The Bagpipe: perceptions of a national instrument

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PhD by Research Publications
The University of Edinburgh
2007
Contents

Preface 3
Prospectus 6
Section 1. Theme and variation - representing the national instrument 26
Section 2. A distant past - early history, the bagpipe comes to Scotland 43
Section 3. Gaelic symphony - the ‘great pipe’ takes root 51
Section 4. Piping dynasties - pipers, poets and ‘shennachies’ 61
Section 5. The Pastoral and New Bagpipe - echo of the Neo-Baroque 72
Section 6. Taste and Humour - the Union pipe of Scotland and Ireland 82
Section 7. The maestros - bagpipe makers, architects of change 90
Conclusions 102
Records and Sources 110
Bibliography 111

CD Bagpipe. A national collection of a national instrument.

Declaration:

I declare that I am the sole author of this work and that the work has not, either in whole or in part, been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed:

Date:
Preface
The thesis, *The Bagpipe: perceptions of a national instrument*, is a work offered to the University of Edinburgh for the degree of PhD by research publications, and includes a portfolio of published items and research papers, amounting in total to approximately 63,600 words, with a critical review and a CD.

Research papers:

These papers are discussed in a critical review whose thesis and structure is explained in the Prospectus. The critical review amounts to approximately 24,200 words and is divided into seven Sections (as listed on the Contents page) which relate specifically to their respective research papers and summarise their findings. There is some imbalance of wording between the Sections, for example there are more words in sections ‘Piping Dynasties’ and ‘the Maestros’, and this reflects a perceived need to strengthen the statements in these areas in order to deliver the arguments of the thesis more effectively.
The submission is accompanied by a CD which serves as an essential appendix to the thesis and is explained in the final part of the Prospectus. This electronically assembled work is organised in two parts; the first part comprises an account of the bagpipe and its culture through the collections of the National Museums of Scotland. Narrative and interpretation draw on original objects and the material culture of the instrument, largely as a European phenomenon. The CD is orientated towards the general public of all ages (as appropriate for information offered by a national museum to its public) as well as specialists, and conforms to scholarly standards in offering some critical apparatus. It covers (in abbreviated form) the main subjects of the research papers, topics such as museology (for the formation of a national collection) and organology, the early history of the instrument, the emergence of the bagpipe in a distinctive socio-cultural context in the Scottish Highlands, and instrumentation of the Neo-baroque. It also includes material relating more directly to the scope of the CD, with sections on ‘Discography’, ‘Piping Portraits’ (touching on the problems of interpreting iconography in museological terms), the exploration of individual objects in the national collection such as ‘MacCorquodale’s Pipes’ (NMS K.1998.1130), and reference to the outstanding collection of the ethnomusicologist, Jean Jenkins (1922-1990).

The second part of the CD comprises museum collection documentation in the form of about 2,100 object records, representing the systematic assembling of a collection of ‘the national instrument’ over a period of years. The process and rationale of building this collection is explored in the first of the research papers, ‘Making a national collection of a national instrument’ (2003), and in the critical review. Certain aspects of the national collection are here explored, such as the relative invisibility in historical and collection terms of the ‘Great Highland Bagpipe’ and the rich variety of instrumentation deriving from the ‘Neo-baroque’.

This is a resource that can be explored using standard querying techniques as explained in the final section of the Prospectus. Its potential audience is described in the introduction to the CD:
It will be of unique use to students in school and university, to lifelong learners, to pipers and musicians, to specialists and practitioners, to musicologists and organologists, and to overseas audiences, particularly in Europe, North America and those countries which sustain a special affection for Scotland and its rich culture. This is the first time that the ‘national instrument’ can be considered in depth and against the wider background of Britain and Europe.

The CD provides record evidence to support the arguments and proposals in the body of the thesis, and reference to objects in the National Museums’ collections is frequently made through the text in abbreviated standard format. These may then be checked in the CD data base. This body of work, particularly searching out and assembling potential and provenanced museum objects, has been carried out over a twenty-five year period as time and circumstances have permitted in the course of busy public sector employment which has involved a range of responsibilities not including the bagpipe. This was in pursuance of a museum Collecting Policy for the bagpipe and a passionately held conviction that the fundamental work should be carried out in Scotland to form systematically, coherently and, within reason, conclusively a ‘national collection of a national instrument’.

Hugh Cheape
National Museums Scotland
2007
Prospectus

The following text forms an introduction to a critical review or 'supporting statement' for the thesis, *The Bagpipe: perceptions of a national instrument*.

The thesis of this work is founded on the following and related critical points and arguments:

- that the Great Highland Bagpipe [GHB] never existed as a historical (or organological) autonomous phenomenon
- that the ‘GHB’ was a European instrument, assimilated into Gaelic society, whose strong and distinctive cultural traits gave it a particular sound (there being evidence elsewhere for a similar instrument for example in Ireland and Iberia)
- that material evidence for the GHB is readily and consistently misinterpreted, since (a) it has hitherto never been considered in a scholarly way, and (b) popular and longstanding views are based on representations of instruments to be considered as inauthentic or fake
- that the evidential base for the prevailing ‘grand narrative’ (i.e. accepted as a conventional and unquestionable account) of the bagpipe in Scotland is very narrow, whereas the ‘raw data’ of a ‘national collection of a national instrument’ offers in digital format abundant evidence for a radically different account (i.e. of the bagpipe as a pan-European phenomenon)
- that the dynamic that produced a ‘national instrument’ may be sought equally in Scotland’s musicological role in the European Neo-Baroque
- that this instrument was a 'pastoral' bagpipe ‘invented’ in London and performing music shared with Ireland
- that a reason for the persistence of this travestied account is that the impact of the Baroque on the Scottish material record has never been considered
Amplification of these points is carried in a series of Sections under the following titles:
Theme and variation - representing the national instrument
A distant past - early history, the bagpipe comes to Scotland
Gaelic symphony - the ‘great pipe’ takes root
Piping dynasties - pipers, poets and ‘shennachies’
The Pastoral and New Bagpipe - echo of the Neo-Baroque
Taste and Humour - the Union pipe of Scotland and Ireland
The maestros - bagpipe makers, architects of change


To summarise the arguments and describe in brief the rationale of the CD:

Section 1. Theme and variation
The Great Highland Bagpipe [GHB] - the ‘national instrument’ - in terms of an autonomous development in Scotland, continuity from a more or less remote past, and an assumed antiquity, never existed. The instrument has become, particularly in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, an unquestioned and unquestionable part of the Scottish cultural inheritance, but the evidential base for its distinctive form and existence before the late-eighteenth century is scant. General knowledge of the instrument is sustained in Scotland and beyond by what might be described as a ‘grand narrative’ (i.e. a conventional and unquestioned account) but the evidential base for historical claims is very narrow.¹ This section describes the forming of a collection and assembling of an evidential base which offers abundant evidence for the bagpipe as a European (and wider) phenomenon while showing, suggestively for Scotland, that there is little evidence for the GHB before the eighteenth century.

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The national history and associated texts on cultural phenomena such as music and song offer a robust and confident account of the bagpipe in Scotland. Generally considered as a (or the) national instrument, the bagpipe in a form described as the ‘GHB’ is presented as a highly distinctive instrument with putative origins in the Highlands of the late fifteenth or sixteenth centuries, such origins being traceable to and associated with names such as MacCrimmon. By the early twentieth century, the GHB was clothed in an aura created in the course of the preceding hundred years, giving it an autonomous development in Scotland in defiance of a scarcity of evidence and a wealth of evidence for its coterminous existence in other forms and elsewhere in Europe.² Scotland is a victim of Hobsbawm’s ‘invention of tradition’ in more ways, perhaps, than Trevor Roper succeeded in describing. The uniformly kilted piper - a sometimes lurid stereotype - producing a particularly strong sound to the heavy beat of drums in the marching band, has been a warmly accepted and never questioned icon of identity descending (or so it is assumed) from a past beyond memory. Dissidents, such as Campsie, who have tried to produce serious critique, could not break out of the dialectic vice and have been forced to punch at shadows as the cognoscenti re-grouped.³

Scholars in Scotland have conceded that the bagpipe is variously evident elsewhere in Europe or is a universal musical instrument, but have never questioned the identity of the GHB. Views have been so long entrenched that the GHB has become part of national history but also, arguably, of a shallow and reductive narrative.⁴ ‘Facts’ such as the role of the MacCrimmons or

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³ Hugh Trevor-Roper, The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland, in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger eds., The Invention of Tradition, Cambridge University Press 1983, 15-41; Alistair Campsie, The MacCrimmon Legend. The madness of Angus Mackay, Edinburgh: Canongate 1980, is a flawed book, both in its history and musicology, but nevertheless has posed some fundamental questions and raised the debate. Its very success at the time may be taken as a gauge of the quality or absence of debate on the subject of piping.

⁴ The absence of serious critique may be part-explained by Scottish ‘constitutional and institutional subordination’ as well as nineteenth-century developments in Scottish education such as the attrition of a ‘democratic’ and broadly-based tradition in the face of Anglo-British standards; this has been explored in George Elder Davie, The Democratic Intellect, Edinburgh University Press 1961, and
definitions of piobaireachd had achieved the status of dogma, of an article of faith laid down by a high authority that busily defined what had to be believed.  

As a consequence, the bagpipe has tended to fall below the purview of the *musicien savant* and musicological analysis. Redressing misapprehension concerning its long-term history in Scotland and in Europe can now be seen as critical for analysing the bagpipe, not merely as an independent object of study but as an essential part of the history of music.

The piper in Scotland today is emblematic, readily standing for elements of Scotland’s culture and history and especially her military tradition, and, theatrically attired, is a much-loved asset in a service economy of tourism and ‘heritage’. In the second half of the twentieth century, the growth of tourism and the numbers of annual and perennial visitors to Scotland with expectations of spectacle have demonstrated that demand has kept ahead of supply; the kilted piper could always find work. The piper is still considered a ‘useful’ symbol of a rich cultural inheritance although the symbolic and militarised image is under siege and the ideological connotations questioned. Source material for the concept of the piper as emblem is available in the published literature and is powerfully evident in media portrayal.

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7 A sense of theatre was already startlingly evident in the account of the Highland Society’s Piobaireachd competition in the *Edinburgh Advertiser* for 22 August 1822; and see NMS A.1947.128.

2. A distant past
The matter of definition of the Great Highland Bagpipe, and hence of identity, is conditioned by perceptions of origins. But during the last two hundred years of writing piping histories, no scholar or researcher has been able to offer critical evidence for the origins of the Scottish or Highland bagpipe. A prima facie weakness of these histories is their presentation of the bagpipe in Scotland as an independent object of study rather than an essential part of the history of music, or of the history of European music. Paradoxically perhaps, accounts or definitions offered by the earliest writers (for example MacCulloch or Mackay) made no claims for (and even doubted the credibility of) an autonomous development. Advances of scholarship have been acclaimed when fresh references or new documents have been discovered, but, without underestimating such discoveries, it may be contended that no real intellectual advance will be made until overviews are offered and contexts explored.

Pursuit of the ‘origins of the bagpipe’ is a largely futile quest in the existing literature, as Collinson’s Bagpipe demonstrated. Early evidence which can be readily interpreted is scarce or non-existent, and the pitfalls of enthusiastic interpretation are best illustrated by the use of Classical and Biblical sources; the equation of terminology with instrument (as we imagine it) cannot be proven. Contemporary iconography is generally an unreliable source for technical detail. It has been claimed that so little work has been achieved for early musical instruments that archaeology fails to recognise the material evidence when it emerges. The Berlin-based International Study Group on Music Archaeology has sought to remedy this by creating a forum of discussion since its first meeting in 1981. Various other sources for early history have

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9 This problem is central to the assembling of a narrative in recent studies; see for example Hugh Cheape, The Book of the Bagpipe, Appletree Press 1999, 22; see also Anthony Baines, Woodwind Instruments and their History, 3rd edition, London: Faber & Faber, 1967.
10 John MacCulloch, Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland, containing descriptions of their scenery and antiquities ... in letters to Sir Walter Scott, Edinburgh 1824, volume II, 381-382; Angus Mackay, Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd or Highland Pipe Music, Edinburgh 1838, 15.
12 ISGMA have now published five volumes of proceedings under the title Studien zur Musikarchäologie from the German Archaeological Institute. The bagpipe was a particular focus of
been suggested, for example in literature and language, but generally there has been no attempt at critique. By contrast, constructive comment waits to be offered on aspects of the early history of the bagpipe in Scotland such as its inheritance from England and Europe, the dynamics of spread and transmission to Scotland including patronage, migratory and trading patterns, Islamic culture, the Renaissance and changing patterns of taste and patronage, using also paradigms of material culture such as architecture to further illuminate such processes.

3. Gaelic symphony

A sense of ‘prehistory’ shrouds the appearance of the bagpipe in Gaelic society. We might expect to find clear evidence for the GHB, but there are no surviving instruments and graphic evidence is late and ambivalent. The literature, particularly bardic poetry and song, suggests that the bagpipe was a parvenu in the late-sixteenth century when it began to supplant the harp or clàrsach.¹³ There is no doubt, however, that a bagpipe then emerges in Gaelic society as a powerful and distinctive ‘voice’, being characterised by poets with terms which contrasted it with the softer tones of the clàrsach. In fact, the emergence of a ‘Highland bagpipe’ is part of the story of the emergence of a ‘Lowland bagpipe’, and must share some of the same conditioning such as patterns of settlement and lordship, and the spread of market networks and communications. More specific conditioning lies in the context of patronage (and reward systems) in Gaelic society and links with Ireland; we may speculate how an evolving instrumental tradition was conditioned by factors such as function, adaptation, transmission and change (and attrition). A further question is posed by hypotheses of the origins of piobaireachd in different musical and metrical forms and possible higher and lower registers and styles. It evolved from what might be described as a rhetorical form to a formulaic and fixed canon in the nineteenth century and a ‘tyranny of pibroch’ has haunted the

¹³ This was noticed significantly by MacCulloch (as above), who made the important point that in a wealth of early panegyric poetry no reference to the bagpipe was to be found.
tradition in the twentieth.\textsuperscript{14} Further research will allow the musicologist to validate these hypotheses.

4. Piping dynasties

The historical narrative of the GHB conventionally includes some account of the leading piping families such as the MacCrimmons, MacArthurs, Rankins, MacGregors and others who performed a role hereditarily in the service of clan chieftains. Their status is variously described but conventional accounts have never ventured far beyond the autonomous development of the individual families. However, in many cases their individual histories and traditions yield significant details linking them to Ireland and offer an interpretive framework for understanding the individual family narratives. The learned and literary ‘orders’ of medieval Scotland were described as a significant cultural phenomenon by Professor Derick Thomson (1967).\textsuperscript{15} This perspective has largely been lost in the face of a narrower historiography. This account revisits this perspective and explores ‘bardic’ origins, links with Ireland and a context for the piping families own pursuit of excellence.

5. The Pastoral and New Bagpipe

In spite of a perception of the autonomous development of the GHB at an unspecified early period and of its iconographic role in recent generations, the work of assembling the material record of piping in Scotland has revealed, paradoxically, a predominance of instruments other than the GHB in the surviving record. Material evidence is much more varied and tells a different story, most prominently characterised by a range of instruments from simple shawms and pipes to sophisticated chamber instruments more obviously rooted

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\textsuperscript{14} The point has been made forcibly in William Donaldson, \textit{The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society, 1750-1930}, Tuckwell Press 2000, in which he names and shames the architects of ‘pibroch’; see \textit{Times Literary Supplement} 11 August 2000 for a review of Donaldson by Hugh Cheape.

\textsuperscript{15} Derick Thomson, Gaelic Learned Orders and Literati in Medieval Scotland, in \textit{Scottish Studies} Volume 12 (1968), 57-78.
in the Baroque and Neo-baroque than in a Scottish folk music tradition. The material culture record now challenges irresistibly the accuracy and authenticity of the ‘grand narrative’ and conventional wisdom and demonstrates, inter alia, the impact of the Baroque on the Scottish tradition. This points the way forward to a new organology - the study of the instruments of music - based on a national collection and drawing on comparisons with UK and overseas collections.

