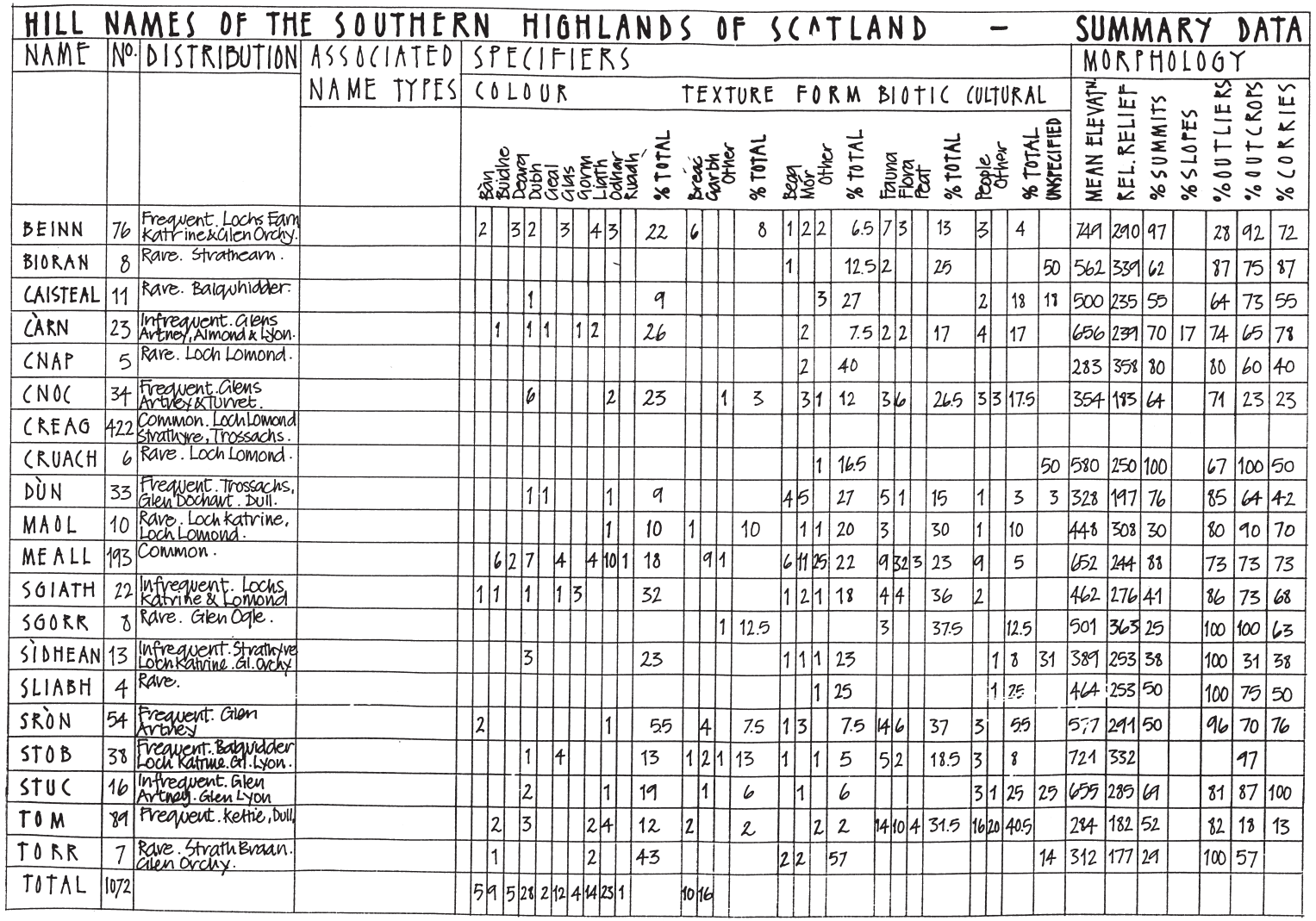

Glen Lochay
Glen Dochart
Glen Lednock
Glen Artney
LOCH TAY
LOCH EARN
LOCH KATRINE
HIGHLAND FAULT
DISTRICTION
Sron, Stron, Strone
N
PERTHSHIRE MOUNTAIN NAMES
STUDY AREA 1:250000 SCALE
land over 1000ft./305m.

Figure 2.

SCHEDULE OF NAME TYPES - SRON 1

NAME	NGR(NN)	MEANING	HT.	RELIEF	TOP	OUTLIERS	OUTCROPS	CORRIES
Sròn a Mhill Bhuidhe	447458	of the yellow Meall	739	290	√spur	of Meall Buidhe	NES	N
Sròn a'Choire Chnapanaich	457453	of the knobbly corrie	837	387	√	Creag	NEW (scattered)	N
Sròn Chona Chorein	500444	of the small cottongrass corrie	900	300	√spur	of Stuchd	NEW	NS (of same name)
Sròn Eich	616459	of a horse	600	310	x spur	of Meall	NEW (scattered)	N
Sròn Mhór	675425	Big	805	321	√spur	of Meall. Sròn	NEW	E
Sròn Bheag	674424	Small	560	350	x slope	of Sròn	SE	S
Sròn a'Ghamhuinn	884480	of the calf	368	140	√spur	of Creag	NW	
Sron nan Colan	311303	of the young cows	590	340	√	of Meall	NESW	S
Sròn Ghaurbh	336384	rough	550	300	√slope	of Meall Gaurbh	NESW	E
Sron Ghaorbh	322331	rough	750	560	x spur	of Beinn	NEW	W
Sròn Phrine	370350	of a pin	750	290	x spur	of Creag	NE	NW
Sròn Sheamraig	356350	of a shamrock	550	440	x spur	of Beinn	SE	S
Sròn nan Eun	401356	of the birds	836	316	√	of Creag	NESW	S
Sròn Tairbh	406370	of a bull	973	483	√spur	of Stob	NSW	N
Sròn Eanchainne	481396	of a brain	710	190	√spur	of Meall	NEW	NW
Sròn a'Chlachain	561330	of the village	450	340	x cliff	of Creag	E	
Sròn Dha Mhurchaidh	607397	of two Murdos	685	370	√spur	of Meall. Creag	ESW	S

Figure 3.



HILL NAMES OF THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND – SUMMARY DATA

NAME	No.	DISTRIBUTION	ASSOCIATED NAME TYPES	SPECIFIERS																								MORPHOLOGY						
				COLOUR										TEXTURE			FORM			BIOTIC				CULTURAL										
				Bàn	Buidhe	Dearg	Dubh	Creag	Glas	Gorm	Liath	Odhar	Ruadh	% TOTAL	Breac	Garbh	Other	% TOTAL	Beag	Mor	Other	% TOTAL	Fauna	Flora	Peat	% TOTAL	People	Other	% TOTAL	UNSPECIFIED	MEAN ELEVATN	REL. RELIEF	% SUMMITS	% SLOPES	% OUTLIERS	% OUTCROPS	% CORRIES
BEINN	76	Frequent. Lochs Earn Katrine & Glen Orchy.		2		3	2		3		4	3		22	6			8	1	2	2	6.5	7	3		13	3		4		749	290	97		28	92	72
BIORAN	8	Rare. Strathearn.																	1			12.5	2			25				50	562	339	62		87	75	87
CAISTEAL	11	Rare. Balquhidder.					1							9							3	27					2		18	18	500	235	55		64	73	55
CÀRN	23	Infrequent. Glens Artney, Almond & Lyon.			1		1	1		1	2			26					2			7.5	2	2		17	4		17		656	239	70	17	74	65	78
CNAP	5	Rare. Loch Lomond.																	2			40									283	358	80		80	60	40
CNOC	34	Frequent. Glens Artney & Turret.					6					2		23			1	3		3	1	12	3	6		26.5	3	3	17.5		354	193	64		71	23	23
CREAG	422	Common. Loch Lomond Strathyre, Trossachs.																																		
CRUACH	6	Rare. Loch Lomond.																			1	16.5								50	580	250	100		67	100	50
DÙN	33	Frequent. Trossachs, Glen Dochart. Dull.					1	1				1		9					4	5		27	5	1		15	1		3	3	328	197	76		85	64	42
MAOL	10	Rare. Loch Katrine, Loch Lomond.										1		10	1			10		1	1	20	3			30	1		10		448	308	30		80	90	70
MEALL	193	Common.				6	2	7		4		4	10	1	18		9	1		6	11	25	22	9	32	3	23	9		5		652	244	88		73	73	73
SGIATH	22	Infrequent. Lochs Katrine & Lomond		1	1		1		1	3				32					1	2	1	18	4	4		36	2				462	276	41		86	73	68
SGORR	8	Rare. Glen Ogle.															1	12.5					3			37.5			12.5		501	363	25		100	100	63
SÌDHEAN	13	Infrequent. Strathyre Loch Katrine. Gl. Orchy						3						23					1	1	1	23						1	8	31	389	253	38		100	31	38
SLIABH	4	Rare.																			1	25						1	25		464	253	50		100	75	50
SRÒN	54	Frequent. Glen Artney		2								1		55		4		7.5	1	3		7.5	14	6		37	3		55		577	291	50		96	70	76
STOB	38	Frequent. Balquidder Loch Katrine. Gl. Lyon.					1		4					13	1	2	1	13	1		1	5	5	2		18.5	3		8		721	332				97	
STUC	16	Infrequent. Glen Artney. Glen Lyon					2					1		19		1		6		1		6					3	1	25	25	655	285	69		81	87	100
TOM	89	Frequent. Kettle, Dull			2		3				2	4		12	2			2			2	2	14	10	4	31.5	16	20	40.5		284	182	52		82	18	13
TORR	7	Rare. Strath Braan. Glen Orchy.			1						2			43					2	2		57								14	312	177	29		100	57	
TOTAL	1072			5	9	5	28	2	12	4	14	23	1		10	16																			

Figure 4.

(rock) has been omitted from the study because of the large numbers (422) involved and the likelihood that a translation to English is fairly straightforward.

A map search of the terms was carried out at 1:25,000 (Pathfinder) scale and distributions were mapped at 1:250,000 scale (figure 2). For each entry the following associated data was recorded (figure 3): National Grid Reference, qualifying nouns or adjectives (and their meaning), height, relative relief (degree of ruggedness), whether summits or outliers and the presence of corries and outcrops. Munro's tables (1990) were used as a source of grid references and elevations for hills over 2500ft in height. The information for each name type (see sample schedule of name types) was then collated, tabulated and analysed (figure 4).

Geology has been omitted from the study, as it appears that there is little relationship between the distribution of name and rock type as evidenced by the 1:250,000 geological maps (sheets 56N 04W & 56N 06W). For example, there seems to be no toponymic recognition expressed in changed name type or distribution of the major outcropping of granite which is found to the north west of Comrie in Glen Lednock.

In contrast, different name types appear to be directly related to geomorphology, in particular degrees of ruggedness. The concept of ruggedness has been adapted from Whittow (1992). When applied to a name type, it has been measured as the maximum difference in elevation within the kilometre square in which the name is situated. Very rugged has been defined as a height difference of over 300 metres, moderately rugged as between 200 and 300 metres and rolling as being below 200 metres.

RESULTS

Results for each name type are as follows. They should be read in conjunction with summary tables 1 and 2. Definitions are from Dwelly's *Illustrated Gaelic to English Dictionary* (1988).

Beinn (76) – *mountain, hill, pinnacle, high place* (figure 5)

These are frequent, of the highest elevation and concentrated in the mountainous areas of Mamlorn, West Balquhidder and South Loch Earnside. Although only moderately rugged, they are very likely to be dominant summits possessing outcrops and corries. This supports Nicolaisen's view (1961) that *'relative height seems to be one of the factors that determine the usage of beinn in Scotland.'* Indeed the diminutive Am Beannan is the only slope recorded in the area. They are always qualified and if coloured most likely to be grey (liath), red (dearg), grey-green (glas) or dun coloured (odhar).

Bioran (8) – *stick, staff, any sharp pointed thing* (figure 6)

These are rare, of medium height, but very rugged. They are very likely to be lesser summits with corries and outcrops. They are seldom qualified, implying a very specific form.

Figure 5. Ben More and Stobinian from the north-west.

Caisteal (11) – *Castle, fort, tower, garrison. Turreted mansion.*

These are rare, of medium height and moderately rugged. They are likely to be a lesser summit with outcrops, but less likely to have corries. Some are unqualified, several are steep (corrach). Almost half of them are slopes however. Only one out of 11 is associated with an archaeological artefact – a fort. Such a low figure suggests that the name is used to suggest a steep, castle-like form in the landscape rather than the actuality of a fortress (also see dùn).

Càrn (23) – *heap or pile of stones loosely thrown together. Cairn.* (figure 7)

These are infrequent, yet widespread, high and moderately rugged. They are reasonably likely to be a lesser summit or slope with outcrops and corries. They are always qualified, usually by colour.

Cnap (5) – *knob, button, lump, boss stud, little hill.*

These are very rare, low, but very rugged and concentrated on East Loch Lomond side. They are likely to be an outlying summit with outcrops, but no corries. They are always qualified, according to size.

Figure 6. Am Bioran.

Cnoc (34) – *hill, knoll, hillock, eminence.* (figure 8)

These are frequent and sometimes paired, in the low, rolling country to the South of the study area. They are likely to be lesser summits without outcrops or corries. This finding supports Nicolaisen's view (1961) that cnoc is '*apparently never applied to very high eminences*.' They are always qualified just under a quarter by colour – especially dubh or odhar and just over a quarter biotically – references to flora being twice as common as those to fauna.

Figure 7. Glen Artney. Càrn Labhruinn and Sròn na Maoile.

Figure 8. Glen Artney. Cnoc Brannan.

Figure 9. Cruach Ardrain from the north, near Auchtertyre Farm.

Cruach (6) – *rounded hill standing apart, mountain pinnacle.* (figure 9)

These are rare, of medium height and ruggedness, and concentrated on Loch Lomondside. They are likely to be lesser summits with outcrops, but less likely to have corries. Half are unqualified, indicating a specific form.

Dùn (33) – *heap, hill, hillock, mound. Fortified house or hill.*

These are frequent, and sometimes paired, in the low, rolling country found in the valley floors of upper Glen Dochart and Strathearn . They are likely to be rocky, outlying summits without corries. None, in contrast to caisteal, are slopes. They are likely to be qualified by size or biotically. Only 12 per cent (4 number) are related to the existence of an archaeological artefact, usually a fort. Pathfinder maps are unlikely, however, to show all remains. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to conclude that dùn applies to landform which suggests a fort-like appearance or occupies a fort-like position, in relation to outlook for example. Dùn'n Aon Duine in its prominent position above South Loch Earnside is a good example of fort-like qualities of the landscape.

Maol (10) – *brow of rock, great bare rounded hill.*

These are rare, of medium height, but very rugged and concentrated between Lochs Katrine and Lomond. However, their different physical qualities suggest that they are

Figure 10. Sgiath Ghlas and Sgiath Bhuidhe from the north-east in Glen Lyon.

not a dialectic substitution for meall as suggested by Nicolaisen (1961) – even though these are absent from the same area. They are likely to be rocky outliers with corries. They are always qualified, most often biotically.

Meall (193) – ***lump, mass of any matter, heap (as of earth), hill, eminence, great shapeless hill, mound.***

These are very common and widespread, moderately rugged and high summits, although 5 per cent are slopes. They are unlikely to be rocky or have corries. They are always qualified. If by colour, odhar and dubh are the commonest – suggesting an association with blanket peat. If by form, fat (reamhar) accounts for 10 per cent, but strangely, also rough (garbh) for 5 per cent. A wide range of qualifiers indicates therefore, a very general type of landform, providing a vehicle for a wide variety of differentiating descriptors.

Sgiath (22) – ***wing, portion of land jutting into sea, shield.*** **(figure10)**

These are infrequent, of moderate height and ruggedness and like maol, concentrated between Lochs Katrine and Lomond. Their physical similarity to sròn types, and the latter's absence from the same area suggest a dialectic substitution. They are more likely to be outliers (nearly 50 per cent are slopes) than summits, with both corries and

outcrops. They are always qualified, usually by colour (blue – gorm, the commonest) or biotically.

Sgor (8) – ***sharp steep hill, rising by itself, or a little steep precipitous height on another hill or mountain. Peak, pinnacle.***

These are rare, moderately high, but very rugged. They are likely to be rocky, outliers with corries. Over half are slopes which suggests a different usage to that prevailing in Skye. All are qualified, usually biotically.

Sìthean (13) – ***little hill or knoll. Fairy hill. Big rounded hill.***

In Perthshire these are infrequent, moderately rugged and low – in contrast to the last phrase in the definition. They are mostly outliers with nearly a quarter being slopes. They are often paired, without outcrops or corries. One third are unaccompanied by adjectives. If qualified, they are usually black (dubh).

Sliabh (4) – ***mountain of the first magnitude, extended heath, alpine plain, moorish ground. Extensive tract of dry moorland. Mountain grass, moor bent grass. Face of a hill.***

These are very rare, of medium height and moderately rugged. They are usually rocky. Half of them are outlying summits with corries. All are qualified. Given the generality of the dictionary meaning in relation to the physical nature of the study area it is surprising that they are not more common. This supports Nicolaisen's view (1961) that sliabh, *'although still alive in Scottish Gaelic in general, is no longer productive in naming and probably has not been so for a number of centuries.'*

Sròn (54) – ***nose, promontory, headland rising from a mountain to a strath. Ridge of a hill.*** **(figure 7)**

These are frequent and widespread, yet with a significant concentration in Glen Artney along the Highland Fault. They are of medium height and moderately rugged. Half are outlying summits, though only 5 per cent are slopes, in contrast to sgiath, which they otherwise resemble. They are likely to have corries and outcrops. All are qualified, with references to fauna being commonest (37 per cent).

Stob (38) – ***stake, any pointed stick, prickle, thorn. Remaining stump of anything broken or cut. Any sharp pointed stick.*** **(figure 11)**

These are infrequent, high and very rugged and rocky. They are concentrated in the more glaciated West of the study area, in Mamlorn, West Balquhidder and North Loch Lomondside and the great majority have corries. The presence of the less rugged, yet dominant, beinn type throughout these areas argues that stob is not a dialectic substitution for the former, more common name, but a name attached to a form distinct from beinn.

Figure 11. Brae of Balquidder from the east.

Figure 12. An Stuchd from the north.

Stuc (16) – ***little hill jutting out from a greater, steep on one side and rounded on the other. Cliff, rock, conical steep rock, precipice.*** (**figure 12**)

These are infrequent, high and moderately rugged, concentrated in South Lochs Lubnaig and Earnside. They are likely to be outlying summits with outcrops and corries. One quarter is unspecified, but one fifth is; by colour.

Typical examples which support an asymmetric formal meaning would be Stuc a' Chroin to the South of Loch Earn and An Stuchd to the north of Loch Tay.

Tom (89) – ***round hillock or knoll, rising ground, swell, green eminence. Any round heap.***

These are frequent in low, rolling country. Half are outlying summits, without rocks or corries. 20 per cent are slopes. All are qualified. Cultural references (40 per cent) are commonest. There are four references to hanging or hangmen for example. Biotic qualifiers (31 per cent) come next. Like cnoc and meall, if colour is specified, Tom is likely to be dubh or odhar, – suggesting a link with peaty ground. Indeed there are four occurrences of Tom na Moine.

Torr (7) – ***hill, mountain of an abrupt or conical form, lofty hill. Eminence. Mound. Large heap. Rock.***

These are very rare and in Perthshire found in low, rolling country. The last finding tends to contradict the dictionary meaning. It may be however, that local ruggedness is too fined grained to be detected at the search scale employed. Ground inspection would verify this. Torrs are all outliers rather than summits. None have corries, but half have outcrops. The majority are qualified usually by size and then by colour (often grey).

Name	Number	Frequency %	Elevation (m)	Relative Relief (m)
Beinn	76	11.7	749	290
Bioran	8	1.2	562	339
Caisteal	11	1.7	500	235
Càrn	23	3.5	656	239
Cnap	5	0.8	283	358
Cnoc	34	5.2	354	183
Cruach	6	0.9	580	250
Dun	33	5.1	328	197
Maol	10	1.5	448	308
Meall	193	29.7	652	244
Sgiath	22	3.4	462	276
Sgorr	8	1.2	501	363
Sìdhean	13	2.0	389	253
Sliabh	4	0.6	464	253
Sròn	54	8.3	577	291
Stob	38	5.8	721	332
Stuc	16	2.5	655	285
Tom	89	21.5	284	182
Tòrr	7	1.1	312	177

Table 1. Frequency, average elevation and ruggedness (relative relief) of name types.

Name	Colour	Texture	Form	Biotic	Culture	Unspec.
Beinn	22.0	8.0	6.5	13.0	4.0	
Bioran			12.5	25.0		50.0
Caisteal	9.0		27.0		18.0	18.0
Càrn	26.0		7.5	17.0	17.0	
Cnap			40.0			
Cnoc	23.0	3.0	12.0			
Cruach			16.5			50.0
Dùn	9.0		27.0	15.0	3.0	3.0
Maol	10.0	10.0	20.0	30.0	10.0	
Meall	18.0	5.0	22.0	23.0	5.0	
Sgiath	32.0		18.0	36.0		
Sgòrr		12.5		37.5	12.5	
Sìthean	23		23.0			31.0
Sliabh			25.0		25.0	
Sròn	5.5	7.5	7.5	37.0	5.5	
Stob	13.0	13.0	5.0	18.5	8.0	
Stuc	19.0	6.0	6.0		25.0	25.0
Tom	12.0	2.0	2.0	31.5	40.5	
Tòrr	43.0		57.0			14.0

Table 2. Frequency (%) of name qualifiers.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In Nicolaisen's 1961 study he continually asked the question whether differences in distribution were of a dialectical nature or were determined by differences in geomorphology or attributable to different phases in the expansion of Gaelic settlement. He concluded that a great deal more field work was necessary to establish these distinctions.

The research has shown that the name types studied do indeed possess distinguishing and identifiable physical attributes. For example, we can expect sgorr, cnap or bioran to be very rugged, but relatively low in elevation, when compared to beinn. Stob in contrast, is not only both high and very rugged, but also rocky. In complete contrast, cnoc, dùn or tom are likely to be found in low, rolling country and to be without outcrops.

Adjectival qualifiers can further differentiate formal types. Common, but differing kinds of associations can be identified. For example, cnoc, dùn or sìdhean are often black or dun coloured, suggesting a link with peaty ground. Site observation also indicates an association with valley floor morraines. Meall on the other hand, when, in 18 per cent of instances, a colour is identified, is often linked with peaty hues, but at the much higher level of the rounded plateau. Cnoc, dùn and sìdhean are sometimes also found in pairs, denoted by opposing adjectives such as big or small, black or white. Whereas beinn is never paired and more likely to be grey or red, whilst sgiath is more likely to be blue. In the study area however, only 15.5 per cent of the names are qualified by colour, and of these, over 50 per cent are either black or dun coloured. This preponderance may reflect the wide extent of blanket peat in highland Perthshire.

It has been observed (Drummond 1992) that the Gaelic colour spectrum is more differentiated than, and therefore, not precisely translatable into English. *'It is pastel rather than primary, gentle rather than bold.'* Meanings appear to overlap, but in fact are contextually informed and distinguished. In particular, blues and greens are more diverse in Gaelic and more differentiated than in English. It seems reasonable to assume that a pastoral people, reliant on transhumance, needed to have great precision in the way they described at a distance the perceived condition of upland grasses, prior to the moving of stock. Language then, becomes part of place through what it is required to name. Toponymically, it becomes specific to its context (Stuart-Murray 1995).

Some names of course, such as bioran, caisteal, cruach or stuc seem to possess such a specific formal meaning that they require no adjectival qualification. Others such as meall are always qualified, implying a form so general; it can be pointed, round, rough, notched, forked but most often fat – thus emphasising the dictionary definition. Tom is qualified culturally in just over 40 per cent of instances, which may reflect greater human activity at lower elevations. In contrast over a quarter of the much higher sròn type are associated with animal descriptors. This may relate to their position as outlook points overlooking valleys, such as Glen Artney, which lie at the edges of mountain complexes.

Comparison of the distribution of different name types reflects contrasts, at the larger scale, between landscapes of differing character. For example the common occurrence of stob in Balquidder reflects the greater ruggedness prevailing there than in the rest of the study area. The parallel occurrence of beinn in the same locality implies that this is not a case of dialectic substitution, but a name attached to a distinct form. A similar situation exists with the parallel distribution of maol and meall in the area between Lochs Lomond and Katrine. However, in the same area sgiath does, in part, appear to substitute for the formally similar sròn, which is absent from the locality.

In this way, an understanding of landscape through its toponymic themes and associations can inform the study of language. In general, however, the findings seem to support Gelling's argument that irregular distributions of landscape terms present in placenames are more due to differences in regional landscapes rather than differences in regional naming fashions.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

It would be productive for further studies to examine associations between name types, so that typical, toponymic landform profiles can be established and drawn. Associations could be established accurately if grid references were digitised. Iconic sketches could also be made of certain specific types, where distinctive forms exist, e.g. bioran, caisteal, cruach, sìdhean and stuc.

During the course of the study, it has become apparent that there is not a clear relationship between toponymic density and landscape complexity. This may be due to cartographic idiosyncrasy, error or omission. A search of 1:10,000 scale and historic maps of selected areas, such as upper Glen Almond, where landscape though complex, is sparsely named at OS 1:25,000 scale, may lead to a resolution of this problem.

It would be useful if maps were digitised, so that toponymic distributions could be related to other data sets such as soil and vegetation, using GIS (geographical information systems) technology. The incidence of Gaelic colours and textures etc could be also mapped directly and then related to physical indicators of landscape character.

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Does Ethnology Have a Future?

JAMES PORTER

The title of this paper may seem unnecessarily provocative. Ethnology is understood throughout the world as a term and as a disciplinary concept that denotes a sister field to anthropology even if, as a field, it has been somewhat squeezed out of the larger picture of pedagogy and research by the dominance of anthropology in the Anglophone and particularly the North American academic world. The reasons for this exclusion are of course not hard to seek: the rise and phenomenal growth of anthropology in North America after World War II, and the proliferation of anthropology departments across the United States in particular has meant the confining of 'ethnology' in usage there to a section of the American Anthropological Association, to the association with museum collections and, less flatteringly, to the evolutionist and comparativist work of nineteenth century scholars such as E. B. Tylor, Sir James Frazer, Herbert Spencer and Lewis Henry Morgan. The term is sometimes, though now less commonly, used as a synonym for cultural anthropology in the English-speaking world generally (cf. Hammond 1964). If, then, it has been in decline as a term in this world of language and discourse, is it also moribund as a discipline?

A recent statement by the anthropologist Adam Kuper sets the challenge: in his summary of the state of play in anthropology, he observes, 'Within anthropology, the intertwined European traditions of ethnology and folklore studies are today so feeble that they probably cannot survive. They have been pushed on to the nonacademic periphery in most Western European countries, and in Eastern Europe, where they have persisted, they will probably be among the many unremarked casualties of the present political reorientation' (Kuper 1994: 114). Remarking on the founding of a European Association of Social Anthropologists and its first conferences in Portugal (1990) and Prague (1992), Kuper sees a fresh vitality to social anthropology in Europe, mainly as a result of North American influence. Yet he strangely fails to mention the development of European regional ethnology and its attempts since the late 1960s to forge research paradigms that, drawing on both the work of European sociologists and North American anthropologists, explore questions of identity, ethnicity, power and agency in a changing Europe, as recent issues of the journal *Ethnologia Europaea* show.[1] Europe, it has been said, is the last anthropological frontier; but it is surprising that an anthropologist well-versed in the history of his field would omit all mention of

this development. Just as seriously, Kuper neglects to cite the vigorous debate among folklorists in the United States as to the future of their field. In such a context, when chairs and programmes of ethnology proliferate in Scandinavia, Central and Eastern Europe, and folklorists are debating their paradigmatic history, we are entitled to ask why these fields (which are often associated although they have somewhat different histories) should be banished from the table.[2]

In Europe, of course, the picture historically is rather different. Whereas it was European anthropologists who initially energised American work through Franz Boas and his students after the turn of the twentieth century, ethnology under that name fell on hard times in Europe, its postulates in ruins because of the demise of Darwinian theories of biological, social and cultural evolution and as a result of field studies by Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown and their successors. Radcliffe-Brown, notably, proceeded to adapt the theories of the French sociological school (especially those of Émil Durkheim), while North American scholars inherited the emphasis on culture introduced at the turn of the century by the Berlin-trained, anti-evolutionist Franz Boas. But even as the brilliance of British social anthropology began, after World War II, to give way to North American advances in cultural anthropology because of the contrasting emphasis on 'society' in British anthropology and 'culture' in North America, ethnology as a particularly European field of interest began to revive under the enthusiasm and guidance of figures such as Sigurd Erixon. The focus then was on what had formerly been called 'folk life', the holistic study of peasant or rural culture as a comparativist programme within Europe itself. Content to leave the development of anthropological horizons to colleagues in the former colonial powers (Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands) and the United States, ethnologists in Europe began after World War II to stake out their territory within the borders of the continent.

Not that their methods *per se* were radically different from those of post-Malinowskian anthropology: but the forging of a 'European regional ethnology' along lines that banished extreme ideological baggage (such as had been evident in Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union), and the incorporation of historical data meant avoiding some of the pitfalls into which anthropology had fallen in its exploitation of African, American, and Asian peoples (Kuper 1996). Nevertheless, until the dominance of positivism had been questioned there was also some exploitation of rural peoples throughout Europe, mainly because of the conceptions of backwardness and time-lag that had long distinguished the study of the European peasant.

It was this conception, of course, that had led Tylor and Andrew Lang into their famous comparisons of 'peasant customs' and 'savage myths' as a prelude to theories of cultural evolution, these in turn linking the European rustic historically to his colonial counterpart (Dorson 1968). Instead of the grand comparative schemes of the Darwinians, ethnologists between the World Wars initiated a programme of documenting national folk culture, often built around museums, archives and the field studies of professionally-

trained collectors. But this programme, motivated by a rather naive conception of folk life, has increasingly had to face up to some hard facts about economic and demographic changes in 'this other Eden, demi-paradise' and stringent criticism from within the field itself. The need for a more selfconscious, context-sensitive ethnography, for example, has meant a drive towards introspection and novel theory-building on the part of the researcher. One could say that the twentieth century has been one in which ethnology lost its innocence and, in effect, attained adulthood.

ORIGINAL SIN: INNOCENCE ABROAD

In the beginning, then, ethnology was innocent. Like folklore a burgeoning science in the early nineteenth century, it began as a way of making sense of Otherness, of cultures and societies that seemed strange and exotic to Western travellers, imperial civil servants, or Presbyterian missionaries. It grew up under the shadow of an antiquarianism that was itself a child of the Enlightenment and anti-Enlightenment, and was realised parallel not only to the Romantic movement in literature and the arts but also to the struggle for national autonomy on the part of former imperial territories in Europe. Folklore flourished as scholars delved, first, into the history and prehistory of their country's popular customs through archival research and, later by means of field studies in, for example, the counties of Britain. As the nineteenth century progressed, folklore and anthropology took centre stage, and it was eventually the evolutionist anthropology of Tylor, Frazer and Morgan that triumphed: the latter's *Ancient Society, or Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization* (1877) influenced Marx and Engels, not least because Morgan saw himself as a member of the commercial and industrial middle class and its achievements. Ethnology as a term gradually fell by the wayside despite vigorous attempts by scholars in the Folk-Lore Society to keep it in the picture as part of the study of rustic and savage culture worldwide (e.g. Gomme 1892).

In an earlier paper I gave a somewhat cursory picture of the interrelationships among the allied fields of ethnology, anthropology, folklore and sociology (Porter 1999). In this essay I am concerned to locate the wider context of both 'ethnology' and 'Scottish ethnology', a project that may be ambitious but needs to be attempted if the current status of ethnology in Scotland and Europe is to be understood. But I do not intend here to trace the history of ethnology throughout the twentieth century, except to note the emergence of 'European regional ethnology' as a field in the Nordic countries and Central Europe since World War II. Even as early as 1918 the first Swedish professor of European ethnology, Nils Lithberg, occupied a chair known as 'Nordic and Comparative Folklife Research' (Löfgren 1996). The overtones of ethnology as a 'national' science, whose project was essentially to interpret a national folk culture, was a striking contrast to the diffusionist and comparative approach that had preceded it. Despite the fact that national borders were often irrelevant to traditional folk culture,

the discipline was often confined to work within individual states, the idea being that combining these national pictures would not only yield a more detailed picture of folk life on the European level, but would also fulfill a longing to compile and present, as a lesser-known part of cultural history, the panoply of indigenous folk life. Sigurd Erixon's enthusiasm for ethnology lasted from the 1930s until the 1960s, when work in Germany began to scrutinize the Nazi past of the discipline and to banish the idea of a national *Volkskunde.* This was, in truth, a 'farewell to folk life' *(Abschied vom Volksleben)* in Germany that was partly brought about by the ideological slough into which folklore there had fallen in the 1930s. But the subsequent analysis of folklore in terms of a modern industrial society was a challenging programme that decisively wrenched the discipline away from its traditional focus on rural culture (Bausinger 1990, Scharfe 1993). It also led to a renaming of the field in universities: 'Europäische Ethnologie' instead of 'Volkskunde' (Korff 1996).

The banner year of 1968, similarly, marked a time of revolt against older styles of ethnology, and a turn towards fieldwork and especially community studies of groups on the periphery of society, fishing villages, rural hamlets, and so on. In widening the frame of reference from rural pursuits, urban subcultures later came under scrutiny: women, children, the elderly, immigrants, deviants; and this brought ethnology within striking range of some of the programmes of sociology. Marxist influences were beginning to make themselves felt, especially through the work of the Frankfurt School, and through the writings of Raymond Williams, E. P. Thompson, and Stuart Hall. In this light, themes of social domination and subordination came into focus. Taking a direction pointedly distinct from their earlier positivistic fascination with peasant or urban culture, ethnologists began to reflect on identity and the ways in which their own sense of identity influenced their work. 'Latent ethnicity' directed attention to the researcher's own class, gender and cultural background as markers that could shape, consciously and unconsciously, their theories and methods (Hofer 1996).

To explore this self-conscious idea further, French and German researchers convened at Bad Homburg in 1984 to discuss their 'mutual strangeness that is the beginning of trust' (Chiva and Jeggle 1987: 11). What emerged, not unsurprisingly, was the dissimilar intellectual style of these two national groups, their differences in language, terminology and concepts, and the imprint of their distinctive historical past. This 'latent ethnicity' has also been evident in the discourses of not only French and German but obviously British, American and Japanese scholars (Galtung 1981). Language, history, enculturation and individual personality all matter in the understanding of basic concepts and their history. A classic case is, of course, the distinction between the French concept of *civilisation* and the German *Kultur*, words which contain a wealth of associations for native speakers of French or German but which often are, for outsiders, difficult to grasp (cf. Elias 1978). Such concepts do have immense significance for the idea of a 'national' ethnology, and for the 'nationalising' and 'historicising' aspects of European peoples, including Scotland (cf. Kaschuba 1996).

WEST OF EDEN: ETHNOGRAPHY EXPOSED

No one can escape the problematic of terms (and the concepts they embody) in ethnology, anthropology, folklore, sociology and the human sciences generally. This is inevitable given the mental constructs with which scholars have been dealing since these fields were first conceived in the early nineteenth century. It is well known that concepts such as 'folk', 'tradition' and 'orality' (not to mention 'culture' and 'art') are bedevilled by a breadth of reference that makes close definition hazardous and nice distinction frustrating. These terms do have their equivalents in other (European) languages and they thus suggest common problems in the history of scholarship. The recourse to understanding 'native' terminology, and ethnomethodology as a whole, seemed likely for a time to rescue anthropology and folklore from a creeping ethnocentrism. Yet such attempts often foundered because of other problems in the fundamental attitude of fieldworkers: an unwillingness to admit to private interest or profit, to political exploitation, or to institutional agendas has continued to cast a shadow on interpretations of classically Malinowskian (or better, Lévi-Straussian) smallscale, remote, 'cold' societies as some kind of 'reduced model' of Western culture (cf. Firth 1970, Leach 1970).

Could ethnography – the detailed description of single cultures – free itself from these built-in distortions? As soon as this problem became evident, some suggested that 'native' or 'indigenous' ethnography should in principle take over from that of 'outsiders' who often seemed bemused by indigenous customs, obsessed with minor details, or gave the wrong signals by appearing in a village or 'remote' culture burdened with camcorders, tape recorders, digital cameras, and a 'collector's' attitude. This has happened in an increasing number of instances as Western scholars in particular have been forced to become more sensitive to the history of exploitation brought about by their predecessors (Asad 1973; Cohn 1996; Fabian 1983; Said 1978). But even more importantly the fieldworker, instead of producing a monograph couched in terms of a spurious authority and from which he or she is the absent author, must be written back into the text as part of a dialogue that conveys more of the multiplex cultural context (Clifford 1983, Geertz 1973, 1983). The subsequent path towards selfconsciousness has been a painful one for many researchers who choose to immerse themselves, sometimes uncomfortably and at length, in a very different world in order to understand it. At times, the issue of who is, in fact, an 'insider' or an 'outsider' has complicated folklife studies of Western societies. But the spotlight has been turned, by so-called postmodern anthropologists, on the fieldworker and his or her motives, character, and methods, and on the production of what is, in their ethnographic writing up of fieldwork, not so much analysis and explanation but rather, another cultural text produced for a different audience (Clifford and Marcus 1986, Marcus and Fischer 1986).

The very presence of the fieldworker, in any case, had been seen to mark a change in the everyday life of those among whom he or she lived; and the people themselves could

no longer be acceptably described as 'informants', a word that demeans them to the level of suppliers of information. Rather, the principles of exchange and reciprocity and the mandates of reflexive anthropology led the fieldworker to see that intersubjectivity through dialogue (but not self-effacement) is both an ethically preferable and more perceptive way to proceed.[3] Interpretive anthropology 'reflects on the doing and writing of ethnography itself' (Marcus and Fischer 1986: 16), and 'demystifies much of what had previously passed unexamined in the construction of ethnographic narratives' (Clifford 1988: 38). Introspection and self-criticism on the part of the academic fieldworker made this a very different project from the butterfly collecting of an earlier generation. Where formerly the field had been peopled by rustics and savages, the world of the ethnologist was now transformed to include 'co-workers' and even 'teachers' – guides to fuller understanding of reflexive cultural meanings which can change and shift depending on context and mood. Ethnography no longer consisted of, as Malinowski had asserted, simply seeing things 'from the native's point of view', but an exchange of knowledge and worldview based on trust and negotiation. This development, despite or perhaps also because of its radical suppositions, has been roundly criticized for its extreme subjectivity, narcissism, allusiveness, and a tendency to reduce all problems to those of field narrative. Secondly, 'postmodernist' ethnographic writing masks its own power plays while analysing the power plays of others (Borofsky 1994: 26). The major issue, as a consequence, is how to use a variety of textual formats to reconstruct social worlds and also, just as importantly, to explore how these texts are received by both the intellectual disciplines and the social worlds ethnographers seek to capture (Atkinson and Coffey 1995).