6. Taste and humour

The ‘Lowland Bagpipe’ in its different forms was not evident in musicology (defined as the scholarly study of music in both historical and scientific aspects) before the founding of the Lowland and Border Pipers’ Society in 1981. We lack any searching and analytical presentation of the bagpipe before the publications of Francis Collinson and Roderick Cannon, and even these scholars have not explored the Scottish Union Pipe – to be considered for our purposes as a ‘Lowland Bagpipe’. Taste and humour’, considered to be the achievement of the Union Pipe, shows how this extraordinary instrument grew out of Enlightenment society and contemporary taste as defined in the philosophy of ‘aesthetics’. This new and extraordinary bagpipe emerged from the Neo-Baroque and musical performance, initially in London and spreading to Newcastle, Edinburgh and Dublin, and made by one or two makers whose history has until recently been obscure. More fundamentally, this earlier variety of types of instruments, very evident in the material record, has been largely masked by the predominance of the GHB in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with a perceived national status which seemed to preclude any more exploration of the origins and functions of these other instruments.

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17 Francis Collinson, The Traditional and National Music of Scotland, London: RKP 1966, has tended to be more lastingly useful than his later The Bagpipe; Roderick Cannon has begun the exploration of the Union Pipe through printed music collections, see his Bibliography of Bagpipe Music, Edinburgh: John Donald 1980, 8-14, 76-98.
18 The phrase is used in an early-nineteenth century Union Pipe Tutor by its author, Henry Coleclough.
7. The maestros

'The Bag-pipe is, perhaps, the only national instrument in Europe. Every other is peculiar to many countries, but the Bag-pipe to Scotland alone.'

These words by Donald MacDonald (1767-1840), born in Trotternish, Skye, subsequently soldier and then bagpipe-maker in Edinburgh, introduce the concept of the GHB as the 'national instrument'. They were published in the Preface to his collection of *piobaireachd* of c. 1819.19 Such a concept of the GHB as 'national instrument' is significant, to be considered as remarkable success story or over-blown national conceit, or somewhere in between the two on a spectrum between respect and disdain.

Certain factors seem to contribute to this view, for example the role of the Highlander as soldier in the British armies of empire, and more specifically the involvement of Highland soldiers in the Seven Years' War, then the American War of Independence and the Napoleonic Wars.20 Disproportionately high numbers of Highland soldiers were involved and culturally this was the first experience of 'global war' for a country like Scotland and for an embattled Gaelic culture. The founding of the Highland Societies of London and Edinburgh from 1778 to 1784 begins a process of 'rescue' and research into an ancient culture then perceived as in danger of disappearing. The subject of Highland music was high on the agenda. From this point, the topic of the GHB and its character and origins begin to be articulated robustly from outside the Highlands and Islands, and a degree of fabrication and distortion to colour the 'story'. This has been thoroughly analysed by Donaldson but he confines his attention to the GHB and neglects the wider interests and obsessions of nineteenth-century Scots. Other scholars have described a 'cultural sublimation'

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20 The size of that involvement is documented by David Stewart of Garth, *Sketches of the Character, Manners and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland*, Second Edition, Edinburgh 1822. Between 1756 and 1816, it is estimated that about 48,300 men were recruited from the Highlands and Islands to serve in 23 Line and 26 Fencible Regiments.
and the extent to which nineteenth-century romanticism focussed on ‘appurtenances’ rather than ideas.\textsuperscript{21}

The course of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of an historical treatment for the GHB based on assumptions of an autonomous development of the bagpipe within the Highlands of Scotland and supported by a ‘grand narrative’, inferring a stereotype instrument and depending on a simplified ‘morphology’ and concepts of continuity and antiquity. Assumptions such as this were supported by reconstructions of what were passed off as historic instruments.\textsuperscript{22} This section is supported by research on the making of bagpipes in Scotland and the evolution of a stereotype instrument, c.1780-1830 at the hands of Hugh Robertson and Donald MacDonald in Edinburgh, using the testimony of surviving material culture as the evidence left by a largely ‘silent’ bagpipe making trade.


CD *Bagpipe. A national collection of a national instrument* (NMS 2007)

A catalogue raisonné of the piping collections of the National Museums Scotland [NMS], supported by an assessment of collections and published research, is contained in a CD/digital format. The CD has been assembled over a four-year period from the National Museums’ collections information system and includes over 2,100 separate records besides editorial and interpretive information, sound files and graphics. A proportion of the information carried in it is already available on the SCRAM [Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network] website where it was placed as part of the Resources for Learning Scotland project in 2003. The supporting descriptive, interpretational and editorial sections amount to about 44,500 words. The ‘raw data’ in the form of a standardised museum object documentation amounts to over 150,000 words. This is the evidence to substantiate the arguments presented above and makes available for the first time the ‘material culture’ of the bagpipe and the raw material for an organology of piping.

The museum collection of musical instruments (in the more modern and musicological sense) began in the late-nineteenth century and in the era of the founding of the large public education collections and ‘national museums’. The formation of a collection began in Scotland in 1872, at the same time as the South Kensington Musical Instrument Exhibition. In general terms, the process of forming a collection is shaped by the survival of ‘evidence’ and dictated by an acquisitions policy. Until recently the National Museums had no specific collecting policy for bagpipes but collected items illustrating Scottish history or craftsmanship and the applied and decorative arts. This approach resulted in a small but indiscriminate (though aesthetically pleasing) collection of bagpipes in the national collection, but a noticeable absence of the ‘national instrument’. Museums, with their own motivations, interests and disciplines,

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had not been required to produce any coherent account of the GHB and a lack of intellectual curiosity about the instrument made no demands on them. The ‘completion’ of a collection and its necessary documentation reveals a hiatus in Scotland between published histories – what might be termed ‘the grand narrative’ – and the material culture of piping. This is nowhere noticed or discussed since there was no expertise available to collect systematically or to offer interpretation of what was there.

The NMS collections information system includes the category ‘musical instruments’ within which there are presently 3,445 records. Musical instruments include the category of ‘bagpipes’ and, if this descriptor is used in searching or querying the NMS system, the full range of piping material can be accessed. This latter category forms the data in the CD. Each object record carries a number, its museum collection object number, which is unique to it; numbers are expressed in slightly differing formats, for example, NMS H.LT 31, NMS H.KL 131, NMS H.OD 69, NMS A.1980.275, NMS H.1995.798, or NMS K.2003.939, reflecting classification and typology as well as the evolution of a museum catalogue since the 1780s. These numbers offer the swiftest path to information on specific items. Other descriptors or criteria can be used to query the database, for example, object name or type of instrument such as Gaida, Piva, Tsambouna or Zukra, materials such as woods, ivory or metals, associations (with people, place or event), and makers and their location. In addition there is a complete list of the makers’ names occurring in the NMS bagpipe collection, with the familiar names for Scotland’s piping culture such as Glen, Hardie, Henderson and Lawrie, and unfamiliar names such as Aziz, Bannon, Duke, Kerr and Massie.

The collection itself and its interpretation shaped the category and object list, rather than the list being shaped according to preconceived formats. Different names, words and terms emerged and these have been arranged in a hierarchy from broader to narrower terms.25 The broadest term is ‘musical instruments’, bagpipes are a category of musical instruments and, at a third level, a further

25 See Appendix.
term will narrow the search; thus ‘musical instruments: bagpipes’ identifies the
different instruments themselves and ‘musical instruments: bagpipes:
components’ goes further into the collection and to the level of object names
and parts of instruments. The collection includes 838 bagpipes but, of these, 124
are complete instruments and 714 are components or fragments. This
distinguishes the ‘national collection’ from earlier musical instrument
collections; the latter were characterised by representative selections of high-
grade examples and standards set in the era of ‘national museum’ building
following the Great Exhibition of 1851. For the first time, separate parts of
instruments are recorded as individual objects within the collection and
accorded equal status with complete instruments. This methodology was
instigated in the author’s Check-list of Bagpipes in the Edinburgh University
Collection of Historic Musical Instruments of 1983. Taken as a whole, the
‘national collection’ now offers forensic evidence for the evolution of the
bagpipe in Scotland.

The words and terms form a systematically arranged list or ‘thesaurus’. The
‘NMS Piping Collection Category and Object List’ has been sent to the
Museums Documentation Association (MDA) in Cambridge to be included in
the MDA terminology bank with thesauri from other major UK museum
collections. Under the title The NMS National Instrument Thesaurus the piping
collections’ terminologies will be published online by the MDA in a format
which complies with SPECTRUM, the international standard for museum
documentation.

The CD, with its 2,100 records, has effectively assembled for the first time the
raw material for an organology of piping. It also includes a ‘collection of a
culture’ in the wide range of material which belongs to the art of making and
playing the bagpipe. It offers an ethnomusicology for piping, in other words for
the study of music within its cultural context, and the exploration of the many
interlinked facets of that context. It challenges the fundamental concept of a
‘national instrument’ as an ancient and authentic building block of Scottish
culture. It illustrates the wide scope of the collection with the instruments themselves in a collection beginning with a French Musette in 1872 and concluding for the purposes of the present database with an Egyptian Arghul in 2007. Scottish, British and Irish instruments predominate and illustrate a variety between Great Highland Bagpipe, Lowland Bellows Bagpipe, Border Half-long Bagpipe, Northumbrian Small Pipe, Pastoral Pipe, Union Pipe, and Uilleann Pipe. There is also an important collection of European and Middle Eastern bagpipes, including for example a Bedouin bagpipe from Syria noticed by other scholars (NMS A.1927.2). The components class of the collection is large, reflecting the significance given to collecting parts and fragments of instruments, for example H.1995.798 and K.2003.688 are items made by a spinning-wheel maker in Aberdeen; a stock for a bagpipe which is a ‘common stock’ for three or more drones emerges as a Union Pipe made by Robert Reid of North Shields in the early-nineteenth century (NMS K.2005.105), or a set of bellows of eighteenth-century date from Tarland in North-East Scotland, registered in the National Museums as fireside bellows, has been subsequently identified as musical instrument bellows (NMS H.LT 108). There are 155 reeds of double and single type, including very recent ‘technology’ in a set of ‘Ezeedrone’ © (NMS K.2005.188). There is material to demonstrate the culture of learning, handling – ‘setting up’ – and playing the bagpipe, such as music, published and unpublished. There is a manuscript of ‘Campbell of Cawdor’ by Angus Mackay (NMS K.2002.1287), manuscripts prepared by army pipers (eg. NMS K.2002.1337, K.2005.47), two unique Union Pipe manuscripts (NMS H.LT 116 and H.1995.795), letters, accounts and a wide variety of documents (eg. NMS K.2002.1870). A set of tools used for engraving pipe music includes 84 records (NMS H.1995.690-739); these are the music engraving tools of Alexander Boyd, working for Aird and Coghill, music printers and publishers, in Glasgow between 1921 and 1975. Equipment and ephemera throw light on the culture of piping in past generations and include reed boxes, containers and

26 The sociological discourse includes the bagpipe as an element in the ‘distorting legacy of mythic structures’ dominating Scottish culture, but it is clear that it has escaped further critique, presumably because so little is known of its background and nothing of the faking of old instruments; see David McCrone, Understanding Scotland. The sociology of a nation (see Footnote 8), 131.

27 Anthony Baines, Bagpipes (see Note 2), 40, where it is compared to a poorer example in the Pitt Rivers Museum; see also Jean Jenkins and Poul Kovsing Olsen, Music and Musical Instruments in the World of Islam, London: Horniman Museum 1976, 68-69.
carrying cases for bagpipes, for example, a carrying case of about 1830 complete with its contents of bagpipe accessories (H.1995.795). The stock-in-trade and tools of turnery from Glens' shop in the Lawnmarket, Edinburgh, with a business beginning in 1827 and trading until 1978, has been a vital building block of the ‘national collection’. This collection established the significance of parts and fragments of instruments for a more searching analysis of the bagpipe (eg. NMS K.2005.105-183). Paintings and portraits have been collected, more as forms of documentation rather than works of art, and are importantly represented by the early-eighteenth century ‘Piper to the Laird of Grant’ (NMS H.OD 69). The collection includes highly idiosyncratic items such as two sets of foot bellows (NMS K.2005.517 and K.2006.133) used by George Moss (1903-1987), piobaireachd exponent, to enable him to blow the practice chanter and Highland pipes for recording by the School of Scottish Studies.

The broad purpose of the CD is twofold, in the first place, to feed a body of data into specialist fields of musicology and secondly, to make publicly available information, analysis and interpretation. This is in line with a museum duty to conserve and make accessible and with a scholarly duty to place research in the public domain. Hitherto lacking a ‘national collection’, Scotland has been unable to offer any detailed account of its ‘national instrument’. A ‘national collection of the national instrument’ offers new material for historical narrative and for analysis of the bagpipe in Scotland. To date, narrative history has been almost entirely silent on such organological detail. In due course, its accessibility will be enhanced in the form of online catalogue, and historical and scientific potential more readily realised.

29 Peter Cooke, Pibroch: George Moss, University of Edinburgh: School of Scottish Studies (Scottish Tradition Cassette Series 6) 1982.
Appendix

Piping Collection
Object Category and Object Name List

Musical instruments : bagpipes
Bagpipe
Bagpipe, bellows
Bagpipe, Cornemuse
Bagpipe, Doedelzak
Bagpipe, Duda
Bagpipe, Gaida
Bagpipe, Gaita
Bagpipe, Ghaita
Bagpipe, Highland
Bagpipe, Highland Reel
Bagpipe, miniature Highland
Bagpipe, Indian
Bagpipe, Lowland
Bagpipe, Musette
Bagpipe, Northumbrian
Bagpipe, Piva
Bagpipe, Small Pipes
Bagpipe, Syria
Bagpipe, Tsambouna
Bagpipe, Uilleann
Bagpipe, Union
Bagpipe, Zampogna
Bagpipe, Zukra
Ciife
Double hornpipe, Zamr
Reed pipe, Arghul
Reed pipe, Zummara
Stock-and-horn

Musical instruments : bagpipes : accessories
Banner, pipe
Card, thread
Cleaning rod, shotgun
Container, bagpipe seasoning
Container, hemp
Container, reed
Instruction, bagpipe seasoning
Mace, drum major's
Pad, waxing
Pocket book
Safety pin
Sandpaper
Stopper
Thread
Wax, sealing

Musical instruments : bagpipes : bagpipe making tools
Bit, boring
Bit, cutting
Bit, drill
Bit, hand turning
Bit, reamer
Bit, spoon
Bit, throat
Bit, turning
Block, shaping
Brush, cleaning
Chisel
Chisel, turning
Clamp, scissor
Cutter
Cutter, wire
File
Gauge
Gauge, wire
Grip
Key, winding
Lever
Marker wheel
Name stamp
Pattern
Pincers, blacksmith's
Plate, grading
Pliers
Punch
Rasp
Reamer
Rod
Screw cutting plate
Soldering iron
Spandrel
Spokeshave
Template
Tool
Tweezers
Vice, hand

Musical instruments: bagpipes: components
Bag cover, bagpipe
Bag, bagpipe
Bellows
Bellows air inlet
Billet
Blowpipe
Blowpipe, Gaida
Box
Case, carrying
Chanter
Chanter key
Chanter, Gaida
Connecting pipe, bellows
Crate
Double chanter
Drone
Drone joint
Drone joint, bass
Drone joint, tenor
Drone section
Drone, bass
Drone, Gaida
Drone, tenor
Drone, top
Mount
Name plate
Practice chanter
Reed
Reed, bass drone
Reed, chanter
Reed, double
Reed, drone
Reed, Gaida
Reed, practice chanter
Reed, single
Reed, staple
Reed, tenor drone
Reed, treble drone
Reed, Tsambouna
Regulator
Sole
Stock
Stock, bass drone
Stock, chanter
Stock, tenor drone
Stopper
Tuning cord
Valve

Musical instruments : bagpipes : documents
Account
Advertisement
Article, newspaper
Book
Booklet
Card, business
Card, dance
Card, membership
Catalogue, auction
Catalogue, commercial
Catalogue, music
Catalogue, record
Chart, fingering
Insert
Invitation
Journal
Leaflet
Letter
List
Packet, cigarette
Packet, promotional
Price list
Programme
Programme, concert
Programme, music
Receipt
Sheet
Testimonial
Ticket

Musical instruments : bagpipes : miscellaneous
Bookcase
Bowl, bowling
Brooch, plaid
Buckle, shoe
Doublet
Figure, bagpiper
Flute
Handkerchief, souvenir, piper's
Jacket
Jug
Kilt
Plaid
Sampler
Sash, shoulder
Sword
Tie-pin
Tin, shortbread
T-shirt

Musical instruments : bagpipes : music
Book, manuscript music
Book, music
Catalogue, music
Music
Music theory
Printing plate, music
Sheet, manuscript music

Musical instruments : bagpipes : music engraving tools
Burnisher
Cutter, balkan
Cutter, bar line
Cutter, ledger line
Cutter, slur
Cutter, staff line
Cutter, stem
Dividers
Finisher, line
Hammer
Hammer, sharpener
Pull
Punch
Scriber
Tool, music engraving
T-square

Musical instruments : bagpipes : paintings, drawings, photographs
Drawing
Engraving, portrait
Painting
Painting, portrait
Photograph
Poster
Print
Print, portrait

Musical instruments : bagpipes : prizes
Bowl, prize
Brooch, plaid
Case, medal
Chanter, prize
Dirk
Medal
Scabbard
Sgian dubh
Snuff mull
Trophy

Musical instruments: bagpipes: recorded sound
Record
Record, gramophone
Wax cylinder
Section 1.