WHOLLY WRIT? ANTIDISCIPLINARITY AND THE TEXT

While postmodernism was overtaking anthropology in terms of its central method (ethnographic fieldwork), the issue of 'the text', and the way in which writing and representation were part of a semiological apparatus, were coming to dominate literary studies. The French journal *Tel Quel* had, since the late 1960s, been drawing attention to the way in which 'text' could be applied to any cultural phenomenon and thus analysed in terms of the signs it employed: Roland Barthes and others were influential in this development. 'The text' then became a kind of 'antidisciplinary object' that cut across conventional disciplinary lines and also brought into question traditional methods of determining the 'meaning' of a particular work. This trend was reinforced by global demography, which saw the movement of peoples compelled by economic or political forces to live and be enculturated in very different social contexts. The political voices of ethnic minorities, women, and marginalised groups added to the questioning, not only of traditional critical methods, but also of traditional disciplines. Departments in the humanities and social sciences both felt the brunt of these attacks. The postmodern crisis, as it has been called, brought with it not only a sense of conflicting but equally valid

interpretations but also, in academic courses, a rising tide of 'cultural studies', in which a radical sociology of modern urban life was allied to a critique of mass media – film, music, and television as well as novels and other forms of verbal publication.

According to some commentators, anthropology in Europe (unlike that in North America) was unaffected by these incursions. Rather, the influence came from the contemporary sociology of Bourdieu, de Certeau, Foucault, and Habermas: Habermas in particular was involved in a debate of the 1970s that ranged over the philosophical and political spectrum of social theory. A major issue was that of culture in the modem state: if culture was a crucial site for understanding both resistance and incorporation within a postwar order that was 'democratic' yet driven by new forms of domination, how could politics address this problem? Shaped by the tradition of critical theory in Germany, in answering that question Habermas turned his attention to an analysis of the public sphere conceived as a 'realm' outside the marketplace and the state yet not reducible to private life. In this he discussed the historical evolution of the public sphere in Europe, identifying various meeting places and communication media that enabled discussion to take place. Critical of the social impact of the mass media, Habermas sensed that the resources of critical consciousness are being eroded and depleted by the influence of mass culture. His rather pessimistic conclusion was that, in the present, both the state and the market are intruding on the public sphere, and that engagement in rational discussion is the best way forward. Such discussion is necessary for genuine democracy to thrive (Habermas 1989).

Even more pertinently, Habermas established early in his career a mechanism for analysing how the conditions of intellectual production cannot be separated from historical events affecting the relationship of universities, the mass media, and the market (1971). Bourdieu took up the issue of disciplinary positioning via a struggle between the Sorbonne and the École Pratique des Hautes Études to achieve intellectual prestige in the context of a general devaluation of humanistic knowledge. For him there was a close relationship between the crisis in prestige that conditioned the decline of 'academic criticism' and the proliferation of interdisciplinary projects which eventually gave rise to the paradigm of textuality. According to some critics, however, Bourdieu missed the fact that the 'new criticism' was not simply reproductive nor restricted to the sphere of institutional criticism. What had happened was that the social conditions that supported the coherence of the author as an example of subjectivity had been remapped: Habermas's public sphere had been realigned to provoke a crisis in the categories created by intellectuals within that public sphere. New forms and organs of communication had proliferated, reconstituting the public through technology and subjecting its intellectual life to new constraints such as, for example, the space, time and speed of a magazine article (Mowitt 1992: 74–76).

How, then, did the antidisciplinary nature of textuality affect the established disciplines? Disciplines still form the organising intellectual hub of a curriculum, and curricular expansion is consistent with disciplinarity. But the recent struggle over the

humanities curriculum, both in Europe and North America, has been fought in the 1980s and 90s between partisans of the newer social movements who naturally want to promote radical extensions of democracy into educational institutions and thus bring about the empowerment of minorities.[4] The nature of the text allowed scholars to interrogate and assess a realignment of traditional subjects. One American folklorist has noted that, while the genres of scholarship are blurred, their boundaries crossed, their territories newly appropropriated, it does not mean that they all turn into muddled thought, lacking the discipline, language and history that their names signify (Ben-Amos 1998: 274). On the other hand it has not been of particular utility to claim, as some have done, that universities should return to teaching classical languages or philosophy in order to help students to think logically. Rather, it has been at the points where traditional disciplines meet that the ambivalence of the text has become a useful tool for intellectual expansion: Platonic dialogues, for example, can be taught along with studies of slavery in Athens (Mowitt 1992: 220). Still, the coming of the text with its ideological underpinning has helped to carve out two flourishing 'metadisciplines': cultural history and cultural studies.

PARTING THE RED SEA: CULTURAL HISTORY, CULTURAL STUDIES

Cultural studies has established itself in both Britain and North America (although along somewhat different lines politically), and evolved beside the parallel attempt to establish a metadiscipline of 'cultural history', which to some extent addressed the concerns of university students from different backgrounds because of influence from the social sciences and its attention to the history of ideas (cf. Braudel 1980). One North American historian, noting some twenty years ago the rise of what he called 'social science history', remarked that it was a specialty not defined by time, place, and an aspect of social life; the 1979 meeting of the Social Science History Association included topics such as labour history, ethnicity, demography, violence, and criminal justice (Tilly 1981: 28–29). The new approach to history developed to some extent in response to a dissatisfaction with an older form of cultural history, especially in France during the 1960s and 1970s. At that time, history had a dominant position in the universities: in the humanities, history was second only to French literature and was well ahead of linguistics, psychology, or sociology. Measured by standards of institutional legitimacy, history was surpassed only by French language and literature, classical studies and philosophy (Chartier 1988).

It was this dominance that the newer social sciences tried to displace, and the challenge came in a variety of forms (including structuralism) which focussed on history's traditional objects of study or on its methodology. By applying models often adapted from the natural sciences, the social sciences moved to undermine the dominant position of history in both the academic world and the public sphere. By importing into the humanities new principles of legitimacy that rejected history as an empirical discipline,

the social sciences attempted to convert their institutional fragility into an intellectual hegemony. This in turn provoked historians into areas of novel research: beliefs and religious patterns, kinship systems, rituals, forms of social interaction and so on. But the specific aim of cultural history is 'to note how, in different times and places, a specific social reality was constructed, how people conceived of it and how they interpreted it to others'. 'Representation' was already felt to be a better term than the older concept of *mentalité* because it permitted the description of three modes of social relationship: first, the classifying practices by which reality is constructed in contradictory ways by various groups; second, the practices that provide for the recognition of social identity, a way of 'being in the world', and signifying (symbolically) a rank or status; third, the forms by means of which 'representants' mark in visible and perpetuated fashion 'the existence of the group, the class, or the community' (Chartier 1988: 9–10). Ethnologists can easily recognise these relational modes as consistent with their own contemporary interests (Christiansen 1996, Köstlin 1996, Löfgren 1996, NiedermülIer 1994).

According to its protagonists, cultural history is to be understood primarily as the study of the processes by which meaning is constructed. Leaving behind the earlier idea that endowed texts and works with an intrinsic, absolute and unique meaning which it was the critic's task to identify, history of this kind has turned to practices that give meaning to the world in plural and even contradictory ways. Furthermore, the cultural historian investigates the relationship of his or her subject to other, closely related branches of knowledge: literary history, for example, or the epistemology of the sciences and philosophy. It is not surprising that the names of Bourdieu and Foucault readily crop up here, as well as those of classical reference such as Durkheim and Mauss. The break between sociology and history resulted in debates over methodological differences that were in reality struggles for predominance, both between and inside disciplines and in the intellectual world in general. The problem, however, has not been one of mere power struggles; it lies in the need to consider the divergences that have arisen in the academic world, or the evolution of academic disciplines, by situating them in their intellectual space (Chartier 1988: 4–9; cf. Burke 1984, 1997). Here, 'oral history' – the interviewing of eye-witness participants in the events of the past for the purposes of historical reconstruction – provides a method that links cultural history to the fieldwork of ethnologists and anthropologists. In a number of recent studies, anthropological techniques and interdisciplinary bridges have been specifically evoked (Dunaway and Baum 1996, Perks and Thomson 1998).

'Cultural studies' is a somewhat different case, although it arose, in part, as a response to the coming of 'the text' and critiques of modernity. But from the beginning in Europe it was not restricted by a reaction to traditional paradigms as was cultural history. Rather, cultural studies has been at once interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and antidisciplinary in its embracing of both an anthropological and sociological conception of culture.[5] A decisive orientation toward the analysis, often Marx-inspired, of contemporary urban industrial societies was evident in its early phases, but this has

since broadened to include aspects such as nationalism, ethnicity and identity (Giroux and McLaren 1993). Three main models of research predominate: studies of cultural production, of 'text', and of lived cultures (Johnson 1995: 575–612). Rejecting the notion of 'culture' as identical with 'high culture', cultural studies demands that all forms of cultural production should be scrutinised, both in relation to other cultural practices and to social questions (cf. Grossberg, Nelson, Treichler 1992: 4). Much of this stemmed from concerns about the new ways social domination operated in the postwar world. Shifts in the social organisation of cultural and communications media brought imports from the United States (rock music, jeans, the shopping mall, music videos, theme parks) that flagged up critical questions about democracy, equality, and the relationship of politics and culture. The Frankfurt School had influentially drawn attention to these problems (e.g. Adorno 1950, 1991, Marcuse 1966; also Althusser 1969), and ethnologists too have turned their attention to the impact of popular culture and modernity on traditional forms (e.g. Köstlin 1997).

The problem of social change in Europe was also investigated by semioticians such as Barthes, who has analysed culture as a historically sedimented collective system of meanings that retained traces of earlier social relations and had the capacity in the present to structure categories of thinking and thereby obscure or naturalise power (Barthes 1972 [19901). In England, Richard Hoggart had seen the communities that provided roots for ethnic or class solidarity dispersed by urban renewal, de-industrialization and American popular culture; these factors also effaced an older sense of place (1959 [1992]). The historian Peter Laslett documented 'the world we have lost' (1969 [1983]). The work of Raymond Williams and E. P. Thompson shaped much of the thinking in 'British cultural studies' in its early phases (e.g., Thompson 1963, Williams 1958; cf. Easthope 1997, Johnson 1995). The ideas of Antonio Gramsci, notably, began to encourage conceptions of hegemony and resistance in the analysis of popular culture by scholars at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, founded by Hoggart in 1964. Other centres of study emerged later at Leeds, Leicester, Glasgow and Cardiff (Turner 1996).

Questions of gender, race and so on were opened up in a wide-ranging set of enquiries into the lived practice of, for instance, subcultures, who often formed collective identities based on the notion of a counterculture (Hebdige 1979). Folklorists, aware of Gramsci and his writings on folklore, had also pointed out this contestatory role of culture (Lombardi-Satriani 1974), and Gramsci's insights on cultural hegemony ultimately found their way into American anthropology via cultural studies (Nelson and Grossberg 1988). Since Hoggart's time new urban forms (planned communities, theme parks, tourism) have stimulated a postmodern generation of critics to see how these forms could structure collective action (Jameson 1991, Lyotard 1984). Hoggart and Williams had turned to sociology, ethnography and social history in the 1960s for ways to contextualise the text, 'to flesh out the sense of reading and response as forms of culture produced by the activity of a whole society' (Easthope 1997: 6). But

in doing so, they left themselves open to charges of moralising attitudes, and there resulted a tension between what Stuart Hall has called the culturalism of Hoggart and Williams and latterday Marxist structuralism (Hall 1980). Mass media, for example, was transforming traditional culture; but forces such as rock music also disturbed conventional cultural hierarchies, and this led to a reassessment of culture itself and its economic base. 'Culture' became an arena for struggles linked to collective interests and political power (Long 1997, 18–19). It also functions, prominently, as a subject for discussion in open forum when topics such as race, class and gender prove too personal or too sensitive. At any rate, as gender, race, nationalism or sexuality are increasingly seen as irreducible to the logic of class or capital, some describe this newer intellectual terrain as 'postMarxist' (McRobbie 1992).

NO CONTINUING CITY? ETHNOLOGY'S FUTURES

Power, indeed, is a recurrent topos in all these intellectual fields, and this confirms the scrutiny by critics of not only the foundations of knowledge but the foundations of society (cf. Wolf 1994). Further, does the ambivalent role of 'cultural studies' in the academy mean that it threatens to replace traditional disciplines such as anthropology, folklore, or ethnology? Is it some kind of critical substitute, in a world dominated by global capitalism, for Marxism, Eurocentrism, or even anti-Americanism (Jameson 1995)? It must be admitted that, even in the not-too-distant past, ethnologists in Europe have to some extent colluded in fabricating national identities as an assertion of cultural and historical superiority. In the academy, moreover, ethnology's traditional concerns can in recent times be seen to merge with, or even disappear into, the ethnologisation of social and historical disciplines, a process somewhat similar to that affecting the relationship between history and sociology (Chartier 1988). While in Germany it appears that *Volkskunde* (the study of folklore) has all but disappeared because of its ideologically-compromised role in Nazism, recent research of a more obviously sociological kind there has centered on, for instance, the fast-food complex, which is closely related to a mobile society and its life-style. As Konrad Köstlin has pointed out, the world-wide ubiquity of MacDonald's or other American-based chains mediates the feeling of absolute security in a confusing world; at the same time, in former Eastern Bloc countries these food outlets act as a symbol of freedom and modernity. But this similarity and universality of the fast-food complex can also contain within it negative associations, such as loss of individual and local identity (1996: 171). The same food is prepared in the same way whether one is in Deauville, Dresden or Dundee.

Then what of local identities, regional cultures, even national traditions in the face of computer-driven globalisation and multi-national companies who make decisions that transcend national autonomy? In the past twenty or thirty years there has been fashionable use of the terms 'invention' or 'reinvention': invention, for instance, of

culture (Wagner 1975), tradition (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), (primitive) society (Kuper 1988, Moscovici 1993), race (Lott 1999), ethnicity (Sollors 1991), history (Bann 1990), progress (Bowler 1989) and so on.[6] This suggests the notion that people construct their history and culture anew from time to time according to individual or collective needs, such as notions of a heroic past (the heroisation process) or national status (the nationalisation of culture) or external pressures (political or economic threat) (Löfgren 1989). But how 'new' is much of this invention? There exists, for example, as much a 'tradition of invention' as an invention of tradition: James 'Ossian' Macpherson, in his influential re-working of Gaelic songs and narratives in English translation, was merely one in a long line of 'inventive' adapters of tradition in Britain and Ireland, such as Geoffrey of Monmouth or Iolo Morganwg. It is mistaken to infer or suggest that invention is, first of all, newly made out of whole cloth rather than piecemeal and with an eye on past models. The word 'invention' unfortunately suggests this very notion of something new, whereas 'adaptation', 'reworking', or 'recasting' older ideas might better fit the process. Hobsbawm and Ranger's much-quoted book on the invention of tradition makes a distinction between traditions that have evolved over lengthy spans of time and those that are invented for ideological (usually nationalistic) reasons. But many have pointed out that the line is hard to draw. The theory, moreover, of Hobsbawm that nations and nationalism cannot predate 1780 has been effectively demolished: the early experience of nation-forming in the British Isles has indicated how 'nations' were gradually formed out of tribes and tribal complexes (Hastings 1997).

Given that the construction of reality is as much a mental process as a phenomenal set of 'facts', and that the business of the academic world is to examine, analyse and propose new ways of seeing, how can ethnology proceed as an enterprise? Furthermore, what is 'Scottish' ethnology, and how does it fit with both a 'European' ethnology and a more globally-oriented anthropology? There is no question that anthropology has flourished in the United States, not only because of the relative wealth of resources in its universities and research institutions, but also because of the nation's juncture in world history as a powerful economic and military force. But the coherence of the field has been, as some see it, weakened by individualism and the constant need to 'slay' the paradigms of one's predecessors, only to see them return to life as if discovered for the first time (Wolf 1994: 220). Anthropologists' ignoring of work in related fields, too, may be based on a myopic view – a kind of intellectual solipsism, as it were – that little of significance happens outside its national as well as its disciplinary boundaries. Folklorists in particular complain vocally about anthropologists' (and historians') ignorance of their field (cf. Ben-Amos 1998; see also Becher 1989, Christiansen 1984, Cohn 1987, Lindqvist 1992). Economic and institutional power are all at work here: ethnology and then anthropology in Britain were at their height from the 1870s until the 1950s, when Empire was diminishing and prestige waned. Anthropology in Britain has to some extent fed from the transatlantic trough: noted scholars (Talal Asad, Mary Douglas, Robin Fox, Philip Gulliver, Stanley Tambiah, John Middleton, Victor Turner)

left for posts abroad in the 1970s as the general academic context for anthropological work declined and sociology began its rise to popularity (Kuper 1996: 180).[7]

This is not to belittle the original work in British anthropology as a whole through the 1970s and 1980s; but when one takes into account that there are over 10,000 professional anthropologists in the American Anthropological Association, and that the society has 34 sections defined by topic of study (e.g., feminist, political-legal, education, nutrition, agriculture, consciousness, work, cultural, humanistic, linguistic, medical, psychological, urban anthropology) and six interest groups (ageing, American Indian/Native American/Alaskan native, East Asia, Melanesia, post-communist cultural studies, ritual), there is no question where the power and influence lie. The American Ethnological Society, founded in 1842, is one of the sections of the AAA; it has nearly 4000 members and publishes a journal. *American Ethnologist,* which promotes scholarship on 'ethnology' in the broader sense of the term. It is in this 'broader sense' (namely comparative, historical and regional analysis) that any understanding of ethnology – whether as an 'American' or as a 'European' enterprise – must be sought. And as Adam Kuper has observed, the most suggestive and subtle kinds of comparison are today regional in scope and historical in conception (1994: 116). British as well as American anthropologists are turning to the study of Europe (Goddard et al. 1994, Macdonald 1993). It is not, of course, an enterprise that belongs to any country or continent or even discipline but is, rather, a means of understanding the human condition. This in turn means not only furthering an ethnology of the West (and Europe) as the cradle of these, humanistic fields but also, in more immediate terms, an 'ethnology of Scots in and beyond Scotland' (rather than simply the national enterprise that is suggested by the conjoining of 'Scottish' and 'ethnology').

A 'national' ethnology, therefore, can only be one strand in a layered approach to this understanding, the other strands being the local, the regional, and the transnational or international. Any one of these cannot justifiably stand on its own as the subject of enquiry, for to do so would be to confine the question of identity in the modern world too narrowly. Identity is created or emerges around local, regional, and national concepts, around language, around gender, class and occupation: some anthropologists have referred to this as a sense of 'belonging' (Cohen 1982, Macdonald 1997). But it is also an emergent aspect of individual and social life, as factors from both within and without impinge and develop change, whether gradual or dramatically swift. In the case of ethnology in and of Scotland there has perhaps been, as there was in Ireland after independence, a focus on the local, regional and national to the detriment of the transnational, the minority immigrant or transient, as well as of gendered and the social class distinctions: there are few cultural studies, for instance, of an Edinburgh or Glasgow bourgeoisie that has immense social influence and power in commercial and legal spheres. Social analysis has in this sense begun to overtake cultural analysis; but sociologists have begun to see that a study of social history must include cultural factors if it is to understand behavioral conventions and traditions.

In the ethnology of Scotland, nevertheless, nativistic and national agendas directed towards the rural, the past, and the remote tend to dominate research. I would argue that ethnology must begin to free itself from idealised conceptions of Scottish culture in its local, regional, national or even transnational dimensions. That is not to say that those with whom ethnologists work do not have such idealised conceptions; but it is in keeping with trends elsewhere in Europe – and in ethnology as a whole – for the ethnologist to divest himself or herself of the national bias that distorts basic concepts and guides method into an uncritical 'authority' and unselfconscious empiricism. Empirical findings, description and analysis have their place; but prosaic, surface description of cultural phenomena in terms of a local or national history is no substitute for a cultural analysis of this local/ regional /national/ transnational world as seen through multiple eyes and minds – these imaginings, inventions and constructions that are all around us in different classes of society, in women, men and children and heretofore largely invisible immigrant communities (Brah 1996), as well as in 'outsiders', tourism, and the culture of long-established emigrant settlements abroad. Such analysis must in turn lead to a general theory of Scottish culture and identity at different social and diasporal levels.

To argue that these communities and topics have become the domain of the sociologist is to miss the point: sociologists have only recently turned to an analysis of specifically urban (European) culture under the influence of the Frankfurt School and others. The role of sociologists, in addition, and that of their discipline have been partially absorbed into 'cultural studies', more so, I would venture, than for anthropology or ethnology, which still retain their association – not always correct or deserved – with Third World, peasant or rural cultures. But these affinities must in any case be thrown off if such disciplines are to forge a fresh sense of identity and purpose: oral traditions, for instance, have become important for historical interpretation as much as oral accounts of 'what happened' (Henige 1974, 1982). Oral history here begins to approach the methods of ethnology and cultural anthropology as its practitioners see that there is no 'objective' account in the popular historical imagination (cf. Thompson 1988).

As I see it, ethnology in Scotland and elsewhere must harness three strategies to safeguard its disciplinary future: first, it must vigorously defend and promote its traditional devotion to historical and comparative studies (this need not preclude field ethnographies, indeed ought to promulgate ethnography as a balancing factor); second, it must forge new theories out of its own disciplinary history and from the confluence of related fields; third, it should engage in ruthless critique of its theoretical and methodological assumptions, especially in matters of representation. The first of these strategies is what will distinguish ethnology from an anthropology suffering from a proliferation of competing paradigms (Borofsky 1994: 11–12; in any case, comparison takes place at both conscious and unconscious levels, and it is now the scholar's task to bring to consciousness and understanding those 'unconscious' comparisons). The second and third will, one hopes, rescue ethnology from the descriptive and often complacent, 'common-sense' empiricism into which it can readily fall.

These strategies can readily be integrated into a Scottish cultural framework. A glance at ethnological topics recently undertaken at an academic level in Scotland displays the possibility for such integration: folk revivals and their relation to 'mature' traditions; emigrant traditions and their relationship to both source and host culture; the traditions of twentieth century immigrant communities; sport and contemporary culture industries (e.g., tourism); urban studies; issues surrounding older traditions (e.g. Gaelic oral culture). Allied to these topics are theoretical perspectives (e.g. feminism) and scrutiny of the political agendas behind representations of ethnology. An ethnology of Scots people, both within 'national' borders and abroad, should seek to uncover the range of cultural constructions that contribute to ideas of identity, local, regional, national – or even those inspired by the British Empire, for in this last kind of identity Scots were often complicitous. The confrontation with history, especially unpleasant or awkward historical events, will involve a range of responses that include insight, confession, invention, dissimulation, evasion and re-imagining, and these deserve careful interpretation through published accounts. It is in this sense that ethnologists have learned to shun the selective rhetoric of 'heritage' and to carry forward the task of interpreting a complex, conflict-laden culture under a banner of ethical awareness. For the tasks of ethnology in Scotland cannot be confined – as they have been at times – to rural or 'backward' areas; instead, ethnologists need to confront past lacunae, present and future goals, the work of sister disciplines, and the technology that is transforming human behaviour. They must also, *pace* Kuper, find a sense of urgency if defensible conclusions on identity and tradition in the modern world are to be reached.

NOTES

1 *Ethnologia Europaea,* vol. 1 (1967–). A recent issue of the *American Anthropologist* (vol. 99/4, 1997) devoted to 'provocations of European ethnology' largely ignores the work of contemporary European ethnologists.

2 It is as well to note here the contemporary revival of 'rhetoric' as a method or technique of intellectual persuasion (see Hutton 1992).

3 Influentially outlined by the French sociologist Marcel Mauss in his *Essai sur le don* (1925; *The Gift*, 1954). It is difficult to gauge just how specific this influence was in terms of modifying the 'authority' of the ethnographer. The practice however of giving, receiving and taking belong, as Annette Weiner has shown, to more complex temporalities, extending the effects of the gift beyond death (1992). Mauss was concerned primarily with the problem of agency in society, one taken up in turn by Malinowski, Edmund Leach and others; see *Current Anthropology* 36 (1995), 711–18. For reflexivity as anthropological technique, see Marcus *1994: 45;* for reflexivity in the sociology of knowledge, see Ashmore 1989, Woolgar 1988.

4 Interdisciplinary movements such as 'American Studies' or 'Canadian Studies' may have grown out of a concern for both cultural identity and issues that were being lost in the

cracks among disciplinary boundaries. The attempt by such broad movements to become disciplines has usually failed because, although starting from a critical perspective, the more successful they have been the more they have retreated from radical critique. In American Studies, interdisciplinarity was a vehicle for challenging institutional hierarchy, but in the end did not offer an alternative; as it became more entrenched. interdisciplinarity receded in importance and critical work has been left to research groups (such as Women's Studies) involved in radical social change (cf. Giroux et al. 1995).

5 It is ironic that the anthropological conception of 'culture' has passed into popular thought when anthropologists are now questioning the term's utility. The essentialist and reified conception of culture devised by anthropologists can be found not only in everyday discourse but has been adopted by Third World elites in their nationalist rhetoric, providing an ideal instrument for claims to identity, 'phrased in opposition to modernity, Westernisation, or neocolonialism'. Culture, so reified, can be deployed against foreign or outside researchers, who can be pilloried for having stolen 'it', sold 'it' in the academic marketplace, or simply misrepresented 'it' (Keesing 1994: 303–304).

6 'Inventing' – no doubt in the wake of nineteenth century patent legislation – has acquired this sense of 'creating novelty'; consequently, in recent literary and humanistic contexts it has been accompanied by these similar terms: not only 'reinventing' but also 'construction' and 'imagining, for example, in terms of both disciplines and their subject matter; see Atkinson 1990 (textual constructions of reality), Brett 1996 (construction of heritage), Cohen 1985 (symbolic construction of community), Cubitt 1998 (imagining nations), Hymes 1969 (re-inventing anthropology), Macdonald 1997 (reimagining culture), Searle 1996 (construction of social reality), Tonkin 1992 (social construction of oral history). For Scottish topics, cf. Gold and Gold 1995 (touristic imagining), Pittock 1991, 1997 (historical invention of Scotland, Britain), Smith 1998 (constructing identity in the visual arts). The anthropologist Marshall Sahlins (1999) has recently argued against the easy functionalist dismissal of the peoples' claims of cultural distinction (the invention of tradition) and for the continued relevance of such distinction (the inventiveness of tradition).

7 But folklorists and ethnologists should not be afraid of being 'marginal' (Oring 1998). In any case, centrality and marginality in terms of knowledge or even economic power are relative concepts, not universal values (see Cockcroft 1994, Stoklund 1992).

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Some Heathenish and Superstitious Rites: A Letter from Lewis, 1700

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Ane Accompt of some heathenish & superstitious rites used
in the Isle of Lewis given by a frend to Mr Alan
Morisone Minister of Ness 15 Aprill 1700

Within these hundred yeirs last there were many superstitious rites used, wherof I shall give ane accompt of such as I remember, although now extinct since yor fayrs entry to the Ministry.

I have seen and heard in all the Chappells and kerks that ever were roofed in this countrey, The people men & young women travelled in flocks from all quarters upon these saints days to whom these kerks were dedicated and kindled great fyres in these kerks all the neght over, & spent the whol neght in in pyping singing prophane songs, danceing & whoreing too, that seldom I heard of these meetings (when I was a child) but I heard also of such & such persons falling in fornication or adultry at such occasiones, & this made a sport of. I know yor fayr had great difficultie, and did put the superieors of the countrey to it before he could get this custome quyt abolyshed. I have been a boy travelling in yor parish and at four miles distance from the kerk Molruy, when wee came in view of it, all the company fell on there knees discovered there heads, saying there Pater noster, Praying the saint Molruy to blesse them. I have seen oxen sent 12 miles off to that kerk to be slane and given to the poor.

I have seen Mc Torcal Vc Varrish go about the Lewis wt the crosse Molruy, puting it thryce about everyones head & rubbing the cristall stones in it to there eyes. The like adoration was performed to flanan in Uig, & generally to all dedicated kerks wherof there are about 24 in countrey, but none of them at present roofed, save one in Stornway

Another paganish custome, wch I fear is not as yet abolyshed, it being more privat is. Many when the[y] see the new Moon first after the chang, they pray standing before it, wt their heads discovered. Others anoynt there eyes sunday morning wt holy water. Others contribut a quantity of Corn & make malt of it, & brew it into ale, and drink it in the kerk pouring the first coigfull into the sea, that they may have fish the better that yeir and sea ware for there land, And all the town will joyn in this work but now its abolyshed, they called this kynd of sacrifeceing **Shion**, but the Etymology of that word I know not. Others killed ane heiffer or bul-

lock and threw the blood of it into the sea wt certane rites and ceremonies promiseing to themselves therby the more abundance of fysh and sea ware to be brought ashore to them

Another custome was upon Candlesmas Even or in Irish **féil bríde** after supper, St Brigida's bed was made in a Seive wt a litle straw and clean cloaths, a handfull of barly and oats unthres sed was taken and wrapped about wt Linnens well pinned, and made into the fashion of a womans body. Then every persone in the family man woman and child put in something wch he daily wor into the bed, and after all was compleet for the service, all the familie fell on thr faces and wt high voices cryed **ndanig briid, gun di riist**. I Remane

At Bragar april 15 1700 — Yor loving Cousine J Morisone

THE BACKGROUND

This extremely interesting letter is preserved in the Colin Campbell Collection in Edinburgh University Library, under the reference EUL MS 3097.12. It is a copy written in the hand of the Rev. Colin Campbell of Achnaba, minister of Ardchattan, himself. Although he published very little, Campbell (1644–1726) enjoyed a high reputation among his contemporaries as a mathematician, an astronomer and a theologian (cf. Ó Baoill). Although a great deal of Campbell's cultivated Latin verse survives in his papers, rather sadly there is very little concerning the culture of his own people. However, we are fortunate that the minister saw fit to copy the above letter. He probably intended it for the famous Welsh polymath Edward Lhwyd, who was at that time engaged in his antiquarian tour around the Celtic countries. Lhwyd had met the minister at the Synod of Argyll in 1699, and at the end of the year had written to him asking for help in gathering information, including: 'The Peculiar Games and Customes, observd on set days throughout the year; and any other Fashions yt you know peculiar to the Highlands' (Campbell and Thomson: xix, 4–5 [= Edinburgh University Library MS 3099.14]). Then as now, the people of the Outer Hebrides were perceived by other Gaels as preserving many customs otherwise lost on the mainland. It is to be expected that Campbell would keep an eye out for any useful material from these islands.

The original copy of the letter was written by the well-known Iain mac Mhurch' 'c Ailein (*c.*1630–1708), John Morison of Bragar, grandson of the last brieve of Lewis. In *An Clàrsair Dall*, William Matheson writes about him as follows:

> He was tacksman of Bragar, entered in the records of the estate as a sixteen-pennyland – the largest agricultural unit in Lewis. John Morison was also a man of good education, and was the author of a description of his native island that is still extant. A performer on the violin, and a poet whose *ex tempore* verses figure prominently in Lewis tradition, he was a man of many accomplishments, accepted as leader and counsellor by his fellow islanders, more especially as they seem to have regarded him as the representative of the family who had been custodians of the law in Lewis for so many generations.[1]

It was probably in the early 1680s that Iain mac Mhurch' 'c Ailein composed his (mainly geographical) description of Lewis for Sir Robert Sibbald, under the name 'Indweller' (cf. Maciver; Mitchell: 210–15). Iain obviously gave Martin Martin a great deal of the material concerning superstitious beliefs in Lewis which appeared in his *Description of the Western Isles of Scotland* of 1703; indeed, Martin had a high opinion of his informant, referring to him as '*John Morison* of *Bragir* in *Lewis*, a Person of unquestionable Sincerity and Reputation' (Martin 1703: 315; cf. 28–30). It is immediately apparent that the material in the book and the letter come from the same source, except that the letter is rather franker than Martin was prepared to go in print. In passing, it is interesting to note that 'Indweller' writes that in the space of three weeks he had been able to cure 'the legg of a young gentleman which had been inflamed and cankered for the space of tuo years' with the *gioban Hiortach* (oil from 'the grease of … fowles especiallie the soline goose': Mitchell: 212). Now, in a letter written just before he was about to set out for the Long Island in March 1696, Martin mentions 'the accident befallen my leg' (NLS MS 1389, fo.85). One wonders if the young traveller was himself treated by Morison – he certainly was very much a proselytiser for the benefits of the *gioban* in his later career.[2]

Iain mac Mhurch' 'c Ailein sent his original letter to his first cousin the Rev. Allan Morison of Barvas (*c*.1655–1723), who had as a glebe the tack of Tàbost, Ness.[3] The Rev. Allan was the son, and successor, of another one of Martin's Lewis informants, the Rev. Donald or Daniel Morison (*c*.1620-?1696), who appears to have been the third son of Ailean mac Iain mhic Ùisdein, and thus was Iain mac Mhurch' 'c Ailein's uncle.[4] It is likely that Colin Campbell obtained the letter as follows.

Two of the erstwhile episcopalian Skye ministers having submitted to the newly-presbyterian Synod of Argyll in May 1692, visitations were despatched to the northern Hebrides in 1695 and 1696, in order to judge the religious situation and to oust the remaining episcopalian clergy from their parishes.[5] While holding a meeting in Clachan Sand, North Uist, on 26 July 1696, the synod's representatives heard how the island was being ministered to by the Rev. Alexander Cooper (*c*.1670–1706), who had taken over from his fellow episcopalian Allan Morison after the latter had received a call to Ness some four years previously.[6] After the visitation had made its report, the synod determined to call Cooper and Morison to account, not only because of their episcopalianism, but also on suspicion of surreptitiously dividing up the teinds of the parishes for their own benefit.[7]

The Presbytery of Skye was unable to summon the two recusant ministers to a meeting of the synod in 1697 – a time of great hardship in the Gàidhealtachd – 'because of the stormines of the weather and great interveeneing Sea'.[8] However, the following year the presbytery was more successful, and in June 1699 Cooper and Morison at last stood before the Synod of Argyll – possibly with Lhwyd as a spectator – to give account of themselves.[9] Alexander Cooper took a compliant line with his inquisitors, presenting them with a 'testificat of his ordinatione', his licence to preach and his

call from the parish heretors, and baldly confessing: 'I do acknowledg my self highly faulty in my methods'.[10] Accepting his statement, the synod allowed him 400 merks out of his stipend for the coming year, when he was to appear once again before them. Allan Morison, however, intended to stand his ground. But although he denied he had intruded himself into his parish, he was unable to present any firm proof to the contrary – a letter from the late Bishop James Ramsay to the episcopalian Presbytery of Lewis which he gave to the synod as evidence did not refer to him at all; neither did he have 'the Presb's act nor the Call of the people to produce'. He was ordered to appear the following summer, with the relevant documents 'and what other papers or evidences he hath in his favours'. However, like Cooper, he was still allowed to preach in his parish and collect his stipend:

> But in the mean tyme the synod considering the greatnes of the charg of Nesse & Cladich, and that some relicts of Heathenisme & Popery ignorance and prophanity are there abounding, also considering the vast distance that parioch is from any supply the great number of souls wtin the sd parioch the discontignity of the towns the danger of the inrods of the Priests wt other weighty considerationes have allowed the sd Mr Alan this yeirs stipend he exerciseing his Minry in the sd parioch of Nesse & Cladich, and this allowance to continue to the nixt summer synod alanerly[11]

The following year, on 7 June 1700, Allan Morison once more appeared before the Synod of Argyll, this time with the papers demanded of him. The synod, however, was unimpressed:

> Compeared Mr Allan Moryson episcopall incumbent in Ness and Cladich in Lewis, conforme to the appointment of ye Last Summer Synod, & produced ye call of Ness & Cladich, and act of ye presbrie of Lewis yranent: The Synod considering the sd call to be of ye Date nyntie two yeares, & ye sd act of ye pretended episcopall pr[esbitr]ie of Lewis to be of no force, in regairde Episcopacie was abolished by act of Parliat some years befor, and finding yrfr yt the sd Mr Allan setled in ye sd charge wtout ye concurrence of anie church Judicature Declared ye sd call illegall; and that ye sd Mr Allan neyr has, nor had anie pastorall relation to ye sd parioch of Ness & Cladich & therto Delaying ye furder consideration of yis effair to ye nixt Summer Synod.[12]

There the matter was allowed to rest. As long as Allan Morison continued to minister the gospel in what was the most distant parish in its territory, the Synod of Argyll was content to allow him to receive the ministerial stipend, and to be supervised by the Presbytery of Skye – although we may doubt just how much supervision, if any, he received from the ministers on the other side of the Minch, doubtless put off by the prospect of an arduous, expensive journey and a cold welcome awaiting them at the end of it.[13] We should not imagine, however, that the minister of Ness was thereafter somehow confined to his bounds. Together with his cousin the Rev. Angus Morison, the notorious episcopalian minister of Contin Aonghas Dubh, he managed the affairs of his kindred, and also acted as tutor and administrator for the children of another erstwhile colleague, the Rev. Donald Nicolson, chief of the Nicolsons of Scorrybreac.[14]

Towards the end of Morison's life, however, there came about a curious twist in his fortunes. Following the failure of the jacobite risings of 1715 and 1719, and the exile of Uilleam Dubh, the Catholic Mackenzie chief, the forfeiture of the Seaforth estate in 1720 meant that at last the way was open for the Presbytery of Skye to impose its authority on the island, and to collect the ecclesiastical dues. A rental prepared for the Trustees of the Forfeited Estates in 1721 showed that the Lewis rents – and therefore its teinds – were considerably higher than the synod had previously thought. It is probably this which, in March 1721, spurred the Presbytery of Skye to petition the church authorities to erect a new system of five parishes on Lewis. The Trustees evidently demurred at having to more than double the amount of money they spent on the church, and thus, in July 1722, it was agreed that a commission would be sent by the presbytery to gauge:

> the extent of the teinds That it may appear what fund yr is for provideing the Minrs As also that a proper Cognition be made by the Presbetry or any others the Lords shall be pleased to appoint of the bounds & extent of the sds Isles and of the method of divideing the same into paroches And what are the fittest places for situateing the kirks and Manses

It is clear, however, that the commission could expect grudging help at best from any of the Lewis tacksmen they had listed as potential witnesses. For local knowledge they had to rely in particular on none other than Allan Morison:

> being minister in the sd Island these twenty eight yeares by past and had frequent occasion to travell through the whole bounds therof

The report, recommending the erection of four parishes in the island, was drawn up at Stornoway on 17 October 1722. It was accepted by the trustees in Edinburgh, and on the 19 December the decreet of disjunction and new erection for the island of Lewis was formally ratified.[15]

It is clear that the coming of the commission affected not only the island, but Allan Morison himself. On 2 August 1722 Allan Morison once more stood before the Synod of Argyll, having entered a petition in which he informed them that:

> by the Grace of God's spirit studying the holy Scriptures with the Converse of men and Good Books he had attained to the full Conviction and persuasion of presbyterian ordination & Government, to be the ordination and Government of Christ's Church, As also the Doctrine contained in the Confession of ffaith Larger and Shorter Catechisms to be the true Doctrine of the holy scriptures, and that thence he had the greatest desire to pass the remainder of his Ministry and Life in Communion with the Ministers and people of this Established Church of Scotland[16]

In their presence, he therefore 'judicially dissowned the Episcopal Hierarchie, and subscribed the Confession of ffaith . . ., and promised all due submission to the judicatories of this Church'.[17]

Although we are in no position to doubt that the Rev. Allan Morison's conversion to presbyterianism was anything but genuine, we might also note that the political and the ecclesiastical situation in Lewis had changed considerably following the forfeiture

of the Seaforth estate after the 1715 Rising. In the new circumstances which prevailed, Morison was no longer able to depend upon the protection of his chief, or the isolation of his parish. In addition, he was now growing old. He had to think about his wife, about his sons. His participation in the commission, and his submitting to the synod, may well have had ulterior motives.