Theme and Variation – representing the national instrument

[This is a review of the topic ‘Making a national collection of a national instrument’ and includes the Appendices from the original Lecture text]

A national instrument

The perception of the Great Highland Bagpipe as the ‘national instrument’ has grown since the early-nineteenth century. The claim was made in the Preface to the first published collection of Highland bagpipe music of c.1819 by its author and publisher, Donald MacDonald, that the bagpipe was the ‘only national instrument in Europe’.\(^\text{30}\) The claim chimed with the cultural atmosphere of the day. The Highlands, resounding to the publishing success of the poetry of ‘Ossian’ from the 1760s and coming under the enraptured gaze of European Romanticism, were an object of the greatest curiosity, although an understanding of Highland life and Gaelic culture probably owed more to Ossian than to personal knowledge and experience. The Highlands and Islands were still by the turn of the century a terra incognita and their music among Europe’s exotica. Dr Johnson’s comment of 1773 in his *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* still rang true:

‘To the southern inhabitants of Scotland, the state of the mountains and the islands is equally unknown with that of Borneo or Sumatra. Of both they have heard only a little and guess the rest. They are strangers to the language and the manners, to the advantages and wants of the people, whose life they would model, and whose evils they would remedy’.\(^\text{31}\)

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The bagpipe was essentially ‘rescued’ by the British army as its single most powerful ‘marching’ instrument with the drum. It was then one of the prominent elements of what was presented to the contemporary world of the late-eighteenth century as an ancient culture. The characterisation of the national instrument and an ancient musical tradition was a familiar expression of the Scottish cultural perspective in the first quarter of the nineteenth century: ‘the Bag-pipe is sacred to Scotland, and speaks a language which Scotsmen only feel. It talks to them of home, and of all the past …’ appears to summarise national sentiment in Donald MacDonald’s Preface. It may then seem a paradox or even a tragedy that Scotland has had no national collection of its national instrument.

Organological beginnings

Whether as icon or ingredient of a stereotype, the bagpipe is still widely recognised as the national instrument of Scotland but has been poorly represented in national historical, ethnological and musicological collections. When ‘national history’ museums emerged in nineteenth-century Europe, Scotland acquired the collections but failed to provide a building for their display until the opening of the Museum of Scotland in 1998. These issues may be identified as symptom of a wider malaise, that is, the dominating influence of English political hegemony, state-centred and teleological, on the writing of ‘British history’. Scotland tended in the past to connive at this intellectual state of affairs and submit to silent snubs such as no Scotsman ever being asked to contribute on ‘Bagpipes’ to Grove’s Dictionary of Music. Not surprisingly, Ireland was not so submissive and had complained about the under-representation of Irish musicians and composers in the standard sources such as Grove. The bagpipe has also fallen below the gaze of musicological scholarship and has been unevenly represented in the literature with the

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33 Francis O’Neill, Irish Minstrels and Musicians. Chicago 1913, 196.
exception of more recent work by scholars such as Baines, Cannon and Purser.\textsuperscript{34} The bagpipe has been a poor relation in instrumental history, paradoxically perhaps given its pedigree and its technical and tonal characteristics. It has not been studied in any real depth, at least in Western Europe, in folk and traditional music research, again with recent exceptions such as Hubert Boone, Ernst Eugen Schmidt, Zoltán Szabó, Alfonso García-Oliva and Per-Ulf Allmo.\textsuperscript{35} It is timely to consider means by which the bagpipe may be drawn into mainstream musicological scholarship.

The bagpipe has not been entirely neglected and examples have been collected for British and Continental museums. If this could be described as a scholarly process, it has specific origins in an international exhibition, ‘The Special Exhibition of Ancient Musical Instruments’, held in the new South Kensington Museum in London in 1872. This marked the beginnings in the United Kingdom of the study of historic musical instruments, the material culture of music and the systematic collection of musical instruments for museum and conservatoire.\textsuperscript{36} Since the late-nineteenth century other more comprehensive collections have been assembled including representative bagpipes in the Pitt-Rivers Museum and with the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle (Morpeth Chantry Museum). Overseas there are notable collections of bagpipes, for example in the Department of Musical Instruments in the Metropolitan Museum.


\textsuperscript{36} Carl Engel, \textit{Catalogue of the Special Exhibition of Ancient Musical Instruments, MDCCCLXXII,} London: South Kensington Museum 1873.
of Art in New York (the Crosby Brown Collection) and collections in Poland, the Czech Republic, France, Belgium and Spain.\textsuperscript{37}

Where examples of bagpipes, whether Scottish or European, have been collected and placed in museums, they were in the past often acquired for an association with person or event, this association and reputation often being the factor ensuring their survival. Alternatively they have been acquired for their aesthetic qualities and craftsmanship and displayed in museums of the decorative arts; this was the treatment for example of the Victoria and Albert Museum’s musical instrument collection.\textsuperscript{38} Here a comparatively large and specialist collection was subsumed within the larger collections of the Department of Furniture and Woodwork since, for administrative purposes, the collection had to be identified with the predominant material in its make-up. It was, as the argument went, more obvious to allocate the musical instruments to ‘Furniture and Woodwork’ than to ‘Ceramics and Glass’.

\textit{A national collection}

The first bagpipe in the collections of the National Museums of Scotland, received coincidentally in 1872 from the artist and antiquary, James Drummond, was a French \textit{musette de cour} purchased in Rome at the sale about 1830 of the effects of Henry Benedict, Cardinal York, and said to have belonged to his brother, Prince Charles Edward Stewart - a compelling association for a national collection. Distractingly, these pipes are described in the records of the Society of Antiquaries as ‘… of the Irish form and mounted with ivory and silver keys’ (NMS H.LT 6).\textsuperscript{39}


\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Proceedings} (1880). Bequest by the late Mr Drummond to the Society, \textit{Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland} Volume 12 (1879-1880), 374-404; it was reported that Sir Walter Scott
In museological terms, the national collections have been well supplied with antiquities from artists’ studios, for example those of Allan Ramsay, James Drummond, Gourlay Steell, Noel Paton and Skeoch Cumming. Among a remarkable selection of material bequeathed to the Museum by Drummond in 1877 were ‘Pair of old Bagpipes, with mountings of lead and horn’ (NMS H.LT 5) and an ‘Old Scottish musical instrument, called the “Stock-and-Horn”, a species of flageolet, 22 inches in length, the pipe of ebony, mounted with bone or ivory, and the lower part of horn.’ (NMS H.LT 12).40 One of three or more surviving Stock-and-Horns, this may even have been made at the artist’s request, as the appropriate shepherd’s pipe for their illustrations of scenes for Allan Ramsay’s ballad-opera, ‘The Gentle Shepherd’.

The significance for collecting of person and event remained strong in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century and it is ironic that the survival of certain items is rooted in such an ideology. The collecting policy of a national historical museum of course tended in these directions of heroes and battles. Another early acquisition was a set of Highland bagpipes said to have been played at the Battle of Waterloo (NMS H.LT 31).41 It is difficult to judge this attribution since the instrument is a mixture of parts of self-evidently different dates although there is no critical comment alluding to this in museum records. Battles generate tradition and commemoration and none scarcely more than the Battle of Culloden (see NMS M.1951.1204), while another set of pipes, incredibly, was said to have been at Flodden (NMS H.LT 77). As a species of oral testimony, it seems never to have been seriously questioned and poor provenance and the want of an organology left no benchmarks against which to judge old instruments.

No formal commitment was made to musicology while responsibility for musical instrument collections was considered to lie elsewhere. Re-visiting this

claimed (on unknown authority) that the bagpipe was an instrument of which the Prince was fond and that he possessed several sets.

40 Ibid., 377-378.
principle in 1985 on the amalgamation of Scotland’s two national museums, the Royal Scottish Museum and the Museum of Antiquities, it was decided that the newly created National Museums of Scotland should not create musical or piping sections but should defer to specialist collections such as the neighbouring Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments.\(^\text{42}\) The dispersal of the piping material to other collections such as this was then considered but rejected following the case being made for its retention within the National Museums (see Appendix 1). A Collecting Policy was formulated for piping on the grounds that there was a collection of significance and some specialist curatorial expertise within the new national grouping (and not elsewhere), and that this could and should be used to save particular examples of instruments in the public domain; in other words, a collecting policy accepted within the museum community legitimised the acquisition of bagpipes and related material by the National Museums (see Appendix 2). This focus was subsequently recognised and endorsed by the Museums and Galleries Commission in their ‘Review of Musical Instrument Collections’ in the United Kingdom.\(^\text{43}\) This was followed by the publication of their *Standards in the Museum Care of Musical Instruments* in 1995 which acknowledged the expertise of the National Museums of Scotland and raised the bagpipe to the fraternity of musicological curatorship (see Appendix 3).

The late Dr R B K Stevenson had earlier pointed out the large and anomalous gaps in areas of museum collections in Scotland, such as in bagpipes and the culture of piping in that nowhere was the story of the bagpipe comprehensively explored. In addition, the concept of the bagpipe, fondly perceived as Scotland’s ‘national instrument’, as a member of a universal family of musical instruments seemed to be only dimly understood.\(^\text{44}\) Piping scholarship, to use a phrase that


might have conveyed certain perhaps ambiguous messages in Scotland, had been an entity of varying value. All these factors encouraged the pursuit of the goal of a ‘national collection’.

A further idiosyncratic feature of museum collections had become obvious, emerging significantly with the first acquisitions in the 1870s, that there were few sets of the iconic Great Highland Bagpipe in the collections of the community of Scottish museums at large. Those collections which had examples of bagpipes were dominated by types of chamber instruments, so-called ‘Pastoral Pipes’, ‘Union Pipes’ and Small-pipes, many albeit of exquisite workmanship. This ‘imbalance’ or lacuna was nowhere noticed or discussed but could be partly explained by motivations and fashions in UK museum collecting since the late-nineteenth century. One or two reasons can now be further suggested for this imbalance in Scottish collections. When musical instrument collections began to be formed in the second half of the nineteenth century, they absorbed bagpipes then no longer being played and out of fashion. These same instruments were generally types of ‘Chamber Pipes’ of the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, finely made pieces used for indoor and theatrical performance in the formerly prevailing fashion for pastoral and ballad operas (eg. NMS A.1947.105). But this earlier variety of types of instruments and their significance came to be masked by the predominance of the Great Highland Bagpipe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A narrowing of the tradition and repertoire of Scottish piping is also evident in this period. The bagpipe tradition was beginning to fade in Europe as a whole with the strident exception of Scotland. The demands of empire and Victorian militarism offered a last gasp to an ‘ancient’ bagpipe which had been retrieved from its mountain fastness and made to perform to order. Alternatively, since there was no material evidence for a pre-existence, it might now be claimed that the Great Highland Bagpipe never existed as a historical musical instrument, and it may

‘Aerophonic instruments that incorporate a reed and airbag have been used in Eurasia and the region of the Mediterranean Sea for thousands of years. It would be difficult, in fact, to name a single nation or ethnic group that has not produced at least some type of simple bagpipe.’


be significant that the Great Highland Bagpipe is absent from Hipkins and Gibb’s seminal *Musical Instruments Historic, Rare and Unique* of 1888. Research is showing, for example, that any bagpipe considered in the literature as an ancient Highland bagpipe is evidently not authentic or may even be a fake.\(^{47}\) One or two examples in the national collection exemplify the problems of interpretation of historic bagpipes for which extravagant claims have been made (NMS K.1998.1130; NMS K.2005.197; NMS K.2003.939).

The National Museums’ collecting policy has run its course for more than twenty-five years and a selection of over two thousand items assembled for the national collections. Recently, an outstanding acquisition was the purchase in 1983 of the Ross and Glen Collection with the collaboration of the Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments where it had been on long-term loan.\(^ {48}\) As the contents of a very active shop and business of longstanding, this collection supplied at a stroke one of the most important building blocks of a national collection, that is, a mass of different parts and fragments of bagpipes as well as a range of other musical instruments - the stock-in-trade of the Glens’ business - giving a detailed picture of the development of the instrument from the early-eighteenth through to the late-twentieth centuries. This included unusual pieces of documentation (see Appendix 4). Between fragments and complete instruments, the principle was established for the ‘national collection’ to accord more or less equal status to every single item from Glens’ shop. In the recesses of the premises was the forensic evidence from which to assemble the organology of the bagpipe.\(^ {49}\)


Concluding remarks

Forming what might be tentatively (or tendentiously) defined as ‘a national collection of a national instrument’ has been a relatively swift process, achieved essentially within thirty years. Foundations were already in place with a range of museum specimens but the starting tally was about twenty items and the end product is well over two thousand.

The principal purpose of a museum collection is display for education and research for better understanding of our environment. The larger and more comprehensive a collection becomes, the greater becomes the potential for research, with the qualification that the process is better for being policy-driven rather than random and serendipitous. A museum collection preserves musical instruments as ‘documents’, supplying evidence of original design and manufacturing processes. The simple purpose of the ‘national collection of a national instrument’ is to achieve this and to nourish fresh awareness (hitherto conditioned by a distinctive national environment in Scottish history) such as offering an account of the Great Highland Bagpipe and its culture, and prompting fresh perspectives and understanding such as the wider influence of the Baroque and Neo-baroque on the Scottish musical tradition. Without a ‘national collection’, these topics remain shadowy and neglected, reflecting perhaps the extent to which the topic has been understood in Scotland, arguably with a lack of intellectual curiosity and a self-perpetuating ‘clarity’ which obviated the need for further study. The observable absence of the bagpipe from musicological scholarship in the twentieth-century, apart from one or two notable modern exceptions, and the evident hiatus between published histories and the material culture suggest lines of enquiry for the future. The inclusion of bagpipes and Scotland by the Museums and Galleries Commission in their Survey of 1992-1994, following input from the former National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, helped to redress the balance. This brings the bagpipe into the scholarly discourse and widens the potential exponentially for a ‘national collection of the national instrument’.
Postscript

The concept of a ‘national collection’ bore fruit in 1994 when a plan for a piping museum was included in the larger project of placing the College of Piping in Glasgow on a sounder footing. The Trust, that had been created to raise funds and undertake the work, requested support from the National Museums of Scotland for the enterprise of creating a museum of piping. The initial understanding was that the ‘national collection’ could be drawn on to supplement the collection already in the College of Piping. The unfortunate secession of the College from the project left a void in the plans which, in the event, was easily filled from the collections of the National Museums. The new Museum of Piping, therefore, was assembled by the author entirely from the national collections. The pursuit of ‘a national collection of a national instrument’ in the immediately preceding years was thus vindicated, although no recognition of this was gained within the Museums and it was clear that those outwith the Museums unquestioningly assumed that a ‘national collection’ for the bagpipe must exist within the National Museums of Scotland.

The brief for a museum of piping in the Piping Centre in Glasgow proposed a display of the history of the Great Highland Bagpipe, conforming, it must be said, to Scotland’s ‘grand narrative’. In the absence of sufficient diagnostic items in the national or any other collection, an alternative display was offered putting the bagpipe in Scotland into the wider context of European and Neobaroque instrumentation. The Museum of Piping was installed in 1994-1995, in circumstances severely constrained by the concurrent enterprise of the Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, and was formally opened by HRH Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay, in January 1996. The Museum, with its complex sound systems, was a runner-up for the Museum of the Year Award in the following year.
Appendix 1.