Less than a year after confessing his errors before the Synod of Argyll, on 5 July 1723, the Rev. Allan Morison died.[18] It is noteworthy that the presbytery granted his wife a widow's pension, and that Morison was succeeded in his parish by his son Murdoch (*c.*1695–1767) (CH2/473/6: 68; Matheson 1970: 247; Scott 7: 200). As the last episcopalian minister of the island, Allan Morison's death marks the end of an era in the church history of Lewis. His lasting memorial, however, is the arrangement of four parishes which remains in Lewis, albeit with subsequent modifications, to this day.

It will have been noted that Iain mac Mhurch' 'c Ailein wrote his letter to Allan just two months before the latter was due to appear for a second time before the Synod of Argyll. Whether it was deliberately composed for the occasion or not, it must surely have been part of the evidence presented by Morison to his presbyterian adversaries in June 1700. Here was concrete proof, from the oldest and most well-regarded tacksman in Lewis, that the parish certainly did not abound with 'relicts of Heathenisme & Popery ignorance and prophanity' as the presbyterians alleged, and that this state of affairs in no small measure due to the efforts of the episcopalian church, in particular thanks to the work of Allan's father, the Rev. Donald Morison. We are fortunate that the Rev. Colin Campbell saw fit to copy the letter, whether on behalf of the synod, for Edward Lhwyd, or just for his own personal interest. Indeed, who knows if his uncle's letter might even have helped Allan Morison keep his charge and his stipend at a time when other episcopalian ministers all over Scotland were losing their livelihood?

It is worth mentioning that Allan Morison was not without a friend, or at least a close relation, in court when he was called before the synod in 1700. This was the Rev. John Morison (*c.*1675–1747), who had just been ordained as minister of Glenelg the previous year. He was in fact the second youngest son of Iain mac Mhurch' 'c Ailein himself, and may well have had a hand in asking his father to write such a letter on Allan's behalf.[19] We should also note another member of the Morison clerical dynasty who was a near neighbour of Colin Campbell, namely the Rev. Donald of Kilbrandon and Kilchattan (*c.*1678–1746), grandson of Aonghas mac Ailein, who was married to Christian, daughter of Martin's third Morison informant – and brother of Iain mac Mhurch' 'c Ailein – the Rev. Kenneth Morison of Stornoway (*c.*1647–1720).[20]

THE LETTER

'Ane Accompt' is a fascinating – though all too short – document, taking us back to the childhood of Iain mac Mhurch' 'c Ailein in the 1630s, at a time when Lewis had not yet been totally subdued by the Mackenzies. What is immediately apparent is how much

the Protestant religion had affected the island even during Iain's lifetime, some 150 years before the coming of evangelical religion. Although Allan's father, the Rev. Donald, had taken great pains to extirpate the 'heathenish & superstitious rites' described in the letter, local tradition suggests that he did not enjoy total success in his efforts.

Perhaps the Rev. Donald's most notable achievement – if we might call it that – was the abolishing of the custom of visiting chapels on the feast days of the saints to which they were dedicated. He was certainly not the first protestant minister to have tried, as appears – in terms very reminiscent of the letter – from an official report on Lewis composed by Capt. John Dymes in 1630:

> In theire religion they are very ignorant and have been given to the idolatrous worshipp of divers Sts. as doth appeare by theire Chappells wch are yett to be seene, but they are now most espetially devoted to one of their Sts. called St. Mallonuy whose Chappell is seated in the north part of the Ile, whome they have in great veneration to this daie and keepe the Chappell in good repaire. This St. was for cure of all theire wounds and soares and therefore those that were not able to come vnto the Chappell in person they were wont to cutt out the proporcion of their lame armes or leggs in wood wth the forme of their sores and wounds thereof and send them to the St. where I have seen them lyinge vpon the Altar in the Chappell. Within the Chappell there is a Sanctum Sanctorum wch is soe holy in theire estimation that not anie of their weomen are sufferred to enter therein. Anie woman wth child dareth not to enter within the doores of the Chappell, but there are certaine places without where they go to theire devotions. They had two gen[er]all meetings in the yeare at this Chappell, the one at Candlemas, and the other at Alhollautide where theire custome was to eat and drincke vntill they were druncke. And then after much dancinge and dalliance togeather they entred the chappell at night with lights in their hands where they continued till next morninge in theire devotions. The last tyme of theire meeting was at Candlemas last. They were prevented of theire Idolatrous worpp by a gent. whoe is a Minister in the Ile, who albeit the place was farre from his aboade and out of his Cure, hee mett them at theire Assembly in the Chappell where he began first to reason wth them, then to admonish them and afterwards to threaten them with God His Judgmts and the Lawes of the Realme, in somuch as divers of the better sort of them promised to forsake that wonted Idolatry of theires.[21]

Whoever the gentleman minister was, his strictures mostly went unheeded; it would be another generation before the custom was – apparently – 'quyt abolyshed' by Allan Morison's father.[22]

We can see the original intention of such celebrations in the papal letter of 1403: 'To all the Christian faithful. Indult granting an indulgence to visitors to the church of St. Mary in Barwas in the isle of Lewis, Sodor diocese, on certain feast days and those who contribute to its reparation' (McGurk: 103; also Barrell: 254; cf. Watkins). In other words, the visiting – and indeed the upkeep – of the chapels in Lewis was not just a matter of 'superstitious rites', but closely tied in with patterns of belief, 'official' as well as 'unofficial', of the old pre-reformation religion. The letter suggests that the twenty-four chapels on the island were at the very least culpably neglected by the

established church, not just in an attempt to keep social order – and, in the absence of parish clergy, the feast days certainly seem to have degenerated – but also in an effort to abolish the cults of their saints, and indeed to efface the remaining traces of the Catholic church in Lewis.

Campbell's 'Molruy' shows that the minister misread as Maol-rubha the original letter's 'Molvey'. The dedication perplexed nineteenth-century visitors too: Second Corporal Michael Hayes of the Ordnance Survey recorded it in May 1852 as 'Fo'luith', while in the brief notes Alexander Carmichael jotted down on 27 October 1873 from the then bed-ridden Ness seanchaidh Angus Gunn (*An Guinneach*), it appears as 'Bholai'ey', 'Phollaiy', 'Pholley' and 'Phol Aoi'. In other words the temple was consecrated to 'Moluaidh', a name derived through the variant 'Moloch' from Moluag, the saint of Carmichael's native Lismore (EUL Carmichael Watson MS 115, fos.2v, 3; NAS (West Register House) RH4/23/148; cf. Carmichael i: 126–7; Robson 1991: ii, 99–103; also Mackenzie 1792: 290). It is interesting to note that the alternative form of the saint's name – 'Molonachus' – appearing as Dyme's 'St. Mallonuy', as 'templa St Molonochi' in a fragmentary list of island chapels from *c.*1700 preserved in the Scottish Catholic Archives, and as '*Tiample Maloni*' in Colin Mackenzie's 1792 account of Lewis antiquities, certainly persisted – possibly under the influence of the clergy – into the mid-nineteenth century, being recorded by Arthur Mitchell as 'Maolonfhadh' (SCA SM3/14, '75'; Mackenzie 1792: 291; Mitchell 1860–2: 267; for St Moluag, see Clancy: 219–23, 225–6; Dransart: 234–40; Watson: 292–3)

Nevertheless, Angus Gunn averred that 'Bhol. came fr[om] Baile na Neirv where the King lived', *Baile na Nirribhidh* evidently being a rationalisation of *Baile na Beirbhe*, Bergen, an entrepôt whose name was of course as familiar to nineteenth-century Leòdhasaich as it was to their Viking ancestors. After a peculiar and apparently counterintuitive aside that 'Phollaiy built his temple put coal [?charcoal] under the (Steigh) to put an echo in[i]t', Gunn told Carmichael how, after the walls were built, the saint prayed for a roof: 'thainic gu[th] thuige 'n dei dhan choil[each] gairm e dhol a thearnadh gu trai Sheannta [i.e. Tràigh Shanndaidh]. gu ro an ceann eir tin [tighinn].' The roof magically fitted the new church: 'Rinn i n ceann 's cha ro bior a chor s cha ro bior as ionais. No nails in it. Spars & couples fitting into one another so ingenously that it wld never move.' This may or may not be a distant memory that the original church had a keel-shaped roof.[23]

Given Carmichael's own statement in his manuscript memoir of Gunn that 'My limited time and imperfect understanding of the kind courtesy old mans impaired enunciation prevented me writing down much of his highly interesting old lore' (EUL Carmichael Watson MS 230(a), fo.26), the more detailed version of the legend he appended thereto may be somewhat embroidered, probably with information gleaned from other Ness seanchaidhean:

> A son of the King of Scandinavia became a good man and wishing to perform good deeds for the evil deeds he had done he built a church down at Rudh Eorapaidh and called it

> Teampull Maoluag, Saint Maoluag's or Saint Malachie's Temple the walls of which are still entire. When the walls of the temple were built the King's son had no roof to put on and he was in great straits. He did not know in all the living world what to do for a roof for the weather was so stormy that his fathers galleys could not go to Lochlan for wood to make a roof. The prince prayed and prayed and when he prayed his best a voice came to him in a dream of the night and told him to go to the Stoth and that he would find a roof there. The Prince arose and went down to the Stoth and there he found a roof floating in the Port prepared and of the size required for his temple. The roof was taken up and placed on the walls of the building which it fitted.[24]

Teampall Mholuaidh was unquestionably one of the most important centres of worship in Lewis during the late mediæval period, the focus of a complex of temporal and ecclesiastical power alike. For some centuries both Morisons and MacLeods possessed power bases there; indeed, the residual but insistent evidence of local tradition might conceivably be interpreted to suggest that we are not so much dealing with two closely allied families as two branches of the same original kindred. Donald Murray, drawing upon information supplied by his namesake the Eoropaidh seanchaidh, describes the Teampall as 'the Laird's Church. The MacLeod Chiefs of Lewis had a mansion house in Eorobie in close proximity to the Temple and no one could find access to it but through a gateway which went through the mansion house'. A related site somewhat to the south, now known as Cnoc a' Chaisteil, is described by the Rev. Donald MacDonald in the Old Statistical Account as once occupied by '*Caistel Olgre (i. e.)* Olaus his Castle'. His contemporary Colin Mackenzie ascribes the Teampall's construction to 'one of the first McLeods of Lewis', while William C. MacKenzie recounts a tradition that it was built by 'King Olaf of Norway', a clear error for Olghair, ancestor of the MacLeods – and possibly the Morisons as well. However, there may already have been a Teampall Mholuaidh in Eoropaidh before the coming of these kindreds. It is noteworthy that the older of the two chapels on Pabaigh in the Sound of Harris is also dedicated to Moluag; according to the Bannatyne Manuscript, both Ness and Pabaigh appertained to the mysterious 'Clan Igaa [Clann a' Ghobha] or the descendants of the Armourer' whose heiress is supposed to have married GilleMhoire, the progenitor of the Morisons. Perhaps tellingly, the later, larger temple in Pabaigh is dedicated to Mary, as is the chapel in Barvas, the parish church of Ness and the West Side. The MacLeod gateway, 'a zigzag covered walk', was apparently finally choked by sand in the first half of the nineteenth century; much of the stonework of both rampart and stronghold had already been plundered for local use, and – as part of a wider and seemingly deliberately systematic reuse of the material of local historic structures to construct new institutional foci for church and education – in the building of Lionail Schoolhouse (Murray: n.p.; MacPhail 1898b; MacDonald 1795–7: 270; Mackenzie 1792: 291; MacKenzie 1919: 141; Martin 1703: 48; Lawson: 12–14; Robson 1997: 55; ibid. 2004: 18; NMS SAS MS 28/'(d) Lews', 1; /'2(f)', fo.7; SSS PN1966/10 [Louis Murray, Tàbost], no.44; cf. EUL Carmichael Watson MS 95, fo.35v; MS 115, fo.4v; the ancestry of the MacLeods is discussed in MacLeod 2000; Matheson 1978–80; Morrison: 1–20; Sellar; also Abernethy).

After describing the little stream near the temple known as Uisge, or Sruthan, na Comhraich, the Water of the Sanctuary, the Rev. Malcolm MacPhail writes:

> MacLeod of Eoropie (MacLeod of Lewis), tradition asserts, erected a cross in an enclosed space in South Dell, Ness, known to this day as 'Buaile na Crois' – the cross enclosure – and enacted a law to the effect that the whole of the Ness district to the north of 'Buaile na Crois' was to be a sanctuary. He was obliged, says our legend, to remove the cross to 'Uisge na Comhraiche' near his own mansion-house.[25]

Even among the plethora of *asyla* throughout the islands – indeed, possibly the precincts of every chapel may once have afforded protection to the fugitive – the sanctuary in the north of Lewis stood out, embracing as it did an entire district (EUL Carmichael Watson MS 95, fos.27–8; Matheson 1972–4: 398–9; Robertson: 256–62; SSS SA1949/9/A6 [Aonghas Caimbeul, 'Am Puilean', Suaineabost]). Judging by its description on Blaeu's map as 'Ard Chombrick' – 'Àird Chomraich': height, or better peninsula, of the sanctuary – the area today called 'An Taobh Thall' was still known as a refuge , possibly even to mainlanders, until at least the early seventeenth century. It is not necessarily a coincidence that this major sanctuary was immediately adjacent to the Taigh Mór, the seat of the Morison brieves of Tàbost, who must have practised their legal knowledge as mediators or legal brokers between fugitives and would-be avengers (see Hyams: 26–30). One might also note the well-known tradition of how 'MacLeòid' (or, alternatively, the pygmies of Luchruban!) condemned a man to death on Cnoc Fianais, then had him taken outwith the refuge's bounds to a hillock now known as Bruga Frangais in order to carry out the sentence (MacKenzie 1904–5: 255; SSS PN1966/14 [Norman MacRitchie, Na Còig Peighinnean], no.77).

The fame of Teampall Mholuaidh outlasted that of its sanctuary. Around 1700 it is recorded:

> In Levissa variæ erant celiæ, quarum una no[min]e St Molonochi in hanc usque die[m] miraculis clara[26]

A century later 'a great deal of superstitious veneration' was still paid to the church, some of the people still retaining 'a few of the Popish superstitions' (MacDonald 1795–7: 270):

> The country people send their friends that are long lingering in sickness, to sleep here for a night, where they believe the Saint grants them a cure, or relief by death.[27]

Further details were recorded by the Rev. John Downie, recently transferred from Stornoway to Urray, in a letter of 14 April 1789 for the ecclesiastical antiquary Lieutenant-General George Henry Hutton:

> There are several Chapels up & down the Island, which still bear the name of the Saints to whom they were dedicated, as John Peter Mary Bridget &c., the walls of them in general are pretty entire, & surrounded by a Cemetery. Ignorance & Superstition have created & to this day propagated a perswasion that cures are performed by addressing the tutelar Saints

> of these Solitary mansions. One in particular in the district of Ness is larger & more entire than any of the rest. Patients of disordered intellects are freq[uen]tly bro[ugh]t thither, a bed of straw & blankets is made up for them within the walls, where they are left till morning alone. The Saint is expected to appear to them in person, to cure them. I know not his name in English or Latin, but in Gallic Mo Làì is the name. Mo is only a term of endearment used by his Votaries.[28]

This raises the interesting possibility that the cure was effected with the covert participation of the locals themselves, maybe through the cléireach or clerk of the Teampall.

Writing in May 1833, George Clayton Atkinson records that 'St Malachi's':

> has much celebrity throughout the Western Islands, for the power it possesses of curing insane persons, and those afflicted with a variety of diseases.[29]

That the prestige of the Teampall endured so long might be ascribed to the increased isolation of Ness from the island authorities, temporal and spiritual alike, during the eighteenth century. It seems that following the death of Allan Morison his cousin Donald, grandson of Iain mac Mhurch' 'c Ailein, took over the tack of Tàbost. Barvas thus became the centre of worship in the parish. The 'remote and ignorant' district of Ness was largely neglected 'owing to the distance the want of Roads and the number of rapid waters which intervine particularly in the winter Season'(NAS CH2/473/1, 297–8; also 324; Matheson 1970: 199). Although the Ordnance Survey name-books record that Teampall Pheadair at Suaineabost was said to have been rebuilt in 1756, it was towards the end of the century, and particularly with the accession of Rev. Donald MacDonald to Barvas parish in 1790, that the church initiated a more active approach to the district. The process of spreading ecclesiastical authority may have already been underway before MacDonald arrived from Applecross. Writing in 1813 of Teampall na Crò Naoimh in Galson, William Daniell recounts and comments:

> It was visited till within these last few years by many of the peasantry, who would assemble here at stated periods to feast and dance for two or three successive nights. At one of these merry meetings it was ascertained that a man had taken an indecorous liberty with a female; the hallowed purity of the temple was in consequence destroyed and it has not since been resorted to. As a proof of the high offence taken at this indignity by the genius of the place, it is asserted, and firmly believed by the islanders that a taper lighted within the walls is immediately extinguished. The fable affords a pleasing exemplification of their simple and guileless manners, and this is not the only instance in which popular superstition has been converted to moral purpose. The removal of such delusions is a natural consequence of social improvement, but it is highly important that the dissemination of sound and rational improvements should immediately supplant them and establish restraints of superior efficacy.[30]

If Daniell's account is to be trusted, it may be connected with the Barvas kirk session's hounding in the early 1780's of 'Murdo Clairach Tenant in Galson' – seemingly the

cléireach or clerk of the teampall – for 'keeping as a Domestic in his family a woman with whom he had been guilty of Adultery, to which it was notour he had paid no regard.' (CH2/473/1: 211–12; also 215, 224).

Writing in the middle of the following decade, MacDonald tells of how the place of worship in Ness, 'an old Popish church, called St Peter's, was enlarged and rebuilt last year; it is thatched with heath.' (MacDonald 1795–7: 268) The rebuilding involved the destruction of other chapels in the district. Angus Gunn, probably referring to the second of these reconstructions, told Carmichael that 'When Eaglais Phead was built the roof was taken off [Teampall Mholuaidh] & put on'; Teampall Pheadair was extended using the 'stones of [nearby] Temple Tomais' (EUL Carmichael Watson MS 115, fos.2v, 4v). The evangelical revival begun by the schoolmaster John MacLeod in Galson in 1820, culminating in the erection of the government church at Cross nine years later, brought the era of community worship in the teampaill to an end.[31]

Nevertheless, roofless as it was, Teampall Mholuaidh retained a residual sanctity even after the evangelical ascendancy took hold in the district. In 1873 Angus Gunn told Carmichael that until forty or fifty years previously: 'When peop[le] came ashore (say fr[om] Rona) Clann ic ill Mhoire) [sic] they went deisail an Teample & gail [gabhail] an Urni – before going to the sermon of the min[i]st[er].' (EUL Carmichael Watson MS 115, fo.3) At the end of the nineteenth century, the Rev. Malcolm MacPhail states:

> Such was the veneration the Eoropie Fane was held within living memory, even sixty years ago, by the people of the Eoropie district, that they would pass on the north side of the ruined temple when leaving the stackyard, but return from the field on the south side – thus completing the tour of the temple 'Deiseil'.[32]

According to Donald Murray:

> When I was a boy it was believed by some that if one afflicted with insanity could be coaxed to sleep within the precincts of the Temple he was sure to be at least partially restored. The rites and ceremonies after arriving at the Temple were in the key days of the shrine particular and minute. After arriving at dusk the patient was made to walk round the Temple seven times sunwise (deiseal) and made to drink water from the holy Well of St Olaf (Tobair an Naoimh Oluaidh) [*recte* Tobar an Naoimh Moluaidh] and was then copiously sprinkled with the same water, but unless the patient slept within the Temple after this preparatory treatment there could be no cure.[33]

Murray's description is supplemented by the earlier account of Arthur Mitchell:

> The patient walks seven times round the temple, is sprinkled with water from St Ronan's Well, which is close at hand, is then bound and deposited for the night on the site of the altar. If he sleeps, it is believed that a cure will follow, if not, the powers are unpropitious, and his friends take him home, believing it to be the will of Heaven that he shall remain as he is. The water was formerly brought from the well in an old stone cup, which was left in the keeping of the family, regarded as the descendants of the *clerk of the temple*.[34]

Mitchell goes on to recount that patients have even been brought to the temple from

the mainland, though the cure only worked for two islanders, one of whom later had a relapse.