[Responses by the National Museums of Scotland to the Museums and Galleries Commission for bagpipe and musical instrument collection, conservation and care]

Review of Musical Instrument Collections

We have been asked for a response to the Museums and Galleries Commission on their proposal for a 'Review of Musical Instrument Collections' in the United Kingdom.

The National Museums of Scotland [NMS] hold distinguished collections of musical instruments, eg. an ethnographic collection (the Jean Jenkins Collection), collections relating to the bagpipe in Britain and Europe, in some areas rivalling and surpassing collections in London, Nuremberg, Paris, New York and Washington. We have a strong interest in such a Review, its terms of reference, its findings, and its ultimate recommendations, although our curatorial input into musical instruments and musicology is strictly limited. The brief for the Review is satisfactory although we, as a national museum, are more concerned in some issues than others. Our main points of interest (following the layout of the brief) are as follows:

A. Information on the range and scope of musical collections is difficult to provide immediately. NMS collections are included in the main published guides such as Clifford Bevan’s Musical Instrument Collections in the British Isles of 1990 (which is intended as a detailed guide), and also have entries in appropriate gazetteers at home and abroad such as the British Music Yearbook and the 'European Ethnomusicology Repertoire’ in Paris.

With present resources of staff time, it would be difficult (or impossible) to provide a scholarly account of NMS musical collections. The collections are not geared for sophisticated levels of research, eg. into technical details of tuning or timbre, and scholarly enquiries frequently seek information which we cannot provide, eg. on ‘pitch’ or acoustic properties of instruments. Given the level of enquiries by post and visitor, published catalogues or sufficient documentation
are necessary and highly desirable. But documentation requires to be
standardised whereas, at present, standards vary throughout the UK, Europe and
North America and they (eg. Kurt Sachs’ criteria) are difficult to attain.

NMS has planned a catalogue raisonné of its bagpipe collections. The response
to published descriptive lists, histories, or catalogues raisonnés has generally
been good and such publications usually establish reputations for their holding
institutions eg. Catalogue of the Crosby Brown Collection, 1901-1914; David D
Boyden, Catalogue of the Hill Collection ... in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
1970; Anthony Baines, Bagpipes Oxford, Pitt Rivers Museum 1960 (Balfour
Collection).

B. The NMS share some but not all of the features and problems of
musicological collections as suggested in the brief.

The conservation or restoration to playing condition is an issue much discussed
but seldom practically addressed. This is fundamental to the existence of some
collections eg. the Russell Collection is intended as a ‘playing collection’. The
response to the conservation issue has to be a guarded one; at present the
consensus within the NMS would be ‘yes’ for conservation and ‘no’ for
restoration. Furthermore, very little specialist restoration skills for musical
instruments are available in Scotland (ref. Scottish Conservation Directory

Since we have a collection of bagpipe material of national and international
significance, our main purpose is collection for preservation so that a reference
collection of three-dimensional material is built up in a subject area of
‘ethnomusicology’ that is otherwise poorly documented and inadequately
described. The instrument is primitive in origins and universal in adoption and
there is much research to be done on eg. materials, varieties of construction,
acoustic properties.

The NMS does not make loans for study and playing purposes, does not make
special provision for marketing, does not exploit reproduction or recording
possibilities except on an ad hoc basis, and does not have a specific policy in
UK terms on acquisitions in the wider field. Co-ordination of acquisition with other musical collections in the UK might be appropriate.

C. In the experience of the NMS, the term 'musical collection' is difficult to define since a musical collection has evolved as one element in widely based collections of culture, human history, applied and decorative arts (e.g. musical instruments acquired as curios or small pieces of furniture), or social history. This situation cannot be as clear cut as others such as, for example, the Bate Collection or the Reid Collection. The NMS has already given some consideration to transferring its musical instrument collections on long loan to Edinburgh University; this may not be entirely in the public interest and other formulae may be appropriate to be considered.

Hugh Cheape
13 January 1991

Appendix 2.
Text of NMS Collecting Policy for the bagpipe:

- to form a representative national collection of Scottish and British bagpipes, recognising the considerable variety in sizes and forms of British (including Irish) bagpipes before the nineteenth century.
- to broaden the collection with examples of kindred instruments from Europe, taking account of the history and survival (or attrition) of piping in Western and Eastern Europe.
- to deepen the national collection by acquiring parts of instruments when the opportunity offers (since, as woodwind instrument, the survival rate of sets of bagpipes is poor), double and single reeds, the tools of turnery and manufacture (particularly to record and illustrate the making of bagpipes in Scotland), the material and traditional culture of learning, handling and playing the bagpipes, and examples of bagpipe music (a published tradition only since c.1820).
to interpret and display the piping collection and to research and publish the history of the instrument especially as represented in the collection, and otherwise to raise the profile of the collection as a ‘national collection’.

Appendix 3
[Report to the Director, National Museums of Scotland]

UK Musical Collections Seminar, 13 October 1992

Musical instrument collections held nationwide in a variety of museums and conservatoires pose special problems of curatorship, interpretation and presentation. The NMS was represented at a one-day seminar at the Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC) to discuss musical instrument collections in the public domain and to receive the draft findings of the ‘Review of Musical Collections in the United Kingdom’, the survey commissioned by the MGC in 1991. NMS supplied the MGC review with information and met Dr Hélène La Rue and Kate Arnold-Forster when they visited Edinburgh on behalf of the MGC on 9 July 1992.

The draft report and discussions focused on a range of problems highlighted by the process of review:

- musical instrument collections are generally subsidiary elements of larger collections, to their detriment; the public interest was not best served
- lack of musical specialists in national institutions
- lack of specialist committee to oversee respective collections, therefore collections were marginalised and virtues unrecognised
- inadequate funding, specifically evident in lack of established curatorial posts and of specialist expertise in the public domain
- lack of specialist conservation and of active conservation programmes
- shortcomings in documentation; shortcomings in availability of specialist detail freely commented on
- lack of policy on collecting eg. historically, the Victoria and Albert collected instruments as objects of outstanding design and cabinet-making
- lack of policies on access (i.e. instruments available for playing or not available)
- lack of training; proliferation of museological training but not for musical specialists
- need for a formal framework to advise on musical instruments collections nationwide; an acute absence of a formalised curatorial network for musical instrument collections was commented on

A range of desiderata was discussed and these will form the recommendations of the Review to be published early in 1993. The main needs are as follows:

- purchase funds for ‘modern music’, contemporary work, the work of particular makers and specialists
- more information on conservation to be made available; the MGC will extend its ‘standards of care’ documentation to musical instruments and will advise on developing courses in musical conservation eg. at the MTI in Bradford or in the colleges of music (a recommendation strongly endorsed by the Royal College of Music)
- published statement or statements on ethics of conservation eg. to guard against the destruction of evidence in the face of demand for ‘restoration’
- register of historical musical instruments
- standardised documentation, creation of collections database (warning from the Bodleian against standardised choices of fields), centralised listing of work in progress and research
- national body of expertise, a national advisory committee or formalised curatorial network of musical specialists, who might perform a co-ordinating role, to consider matters of general concern such as cataloguing standards, conservation ethics, and access (eg. policy towards playing or non-playing)
• National strategy on collecting, to achieve the best results from limited staff and financial resources, and to focus eg. on declining or disappearing musical traditions

• Concept of a ‘national collection’, for which the Review solicited opinions, did not generally find favour; rather, strengthen existing provision; there is already a ‘national collection’, though dispersed; more information is needed to corroborate this notion

General discussion and conclusions can be summarised in the following terms:
• Increased funding
• Raise standards
• Information exchange, via information mechanisms and co-ordinating network

Hugh Cheape
14 October 1992

Appendix 4.
[Examples of documentation]

K.2003.1061
Letter written in ink about 1876 on a printed letter form headed ‘MEMORANDUM’ and ‘From Donald McPhee, Teacher and Maker of the Great Highland Bagpipes, 26 Thistle Street, South Side.’ Donald MacPhee (1841-1880) was a pipe maker in Glasgow, with a shop also at 17 Royal Arcade, and was reputed to be the best piper in Scotland. He published a Bagpipe Tutor, a Collection of Marches, Strathspeys and Reels, Jigs and Hornpipes, and two books of Piobaireachd music. The letter was written to John MacGregor (1820-1888) who was Piper to Sir Robert Menzies of Menzies and Weem.
To John McGregor

Sir
I had a visit from an acquaintance of yours and he told me that you wanted some cane. I am out of cane just now but I intend [for intend] going to Belfast for some cane soon and if you let me know what sord [for sort] you would like I will send it to you when I come home. Send the size you want it over.
I have a fine pipe on hand just now. The party that ordered them says that he cannot pay for them. I have other orders that I might but [for put] them in for but thay [for they] are too large in the ivory and the orders I have are for light virls as thay are for gentlemen and thay do not care for heavy pipes. I want £8 - - for them but if you could get a market for them I would alow you £1 - - for your trouble.
I would send them throught [for through] if required for inspection at any time if you think that you could get them off. Thay are a very fine pipe, just finished this week.

K.2005.461.2

Draft letter in French for Messrs J and R Glen of Edinburgh, dated 18 April 1882, concerning the ordering of a quantity of cut reed (roseau) and its dispatch in some form of basket container (corbeille). A sample (échantillon) had been sent to the recipient. The consignment to be shipped from Marseille.

K.2002.1367.9

Letter written in ink on a small piece of paper, with instructions for making up pipe-bag seasoning:

David Glen & Sons
1 Greenside Place
Edinburgh
Dear Sir

Regarding mixture for Bag
Pure Lard, equal quantities Resin
Melt them until they come to the boil, let stand until cold (if you are making as much as will do twice or thrice) and it will firm up, then when you wish to use it take about a Teacupful and slightly heat it, do not put it in hot.
Pour it in chanter stock and give the bag a good rub to spread it well over the inside then let it lie for an hour or two. Clean out stocks with a thin stick or with a small piece of rag or end. If you can get archangel Tar put a small piece into mixture after melting and stir it until it melts a Teaspoonful will do for 2 Teacupfuls.

Yours sincerely
D Glen and Sons

We have it in tins all ready for use if you don’t manage.
Section 2.
A distant past – early history, the bagpipe comes to Scotland

[This is a review of the topic ‘The Early History of the Scottish Bagpipe’]

Scotland is a country whose culture is strongly associated with the bagpipe and its music, and the bagpipe, worldwide, has come to be identified with Scotland, in the form specifically of a version of the instrument known as the Great Highland Bagpipe. We now assume that the bagpipe was in fact a late arrival in Scotland, although this goes against a well-entrenched conviction regarding the antiquity of the Great Highland Bagpipe and its early history.\textsuperscript{50} We have no information about the bagpipe in Scotland, either written, graphic or material, before the fourteenth century, and nothing has been recovered by archaeology to lay foundations for an organology in Scotland with which it is so strongly identified.\textsuperscript{51} Similarly, little is known about the iconic ‘Great Highland Bagpipe’ before the sixteenth century when the bagpipe came to compete with the harp as the chosen instrument of Gaelic society. The received history of the bagpipe in Scotland - the ‘grand narrative’ - has little to tell us of this process and no instruments of any sort survive that can realistically be dated earlier than the seventeenth century.

Conventional histories have offered suggestions on origins. Our attention is drawn to references to pipes in Scriptural and Classical sources. Scots know their Bible and Latin was regarded as late as the seventeenth century as a


national language. But there is undoubted ambiguity, and transliteration and translation mislead; the term *tibia*, ‘shin bone’, can also mean ‘flute’ or ‘pipe’, and in other words made of bone. Dictionaries confirm this for Classical Latin but do not distinguish between flute and reed-pipe. With so little known about the bagpipe in Europe in the course of the first millennium of the Christian era, one or two elements may be teased out since they represent aspects of the wider context, socially and culturally, of piping. A distance-marker stone raised by the Second Legion at Bridgeness, Falkirk, at the east end of the Roman Wall, carries sculpted panels including a figure of a musician playing a double pipe (NMS X.FV 27). It is dated to A.D. 142 and represents the earliest graphic evidence in Scotland for music and context, since this depicts a ceremony of animal sacrifice for the ritual ‘cleansing’ of the Legion.

The period following the fall of the Roman Empire was conventionally labelled as the ‘Dark Ages’ but appears in ‘Pictish’ culture, beyond the Roman *limes*, as a comparatively ‘light age’. Given the symbol stones, their high quality of decorative technique and their iconography, we might infer a settled and organised society rather than a presupposed barbarian chaos. Conventionalised designs and motifs include harp and triple pipe, opening up the possibility that these and their music were a part of the material culture of Scotland before the ninth century. Were these Biblical motifs copied by the artist-sculptors of Pictland or do they hold a mirror to aspects of life in the Scotland of the eighth century? Recent commentators such as Purser have argued cogently for the strong likelihood of the latter position and even possibilities of ‘recovering’ sounds.\footnote{J Romilly Allen and Joseph Anderson, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland. A Classified, Illustrated, Descriptive List of the Monuments, with an Analysis of their Symbolism and Ornamentation*. Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland 1903, for details of the stones at Lethendy, Ardchattan and Iona; John Purser, *Scotland’s Music*, Mainstream Publishing 1992, 32-33; Keith Sanger and Alison Kinnaird, *Tree of strings. Crann nan teud. A history of the harp in Scotland*, Kinmore Music, 13-21; the Lethendy stone shows harp, pipe and possibly drum and is the focus (together with Early Christian Irish sculpture) of speculation as well as experimentation by Barnaby Brown on types of early reed-pipes; Greer Ramsey, The Triple Pipes on Irish High Crosses: Identification and Interpretation, *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* Volume 61 (2002), 26-36; a starting-point for an organology has been the fragmentary silver pipes excavated in Southern Iraq in 1928 and reconstructed in differing formats by successive scholars, see Bo Lawergren, Extant silver pipes from Ur, 2450 BC, in Ellen Hickmann, Ingo Laufs and Ricardo Eichmann, *Studien zur Musikarchäologie II* (as above), 121-132; an evaluation of the 1928 material in the context of tracing origins and}
Section 2.

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Documentary sources proliferate from the twelfth century, Scotland's period of significant adventus from England and the Continent associated with David I (1124-1153) and his successors. Historiographical convention tends to emphasize change at the expense of continuity, and castles and churches will be more evident than poetry and song. Changes that did align Scotland with Europe were in church organisation and the expansion of towns, but English attempts at conquest and civil war from the late-thirteenth century probably help to explain why the bagpipe seems to be invisible at this time. Music (such as organum) and most aspects of culture and religion were shared with Europe, that entity described as 'Christendom' with a community of interests that created movement, for example travel for diplomacy, commerce and pilgrimage. In the wider Europe, the bagpipe appears to have spread rapidly in the wake of what historians have called the 'Twelfth Century Renaissance' when towns and town life, trade and trade routes developed dramatically, and music circulated as part of a minstrel and troubadour culture. Scotland's and England's economies changed radically and innovation is detectable in the surviving dateable material culture, for example in ceramics, metalwork and coinage, provenanced material signifying trade and exchange. Absent from the material record is anything organological such as pipes or bagpipes.

The bagpipe must have been played widely throughout Europe, in the period from the twelfth century when we first begin to learn about it, until the seventeenth century when the pipes began to be displaced (or modified and adapted) in music-making by new orders of instruments. Graphic evidence is particularly compelling, in the form of manuscript illumination with angels,

morphology for the bagpipe in Scotland has been confusing since we are dealing with very different instruments, see Francis Collinson, The Bagpipe. The History of a Musical Instrument, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1975, 9-16.

53 See John Bannerman, The King's Poet and the Inauguration of Alexander III, Scottish Historical Review Volume 68 (1989), 120-149, for a corrective to the concept of a wholesale imposition of 'feudalism' and the importance of the culture of ethnic groups rather than of kingdoms.

54 Denys Hay, Europe. The emergence of an idea, Edinburgh University Press 1957, 27-36; see also John Purser Scotland's Music (as above), 49, for the development of polyphonic music.

monkeys, rabbits and pigs playing bagpipes, and carvings in stone and wood surviving in churches and monasteries. Iconography shows the bagpipe at its most widespread in Europe from about 1300 until about 1500. The earliest surviving representations of the bagpipe in Scotland are the sculpted figures of the late-fourteenth and early-fifteenth centuries at Melrose and Roslin. They (the piper on the Abbey at Melrose is a pig) are shown with single-drone instruments, most closely resembling the Spanish gaita of today rather than an imagined proto-Highland bagpipe. Players and minstrels travelled the roads and seaways of Europe and provided popular entertainment in court, castle and burgh. Payments by the kings of England for music and minstrelsy are documented in this period and patronage was a matter of fashion as well as taste, to be emulated by other ranks of society. The earliest references to piper-minstrels in Scotland are for the reign of David II (1329-1371) by which time a discernable ‘court culture’ was developing.

The linking of Western Europe to the Eastern Mediterranean and new contacts with the Arab world following Islamic expansion reintroduced Europe to the arts and sciences of the Greek and Roman, a civilisation which had evolved within the learning of Islam. Conduits of exchange thrived in Byzantium, Italy and Spain, and the settled culture of regions such as Andalucia illustrate how Islam influenced music and instrumentation, both string and wind. This period, the ‘Twelfth Century Renaissance’ and after, seems to provide a key to understanding the spread of the bagpipe and its music throughout Europe. This is the period which saw a more elaborate form of instrument evolving with the marriage of chanter, bag, blowpipe and drones.


57 Henry George Farmer, Historical Facts for the Arabian Musical Influence, London: William Reeves [1930], for a robust restating of the case for Arab influence in the face of disavowal; see also José Filgueira Valverde, Cantigas de Santa Maria, Madrid: Editorial Castalia 1985, for the depiction of instruments c.1270.
The comment may now be made in general terms that the bagpipe in Scotland derived from European models. The patronage of court and castle in Scotland, a European phenomenon, is evident in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries for its employment of travelling minstrels from the south and from the North Europe littoral. The Scottish court itself was peripatetic, and a 'courtly culture' exudes generosity and ostentation, an important element no doubt in the Stewart dynasty's consolidation of power. The record of James IV's Yuletide festivities in the early 1500s included rewards for both local and itinerant pipers. The fifteenth century had ushered in a period of prosperity when Scotland was more closely integrated with Europe and this suggests a context in which the bagpipe, in common with other cultural traits, would have spread into Scotland. Renaissance influence was pervasive and omnipresent and can be symbolised by the representation of a sixteenth-century European bagpipe in the elaborate painted decorative scheme at Rossend Castle, Burntisland. Material prosperity is reflected in the then significant creation of burghs as trading centres, legally distinct from the royal burghs which were still to enjoy monopolies such as foreign trade. The 'burgh of barony' emerges as a distinct concept by 1450 and, with its busy life of markets and fairs, was a focus of cultural change and innovation. From this period of the late-fifteenth century, one of vital significance for Scottish culture in the widest sense, we have the first references to the employment of pipers as town minstrels suggesting that the burghs with their new wealth were imitating courtly patterns of patronage. Evidence also of material prosperity is the fine Renaissance architecture, created especially during the reigns of James III (1460-1488) and James IV (1488-1513). The transformation of architecture in the Renaissance offers a paradigm for the


exploration of popular music and the bagpipe; built structures were influenced by cosmopolitan politics and religion, for example the politics of 'display' and *imperium*, they exuded the imagery and ideology of the Stewart monarchs and their national identity, and they created the settings for performance and social interaction.\(^{61}\)

Patronage was always a matter of fashion and imitation and there was growing employment for pipers in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; they moved easily between the royal courts, the big houses and the burghs. In terms of both courtly and popular music, the tone was largely European and international and the music identifiable as the popular songs of the day rather than a fixed bagpipe repertoire. Surviving song titles and music may corroborate this.\(^{62}\) There is little to draw on by way of examples but the tune ‘Hey ca’ thro’, to select one, was recorded in the *Scots Musical Museum* and seems to be an early work-song; the tune fits the pipe scale and the bagpipe is frequently described as being played to accompany work.\(^{63}\) Dance music would have been common and is no doubt with us in different guises. References to dancing to measures from Spain, Italy, Germany, Naples and Aragon are seen in the fifteenth-century comic poem, ‘Colkelbie’s Sow’. Dancing ‘in the round’ or in the ‘ring’ (and Gaelic *rinnce*) was common to most of Europe.\(^{64}\) The atmosphere of this old style of community dance has survived in the festivities and celebration of the Breton Pardons when the favoured music for dancing is played on the Breton *binou*. Dancing and music must have been universal in late-medieval Scotland and we have the impotent reproof of the Augustinian canon, Robert Richardson, in his ‘Commentary on the Rule of St Augustine’ in 1530: ‘Good


\(^{62}\) ‘Now the day daws’ is quoted by William Dunbar about 1500 as a stock item in the minstrels’ repertoire in his poem addressed to the Town Council of Edinburgh; see Pet Stewart, *The day it daws. The Lowland Scots Bagpipe and its Music, 1400 to 1715*, White House Tune Books No.7 2005.


God! How much time is wasted on vain music in England and Scotland to the neglect of divinity and sound learning.’ He was of course addressing his brother Canons Regular whose simple chants were being usurped by over elaborate and vamped versions which Richardson characterised as ‘for the sake of carnal minds, not of spiritual’.65

Music, dancing and popular entertainment drew the censure of the Reformation Church after 1560, and pipers appear in the records of the church courts as miscreants or for their effect on the discipline of the citizens; drunkenness or dancing to the music of the pipes on the Sabbath and at bridals are the most frequently cited crimes.66 The pipers themselves appear to be of low status, identified often as vagrants, and kirk censure must be read in context of social control rather than a particular animus against music.67 In addition pipers filled the office of burgh musician, a common sinecure in sixteenth and seventeenth century Scotland. The records of many of the Scottish burghs include references to pipers, to their appointment, duties, tenure of office, emoluments and livery, and the image of Geordy Sime, Town Piper of Dalkieith, with common-stock bellows-blown bagpipe, in the etched portrait of 1789 by John Kay, is as telling for the Scottish piping tradition as the generic kilted figure.68 Sempill of Beltree’s elegy for the Piper of Kilbarchan, ‘Habbie Simpson’, immortalised a town piper whose career ran true to form with prosecution for minor offences in Paisley about 1605.69 The office of burgh piper declined to extinction in the early-nineteenth century in a period which coincided with Burgh Reform and

67 Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, AD 1573-1589, Edinburgh: Scottish Burgh Records Society 1882, 507-508, for proclamations against minstrels, pipers, fiddlers and ‘maisterles persouns’ as threats to the common good in times of plague.
69 George Eyre-Todd, Scottish Poetry of the Seventeenth Century, Glasgow 1895, 270-274; W M Metcalfe ed., Charters and documents relating to the Burgh of Paisley (1163-1665); and, Extracts from the records of the town council (1594-1620) (Scottish Burgh Records Society) Paisley: Alexander Gardner 1902, 256, 275; Kenneth Buthlay, Habbie Simpson, in Adam J Aitken, Matthew P McDiarmid and Derick S Thomson, Bards and Makars, University of Glasgow Press 1977, 214-220, argues for the significance of the poem beyond burlesque and the ‘Standard Habbie’ stanza form as vitally representing an older, submerged and profane Scotland of which the piper figure was the familiar and ubiquitous symbol.
the utilitarian needs of the people. In terms of the instrument and its music, the tradition had been shared with England, the Lowlands of Scotland, the Border country and the north of England forming a musical ‘culture-province’.  

The bagpipe emerges in the sixteenth century in the Highlands of Scotland, in the form of the so-called ‘great pipe’, grafted onto significant pre-existing practices of literature and music which were the preserve of a learned caste and schools of poetry. The story is complex and unique in European terms but the instrument itself was not then particularly distinctive. Few now doubt the universal character of the bagpipe as a musical instrument but this context has not been widely perceived or understood until recently, least of all in Scotland itself which has long felt a sense of ownership of the bagpipe. The early history of the bagpipe is now becoming clearer with concentrated research on the instrument and its context, as well as the enterprise within the National Museums of Scotland of forming a ‘national collection of a national instrument’, illuminating aspects of the evolution of the bagpipe within Scotland since about 1600 and demonstrating how Scotland has, figuratively speaking, ‘invented’ a bagpipe – and a sound.

Section 3.

Gaelic symphony – the ‘great pipe’ takes root

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[This is a review of the John MacFadyen Memorial Lecture ‘Musician and milieu: piping, politics and patronage through three centuries’]

The received history of the Great Highland Bagpipe reflects in too many respects a triumph of sentiment over fact and we as a nation have been disinclined to revisit or rewrite this history.\(^{71}\) An orthodoxy had emerged from modest origins in the first half of the nineteenth-century and was elaborated by repetition and speculation in the second.\(^{72}\) The urge to formulate a narrative for the history of Highland piping was not an ignoble one, indeed it was undertaken in the conviction that the tradition was then in decline and that a written history would reinforce it. But out of a narrower historiography emerged the apotheosis of the ‘great pipe’, a modest and low-caste European musical instrument, as the ‘Great Highland Bagpipe’. A neglected (or ignored) antithesis demonstrates that this same musical instrument, what ever it was, is difficult to detect in the material culture.

In terms of the history of European ‘civilisation’, the bagpipe was a relatively recent arrival whose origins can be suggested, through limited archaeological evidence, in the Middle East and Egypt.\(^{73}\) Literary evidence is less reliable, and has been presented uncritically in the history of piping, generally to support preconceptions of the antiquity of the bagpipe in Scotland. From a wide selection, one of the more specific allusions may be usefully quoted: a reference to musicians by Aristophanes, poet and dramatist of the fourth century BC, harangues a group of street minstrels in Athens: ‘You pipers who are here from Thebes, with bone pipes blowing the back end of a dog’.\(^{74}\) In fact a dog-skin

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\(^{71}\) Such a generalisation takes a long view and does no justice to recent publications such as the exemplary Roderick D Cannon, *The Highland Bagpipe and its Music*, Edinburgh: John Donald 1988, or Joshua Dickson, *When piping was strong. Tradition, change and the bagpipe in South Uist*, Edinburgh: John Donald 2006.

\(^{72}\) Brief and largely unsupported statements about the origins of the Highland bagpipe such as by Donald MacDonald (c.1819) and Angus Mackay (1838) had a compelling appeal and are repeated verbatim in later publications.

\(^{73}\) The material culture of the bagpipe offers comparative material for exploration of, for example, the iconography of Pictish sculpture of the eighth and ninth centuries eg. an Egyptian Arghul, NMS K.2007.162; the pursuit of origins is not our purpose but some comment must be offered since the topic is constantly revisited, mostly spuriously, and is a matter of abiding interest.

bag with blowpipe and bone chanter is a credible bagpipe but the status of these pipers is made very clear. Moreover, the Athenian was one of the greatest of the ancient writers of satirical comedy. The same deprecatory terms were employed against bagpipes in the seventeenth-century Gàidhealtachd, as recalled in Niall MacMhuirich’s Seanchas na Piob o Thùs with his unflinching satirical treatment:

‘The bladder of a pig being over-blown,  
The first pipe-bag that was not sweet-sounding  
That came from before the Flood.’

This is satire and humour par excellence and it is said that MacMhuirich’s dart was directed against two Uist pipers who had disturbed his sleep after his return from ‘bardic school’ in Ireland.\(^7\)\(^5\) Given the importance of satire in the Gaelic tradition, the abuse of the parvenu piper provided sport and there is a quantity to choose from. A series in ‘praise’ and ‘dis-praise’ (moladh ‘s di-moladh) of the pipes has been identified and suggested as a symptom of the contemporary loss of pre-eminence of the harp. The bardic challenge and response is certainly rich in detail but may not be more significant than the literary raw material of the ‘flying’ or poetic contention, and the odd piper the object of satire.\(^7\)\(^6\) A ‘Mock Eulogy on a Bad Piper and his Pipe’ by the poet and piper, Uilleam MacMhurchaidh, of about 1750 turns exaggerated and sustained praise of a Kintyre piper into insult and points to the continuing appeal of this theme. After 15 verses of extravagance, the mood changes:

‘But I am weary of praising you  
And your beast of a pipe with its stinking smell,  
Filled with disgusting slavers.\(^7\)\(^7\)\\

\(^7\)\(^6\) See Colm Ó Baoill ed., Eachann Bacach and other MacLean poets, Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society 1979, 221-222.\\
\(^7\)\(^7\) National Library of Scotland MS 73.2.2 (Turner Manuscript XIV) and Alexander Cameron, Reliquiae Celticae, Volume II. Inverness: Northern Counties Newspaper Ltd 1894, 330-332; this text has not been available in English and a full translation is given in the Appendix to this Section.
Little, if anything is known about the bagpipe or piping in Europe in the course of the first millennium although there are elements to tease out of the known history such as language and literary motifs; for example, the theme of the ‘schools’ as training ground for a professional caste seems to run from Continental beginnings, through the ‘bardic schools’ of Ireland, down to the schools of piping of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Continuity cannot be assumed for music and musical instruments but it may be seen in attitudes, values and the expectations of reciters and players, listeners and patrons. At some point in Highland history therefore the bagpipe met the expectations of Gaelic society.

Another element to explore is a motif in the early Gaelic narrative literature, namely the triad of rejoicing music, sleeping music and lamenting music. The same distinctions continue into the modern period and are made with respect to music-making with the harp and the contrasting bagpipe in Dunvegan in the seventeenth century. The terminology of the prose-tale narratives of the ninth century is known in Gaelic today, _gean traigh_ , that is music for dancing and singing, _suain traigh_ , music for slumber, and _gul traigh_ , music for wild longing and lamenting.\(^7^8\) Significantly we are led into consideration of modes and tonality, rather than rhythm or metres which may be more readily analysed (and distorted), and possibly in the same vein, in the _Compleat Theory_ of Joseph MacDonald of about 1760, the author discusses modes in his section on ‘Keys’ which he also terms ‘taste’.\(^7^9\)

The bagpipe seems to have been played widely throughout Europe, especially in the period from the twelfth century, when we first begin to learn more about it, until the seventeenth century when the pipes began to be displaced by new


\(^{7^9}\) Roderick D Cannon, _Joseph MacDonald’s Compleat Theory of the Scots Highland Bagpipe (c.1760)_, The Piobaireachd Society 1994, 67; if _piobaireachd_ has been distorted in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, rhythms and cadence phrasing are probably the areas of most significant change as compared with earlier performance styles if the interpretation of Joseph MacDonald’s manuscript is accepted.
orders of instruments. The Highland bagpipe is therefore a later but remarkable phenomenon in European and British history and appears but dimly in sources in the sixteenth century. The question of where it comes from is less important to modern scholarship than the compelling question of why it takes root in Highland society, why it flourishes and why it develops in the form it does. The instrument itself would have been of the European ‘great pipe’ family and, as such, was played in Ireland and Iberia as well as England. A key to understanding these processes lies in the highly distinctive society and culture in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. The historical framework offered by the Lordship of the Isles - a ‘kingdom’ within a Kingdom - is important for a background for Highland piping and is explored in the author’s research papers. Cultural shifts within this framework in due course saw the decline of the position and role of the clàrsach and rise to prominence of the bagpipe, beginning in the sixteenth century and following through with the emergence of piper dynasties in the seventeenth century. At the same time a wider tactical role developed for the bagpipe with the involvement of the Highlands in national and international wars, the raising of troops for service on the Continent and the need for a distinctive and carrying sound.\footnote{I F Grant and Hugh Cheape, \textit{Periods in Highland History}, London: Shephard-Walwyn 1997, 130-131; larger fighting forces were required and the Highlands and Islands were distinguished for their provision of soldiers. This was a confident and assertive society which lived by a culture of display.}

Rehearsals for these roles belonged to the \textit{Kulturgebiet} of the Irish and Scottish \textit{Gàidhealtacht}, the training ground of a professional literary caste and a source of reward and privilege. The sense of a culture-province emerges when it is under threat, as evidenced by the notice of the death of ‘Red Hugh O’Donnell’ in 1505.\footnote{John O'Donovan, \textit{Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters}, Volume II. Dublin: Hodges and Smith 1848, 1283, where it was said ‘there was no defence made in Tyrconnell during his time except to close the door against only the wind’.} We see in Ireland also a first step onwards to the Continent, with lines of trade between France, Spain and the West Highlands, especially through the entrepôt ports of Galway and Limerick. The Highland chieftains consumed the best of foreign culture and their taste is endlessly praised in Gaelic song; they were an urbane and cosmopolitan set, many of whose names are preserved in
the canon of ceòl mòr. The role of Ireland in Scottish and Highland history has tended to be understated, especially since Ireland and her reputation had to be reduced for the sake of modern British real politik. Though the importance of the cultural relationship has been challenged, we are still left with a sense of an expanding Gàidhealtachd and of the triumph and urbanity of Gaelic culture.