Despite his elaborate and apparently trustworthy account, checked by 'a native of Lewis' (probably the Rev. Malcolm MacPhail), we might doubt whether the ceremony was still being observed, as Mitchell implies. Indeed, MacPhail records that the last visits for such a purpose 'as far as I can guess from memory, occurred in the latter end of the forties' (MacPhail 1898b) – a time of great distress in the island. This is substantiated by Second Corporal Hayes of the Ordnance Survey, who recorded in 1852, on the authority of his informant John Morrison of Cnoc Àrd, that the temple

> remains under the protection of some Saint or Angel by whose power or through whose Intercession insane People who sleep in it one night are Restored to their senses. The Experiment they say was successfully made a few years ago by An Uig man.[35]

The temple remained a shell until it was restored under the auspices of the episcopalian church at the beginning of the twentieth century.[36]

Iain mac Mhurch' 'c Ailein's statement that at the end of the seventeenth century only one temple in the island remained roofed might appear to be contradicted by the fact that from the date on its lintel Teampall Amhlaidh in Gress appears to have been rebuilt in 1681. The Lewis presbytery were prepared to keep some of the more convenient chapels standing, while allowing the majority to fall into disrepair.

The identity of the mac Thorcail mhic Mhairis who went round the island "with the crosse Molruy" is somewhat obscure. Mairis, or Maurice, is of course the alternative non-Catholic name for GilleMhoire– hence Clann MhicGilleMhoire turn into Na Moireasdanaich. Round transparent rock crystals were of course common for curing eye diseases, among other ailments. Although it might be tempting to imagine the cross to be similar in design – albeit doubtless not on such an exalted level artistically – to the famous twelfth-century Cross of Cong in the National Museum of Ireland, it may be more likely that we are dealing with a simple object, probably wooden, with crystals set in holes drilled for that purpose, perhaps similar in shape to, although rather smaller than, the metre-high cross from Rona presently exhibited in Comunn Eachdraidh Nis, Tàbost (cf. Beith: 39–40, 152–6, 158; Black: 434–44, 448–50, 454–5, 470, 503, 522–6; Fisher: 115; Martin 1703: 225–6; Muir: 191–2).

Iain mac Mhurch' 'c Ailein's statement concerning the cogfull of ale poured into the sea, that 'they called this kynd of sacrifeceing **Shion**' would tend to support Capt. Thomas's hypothesis that the name originally derived from Old Norse son-, an atonement or sacrifice (Thomas: 522n.2). However, we need not think that Martin Martin, reporting how the sacrificer 'cry'd out with a loud Voice saying, **Shony**, *I give you this Cup of Ale*' (Martin 1703: 28), mistakenly applied the name of the rite to a 'Sea-God' object. It may have been that the rite was syncretically assimilated by islanders to the honour of the mysterious indigenous supernatural being 'Sionn' or 'Sionnaidh', whose root is clearly cognate with words such as sionn, sionnach, sionnachan and

sionnaich.[37] It might be suggested that the second element in the Lewis kenning for the fairies – 'muinntir Fhionnlaigh' – and in the local names for the dangerous little whirlwind which sometimes occurs on the moor – 'uspag Fhionnlaigh' or 'maighdean Fhionnlaigh' – is a modern 'rationalisation' of the original 'Sionnaidh' (cf. MacPhail 1896: 402; 1900: 442, 443; Anon.: 157–8, 170; A. Campbell: 8; also Mackenzie 1904–5: 258; ibid. 1905: 267; Campbell (ed. Black): 316n.117). Complicating matters still further is Ronald Black's ingenious suggestion that the Nisich were pouring libations to John the Baptist, though one might trace the name back to the Old Norse form Jón rather than to 'Seonaidh'.[38]

It is worth noting that, although Martin says that the custom was kept 'at Hallow-tide', Iain mac Mhurch' 'c Ailein does not tie it down to any particular time of year. Indeed, Alexander Carmichael recounts that it was carried out at midnight on Maundy Thursday, Diardaoin a' Bhrochain Mhóir, but his claim that the rite was still celebrated – at any rate openly – in Ness in the early nineteenth century seems rather suspect (Carmichael i: 162–3). However, there can be no doubt but that a number of rites connected with the sea did continue intermittently up until the evangelical period at the very least, and not only in districts such as Carloway, Bernera and Uig whose people may have had little time for Morison ministers. Such invocations have a habit of resurfacing during times of crisis – it is worth remembering that Lewis had been suffering a terrible famine for several years when Iain was writing in 1700. St. Brianuilt, sister of St. Ronan, was, it seems, invoked for sea-ware in the late eighteenth century; while in the early nineteenth century there was apparently an incidence of 'tamnadh', a sacrifice of either a sheep or, more commonly, a goat, at the beginning of the fishing season.[39]

Although such sea rites, with a definite goal in mind, appear to have remained 'underground' despite the church's disapproval, the custom of making the Leabaidh Bhrìghde ('in a seive' or criathar)[40] on the eve of Latha Féill Bhrìghde (February 1) has quite fallen out of memory in Lewis. In the Outer Hebrides, the rite survived in Uist the longest: Alexander Carmichael has given us a very elaborate account of the various festivities connected with it (Carmichael i: 166–73). However, although Carmichael wrote his description in the present tense, it appears from Father Allan McDonald's work from the turn of last century that it was last celebrated in Uist in the middle of the nineteenth century at the very latest (cf. J. L. Campbell: 159–60, 168; also Campbell (ed. Black): 540–1; Hutton: 134–8; Ó Catháin; Ó Duilearga: 320–3, 408). Similar customs may possibly have endured in Argyllshire up to the end of the century (Tolmie: 102; Mackenzie 1935: 190–2).

The words cried by the celebrants of the rite – *ndanig briid, gun di riist* ('[Gu]n tàinig Brìd', gun dì [i] rithist') – appear to have been mistranslated by Martin as '*Briid* is come, *Briid* is welcome', where he must have understood 'dì' as being connected with phrases such as ''S e làn dìth ur beatha', 'Tha sibh dìth-bheathte' (Martin 1703: 119). However, 'dì' is best read as 'tì', an older present subjunctive form of the verb 'thig' - for a similar usage we might look at a line by Uilleam Ros in his song *Moladh*

a' bhàird air a thìr fhéin: 'Gun tì Nollaig Mhór le sonas'.[41] We might thus translate the call as: 'Bride is come; may she come again'.

It is very interesting, and rather unexpected, that Iain mac Mhurch' 'c Ailein used classical Gaelic script when writing the Gaelic words in his letter. We might see this as a faint echo of the learning of his ancestors the brieves; then again, we might remember that his grandfather Ailean had an Irish mother, and had himself spent some time in Ireland during the years when the 'ewill trubles' were convulsing his homeland. Iain appears to have had one of his sons educated at an Irish bardic school: this, of course, being none other than Ruairidh, the famous Clàrsair Dall.[42]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks to the staff of Comunn Eachdraidh Nis, Edinburgh University Library, the National Archives of Scotland, the National Library of Scotland, the National Museums of Scotland, the School of Scottish Studies, and the Scottish Catholic Archives for their patience and forbearance, as well as to Douglas Ansdell, Paul Bibire, Ronald Black, Abigail Burnyeat, Aonghas MacCoinnich, Màiri Maciver, Finlay MacLeod, Mary Macleod, Colm Ó Baoill, Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh, Michael Robson, John Shaw, Christine Smith, Andrew Wiseman, and Alex Woolf for their suggestions and advice. An earlier version of this article appeared in Fios a' Bhaile, the journal of Comann Eachdraidh Bharabhais agus Bhrù.

NOTES

1 Matheson 1970: xli; traditions and documents concerning him are recorded and annotated on 206–44.

2 Cf. Martin 1703: 185: 'an approved Vulnerary for Man or Beast'; also 282, 285; Martin 1698: 57–8, 112–13.

3 Cf. Matheson 1970: 246; Scott vii: 191, 200; NLS Acc. 9711, Box 7/2, 138–41 (notes from Norman Morrison, *Adventures of Angus Og and other tales* [Inverness, 1940]: 72–5).

4 Cf. Matheson 1970: 189, 245–6; Scott vii: 200, 205; MacDonald 1981: 376; Martin 1703: 11, 19, 23, 24, 29; NLS MS 1314, fo.9.

5 NAS CH2/557/3, 94–7, 99, 133, 141, 753–4, 758 [*recte* 153–4, 158]; CH2/557/14; NLS MS 1307, fos.130, 133.

6 CH2/557/14, 'Minuts off The visitation Sent by ye Synod off Argyll to visit ye Hebrides Anno Domini MDCXCVI', 7–8; cf. Scott vii: 191.

7 CH2/557/3, 759 [159].

8 Ibid., 774–5 [174–5].

9 Ibid., 788–9 [188–9].

10 Ibid., 821 [221]; cf. NLS MS 1307, fo.136v.

11 CH2/557/3, 823 [223].

12 Ibid., 859 [259]; see also 828 [228]. It is interesting that Alexander Cooper did not attend, nor was he condemned as a result.

13 CH2/557/4, 46, 82, 242, 254–5; /5, 215; NAS E655/13/32; E655/16/53.

14 NLS MS 1316, fo.186v; NRA(S) 2950 (MacLeod of Dunvegan) /1/850/1–6; also NAS RD2/91, 521, 522.

15 For the information in the preceding paragraphs, see NAS TE19/823; also CH1/2/36, fos.172–7; CH1/2/46, fos.158–9; E655/13/32; E655/16/6; E655/19/5, /8–9; E655/26/3.

16 CH2/557/5, 280–1.

17 Ibid., 283.

18 Ibid., 296.

19 CH 2/557/3, 855, 859 [255, 259]; see also 761, 784, 808, 824 [161, 184, 208, 224]; /4, 3, 171, 173, 241; Matheson 1970: 196–8; Scott vi: 446; vii: 49–50, 146–7, 149. John Morison was father of another Rev. John Morison, the famous Petty Seer.

20 Matheson 1970: 189, 191–2; Scott vi: 89; vii: 205–6; viii: 692; MacDonald 1981: 376; Martin 1703: 29. There is a letter from the Rev. Donald to Colin Campbell preserved in EUL MS 3097.8. It is interesting to note that the Rev. Donald Morison's brother, Rev. William of Tiree (*c.*1690–1735) (Scott vi: 120), had a son John who appears to have taken over the Campbell family's tack of Achnaba, possibly while Dugald Campbell, great-grandson of Colin, was away fighting in India (Ó Baoill: 467; MacKinnon and Morrison iii: 31n.2).

21 MacKenzie 1903: 592; the evidence concerning the various chapels in the north of Lewis is expertly dealt with in Robson 1997. For Crùisle nam Ban Torrach, 'where the frail women were put', cf. EUL Carmichael Watson MS 115, fos.2v, 5. For Candlemas, cf. Hutton: 138–45; also Martin 1703: 29; Daniell v 5: 63.

22 MacKenzie suggests that the minister might have been Farquhar Clerk, recorded as minister of Ui in 1642 (ibid.: 524–5).

23 Reused timbers from it apparently still survive in the district: cf. SSS PN1966/17 [Angus Campbell, 'Am Puilean', Suaineabost], no.23; Robson 1997: 71. Carmichael possibly misunderstood Angus Gunn's explanation of how the mortar for the temple wall was made: cf. SSS SA1949/9/A5 [Angus Campbell, 'Am Puilean', Suaineabost].

24 EUL Carmichael Watson MS 230(a), fos.27–8; it is unfortunate that we do not have an account of Teampall Mholuaidh from William Watson, who gathered lore in Ness in 1867: cf. EUL Carmichael Watson MS 95, fo.31v; NLS Acc. 9711, Box 1/4, 285.

25 MacPhail 1898b.

26 SCA SM3/14, '75'.

27 Mackenzie 1792: 291.

28 NLS Adv. MS 29.4.2 (xi), fos.192v-193; cf. ibid. (xiii), fo.50v.

29 Quine: 127.

30 Daniell v: 63

31 NAS CH2/473/2, 50, 57, 69–70, 74, 80, 82, 84, 115–18, 134–5, 138, 154–6, 163–4, 165–8; NLS Acc. 9711, Box 7/2, 28–9; MacFarlane: 13–18, 47–9, 88–90; MacGilliosa: 13–15; Macleod: 107, 113–14; Mac-Neacail: 8.

32 MacPhail 1898b; also idem 1895, 168.

33 Murray: n.p.; cf. Mould: 176.

34 Mitchell 1860–2: 268; cf. also – although erroneously ascribing the temple to 'St. Clement' – Daniell: v, 62.

35 NAS (West Register House) RH4/23/148; cf. NMS SAS MS 28/'3', fo.10: 'the daft lad of Aird Bheag'.

36 See Barber; Meaden.

37 Cf. Carmichael v: 388–91; vi: 127; and maybe ii: 352; but note also Ronald Black's conjectures in Campbell (ed. Black): 232–3, 332n.181, 497n.815, 548–9, 590n.114.

38 Martin 1703: 29; MacPhail 1895: 165; Ronald Black is at present preparing a book about the Gaelic year based upon his 'Quern-Dust Calendar' articles in the *West Highland Free Press*. For guidance in these complex matters, my thanks to Paul Bibire, who also suggests the relevance of Són, the mythical vessel in which the mead of poetry was kept, 'obtained from the dwarves by marooning them on a tidal rock until they handed it over'.

39 MacPhail 1895: 164–5, 166; idem 1898a; Thomas: 522n.2; NAS GD492/186, Capt. F. W. L. Thomas to Sir Arthur Mitchell, 12 Nov. 1868; NMS SAS MS 28/'3', fo.8; SSS Maclagan MSS, 8529–30; Macbain: 171; also Martin 1703: 109; Macdonald 2000: 124–5; EUL Carmichael Watson MS 115, fos.3v, 4v. Perhaps the killing of a goat or sheep was a later replacement for the 'heiffer or bullock' whose sacrifice is described in the letter.

40 Cf. J. L. Campbell: 159.

41 Cf. Calder: 70, 249; also Thomson 1988: xxxvii; 1962: xxix; Ferguson: 95.

42 Matheson 1970: xlii, 187, 188; 1976–8: 70–1.

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A Breton Analogue To 'Wandering Willie's Tale'

JACQUELINE SIMPSON

In a recent issue of *Scottish Studies*[1] I drew attention to a Danish local legend collected by Evald Tang Kristensen which is a close analogue to 'Wandering Willie's Tale' in *Redgauntlet,* and argued that though it was chronologically possible for Scott's work to have influenced folk tradition on the Continent, it seemed more probable that this story was an International Migratory Legend, and so a piece of genuine folklore, as Scott himself had claimed. I ended by remarking, 'Perhaps one day further analogues will be found to clinch the matter.'

Recently, I have myself found another by chance, from Brittany. It was published by Anatole Le Braz, who collected it from Hervé Brélivet, a native of Dineault, at Quimper in 1888; he called it 'L'Homme à la Quittance' (Le Braz v. 2: 449–55). A farmer at Dineault, called Jean Gomper, went to pay his quarterly rent to his landlord at Chateaulin, but not finding him at home handed the money to his son, saying the receipt could wait till next market day. Two days later the landlord died, and the son's agent claimed the rent was still due, and unless a receipt could be shown, all his goods would be seized. In despair, Gomper cries that God is not just. But his wife advises him to consult the parish priest, who undertakes to get him to Hell and back, to get his receipt from the dead man. He must not accept the first piece of paper offered, nor yet the second, for only the third is genuine; nor must he take it straight into his hand, for it will be fiery hot, but must ask for it to be thrown onto the ground. The priest then breathes on Gomper's forehead, and he at once finds himself in Hell, described as a huge space full of wheels of fire ceaselessly turning, and a long avenue of red-hot iron chairs to which the damned are fixed. After unwillingly giving the receipt, the dead man asks Gomper to warn his son that there is a red-hot seat awaiting him too, unless he mends his ways. Then Gomper feels a gust of cool air on his face, and finds himself back in the dining room in the presbytery. Next day he delivers the receipt, and the message.

There is some humour in the telling, especially in the dialogue between Gomper and the dead man, where the former is as deferential and the latter as irritable as in life, despite the changed circumstances. But morality is prominent too; damnation is vividly portrayed, and the priest warns Gomper: 'Do not blaspheme again against God's justice, and live as a good man should.'

The existence of this further variant strengthens the case for an authentic folklore basis for Scott's short story.

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1 (SS 32: 130–33).

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Remembering Jim Mather

J. C. CATFORD

On May 26 2001 Scottish scholarship lost a valued and much respected contributor with the death of J. Y. Mather. James Young Mather was born in 1911 in the fishing village of Seahouses in Northumberland and grew up in the neighbouring village of Bamburgh, where he died.

He was educated at the Duke's School in Alnwick. There he acted a great deal, playing in the Shakespeare plays performed on Speech Day. He wrote poetry, played the cello and sang. Later, in Edinburgh, he sang in the University Choir. He loved the hills and moors of Northumberland, which made him a life-time walker.

In the early 1930s he entered Edinburgh University to take an Arts degree, but he was much affected by the troubles of the period – the Depression and political turmoil, and this led to his leaving before finishing his degree. This concern caused him, at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, to join Spanish Medical Aid (the Duchess of Atholl's organisation). He drove a bus, evacuating women and children from the large cities.

Living on the Northumberland Coast he had, from his boyhood, a passionate interest in the sea and small boats – after his retirement he built his own Northumbrian coble, which had a televised launching in Budle Bay, Northumberland. So it is not surprising that at the outbreak of the Second World War he immediately volunteered for the Merchant Service as an Ordinary Seaman. At sea he made time to study and was able to come ashore to take his Certificate of Competency and served for the rest of the War as a deck officer.

After the War he returned to Edinburgh to complete his Degree, and there he also earned the Diploma in Phonetics, a subject in which he excelled. He enlarged his linguistic training by entering the University of Iceland to study Old Norse. During the War he had frequently sailed into Reykjavik and had already begun to learn the language, and to read the Sagas, which he continued to do for the rest of his life. He had also visited the Faeroes, and published an article in a Faeroese journal (1964).

When he joined the Linguistic Survey in the 1950s he brought with him a great amount of valuable knowledge and skills; a practical knowledge of language, and a sensitivity to linguistic nuances, a considerable knowledge of linguistics, including great competence in phonetics, a detailed knowledge of ships and sea-faring and an outstanding facility in interaction with country people, and particularly with the fisher people of the East Coast. His competence as a dialect field worker was outstanding, and was utilized to the full by the Linguistic Survey. Of the 189 locations covered by

the phonological field survey, he was responsible for the investigation of 90, that is 48 per cent.

He was, however, much more than a collector of dialect data. As he wrote in a review of the *Shetland Folk Book IV* in 1965, 'as every field-worker knows, the excitement of continued collection can sometimes conceal a morbid shrinking from other not less arduous disciplines.' Jim Mather was deeply concerned with the philosophical and methodological bases of Linguistic Geography, in particular with the distinction between the internal linguistic systems of dialects and the relationship of these to the outside world, and he did not shrink from these 'not less arduous disciplines'.

His series of three articles on 'Aspects of the Linguistic Geography of Scotland', published in *Scottish Studies* are a case in point. In the first of these (1965) he shows that the distribution of names for the chaffinch are suggestive of a northward advance and establishment of the birds, and how the correlative ornithological data tend to corroborate this. The second article (1966) deals with fishing boats, gear and techniques, and the third (1969) on 'Fishing Communities of the East Coast' deals with a 'remarkable coincidence between the distribution of certain conventions and techniques in the traditional small-line fishing and the use of certain vowel systems in dialect speech'. In the latter two articles he brought to bear his enormous professional knowledge of boats and sea fishing.