The pipes are not readily detectable in early sources, as suggested, and barely mentioned in Gaelic sources before the late-sixteenth century. When they merit mention, the reference is immediately to an instrument of resounding, almost explosive power; terms such as sgàil, gàirich, gleadhraich, tornan, nuallanach and so on all serve to emphasize the vigour and power of the bagpipe and contrast sharply with descriptions of the music of the harp. The bagpipe seems to slip easily into the cultural format of training in and transmission of literature and music, a pride in the social arts and high value put on them in the milieu of Gaelic society, and the intense interest of the leaders of that society in supporting the arts and supplying patronage in conventional fashion. What were their motives? To provide leadership and impress by example, certainly, but to conform to the model and behavioural pattern of their ancestors whose fame and generosity were kept before them in poetry and song. The catalyst for an honourable and heroic career was the expectations of the people, as Maire Herbert has succinctly proposed:

To read any early medieval narrative is, in a sense, to reverse the expectation which the reader brings to modern literature. The public of the early narrative did not seek to discover the unique world-view of a particular author, but rather, sought recognition of familiar codes and conventions shared from one work to another. Assessment of a medieval text entails ... the reconstruction of the ‘horizon of expectation’ of those for whom the text was originally composed. This involves identification of the signals by which the text disclosed itself to its public. Moreover it entails concern with both text and context, with the location of the work within the historical and cultural worlds which shaped its creation.

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82 Donald Mackay, Lord Reay (1591-1649) is a prime example, of whom it was said: A h-ülle fear a theid a dholaichd, gheibh e dolar o Mhac Aoidh; see Alexander Nicolson, A Collection of Gaelic Proverbs and Familiar Phrases, Edinburgh: MacLachlan and Stewart 1881, 4.
83 See Wilson McLeod, Divided Gaels: Gaelic Cultural Identities in Scotland and Ireland, c.1200-c.1650, Oxford University Press 2004; this critique of the homogeneity of a medieval Gaelic culture province is examined in the research paper ‘Traditional origins of the piping dynasties’.
84 Máire Herbert, Fleid Dùin na nGèid: a reappraisal, Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies Number 18 (1989), 75; the same ideology has been explored by John MacInnes in his study of the ‘Panegyric Code
Contemporary sources, particularly of the late-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, reveal something of this ‘horizon of expectation’. A complexity of social and cultural changes has given us a new abundance of largely anonymous song in vernacular Gaelic, and also the voice of women, composing in the more popular stressed metre.\textsuperscript{85} An early-occurring example of a modern quatrain form survives in a lament by Mary, daughter of Angus MacDonald of Dùn Naomhaig, for the death of her husband, MacDonald of Clanranald, who died in 1618:

\begin{quote}
Is iomadh sgal piobadh
mar ri farum nan disnean air clàr,

\textit{......}

‘Many a blast of the pipe together with the noise of the dice on boards
I listened to in your house, with the poetry and the bragging of the bards,
To the books of history with red covers, and to poems,
Together with pleasure without thirst – why for ever would I let you away from me?’\textsuperscript{86}
\end{quote}

With a reference to the bagpipe in context, these lines alone show the richness of allusion and imagery in elegy; it is remarkable, on the one hand, in its tenderness and, on the other, for its evocation of ‘big house’ culture at the turn of the seventeenth century. Here we see the ‘great pipe’ fully integrated, not only in the front of battle but also in the entertainment of music and song and the declamations and contentions of the poets. We then move from the farum of the Great Hall to the seòmar of reflection and contemplation, of the engaging monologue or dialogue, but still at one with the culture of artistic performance. This reflects too a subtle counterpointing, and move from the more male domain to a female domain and awareness of an emergence of differing social roles. In


this context the engagement of women with piping in this early period waits to
be better defined; we have evidence for masterly transmission of pipe music but
a taboo against playing.\textsuperscript{87}

An historical benchmark for the adoption of the ‘great pipe’ must be the
emergence of \textit{ceòl mòr}, but it remains something of an enigma. Much time has
been expended in speculating about the origins and the intrinsic nature of
\textit{piobaireachd} and arguably too much weight given to the individual histories of
the piping families such as MacCrimmon.\textsuperscript{88} Hebridean tradition recognises the
pre-eminence of the MacCrimmons in one or two generations, and notable and
generic details are the achievement of excellence, powers of memory and
concept of formal training in ‘schools’, drawing on Ireland and a pattern set by
the bardic orders from a period possibly as remote as the fifth to seventh
centuries.\textsuperscript{89}

The adoption of a version of the bagpipe falls in and marks a period of change
in Gaelic society. The topic has been more in the domain of the language and
literature specialists and we are well-informed on language shift – that is the
decline in the use of ‘classical’ Gaelic and the emergence from the shadows of
vernacular Gaelic – but less well-informed on contemporary social and cultural
changes. Assembling the history of the bagpipe in Scotland had not taken
account of this and not been integrated with it. If outlooks and assumptions
seemed to be fixed, late-twentieth century record scholarship in Scottish History
offered opportunities for re-interpretation and hypothesis, with a growing

\textsuperscript{87} Personal communication from Mrs Rona Lightfoot, 12.08.06; later sources take us from the \textit{Taigh Mòr} to the \textit{Taigh a' Phiobara} with an account of the MacArthur household in Skye, see Hugh Cheape, \textit{The Book of the Bagpipe}, Belfast: Appletree Press 1999, 69.

and Alistair Campsie, \textit{The MacCrimmon Legend: the Madness of Angus Mackay}, Edinburgh:
Canongate 1980, for two very different critiques of Highland piping.

\textsuperscript{89} Similar allusions are seen in song, such as ‘Oran do Rob Domhnallach Mac-an-t-Saor, Piobaire Mhic-ic-Ailein’ in Rev Archibald MacDonald, \textit{The Uist Collection}, Glasgow: Archibald Sinclair 1894, 177-178.
quantity of advanced research, for example in Celtic Studies, suggesting lines of inquiry for the history of piping.\textsuperscript{90}

To consider the material culture of the bagpipe is to shift the perspective again from conventional narratives to objects. This is not ‘straight’ history in which we have a given narrative or can even construct a narrative. In fact the record is paradoxical, because of the invisibility of the Great Highland Bagpipe in the material record, while being in the final analysis complementary. Bagpipes as wind-instruments with many separate parts and sections are not good survivors and reputed ancient bagpipes - the soi-disant ‘Bannockburn Pipes’, ‘Flodden Pipes’, MacCrimmon Pipes, and several ‘Culloden Pipes’ - do not measure up to expectations and scrutiny. Change is axiomatic, if sometimes unwelcome, and a ‘great pipe’ or \textit{piob mhòr} which took root in Gaelic society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was not the Great Highland Bagpipe of Scotland today. This was recognised in a past era of change by a poet for whom the preservation of traditional values would be paramount:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Banmhaighthstir gach inneal-ciùil}
\textit{A’ phiob ùr seo thàin’ an dràsd oirnn}
\textit{...} \textsuperscript{91}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{90} The work of scholars such as Dr Keith Sanger in primary sources such as the MacDonald Papers and Campbell of Breadalbane Muniments through the ingathering of the National Archives of Scotland has helped to shift the ground of discussion immeasurably; see also fresh perspectives in work such as John G Gibson, \textit{Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping, 1745-1945}, Edinburgh: NMS Publishing Ltd and McGill-Queen’s University Press 1998, using evidence from Cape Breton and mainland Nova Scotia to indicate that traditional Highland piping and dancing survived Culloden and the proscription period of 1747-1782.

\textsuperscript{91} Angus MacLeod ed., \textit{The Songs of Duncan Ban Macintyre} (as above), 284: ‘Mistress of all musical instruments is this new pipe that has now come to us’.

59
Appendix

*Moladh maguidh air Droch Phibaire agus air a Phib*

Mock eulogy or praise poem in eighteen stanzas on a Kintyre piper and his bagpipe. This is from National Library of Scotland MS 73.2.2, written by the poet himself, Uilleam Mac Mhurchaidh, about 1750, printed in *Reliquiae Celticae* II, 330-332. The printed text has been checked against the manuscript:

My mind is sorrowful  
And I shall not sleep calmly  
Since the Piper went from us ‘on circuit’ to Ireland.

It is John son of Gilfedder  
Who would play music to us harmoniously  
And knowledgeably on the chanters of cedar.

Your friends are grieving,  
You have left our gentry mourning  
Since you went away on the ocean of the roaring waves.

Kintyre is silent,  
And I myself shall be continually sighing  
Until good news of you will be returned with fortune.

The thrush is melancholic  
And the skylark has lost her tune,  
They don’t go singing music for us on the branches.

The cotton-sedge withered in our hills  
And seizure gripped our cuckoos,  
You left dimness and gloom on the stars.

But the righteous folk’s request  
Brought you home to our lands,  
And you restored our faculties to us again.

The birds sung as was customary for them,  
The trout returned to the river-banks,  
Our folks and our gentry are joyful.

When you would set her up  
In the presence of the gentry,  
It would be comfort for my ears to be listening to her.
A sweet chanter like the mavis,
Neat and elegant would be your fingers on it,
Putting your mind in order at the time of rising.

A tune which is most sure in its timing,
And which has the best declamation in its theme
And rapidest of fingering putting a Crúnludh among Gaels.

I forgot a sound of drones,
A pitch true and well adjusted,
In the sweetness of the organs they are in harmony.

You are a figure most royal on the field of parade,
Far off your standard could be seen
Going down into the battle most gallantly.

A helmet upon you of steel,
A shield of yellow studs in rings on your arm,
A slender sharp Spanish blade in your strong hand.

A pair of pistols not awkward on you
On the belt of the studs of silver,
And I would have no doubt that you would kill a hundred of them.

But I am weary of praising you
And your beast of a pipe and with its stinking smell
Filled with disgusting slavers.

It is the oil of the coal-fish
Being waulked into its skin
And breaking wind choking the beast.

A bag of sticks under your arm,
More bitter than the henbane its screaming,
Often is the sweat on your brow
Giving hands and breath to the ‘Grizzled One’,
     The Grizzled One is the name of the pipe.
Section 4.

Piping dynasties – pipers, poets and shennachies

[This is a review of the research seminar ‘Traditional origins of the piping dynasties’]

The historical narrative of the Great Highland Bagpipe conventionally includes some account of the leading piping families such as MacCrimmons, MacArthurs, Mackays, Rankins, MacGregors and others who performed a role hereditarily in the service of clan chieftains. Conventional accounts have never ventured far beyond the autonomous development of the individual families, although their individual histories and traditions yield details associating them with group structures and linking them to Ireland and the learned orders of medieval Scotland. This perspective has largely been lost in the face of a narrower historiography. The paper ‘Traditional origins of the piping dynasties’ revisits this perspective and explores ‘bardic’ origins, links with Ireland and a context for the piping families own pursuit of excellence.

Professor Derick Thomson’s 1967 paper, ‘Gaelic Learned Orders and Literati in Medieval Scotland’, explored the concept of a literary and professional class in medieval Gaelic society. His analysis concentrated on the leading professions of law, medicine and the church, all highly regarded in medieval Europe, and gave prominence, for example, to the Beatons whose origins in Ireland and Scotland and pursuit of learning and maintaining of ‘schools’ offer a significant exemplar for other areas of study. He looked also at the other learned orders of historians, ‘shennachies’, poets and musicians, that is, the guardians of the fame and memory of clan and community. He described also how the piper usurped the place of the harper as the principal musician but this might have been ‘a fresh development which does not link up with the work of the other learned orders as

the work of the harper does'. It is the contention of the present research that deeper levels of evidence for the piping families suggest that the latter do indeed link up with the learned orders through descent, real and imagined, professional affiliation and emulation.

Angus Mackay's 'Account of the Hereditary Pipers' of 1838 provides the starting point for later descriptions, especially with regard to the MacCrimmons. Clearly this is a very partial picture but it offers important messages for a group dynamic. Points common to each account are that they were one of a number of leading families performing a service hereditarily for the families of clan chieftains, that they were endowed with land in return for their service, that they played the bagpipe and taught mainly piobaireachd and that they transmitted their art and maintained schools for this purpose.94

Angus Mackay's 'Account' is more an exercise in storytelling and clan history than history of piping. His narrative chimes with a wider storytelling genre identified by scholars that was largely about events of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and which might often assimilate historical fact to patterns of heroic legend.95 The clan ingredient would have fulfilled the expectations of the original audiences and the teller of tales in the Raasay taigh-cèilidh may have been his father, John Mackay (1767-1848), who had been a pupil of the MacCrimmons.96 This is not of course the first evidence in English for the hereditary piping families and their status. Samuel Johnson recalled that 'the use of the bagpipe begins to be forgotten' and

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94 Angus Mackay, A Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd or Highland Pipe Music. Edinburgh 1838, 1-8; see also Neil Ross, Ceol-Mor agus Clann Mhic-Cruimein, The Celtic Monthly Volume 18 (1910), 26-28, 45-47, 65-67, for the continuing vitality of MacCrimmon tradition in Skye and a differing account of their sloineadh. Ross' essay is rarely quoted or referenced.
96 See Roderick D Cannon, A Bibliography of Bagpipe Music. Edinburgh 1980, 28; it is also important to consider the editorial shaping that was given to an essentially Gaelic oral tradition.
Some of the chief families still entertain a piper, whose office was anciently hereditary. Macrimmon was piper to MacLeod, and Rankin to Maclean of Col. .... The tunes of the bagpipe are traditional. There has been in Sky, beyond all time of memory, a college of pipers, under the direction of Macrimmon, which is not quite extinct. There was another in Mull, superintended by Rankin, which expired about sixteen years ago. To these colleges, while the pipe retained its honour, the students of musick repaired for education.\(^{97}\)

This and other references (including Angus Mackay's) carry the inference of antiquity and continuity which is not necessarily borne out by the evidence as we have it. A slighter but more telling observation is made about 1700 by James Kirkwood, in response to Edward Lhuyd's researches. The evidence gathered in this and cognate sources is of a different order, not least because Lhuyd's contacts such as Rev John Beaton of Kilninian, Mull, and Rev Robert Kirk of Aberfoyle were connected with the old learned orders and had exemplary linguistic qualifications. The bagpipe here falls into place in an élite musical culture with the other instruments of the chieftain's hall:

"The Greatest Music is Harp, Pipe, Viol and Trump. Most part of the Gentry play on the Harp. Pipers are held in great Request so that they are train'd up at the Ex pense of Grandees and have apportion of Land assigned and are design'd such a man's piper."\(^{98}\)

The seventeenth-century context of these comments still places the harp first in a descending order of prestige and allows also that it was \textit{uasal} to play the harp. The bagpipe occupies a lesser and more servile position in the scheme. The business or profession of the harpers was clan panegyric, the public and celebratory composition and transmission of salutation, eulogy and elegy within the social structure of the clan by the hereditary poets and musicians.\(^{99}\) Inter-clan politics and matters of diplomacy such as marriage alliances were also vital

\(^{97}\) R W Chapman ed., \textit{Johnson's Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland and Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson LL.D.} Oxford University Press 1930, 93; it should be noted that Johnson's sensory experience corroborates the status of the leading piping families at this time. His use of the word 'college' has been considered.

\(^{98}\) J L Campbell ed., \textit{A Collection of Highland Rites and Customs copied by Edward Lhuyd from the Manuscript of the Rev James Kirkwood (1650-1709) and annotated by him with the aid of Rev John Beaton}. The Folklore Society 1975, 3-6, 7-8, 49.

sparks for poetic composition. Performance was within the cultural milieu of the chieftains’ households, with families such as MacLeod of Dunvegan and MacLean of Duart, both of whom maintained successions of poets, harpers and then pipers and were generous patrons of the arts. This is the substantial and crucial background to the emergence of Highland piping and without which it cannot be adequately described or understood. There is in this sense nothing new about piping, its origins and meaning lying clearly and emphatically within a group and group structure with status and highly developed mores to which the leading Highland pipers aspired to conform.