After his retirement he was made a Fellow of the Faculty of Arts and continued working on the Linguistic Survey. By far his most 'arduous' and most important works are the three volumes of the *Linguistic Atlas of Scotland* (1975, 1977 and 1986) which he edited together with Hans Speitel. These volumes are an invaluable source of information on the state of Scottish dialects in the mid 20th century, and will be an enduring memorial to his name.

Jim Mather was a serious scholar, but, as all his associates will remember, he also had a great sense of humour. When Jim was around, working on the Linguistic Survey was always great fun. We had fantasies, fostered by Jim, about ourselves as linguistic surveyors, known as 'lingies' (on the analogy of 'sannies' – the once popular name of the sanitary inspectors, who used to travel round the country inspecting drains and so on). We imagined ourselves going around the country, chapping at doors and announcing 'Linguistic Survey. We'd like to inspect your vowels'.

And there was that great day when, browsing in Jakobsen's *Dictionary of the Norn Language of Shetland*, I came across this entry.

> Bogel . . . a large cake (of oat- or barley-meal) . . . formerly baked and eaten on a kind of holiday, the so-called 'Bogel Day' . . . March 29th, the day on which the fieldwork . . . began.

This occasioned great hilarity, for late March (when rural Scottish roads were largely clear of snow) was indeed about the time when we used to start our field-work! Jim enthusiastically adopted 'Bogel Day' as a red-letter day for the Linguistic Survey, and

evolved a kind of phoney ceremonial folklore about it, and my wife baked a 'Bogel Cake' (of a more palatable kind than the Shetland bogel.

It was always fun to be with Jim whether in the Linguistic Survey office, in the field together, or hill-walking in our beloved Cheviots.

His scholarship, humanity, and sense of humour will be sorely missed.

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Book Reviews

Òrain Dòmhnall Ailein – The Songs of Donald Allan MacDonald, 1906 – 92, edited by Fr John Angus MacDonald. Benbecula 1999. Xxiii + 317 pp. £12.99

Chì mi – Dòmhnall Iain MacDhòmhnaill. The Gaelic Poetry of Donald John MacDonald, edited by Bill Innes. Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd, 1998. Xxx + 369 pp. £12.99

I have a very clear memory of one of my older brothers standing between me and the fire at home, learning a new song. It was *Gruagach Òg an Fhuilt Bhàin.* At the time, possibly the early fifties, when I was a teenager, the authorship of songs was not important to such as me. Neither, I suspect, was it important to those who immediately took a liking to this song. It is amongst those which, as suggested by my colleague Dr John MacInnes, have 'qualities of passion, tenderness, vividness of imagery and a personal tone'. I do not know where my brother got the words or the tune of the song, but it had somehow got into the general Gaelic folk repertory. Its author, Donald Allan MacDonald saw what he thought of as a truncated version of it in a shop window in Fort William in 1950, with, written underneath the text, 'Composed by the deceased Donald MacDonald'. That incident is quoted from a recorded Gaelic conversation between the bard and the late Donald Archie MacDonald in 1963 in Father (now Canon) John Angus MacDonald's *Òrain Dhòmhnaill Ailein Dhòmhnaill na Bainich.* For me, proper knowledge of authors like Dòmhnall Ailein, like Donald MacDonald of Coruna, North Uist, author of *An Eala Bhàn*; like Donald Macintyre, South Uist and Paisley, author of *Òran na Cloiche, Sporan Dhòmhnaill* and *Bùth Dho'ill 'icLeòid;* and like Donald John MacDonald of Peighinn nan Aoireann, South Uist came much later. The Canon has given a way of adding to that knowledge on pages 42–44, where we are given an account of some poets, junior to Donald Allan, who belonged to South Uist and who also composed songs which are very popular and part of the singing repertory of present-day artists from there and elsewhere.

Canon MacDonald investigated Donald Allan MacDonald and his songs for an M.Litt. Degree in the University of Aberdeen. The resulting book is divided into 5 sections including, for instance, a biographical sketch of the bard, formative influences, the bard and the local tradition and the bard and the composition of his songs. There are 35 poems in all. Some are fragments only, and there are three short satires in Limerick form which, along with a few others, may not have been intended by the bard himself for a general readership.

Both Donald Allan and Donald John – but the former more so – belonged to an era when, as Canon MacDonald puts it, 'the bulk of Scottish poetry was composed for singing'. The melodies of 25 of Donald Allan's songs have been transcribed by Ishabel T. MacDonald. Five of them are familiar to me personally: *Oran Uibhist* (no.5), *Ceud fàilt air gach gleann* (no.10), *Gruagach òg an fhuilt bhàin* (no.11), *An Daorach* (no.20), and *Moladh Uibhist* (no.30). It remains to be seen whether more will go into general circulation as a consequence of the Canon's and Ishabel's work.

Apart from the texts themselves, the translations and the melodies, there is some very useful information given to us. The sectional format, however, makes for an untidy layout in my opinion, and a certain amount of repetition could have been avoided. Bill Innes' editorship of the poems of Donald John MacDonald is more concise and the book is easier to consult. Again the dichotomy between song and poem is highlighted, this time in the quotation on the back cover, 'Once we made songs to be sung – now we write poetry to be read'. One could indeed imagine many of Donald Allan's songs – or stanzas from them – being sung by any serious singer, especially singers from Uist. *Aiseirigh a' Bheachain* (no.34), thirteen 8-line stanzas which contributed to his winning the Bardic Crown at the National Mod of *An Comunn Gàidhealach* in 1959, would not go into the singing repertory.

Donald John MacDonald had the advantage of literacy in Gaelic; Donald Allan MacDonald could read it but could not write it with ease (a fact that was aggravated later by the loss of his sight). Bill Innes describes Donald John MacDonald as a 'harum-scarum, truant-playing teenager impatient to leave school at fourteen having shown little sign of any academic bent'. Donald John in particular had a striking pedigree: son of one of the greatest storytellers and song-transmitters of the last century, and of a sister of Donald Macintyre. Canon MacDonald tells us that Donald Allan MacDonald made much of his own kinship to well-known poets. There has always been a belief among Gaels that the ability to compose poetry was an inherited gift, and it is tempting to surmise that that is the case for these two MacDonalds.

Donald John experiments with metres that are not common in 20th century popular song. There are one or two examples of Burns' favourite *Standard Habbie* metre (generally a stanza form aaabab where a has 4 stresses and b has 2. See the Concise Scots Dictionary.). This would seem to conform with the concept of 'poetry to be read', as poems in that metre are not sung in Scots. Mr Innes refers several times to examples of the strophic *iorram* which John MacDonald and Mary MacLeod brought to an artistic height in the 17th century. The poems he refers to, important, longer poems, are actually more like *amhrán* where what he calls the triplet would be the complete line if the poem were sung. They are reminiscent of, for example, the Lewis song *An t-Eilean mu Thuath* or *A Chuachag nan Craobh,* but with a longer stanza. Such a song structure has to be sung before one can place its form. That is not by any means to dismiss the poet's knowledge of the structure or his skill in upholding the same end-rhyme through 68 units. He does, in fact, use the *iorram* metre in his *Duan I* and *Duan*

II (pp.204 and 206), sections of *An Clàrsair* (no. 49), the first stanza of *Duan II* having an echo of John Roy Stewart's *Latha Chuil-Lodair* (see *Highland Songs of the Forty-five,* p.176 or *Sàr Obair nam Bàrd Gaelach,* p.266):

A shliochd nan curaidh a bha
Bithibh ullamh gun sgàth,
Seasaibh duineil ri càch-a-chèile.

The editor rightly draws our attention to an example on page 302: *Do Niall Caimbeul* (no. 81), with irregular verse lengths.

Donald John's knowledge is also apparent in his vocabulary, much of which depends less on local dialect than on a kind of literary register. This is true of Donald Allan also, and indeed of most Gaelic poets. It is as much due to a familiarity, in an oral tradition, with the works of earlier poets as to reading. Donald John MacDonald is adept at choosing the proper language to suit his subject, and this is admirably illustrated in *Am Birthday Party.* To quote the editor, 'for a community that was then close to 100 per cent Gaelic-speaking the humour depended largely on the use of alien English words and concepts in the exaggeration of all the imagined sophisticated features of the occasion'. Of course, part of the comic attraction of this device was the attention to the rhyming scheme between the two languages, for example:

Chaidh an seòmar-suidhe rèiteach
Deiseil glan for the occasion
Gu robh grunn chongratulations
Air an leughadh aig a' bhòrd.

There is also a comment on the simplicity of Donald John's language in the religious songs which he composed, of which there are 14 in the book. They are generally short and easy to memorise, which I feel is not surprising as the bard probably intended them for congregational singing.

The humour of songs like *Am Birthday Party* cannot translate into a monolingual situation, and that has implications for the readership of both books – and of this review! Canon MacDonald gives a succinct summary of the recent history of Gaelic in Education on pages 17 to 21 of *Òrain Dhòmhnaill Ailein Dhòmhnaill na Bainich.* Both books are presented in English, with English translations of the Gaelic poem texts, but the Canon's readers who cannot read Gaelic will be frustrated at the Gaelic-only transcriptions of comments recorded on tape, of which there are many in his book. Bill Innes also omits translations of some verses contained in his notes. He declares his wish for *Chì mi* to be useful to students, and we may conclude that both books are intended for a bilingual readership. I confess to not having studied the translations in depth, but have no qualms as to their accuracy.

There are incidental points of interest for the reader: the list of 'local' poets and the piece on Gaelic Education in the book on Donald Allan Macdonald; the note on

Hallowe'n customs in South Uist and several photographs in *Chì mi*. I would recommend both to a bilingual Gaelic/English readership and to any English speaker who wants to know about a lovely aspect of a bygone – and yet fairly recent – age when bards had such prestige in their own territory.

Morag MacLeod

The Merry Muses of Caledonia edited by G. Ross Roy. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1999. ISBN 1–57003–324–2. xx, 128 pp., $90.00.

Six hundred numbered copies have been made of this limited edition published by the University of South Carolina Press. It comprises a facsimile edition of 'The Merry Muses of Caledonia; A Collection of Favourite Scots Songs, Ancient and Modern; Selected for use of the Crochallan Fencibles,' printed in 1799, plus an introductory booklet, held together in a matching slipcase. Robert Burns was a member of the club, the Crochallan Fencibles, which met in Edinburgh, and he was involved in this publication of bawdy poetry and song. The publication contains no music, but tune titles are given for some of the songs. Bawdy versions of well-known songs are given, such as 'For A' That And A' That' and 'Comin' Thro' The Rye', and lesser-known songs such as 'She's Hoy'd Me Out O' Lauderdale' and 'The Patriarch' are also included. The editor, Professor G. Ross Roy, notes that only two copies of the original *Merry Muses* are known to survive, making this facsimile edition all the more valuable, as it enables scholars to readily access this important historical document. The previously known copy lacked a date as a result of an incomplete title page, but the copy now reproduced dates the publication in 1799.

The introductory booklet includes discussion of Burns's interest in bawdy poetry and of previous editions of *The Merry Muses* (1843 and 1872; the latter is spuriously dated 1827). It also includes a facsimile of the letter Burns sent in 1792 to John M'Murdo at Drumlanrig which accompanied the manuscript of the collection. The letter is important as it makes clear that Burns had a hand in the enterprise; some previous writers on Burns have claimed that he had no relationship to the work. Burns states:

> I think I once mentioned something to you of a Collection of Scots Songs I have for some years been making: I send you a perusal of what I have gathered.–I could not conveniently spare them above five or six days, & five or six glances of them will probably more than suffice you.–When you are tired of them, please leave them with M^r^ Clint of the King's Arms.–There is not another copy of the Collection in the world.

G. Ross Roy notes that Burns's name does not appear anywhere in this facsimile edition of *The Merry Muses*, and that the 1843 edition was the first to mention it. He outlines Burns's involvement in the work and mentions that the compiler of the text of the original edition is not known. Indeed, all we can say for certain is that twelve songs exist in the poet's hand, and that nine of the poems were collected but not written by him (a complete list of these is not given with the work, however). Furthermore, not all of Burns's bawdy work is contained in *The Merry Muses*.

An interesting link to this facsimile edition comes via Sydney Goodsir Smith, who together with James Barke and J. DeLancey Ferguson, produced an edition of *The Merry Muses* in 1959, containing texts from the only other known original copy plus other bawdy works by Burns. G. Ross Roy acquired the copy on which the present facsimile is based in 1965, after Goodsir Smith had become aware of it through a chance meeting in an Edinburgh pub.

Another comparatively recent edition of *The Merry Muses* was by G. Legman, who published the work in type-facsimile with additional sources from the Cunningham Manuscript in 1965. This edition has detailed notes on all the songs, a glossary, a substantial introduction and a bibliography containing details of most of the known editions and reprints of the collection known as *The Merry Muses*. Whilst the introductory booklet to the present edition is not as comprehensive in its coverage as Legman's book, it gives a very clear background to the publication and useful recommendations for further reading. Indeed, although there have been previous editions of *The Merry Muses*, the present edition, because it provides a facsimile of this relatively recently discovered second copy as well as scholarly notes, is an important addition to the Burns corpus and should form a useful reference point for all Burns scholars.

Katherine Campbell

Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping, 1745 – 1945 by John G. Gibson. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press; Edinburgh : National Museums of Scotland, 1998. 406p.

When John Gibson's *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping, 1745 – 1945* first came out in 1998, he anticipated a storm of controversy and debate over its fundamental themes and arguments. This is understandable; in it, he challenged long-entrenched ideas within piping circles and debunked myths that have coloured histories by scholars and learned gentlemen for nigh on two centuries. The controversy may have been contained, however, by the book's cost, to academics and those near enough to a library that lends it. But Gibson's first major work is now available in paperback, and may therefore reach a wider readership wherein a storm or two may again stir.

Gibson's overall theme traces the place and functions of Highland piping from the perspective of old-world Gaelic social culture. He offers this as an attempt to redress a perceived imbalance of scholarly works toward the mainstream aspects of piping – the patronage of an English-speaking aristocracy, the rise of staged competition, quantifiable standards on which to judge and be judged – and perhaps also as a way of promoting general interest in the cultural elements which occasioned piping's roots as an art form. With this in mind, he largely sidesteps the rise of such mainstream institutions as the Highland Society of London and the Piobaireachd Society and addresses instead the cultural upheavals affecting Scottish Gaeldom in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and outlines in turn how this affected the indigenous functions and character

of their music. Not so much a musicological treatise, then, as a chronicling of tradition and change within the emergence of modern Scottish society.

The key issue surrounding any observation of piping in the eighteenth century is its status in the post-Jacobite era, and this serves as the platform to Gibson's wider exposition. Modern lore dictates, for instance, that the Highland bagpipe was considered an instrument of war in the aftermath of 1746 and henceforth banned under the terms of the Disarming Act. This in turn brought about a catastrophic decline in the music – particularly *ceòl mór*, its classical form – which was stemmed only by the e fforts of preservation-minded societies in the 1780s.

Whether classical piping was indeed in a state of alarming decline at the end of the eighteenth century has proved debatable in recent years. It is true that many Scots at the time perceived *ceòl mór*, among other by-then iconic strains of Highland heritage, to be in mortal danger of oblivion, such as found in John Ramsay's introductory essay to Patrick MacDonald's 1784 *Highland Vocal Airs*. But these frequent reports of imminent demise were surely exaggerated by a predeliction toward the romanticism of a doomed Celtic twilight among gentlemen with little direct knowledge of piping or, indeed, of the resiliency of Gaelic grass-roots social cohesion. As William Donaldson has shown in his *The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society,* **1750***–1950* (Tuckwell, 2000), there is little hard evidence to support the notion of a sharp deline in the performance tradition at that time, but much oral and manuscript evidence through the nineteenth century to suggest quite the opposite.

However, not everybody who feared for the future of classical Highland music in the post-Jacobite era were lay observers. John MacLean, physician and advisor to MacDonald of Sleat in the 1770s, was a man with impeccable Gaelic credentials and an intimate acquaintance with both the MacArthur pipers in Trotternish and the MacKays of Gairloch. In a letter to the chief of the Grants in 1770, MacLean noted of the MacKays that 'the grandfather of the present generation has been a fine player and composer, but there has been a great degeneracy since his time'. It is likely that he was referring to the famous blind piper and bard, *Iain Dall*, who had died some 16 years earlier. Although MacLean did not go into detail about this 'degeneracy', the remark, from one so well-placed, supports the position that courtly Highland pipe music was not circumventing unscathed the upheavals being su ffered by its patron class up to that time.

The wider social framework in which *ceòl mór* had hitherto operated and flourished was crumbling. I, for one, am inclined to believe that its performance and transmission was not in great danger in the post-Jacobite era, owing to the conservatism and inheritance of what Donaldson has termed 'the performer community'. But it is likely that the classical idiom was in the process of becoming rigidified – gradually becoming divorced from the vital song tradition with which it had shared much cultural and musical space as its bearers moved gradually further afield from the monoglot Gaelic context; its repertoire and stylistic interpretations becoming less pluralistic, less spontaneous and more curatorial in the minds of its bearers and patrons.

Gibson's work proves in many respects to complement this position. In Part One of his book, he argues that the pipes were by no means banned under the terms of the Act and that, even had they been, legislative limitations and thoroughfare conditions in the Highlands would have made such an edit unenforceable. He instead reveals the decline in classical piping's vitality at the time as symptomatic of the decline of the Gaelic aristocratic and middle-class social order on a wider scale. The entire eighteenth century, after all, was a period of economic and cultural upheaval in the Highlands as the old aristrocacy integrated more and more with British modernisation and agricultural improvement. A clan chief's priorities were gradually changing – and so, in e ffect, was the very *raison d' être* of classical Highland pipe music.

In Parts Two and Three, Gibson proceeds to observe piping's role in eighteenth-century Highland military regiments as well as amongst the grass-roots community up to c. 1820, when notated collections began to appear. From his analysis in these sections we can conclude that forms of piping in the Highlands which were not as dependent on the aristocracy as *ceòl mór* managed to thrive during and beyond the post-Jacobite era: piping in the regiments because, amidst the instability which characterised the Gaelic upper class at the time, piping's martial qualities naturally allowed the army to replace them as patrons; and piping within the community because the music was predominantly played for dancing in the *taigh-céilidh*, or ceilidh-house, and needed no laird to patronise it.

The fourth and final part to Gibson's thesis expounds on the character of this indigenous dance-piping idiom, and charts both its decline in Scotland and its survival in the few remaining Gaelic-speaking emigrant communities of Nova Scotia. The legacy of Highland emigration, so far as piping is concerned, has only recently begun to receive proper attention from scholars and performers, and this is due in no small part to Gibson's research there over the past 25 years. He is well aware that a sufficient base of reference for old-world Gaelic piping cannot stand on documentary evidence alone, as the written record since the eighteenth century is mainly from the English-language perspective and, with the exception of travellers' memoirs, not too concerned with rural Gaelic social traditions. This is why Gibson attaches such importance to the conservatism of Nova Scotia's Gaelic-speakers and the anachronistic nature of their piping traditions: they were, until relatively recently, less subject to the influences of British modernity than Scotland's *Gàidhealtachd* and so suggest how pipe music may have been transmitted and performed in the ceilidhs of pre-emigration Highland communities.

Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping does not contain staff-notated examples setting mainstream competitive style against what Gibson perceives to be the older style of the eighteenth century. True, a comparison of cultures naturally leads to a comparison of styles where music is concerned; but Gibson limits himself to a discussion of the cultural contexts which distinguish the aural idiom of the pre-emigrant, monoglot Gael and the literate idiom of today's competitive player. Readers expecting a bombshell of 'this

tune was played in this manner' – a definitive account of style in eighteenth-century Highland Scotland such as that proposed by Allan MacDonald in his 1995 M.Litt thesis – will therefore be disappointed and frustrated. Although such an approach would have been more appealing to pipers hungry for the stuff of repertoires, Gibson is concerned with the broader questions of function, context, and the dynamics of inexorable change. Instead of casting judgement on either style, he merely identifies the points and means by which they diverged, and offers justification for the aural idiom's value to current scholarship. He places piping in the hands of the Gael uninfluenced by Empire, and proceeds to observe its evolution within Empire as the cultural pillars which had previously supported it eroded over decades and centuries. It is an important and timely point to make nowadays, as the *féis* movement gains in popularity and more competitors look to early nineteenth-century manuscripts for 'new' settings of familiar tunes; and therein lies Gibson's opportunity to capture the imagination of the performers as well as the scholars. His work emerges at a time when the piping world is looking more and more at what was, as inspiration for what will be.