This culture belonged to a context which embraced both Scotland and Ireland, definable between c.1200 and c.1650 as Kulturgebiet and Sprachgebiet. A dependency of Scotland on Ireland in a cultural sense carried with it a tacit and consistent acknowledgement that Ireland was the wellspring of this learned and literary tradition.\textsuperscript{100} Legendary and historical reference in Gaelic literature was to Ireland and this well of learning underlines also the importance of attendance at the schools in Ireland. The economic underpinning of these links has not yet been examined in detail but Ireland was also the entrepôt for Scotland on the western European and Atlantic trade routes and an intellectual source for other significant areas of learning. The centrality of Ireland in a medieval Western European context has been firmly and consistently written out of the Scottish historical tradition. For the understanding of the ‘Gaelic’ background of Highland piping, its historical context, as well as broader issues of cultural roots and mores, we ignore Ireland at our peril.\textsuperscript{101}

The social and political circle of the clan chief around the end of the seventeenth century was described in some detail by Martin Martin. Writing

\textsuperscript{100} Derick S Thomson, Gaelic Learned Orders and Literati (as above); this dependency has been thoroughly re-examined and questioned in Wilson McLeod, Divided Gaels. Gaelic Cultural Identities in Scotland and Ireland, c.1200-c.1650. Oxford University Press 2004. The author has claimed that the unity of the culture-province has been overstated and that Scotland’s role was marginal; for our purposes, Ireland’s place in the Scottish Gaelic imagination remains significant.

between about 1695 and 1703, he could still list physician, orator, poet, bard, musicians and craftsmen as among the chieftain’s dependants within a framework of rights and obligations. But he described in some detail the change and decline in the position of the ‘orator’ or file, ‘in their language called Aosdana’, as he saw this in his own time.\footnote{Donald J MacLeod ed., A Description of the Western Islands. Op.cit. 171, 176.} Change is axiomatic but it contributes an anxious and reiterated note in bardic verse of the seventeenth century and is noticed in different ways. A changing world saw decline of the learned traditions of poetry and a more rapid and cataclysmic decline to extinction in Ireland. Scottish Gaelic poets held on longer to traditional tenets of classical Gaelic verse and used them to remind the chieftains of their duties of patronage, a convention which, as Martin hints, had come to be regarded as ‘insolent’.\footnote{See William J Watson ed., Scottish Verse from the Book of the Dean of Lismore. Scottish Gaelic Texts Society 1937, 14-20, for the poet’s importunacy.} A poem by Cathal MacMhuirich, Sona do cheird, a Chalbhach (‘Blissful your trade, Calbhach’), is heavy with irony and anger directed at the slovenly poet who had moved into his bardic domain, comparable in spirit to the satire aimed at pipers.\footnote{David Greene, A satire by Cathal Mac Muireadhaghaigh, in James Carney and David Greene eds., Celtic Studies. Essays in memory of Angus Matheson, 1912-1962. New York 1968, 51-55; Colm O Baoil ed., Gàirn nan Clàrsach. The Harp’s Cry. An Anthology of 17th Century Gaelic Poetry. Birlinn 1994, 90-95; Kenneth H Jackson, A Celtic Miscellany. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1967, 234-235, for the fifteenth-century complaint of a Welsh harper against an English piper who had usurped his position, couched in highly deprecatory terms.}

The emergence of the bagpipe within the cultural ambit of the Gàidhealtachd can be observed in this period.\footnote{Kenneth MacLeod, Notes on Musical Instruments in Gaelic Folk-tales, Celtic Review Volume VIII (1913), 341-347; J L Campbell ed., Hebridean Folksongs III. Oxford 1981, 27-28; see also Seán Donnelly, The Early History of Piping in Ireland, Dublin: Na Piobairí Uilleann 2001, 13, 18.} Early references to the bagpipe in a Highland context are, inter alia, to their being played by men in Argyll’s forces at the Battle of Pinkie in 1547 and in the ceòl mòr song, Pìobaireachd Dhomhnaill Duibh. The military role of the ‘great pipe’ was prominent both in Ireland and Scotland but a prestigious role developed for the bagpipe in Scottish Gaelic society which, politically and culturally, was then at its most successful, assertive and confident and offered new and exceptional opportunities to pipers in the Gàidhealtachd.
A distinction may be drawn between, on the one hand, the use of the bagpipe evolving *sui generis* as a military instrument and, on the other, its grafting onto earlier traditions. In the former case, examples proliferate over Europe of an often ephemeral role in armies of a low-caste bagpipe or 'great pipe' as signalling instrument. In the latter case, it emerged within a cultural milieu of professional music-making and reflected something of a redistribution of the functions of the learned orders. There would be shifts from time to time in lines of demarcation between poets and historians, as we have seen, and an evident professional shift from harpers to pipers is one major feature of these seventeenth-century changes. The piper appears to take over harpers' subject-matter and they probably move into their domain of music. The learned orders and literary professions share in and connive at the acceptance of demotic practice and of a putative downsizing of status, although simultaneously, as we have seen, these shifts offered new opportunity for poetic challenge and response; significantly the pipers' voice is not evident in the *moladh* and *dimoladh* songs which alternate elevation and ridicule of the *bagpipe*, starting with ‘The history of the pipe from the beginning’, *Seanchas Sloinnidh na Piob o thus*.¹⁰⁶

As significant for history as the contempt for the instrument or its practitioners who had seldom had status to boast of, is the bardic controversy, the *iomarbhaidh*, a term with a complex literary history, included but essentially obscured within the *piobaireachd* canon. Competitions between pipers, especially before and on behalf of their patrons and chieftains, are a commonplace of the traditional and recorded history of Highland piping. Intriguing also are the accounts of Highland pipers being put to the test against pipers from Ireland and England, the inference being that they were playing more or less the same sort of instrument or 'great pipe'.¹⁰⁷

Many of the features of the cultural and political changes of the seventeenth-century Gàidhealtachd may be part interpreted, not as autonomous developments as has been the treatment of the Highland bagpipe, but as devolving elements of Irish literary history. This learning in its broadest sense, which is still evidenced in Scotland at a late date, depended on the Irish dimension, and bardic poetry frequently demonstrates familiarity with what were in effect very old and time-served ingredients to be traced in the Irish Law Tracts. Evidence running parallel describes the social and cultural framework which produced and sustained such learning, with features such as differing status of learned practitioners, the schools and their teaching, memory training, and practitioners’ duties and obligations. Such features later characterise the piper’s profession and ‘schools of piping’.

The Aos Dána, the poets, historians and jurists, were the providers and custodians of a culture common to Ireland and Scotland and the term Aosdána survived in Scotland in a restricted sense as a title associated with non-literate bards composing eulogy and elegy in the vernacular and professing certain rights and duties. In this limited respect the seventeenth-century vernacular poets were heirs of the professional poets of earlier eras and it is argued in some detail, using the evidence of an elegy of about 1649, that their stressed metre compositions readily compare with ceòl mòr. Significantly, stressed metre composition in the vernacular, well suited to oral transmission and preservation, seems to emerge from the shadows in pace with bagpipe ceòl mòr in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and within the ambit of the chiefly houses and patrons. The musician is naturally eclectic and congruency in the

before the Battle of Worcester in 1651, although we need not infer that these were all Highland pipers in spite of the deference offered to MacCrimmon.

110 Aonghus MacMathain, Aos Dána, Gairm 8 (1954), 343-347; William Mathson ed., The Blind Harper. Op. cit. 150; William J Watson, Bardachd Ghàidhlig. Op.cit., 207; evidence is also sought in David Glen’s The Music of Clan MacLean (1900) for similarities in structure and phrasing, looking particularly at the piece Cas air amhaich, a Thighearna Chola, to discern similarities with vocal music. The discussion does not include the more obvious link of ‘piobroch songs’.
*piobaireachd* form may also be sought with syllabic metre though the evidence may not be so readily glimpsed.\(^{111}\)

Performance as we have seen was within the cultural milieu of the chieftains’ households where the fine art of the provision of patronage was sustained and poets and harpers and then pipers had a living. At these levels, groups and successions of poets and musicians were maintained and there are poetic references which throw light on these fraternities and also their artistic relationships.\(^{112}\) *Piobaireachd*, significantly, describes the role that developed with the use of the bagpipe in the Highlands and Islands. The question that has exercised those who have struggled to explain the origins of *piobaireachd* and of the Great Highland Bagpipe is whether the instrument evolved *sui generis* or was grafted onto an earlier tradition or traditions. Metrics and music would suggest the latter and this is reinforced by subject-matter, in which encomia predominate in the surviving corpus of bagpipe ‘classical’ music. This encompasses salutes to chieftains and leading men of the clans, laments on their passing in battle, or through accident and natural causes, the celebration of feats of arms, gatherings and incitement to war with rallying cries and slogans, the commemoration of human bonds and relationships in kin and clan, the reinforcement of group identity and the energising of group consciousness.

The most prominent piping families in the historical narrative of Highland piping were MacCrimmon, MacArthur, Mackay and Rankin, as recounted by Angus Mackay, and most subsequent accounts add MacGregor to this roll of honour. Each of these kin demonstrates links with Ireland or with the learned tradition in ways to demonstrate that this broader context supplies important evidence to illuminate origins and cultural influences on their art. The details in

\(^{111}\) Derick S Thomson, The Harlaw Brosnachadh: an early fifteenth-century literary curio, in James Carney and David Greene eds., *Celtic Studies. Essays in memory of Angus Matheson, 1912-1962*. New York 1968, 147-152; the dating of this literary curio still leaves room for speculation and it is not inconceivable that it might in fact be a relatively late composition and itself mimic *piobaireachd*.

the respective family histories to which the author has drawn attention are laid out in extenso in ‘Traditional origins of the piping dynasties’. 113

In his extempore verses on ‘The Court at Tongue’, Rob Donn commented on the disregard, even disdain and ignorance, by then shown to both piper and poet with the failure of patronage: Oir’s bràithrean ann an ceòl sinn, an cùmhradh beòil’s am feadaireachd ..., recalling a shared inheritance of a

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113 The following apparatus criticus summarises sources for the respective piping families:
fraternity of the learned orders. By the late-eighteenth century this was an economic issue as well as a social anxiety. Awareness of change and its implications for the arts was universal throughout the Gàidhealtachd and the disappearance of the schools of piping was a clear symptom. There is more than a hint of disgust or despair evident in MacCrimmon and Rankin history that their status – or what remained of it – no longer depended on their inherited learning, so that genealogy, history or even pseudo-history had no value in the new era of economic imperative.

Looking at the individual and celebrated piping families within their own terms of attainment and longevity, generally relayed through the secondary literature with an inadequate knowledge of Gaelic, and striving to fix genealogical detail such as succession over generations and dates of service, has limited our view. It is still difficult to build a clear picture of their emergence and association with group structures such as the learned orders of the medieval Gàidhealtachd, but greater emphasis could be placed on the group as opposed to the individual or the succession of individuals which has been an over-simple way of presenting the piping families. This is not to disregard the importance of the individual or the individual brilliance of Patrick Mor MacCrimmon or Charles MacArthur, but it tends to elide and lose, underestimate or even misrepresent human bonds and relationships that supplied the essential glue in clan and kin structures and gave such groups their status and longevity.

Group structure and group consciousness may even be as important as musicality in the interpretation of piobaireachd and in turn, this broader, ‘anthropological’ interpretation of piobaireachd could add insights to the understanding of the group and its dynamic in different (or archaic) societies as well as of the music itself. The recent critique of the model of a unified

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114 Hew Morrison ed., Songs and Poems in the Gaelic Language by Rob Donn. Edinburgh 1899, 426, ‘Since we are brothers in music, both in conversation and in piping ...’
115 Group behaviour and response seem to be at the core of the mid-seventeenth century account of pipers in the Royalist army before the Battle of Worcester when MacCrimmon is styled the ‘Prince of Pipers’. This also conforms to contemporary accounts of the then acknowledged mastery of the MacCrimmons; see William Mackay, Chronicles of the Frasers. Op. cit. xix, 379-80, and Hugh Cheape, The MacCrimmon Piping Dynasty and its Origins, op. cit., 20.
Gàidhealtachd strengthens rather than weakens the interpretation of the short-lived role of the piping families in the redistribution of cultural assets in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.\textsuperscript{116} When the arts of poetry and music continued to flourish in Gaelic Scotland, albeit at a perceived lower level, the pipers could aspire and function by aligning themselves and associating themselves with Scottish families with Irish links and origins. The emergence and short-lived success of the piping dynasties can be seen as a significant facet of the divided cultures of this Gàidhealtachd. Equally, the centrality of Ireland in cultural expectations in the classical period emerges from the deeper levels of evidence for the piping dynasties.

\textsuperscript{116} Wilson McLeod, \textit{Gaelic Cultural Identities in Scotland and Ireland, c. 1200-c. 1650}. Oxford University Press 2004, 7-8, 171-172, 193; see also W J Watson, Ciar Sheanchain, \textit{Celtic Review} Volume IV (1907-1908), 80-88, for another important group whose history could contribute to an understanding of the emergence of the piping dynasties.
Section 5.
The Pastoral or New Bagpipe – echo of the Neo-baroque

[This is a review of the paper on this subject in The Galpin Society Journal]

The Pastoral Pipe represents one of the more intriguing topics to emerge from the surviving material record of piping in Scotland, intriguing because of the number of instruments that survive and because of their high quality and finish. But this instrument is absent from the written histories of the bagpipe in Scotland or the United Kingdom. It has received comparatively generous treatment in Ireland but cultural politics have until recently disfavoured recognition of a pre-existence beyond Ireland. It appears to be something of a musicological enigma with very little information on its emergence, no clear chronology of this process, and minimal information on its makers or the demand for such a remarkable musical instrument.

On the basis of the surviving material record, both the Pastoral and Union Pipes appear to be creations of the eighteenth century and of professional wind instrument makers or turners, that is skilled lathe workers, although the early products were not marked. These names are adopted here since these are the names, in the first place ‘Pastoral’ and later ‘Union’, evident in the contemporary written record. Later and more recent naming has wandered from these terms, especially when this instrument faded from use in the nineteenth century, and we find other terms such as ‘Irish Pipes’, Uilleann Pipes or ‘hybrid-Union pipes’ applied to it in the later literature.

The earlier form of ‘Pastoral Pipe’ is a distinctive instrument in terms of European bagpipes of the period and it is significant that one of the earliest specific sources of information on the instrument calls it ‘the Pastoral or New Bagpipe’.\footnote{John Geoghegan, The Compleat Tutor for the Pastoral or New Bagpipe, London [c.1746]; Roderick D Cannon, A Bibliography of Bagpipe Music, Edinburgh: John Donald 1980, 8-9, 76-79; the title page of The Compleat Tutor bears the rubric: ‘Printed for & Sold by John Simpson at the Bass Viol & Flute in Sweetings Alley opposite the East Door of the Royal Exchange, London, Where may be had Bagpipes, & Books of instructions for any Single Instrument.’ John Simpson, a London maker of Baroque woodwind instruments, may be a key to understanding the emergence of the Pastoral Pipe and allow us to claim with confidence that the instrument was ‘invented’ by a London Scot.} The instrument, probably created first in London and later in
Edinburgh and Dublin, was bellows-blown, had two drones, bass and tenor in a common stock, and chanter, and is comparable in overall size to the Lowland or Border bagpipe. Characteristics that distinguish the Pastoral bagpipe are the ‘folded’ or ‘returned’ bass drone with four joints, the length of the bass proportionate to the sounding lengths of the other drone or drones pointing to the acoustic significance of harmonising with the low pitch of the chanter; and the chanter made in sections or ‘joints’ like other woodwind instruments such as flute and oboe, with long narrow conical, but not necessarily straight-sided, bore. The construction of the instrument in its different components suggests that its sound, soft and low pitch, was designed for indoor playing and with other instruments and to blend as much as to stand out. Undoubtedly the Pastoral Pipe was designed to make bagpipe music appeal to sophisticated and discriminating audiences and to fit in a social and musical context of violin, piano or harpsichord, flute and oboe. This bagpipe might be said to represent a largely unnoticed, uncharted but nonetheless significant facet of the changes implicit in the evolution of European music in the successive phases of Renaissance, Baroque and Classical.