Joshua Dickson

Scottish Gaelic Studies volume 17. Edited by Donald MacAulay, James Gleasure and Colm Ó Baoill. University of Aberdeen 1996. 402 pp.

As indicated by its title, *Féill-Sgrìbhinn do Ruairidh MacThòmais/Festschrift for Professor D S Thomson*, this very substantial volume is dedicated to one of the most distinguished and productive Celticists to have worked in Scotland within living memory. Following the opening dedication, the editors provide a useful list of Derick Thomson's publications to date, comprising some 275 items in all (academic books, articles, reviews, translations, original poetry and short stories in Gaelic and English) that have appeared over nearly half a century. The 38 contributions by friends and colleagues, among them leading scholars from Scotland and abroad, are ordered alphabetically by author. A good number of these works are interdisciplinary, capable of being listed under a number of conventional headings, and have the added interest of being consciously associated in some way with Thomson and his work. Their breadth and variety reflect Thomson's wide interests and influence, at the same time providing an impressive indication of the extent of research in Scottish Gaelic (SG) at the close of the twentieth century in the fields of language (linguistic description, dialectology and sociolinguistics), fieldwork-based ethnology, literature, history, medieval manuscripts, and onomastics. Materials studied range from prehistory to the present, and are drawn from as far afield as Nova Scotia.

The studies on language highlight the benefits to be derived from continued applications of modern linguistic theory and descriptive techniques to SG. Richard Cox emphasises the need for reappraisal of our understanding of tense and aspect, pointing to the cursory nature of standard descriptions currently available. The same

theme is taken up at greater length in Donald MacAulay's insightful comments (presumably based on his own Lewis dialect) on time, tense, mode and aspect, where he observes that systems incorporating original distinctions between *tha* and *bidh* in 'traditional SG' have in some instances undergone remodelling along the lines of those characterising contemporary standard English. In her continuing investigation of the terminal stages of East Sutherland Gaelic, Nancy Dorian notes an unusual degree of personal-pattern (i.e. of a kind not conditioned by factors such as age, social class or register and therefore non-evaluative) variation among fluent speakers that does not to appear to occur in English. This she tentatively links with isolated communities where there are few speakers literate in the community language, and outside norms are therefore of little consequence. An emic view of linguistic geography in the Western Isles features in the work of Seumas Grannd, who points out that lexical differences are routinely regarded by Gaelic speakers themselves to function as shibboleths. Taking the north-south distribution of the various words for 'flower' *(sìthean, dìthean, flùr)* Grannd observes that lexical isoglosses closely follow the lines of old political boundaries between the most powerful clans of the region. In a further study in lexical geography, this time based on data from the linguistic survey of Gaelic dialects, Cathair Ó Dochartaigh studies the distribution of two loanwords into Gaelic (*nàbuidh* 'neighbour' and *cuibheall* 'wheel') in relation to their surviving native counterparts (*coimhearsnach, roth*), and what they can reveal concerning the varying acceptance of loans in their social and technological contexts. Another aspect of lexical geography is addressed by Gearóid Stockman in his examination and listing of lexical correspondences between Scotland and the now extinct dialect of the Glens of Antrim, based on extensive ethnographic material published in the 1920s. As a tip of the hat to DerrickThomson's co-authorship with John Lorne Campbell of *Edward Lhuyd in the Scottish Highlands 1699–1700* (1963), R. L. Thomson examines in detail some of the lexical evidence contained in a Manx version of the language questionnaire circulated by Lhuyd. SG-Ulster parallels on the level of phonology appear in Seosamh Watson's remarks in the role of hiatus-filling /h/ in dialects of both countries, where he observes that in both the Outer Hebrides and in East Ulster /h/, though a process of hypercorrection, was substituted for hiatus resulting from the loss of intervocalic *–th-* following a stressed vowel. Continuing with phonology, Kenneth Nilsen discusses, *inter alia*, the spread in Nova Scotia Gaelic dialects of what Alexander Carmichael once termed the *glug Eigeach*: the tendency for non-palatal /L/ (lenited and unlenited) to be realised as something close to a /w/ in English. This feature and the others (/N/>/m/ in some environments, [w] in others) examined by Nilsen suggest to the reviewer, at least, that a more comprehensive look at laterals and nasals in dialectology and language history would yield worthwhile results. The ethnological side of lexicography is more to the fore in †Gordon MacLennan's listing and explanation of obscure words and phrases (much along the lines of Fr Allan McDonald of Eriskay's *Gaelic Words & Expressions from South Uist*) from late tradition-bearer Anna Bhán Nic Grianna of

Rannafast, Co. Donegal. MacLennan draws attention to the expression *tog ort!* 'off you go' as a likely borrowing from SG, noting that a long vowel (*tóg*) is characteristic of the Irish form of the verb (p. 262). A similar collection of 'asseverations, exclamations and imprecations', probably the earliest materials of oral tradition in Eigg recalled by Rev. Kenneth MacLeod, is contributed by †John Lorne Campbell who came across them in the Carmichael Papers (Edinburgh University Library). The collection is of considerable interest to lexicographers and folklorists, and Campbell has added his own notes to those by MacLeod. The applications of sociolinguistics to modern Gaelic are demonstrated in Kenneth MacKinnon's use of the of the 1981 census results to reveal relationship between Gaelic language skills and social (occupational) class. The results of his analysis, namely two occupational 'cores' (the crofting community and a professional-managerial sector), while hardly surprising, are the kind that should form the basis for informed language planning.

In one of the two contributions written in Gaelic, Iain MacAonghuis makes us aware of one of the lesser known aspects of Thomson's work: his contributions as an ethnologist and fieldworker. The fruits of Thomson's collecting journeys, undertaken around 1950 in various of the islands in the company of Anthony Dilworth, are now held in the archive of the School of Scottish Studies, and MacAonghuis provides materials (recorded by himself in the 60s and accompanied by his own engaging commentary) from Donald Sinclair of Tiree on the traditions of Cú Chulainn and the Finn cycle. The second of the contributions in Gaelic, from †Donald Archie MacDonald, and based on tape- and video recordings made from 1982–86 of his conversations with Donald John (*Dòmhnall Iain Dhunnchaidh)* MacDonald of South Uist, is noteworthy not only for what it reveals regarding the process of songmaking (e.g. the roles of visualisation, and of writing), but also for the light it throws on language change – specifically the disappearance of language registers – in the community during the bard's lifetime. Continuing his long-standing and productive exploration of Gaelic custom and belief, Ronald Black examines a calendar text found within a 19th century Perthshire manuscript of proverbs. His conclusion that the text contains much that is new and important regarding the Gaelic traditional calendar is supported in his knowledgeable and detailed notes. The role of women in Celtic society, for some time now a growing field of research, is treated from a fresh, ethno-historical perspective by †Alan Bruford in his diachronic examination of the position of women as poets and performers beside the male 'bardic caste', noting in passing that women poets were more prominent in Scotland than elsewhere. He discusses the meanings and functions in Gaelic society of the *bean-chaointe* 'professional keening woman : *ban-chaínte* 'female satirist' (both probably descended from the female druid), the work songs recorded down into modern times, and speculates on the cultural politics surrounding the banishment and face-down burial of the Harris poetess Mary MacLeod. Continuing developments in onomastics are ably represented in W. H. F. Nicholaisen's discussion of Scots place-names ending in –o (< SG –ach), located primarily between the Firth of Forth and

the Moray Firth, and the implications they may contain regarding language history in that region. Hermann Pálsson's study on the Old Norse origins of place-names in Lewis and Harris is sensibly organised according to the topographical features they describe.

Donald Meek in his contrastive study of the images of nature in the hymns of the 18th and 19th century poets Dugald Buchannan and Peter Grant considers how such imagery was used by the poets in attaining their literary goals, what influences from non-Gaelic/Highland sources were drawn on, how concepts were adapted for specific Highland needs, and what relation they bore to Highland evangelicism. Proinsias Mac Cana's remarks on the much studied Old Irish poem Caillech Bérri 'The Old Woman of Beare' resonate considerably further than the 'literary footnote' in the title of his work would suggest. Mac Cana proposes that past interpretations have been too narrow; the work should be viewed in terms of the larger living mythological and historical traditions, containing multiple allusions that are now only partially recoverable. Also dealing with medieval materials, namely comparisons Welsh, Breton and Irish sources, is J. E.Caerwyn Williams's useful and thought-provoking study, where he examines the usages and semantic range of the root **kan-* 'to sing, etc.' in the Celtic languages, how they are associated with the bard in society and what functions (panegyrist, satirist, magician, prophet) or combinations of these they reveal. In his examination of the Rawlinson B512 MS version of *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó* James Gleasure makes the point that Thurneysen's reproduction of Kuno Meyer's transcription 'is less satisfactory than the latter's transcription of the MS in a number of ways'. Referring to the MS he then lists corrected readings that apply to the work of both scholars. Thomson's longtime friend and fellow poet †Iain Crichton Smith in a critical look at Thomson's verse shows the extent to which its strength is derived from direct access to feeling, uncompromised by academic training.

Contributions on history extend from early medieval times to the present. From the medieval period are detailed studies on *Cath Fedo Euin* by David Dumville; on the landholdings of hereditary families of poets, in particular that of the *ollam ríg* (the king's poet) at Balvaird, near Scone, identified on the basis of historical documentation by John Bannerman; William Gillies's review of the linguistic evidence toward a clearer understanding of the history and development of the *Toschderach*, a legal official attested in Scotland and Man from medieval times whose exact functions have been a subject of speculation. In an illuminating example of how traditions from different periods can become attached to a song, T. P. McCaughey makes use of historical and oral sources – among them the Dewar MSS – to explain those associated with a poem by Iain Ciar Dhùn Ollaidh, who was active early in the 18th century. Illicit trade between Ireland and the Scottish Highlands from later in that century have provided the background for numerous sea songs in Gaelic, and is given a comprehensive treatment by Fiona MacDonald. Finally, on a more contemporary note, the historian Ian Grimble takes us beyond the confines of high literary activity or academia to highlight to importance

of Thomson's journalistic activities over four decades: the prescience behind the varied substantive social and political issues raised in editorials appearing in the early issues of *Gairm,* e.g. language rights, education, the participation of women, the media, economic and social development in the Gàidhealtachd, and home rule.

John Shaw

Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland: James VI's Demonology and the North Berwick Witches. Edited by Lawrence Normand and Gareth Roberts. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000. xiii + 454 p. : ill., maps, ports.

Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland is a combination of a micro-history and a collection of most of the relevant documents from the North Berwick witch hunts of 1590–91 including pre-trial depositions, trial minutes, pamphlet propaganda, and a learned demonological treatise written by King James VI of Scotland. The authors provide an engaging and well-researched micro-history of a most unique event in Scottish history. The North Berwick witch-hunt was a double inversion of social, political and religious hierarchy. Common women accused of witchcraft were thought to have power over the most socially, economically and politically powerful men in Scotland, and the Devil was thought to have had a brief (if failed) opportunity to overthrow God's rule on earth.

The 'North Berwick witch-hunt' got its name from a small grouping of interrelated witchcraft and treason trials of suspects from East Lothian during 1590–91. These suspects were accused of meeting with the Devil in the Kirk of North Berwick to plot and wage magic against the King. While each suspect's case had its own individual (or local) elements – including accusations of malefice (magical harm) against neighbours, love magic, and fortune telling – they were tied together through an alleged conspiracy to kill King James VI. The conspiracy supposedly sought to sink the ship carrying him and his bride, Anne of Denmark, using witchcraft as it sailed the North Sea back from their wedding in Denmark.

The authors cover the likes of Francis Stewart, Earl of Bothwell, cousin to the King, admiral of the fleet and suspected head of the treasonable North Berwick conspiracy. Then, with equal attention, they present the lives of people like Agnes Sampson, a healer, from East Lothian accused of participating in the conspiracy, divining private conversations between James and his wife in bed, and enacting malefice against her neighbours. High political melodrama was fused with witchcraft accusations by and against peasants (mostly women) that formed the mainstay of witchcraft trials right through the seventeenth century. Normand and Roberts skillfully work their narrative through the many different registers of witchcraft belief, class and culture that intermingled in the North Berwick witch-hunts.

The main strength of *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland* is in the details. Normand and Roberts provide a very satisfying and gripping account of the political, social and cultural factors at play in the North Berwick witchcraft trials. This broad sweep is

complimented and enriched by reconstruction of the lives of the individuals charged with witchcraft and those investigating the alleged crimes. Their narrative brings both ideologies of witchcraft and the inner workings of the late 16th Century court politics and political power into sharp focus – highlighting how the discursive formations drew upon and helped to shape one another. As Normand and Roberts observe, 'witchcraft is politicised, and politics is demonised' (p. 44) through the North Berwick witchcraft trials.

Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland is more than a reconstruction of a unique and difficult historical event. Normand and Roberts also provide a coherent theoretical approach to witchcraft. While taking on board recent cultural and literary theory,[1] they do not advance the main pitfalls of such approaches – the tendency to view action and people as static 'text' to be 'read' or a reification of 'culture'. Rather they explore the problematic of language, text and society head on. 'This relation is one of congruence between the ideological forms in the language recorded in the texts and produced through the processes of investigation, trial, propaganda and theorisation (represented in this witch hunt respectively by depositions, dittays, *Newes From Scotland*,[2] and *Demonology*,[3] and those forms as they appear in social, political and religious life' (p. 55). They interweave personal narrative, ideology, textual analysis, and cultural and social history.

The North Berwick witch-hunt was the first of five major witch-hunts in early modern Scotland. The others were in 1597, 1628–30, 1650 and 1661–62. All of the witch-hunts were animated by specific beliefs about demonic pacts, witches' meetings, and malefice. A panic more similar to later witch-hunts and much wider than the North Berwick witch-hunt was simultaneously sweeping across the Lothians, Fife, and Aberdeenshire in 1590–91. Those trials referred to as the 'North Berwick witch-hunt' were different from the rest because they revolved around the added element of treason. Despite the broad title, *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland* is primarily concerned with the North Berwick witch-hunt and as such is not a general explanation of witchcraft in early modern Scotland. The North Berwick trials were substantively and procedurally distinct from later Scottish witch hunts: torture was more liberally applied, procedures were loosened and the government was more directly and personally involved than in concurrent and later witchcraft trials. New, forthcoming work challenges some long held assumptions about the role of Privy Council commissions for witchcraft trials and the legal procedures of witchcraft prosecutions in the 1590s.[4] Unfortunately, Normand and Roberts could not have had access to this new scholarship before the publication of *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland*.

On the whole, *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland* is a clear account of a very difficult tangle of historical documents. Normand and Roberts have assembled the clues and evidence to present a compelling and convincing description of the North Berwick witch-hunt. Their combination of excellent micro-history and accessible transcriptions of early modern witchcraft documents in one volume is a unique and much welcomed

addition to the literature on Scottish history and witchcraft. It is a must read and should be added to the corpus of teaching texts.

Lauren Martin

NOTES

1 For a general discussion of these themes, See S. Clark (ed.), *Languages of Witchcraft: Narrative, Ideology and Meaning in Early Modern Culture*, (Macmillan Press Ltd 2001); and J. Barry, M. Hester and G. Roberts (eds.) *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Studies in Culture and Belief* (Cambridge University Press 1996).

2 A pamphlet about the North Berwick witch-hunt that Normand and Roberts argue was written by a Scottish minister who participated in the trials themselves and was soon after adapted for circulation in England.

3 This is James VI's treatise on witchcraft and demonology.

4 See J. Goodare, 'The Framework for Scottish Witch-Hunting in the 1590s', forthcoming.

Books Received

Some of these books may be reviewed later in *Scottish Studies*.

Collected Poems and Songs of George Campbell Hay, edited by Michel Byrne. Edinburgh University Press 2000. Vol. 1 459 pp., vol. 2 251 pp.

Sami Folkloristics, edited by Juha Pentikäinen. Turku: Nordic Network of Folklore, 2000. 280 pp.

Glenesk: The History and Culture of an Angus Community, compiled and edited by Alexander Fenton and John Beech. Tuckwell Press Ltd. 2000. 301 pp. £20.

Bondagers. Personal recollections by eight Scots women farm workers, by Ian MacDougall. Tuckwell Press 2000. 240 pp. £9.99.

Presbyterianism, Politics and Poetry in Nineteenth-Century Ulster: Aspects of an Ulster-Scots Literary Tradition, by Ivan Herbison. Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University Belfast 2000. 26pp. £3.50.

Danske Talesprog, Bind 1. Institut for Dansk Dialektforskning 2000. 211 pp.

Irish Law and Lawyers in Modern Folk Tradition, by Éanna Hickey. Four Courts Press 1999. 208 pp. £35.

No Quarter Given. The Muster Role of Prince Charles Edward Stuart's Army, 1745–46, edited by Alastair Livingstone, Christian W. H. Aikman and Betty Stuart Hart. Neil Wilson Publishing 2001. 235 pp. £15.

The Gaelic of Islay: A Comparative Study, by Seumas Grannd. The Department of Celtic, University of Aberdeen 2000. 150 pp. £9.

The Scots Fiddle (vol. 2) by J Murray Neil. Neil Wilson Publishing 2001. 226 pp. £20.

Scottish Geographical Journal Vol. 115 Part 3. Royal Scottish Geographical Society 1999. 267 pp.

The Poetics of Empire. A Study of James Granger's 'The Sugar Cane' (1764), by John Gilmore. The Athlone Press 2000. 342 pp. £47.50 HB £16.99 PB.

Worlds without End, by R. A. S. Hennessy. Tempus Publishing Ltd. 1999. 160 pp. £18.99.

The Sir William Arrol Collection. A guide to the Scottish/International Material held in the National Monuments Record of Scotland. RCAHMS 1998, 2000. 48 pp., 96 pp.

The Scottish Connection. The Rise of English Literary Study in Early America, by Franklin E. Court. Syracuse University Press 2001. 199 pp. $39.95 HB $19.95 PB.

Aithne na nGael/Gaelic Identities, edited by Gordon McCoy with Maolcholaim Scott. Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University Belfast 2000. 161 pp. £9.50.

Northern Lights. Essays in honour of Bo Almqvist, edited by Séamas Ó Catháin. University College Dublin Press 2001. 400 pp. £34.95.

Odd Alliances. Scottish Studies in European Contexts, edited by Neil McMillan and Kirsten Stirling. Cruithne Press 1999.

Alas Poor Ghost! Traditions of Belief in Story and Discourse, by Gillian Bennett. Utah State University Press 1999. 223 pp.

Gendering Scottish History. An International Approach, edited by Terry Brotherstone, Deborah Simonton, and Oonagh Walsh. Cruithne Press 1999. 302 pp. £10.95.

Play Today in the Primary School Playground, edited by Julia C. Bishop and Mavis Curtis. Open University Press 2001. 224 pp. £55 HB £16.99 PB.

Two Millenia of Church and Community in Orkney, by Frank Bardgett. The Pentland Press Ltd. 2000. 148 pp. £7.95.

Early Medieval Sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands, by Ian Fisher. RCAHMS 2001. 178 pp. £20.

Physicians and Surgeons in Glasgow, 1599–1858 (vol. 1); *The Shaping of the Medical Profession, 1858–1999 (vol. 2)*, by Joanna Geyer-Kordesch, Fiona MacDonald and Andrew Hull. The Hambledon Press 1999. 478 pp, 288 pp. £30/vol.