Forms of music were changing in the Baroque era, for example with the invention of opera and cantata, and instruments were freely adapted and discarded. In this context, the origins of the Pastoral Pipe might be more readily traced in European woodwind than in folk instrumentation. In France for example the late-seventeenth century enthusiasm for the ‘pastorale’ is linked to operas by Lully and Rameau who used bass notes to recreate a bagpipe drone effect. It was therefore entirely apt to create a pastoral instrument that was a bagpipe. This new form of bagpipe must have borrowed or derived acoustic concepts from the Baroque oboe with its narrower bore and smaller tone-holes, since such features characterise its chanter compared to traditional forms. The oboe itself was developed in this period from the early woodwind shawm. This is a conceptual link that helps to identify early pipe makers in the ranks of wind instrument makers in the large urban centres, principally London.118

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In a European context, the Pastoral Pipe follows culturally in the steps of instruments of the *musette* type, a bellows-blown small pipe developed by leading professional musicians in metropolitan France in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for courtly and aristocratic performance and for inclusion in orchestras and consorts. The *musette* began to acquire its own repertoire or part-repertoire of music and gave rise to at least two contemporary published works, those of Borjon (1672) and Hotteterre (1737), that described it in comparative detail and may have been consciously imitated by Geoghegan in 1746. 119 Significantly Pastoral Pipes are larger instruments and have conical rather than cylindrical bore chanter. French makers also moved to producing sophisticated and finely-crafted conical bore *cornemuses* as larger instruments for different styles of ensemble playing. 120

It remains difficult, without ‘signed’ instruments, to establish a precise chronology of change and development or a pattern of possible diffusion from courtly music-making to alehouse and from France to England and Scotland. References to pipes and pipemaking in Pepys’ *Diary* indicate fine instruments being made and played in London at the time of the Restoration, if not before 1660, while the Restoration itself is the key to understanding changes in musical fashion and a fresh emphasis on social skills such as making music, singing and dancing. That a musical culture was maintained is suggested by the appearance of the first three editions of John Playford’s *The English Dancing Master* during

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119 The format, layout and letter-forms of *The Compleat Tutor* are described in the research paper; see also Anthony Baines, *Bagpipes*, Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford Occasional Papers on Technology 9, Oxford University, Press Revised edition 1973, 125; Bruce Haynes, *The Eloquent Oboe* (as above), 2; museums have collected examples of *Musettes de cou r* because of their fine craftsmanship eg. NMS H.LT 6, NMS A.1947.110 A-B.

120 Sylvie de la Salle, *Les cornemuses de George Sand autour de Jean Sautivet, fabricant et joueur de musette dans le Berry* (1796-1867), Musée des musiques populaires de Montluçon 1996, 20, 98; the *Musette de Poitou* is an example of a bagpipe developed for consorts playing for royal and aristocratic audiences; A Duncan Fraser, *Some Reminiscences and the Baggipe*, Edinburgh: William J Hay 1907, 244-246; NMS A.1947.112.
the Commonwealth, beginning in 1651, and including Scottish tunes.\textsuperscript{121} An Aberdeenshire laird’s journal describes an occasion of lively and sophisticated music-making in a public-house in Penrith in 1729, involving performance on small pipes, double chanter small pipes and ‘big pipe’, all being blown or ‘winded’ with bellows.\textsuperscript{122}

This ‘new’ bagpipe has been referred to in England and Scotland as the ‘Pastoral Pipe’, a name proposed at the time while the term ‘pastoral’ was popularly current. With complex origins in early Provençal literature, ‘pastoral’ could be said to have acquired a special sense in eighteenth-century Scotland where Theocritus’ ‘Idylls’ were widely read. The portrayal or evocation of pastoral Scotland was then as much an historical as idealised construct and therefore had a special meaning for Scots whose landscape, society and languages were seen as exhibiting qualities analogous to Homeric Greece. Native music and song therefore were a part of the evidence drawn into contemporary Enlightenment enquiry into human nature and the moral sciences, part and parcel in fact of the world explored by Hume and Rousseau. The native tradition, real or imagined, had then been ‘rediscovered’ by Allan Ramsay (1684-1758), impresario and maker of pastorals, and published in The Ever Green (1724) and The Tea-Table Miscellany (1724-1732).\textsuperscript{123} On the basis of surviving material evidence, it is suggested that this instrument was developed in this atmosphere of the evocation of the ‘pastoral’ in the first half of the eighteenth century, for chamber music and theatrical light opera, as well as for dance music and the playing of song-airs.

Allan Ramsay’s pastoral drama with music of 1725, ‘The Gentle Shepherd’, puts the shepherd’s pipe or ‘Stock-and-Horn’ into the hands of his ‘shepherd’ as

\textsuperscript{121} Jeremy Barlow ed., The Complete Country Dance Tunes from Playford’s Dancing Master (1651-ca.1728), London: Faber Music 1985; manuscript sources indicate comparable survival of ‘big house’ music-making in Scotland in households such as Balcarres and Panmure.


\textsuperscript{123} John MacQueen, Progress and Poetry, Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press 1982, 70-71; Francis Collinson, The Traditional and National Music of Scotland, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1966, 126; it is doubtful if the term ‘Pastoral Pipe’ had a wide currency and Geoghegan may have been the only begetter.
part-indicator of status and ethnicity. The Pastoral Pipe itself may well have been used for example in the popular and fashionable music dramas of the time, principally for example in John Gay’s ‘Beggar’s Opera’ which opened to huge acclaim in 1728. Part-political, part-moral drama, it mocked the conventions of Italian baroque opera when reaction set in against the metropolitan vogue. The music of ‘The Beggar’s Opera’ was based on popular songs taken from printed sources such as Thomas D’Urfey’s ‘Wit and Mirth, or Pills to Purge Melancholy’ and William Thomson’s *Orpheus Caledonius*, and the Scottish music quotient was high. With a classical title (playing to the appeal of Purcell’s *Orpheus Britannicus*), Thomson’s work placed Scottish music and song centre-stage in the pastorale and appealed to the London as well as Scottish public. Cartoon burlesque of the ‘Beggar’s Opera’ includes an orchestra with bagpipe, arguably the first representation of the Pastoral Pipe and indicator of it being used in the theatre.

London and its cosmopolitan musical life of the Baroque era hold the key to a better understanding of the early history of the Pastoral Pipe. Many ballad-operas were produced, particularly between 1728 and 1733, and some were built on a Scottish story-line such as ‘Patie and Peggy’, ‘Flora or Hob in the Well’ and ‘The Highland Fair, or the Union of the Clans’. Music sustained audience demand and of the 27 pieces of music and melodies used in the ‘Beggar’s Opera’ sequel, over half were Scottish or identified with Scotland and appeared in *Orpheus Caledonius*, testifying to the extraordinary popularity of Scottish music as a form of the Neo-Baroque. Another element in this was the

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124 NMS H.LT 12; a similar instrument, possibly by the same maker, is in the collections of the Royal College of Music; the making of bagpipes as theatre performance instruments may explain the apparently longer career of the Pastoral Pipe in Scotland eg. NMS A.1947.106.
126 Frank Kidson, *The Beggar’s Opera* (as above), where it is pointed out that John Gay had a copy of *Orpheus Caledonius*; the list of 498 subscribers in the 1733 edition offers impressive testimony to the contemporary popularity of Scottish music and song among nobility and gentry, the even spread of this appeal throughout England as well as Scotland, and the independent exercise of female taste; the numbers of husband and wife subscribers, each in some instances taking multiples of sets, are significant details.
127 Oswald Doughty, *Polly: an Opera. Being the second part of the Beggar’s Opera written by Mr Gay*, London: Daniel O’Connor 1922, passim; composers and arrangers such as Purcell and John and Henry Playford adopted and adapted Scottish music for English audiences, and they also supplied material ‘in the Scots manner’, familiar examples being ‘Within a mile o’ Edinburgh town’ and ‘Katherine Ogie’; Roger Fiske, *Scotland in Music: a European Enthusiasm*, Cambridge University Press 1983, ix, 188.
presence of Scots and Irish in the business of music and literature in London in the first half of the eighteenth century, notably Edmund Burke, Oliver Goldsmith, James Thomson (author of *The Seasons*), Tobias Smollett and James Oswald.  

Characteristic of the Baroque was the enjoyment equally of the serious and the profane in music, and a composer such as Henry Purcell (1659-1695) wrote for the court and church as well as for the theatre and the bawdy vernacular in song. Ideals of Baroque music were that it should be eloquent and expressive in order to affect mood and convey emotion, but there was also the strong scatological vein and audiences looked for a range of allegory and symbolism. Different instruments, or combinations of instruments, could be the vehicles for symbolic meaning so that, for example, the ‘lascivious lute’ would introduce a libidinous note. The bagpipe was regarded as the ‘pastoral’ instrument and could also represent the profane or the uncouth as against the sacred of stringed instruments. Its sound was expressive of the bucolic and of a primitive social (and rural) harmony and ‘arcadia’ was evoked by composers, especially on the Continent, developing motifs associated with the pipes or imitating or even using bagpipes in classical performance.

Evidently piping was still in a largely pre-literate state since personal pipe-music collections such as the ‘Dixon Manuscript’ of 1733 are extremely rare, but *The Compleat Tutor for the Pastoral or New Bagpipe*, printed in London in about 1746, provides a detailed insight into the Pastoral Pipe. John Geoghegan’s ‘small Treatise’ of 28 pages with 40 tunes is the first book of bagpipe music produced in Britain and is a remarkable document, opening a window onto a particular stage of the evolution of the bagpipe in Europe and relating it closely to contemporary musical fashion. A manuscript section bound into the National
Museums' copy includes one of the earliest pieces of music written for the 'Great Pipe'.

The fortunes of the bagpipe, lacking generous narrative sources of its own, might also be reconstructed with a clearer understanding of Scottish political and religious life. Edinburgh, where the earliest references to bagpipe makers in Scotland occur, was the 'thoroughfare into all Scotland' and offers a good starting point. It was a centre of British political power following the rise of 'management' and the control of Scotland by the Campbells of Argyll and then by the Lord Advocate, Henry Dundas. Music-making thrived in spite of clerical disapproval, unsteady patronage and the changing political scene, and Allan Ramsay's eloquent 'To the Music Club' of 1721 suggests how Scotland sustained an eclectic cultural tradition with the 'Motetti of Bassani and the Sonatas of Corelli' performed in concert with Scots songs. Oblique comment is offered perhaps on the 'export' of Scottish music in 'your country's fame', but he pursues his claim for Scotland's native idiom of national song including the recherché reference to piping:

Then you whose symphony of souls proclaim
Your kin to heav'n add to your country's fame,
And shew that music may have as good fate
In Albion's glens, as Umbria's green retreat;
And with Corelli's soft Italian song
Mix Cowden Knows, and Winter nights are long;
Nor should the martial pibrough be despis'd;

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129 National Library of Scotland Adv MS 5.2.22, and see also Adv MS 5.22.25; NMS A.1947.129; Roderick D Cannon, A Bibliography of Bagpipe Music (as above), 76-79; Matt Seattle, The Master Piper, Dragonfly Music, 1995; see Appendix and this source is fully discussed in the research paper 'The Pastoral or New Bagpipe: piping and the Neo-baroque.'


Edward Topham, Letters from Edinburgh, 1774-1775, London 1776, 16, 22, 339, 341, in which an Englishman opined that Edinburgh was 'the seat of several of the most ingenious men in Europe', and gave a clear sense of how expediency was replacing political intrigue and dancing added to church-going as participatory entertainment; Edinburgh was a high-status market centre.

131 The Saint Cecilia's Day Concert of 1695 is recorded in detail and must mark a significant point in the contradictory emergence of theatre and concert performance in seventeenth-century Scotland; see Burns Martin and John W Oliver editors, The Works of Allan Ramsay, Volume I. Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society 1944, 194-195; see also Francesco Barsanti, A Collection of Old Scots Tunes of 1742 and the repeated inclusion of favourites such as 'Tweedside' (also turned into Cantata by Pasquali) in concert programmes.
Own’d and refin’d by you, these shall the more be priz’d.132

Aberdeen and Glasgow also hosted concerts and music societies, and Aberdeen is important for its distinctive blend of humanism, a conservative background of Episcopacy, the two music schools of St Nicholas’ and St Machar’s, an inheritance of a big house ‘court culture’ and a rural hinterland which has boasted the richest ballad tradition in Scotland and beyond. Aberdeen as a cultural centre demonstrates characteristics which offer explanation of the survival of the Pastoral and the Union Pipe tradition in North-East Scotland. In terms of the material culture, the final chapter of the organology of the Pastoral Pipe belongs to the early-nineteenth-century North-East; a Pastoral Pipe manuscript music book adds to this modest wealth with a selection of traditional and ‘modern’ song airs, dance tunes and quicksteps.133

By the mid-nineteenth century the Pastoral Pipe had dropped out of the bagpipe narrative which, in Scotland, had been appropriated exclusively for the military ‘Great Highland Bagpipe’. Coinciding with the beginnings of the systematic study of historic musical instruments following the South Kensington Exhibition of 1872, the Pastoral Pipe was an obvious candidate for museum collection but achieved a transcendence to museum status so thorough as to lose all trace of its origins and aesthetic. It had contributed the eloquence and expression expected of Baroque and Neo-baroque music and offered a low-key but compelling ‘native’ response to a national identity built on the oratorio. It

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132 Reference is made to the contemporary imitative ‘fiddle-pibroch’ in which Highland music was drawn into exploration of the pastoral; Sir John Graham Dalyell, Musical Memoirs of Scotland, Edinburgh 1849, 286-287; David Johnson, Scottish Fiddle Music in the Eighteenth Century, Edinburgh: John Donald 1984, 119-142; John Purser, Scotland’s Music, Mainstream Publishing 1992; Topham describes the blending of musical instruments in lighter terms than ‘Jupiter’ Carlyle’s scathing reference to ‘fiddlers and town waits’ in a Glasgow concert in the 1740s; the transmission of a huge national fiddle repertoire in printed form testifies to the popularity of music-making in Scotland; the same printed material could be used by pipers, for example, a surviving Pastoral Pipe manuscript includes the reels and strathspeys of the fiddle repertoire, see National Library of Scotland Adv MS 5.2.22.

easily bridged elite and popular streams of culture and with its distinctive basso, reflected the quintessential of the experimental and imitative in an aesthetic of new sounds.

The Pastoral Pipe developed in the course of the eighteenth century as a complex instrument but failed to develop its own literature compared to the contemporary fiddle. Its repertoire drew on both ancient and modern ‘traditional’ music but always courted modern respectability by offering it for violin, ’cello, flute and keyboard. In this process, Scotland and Ireland, as wellsprings of traditional music, became significant parts of the geography of the Baroque but then lost themselves to versions of Romanticism. The Pastoral Pipe holds a mirror to this cultural trajectory and subsequent silence. Its style and finesse carried it forward but its unpublished career, with the glowing exception of John Geoghegan in the 1740s, cast this extraordinary record into the shadows. The primary sources for recovery and re-evaluation of these aspects of the Baroque and Neo-baroque are the instruments themselves and these offer an unrecognised component for the organology of British music in its European context.
Appendix

John Geoghegan’s Compleat Tutor (NMS H.1947.129); the list of tunes for the Pastoral Pipe in the eleven-page manuscript section:

The Maid that’s made for Love and me
The Mayjor
Minuet
Clout the Cauldron
The Flagon
Pinkie House
She Rose and let me in
Thro’ the wood Laddie
The Yellow Hair’d Laddie
White Boy’s March
Moll Ro in the Morning
My Mother’s Ay Gowering oer me
Whip her and Gird her
March
Bessie Bell and Mary Gray
Section 6.

'Taste and Humour' - the Union Pipe of Britain and Ireland

[This is a review of the paper on this subject in the Seán Reid Society Journal]

Modern perception of the Union Pipe has defined and described it in terms of Ireland's culture and the Uilleann bagpipe of today. By contrast the instrument's surviving 'material culture' suggests that the Union Pipe has been a shared andNeo-Baroque tradition and that an integrity has been ignored or laid aside in sustaining modern perceptions. This Section draws principally on the evidence of material culture to take issue with orthodoxy and to offer a counter-argument for a shared tradition.

Assuming that the so-called 'Pastoral Pipe' represents a first or earlier stage in the development of a chamber bagpipe for art music and light opera performance in Britain in the eighteenth century, the 'Union Pipe' clearly represents a subsequent evolutionary stage. The evidence for this lies principally in the material culture or 'organology' of the instrument and an argument developed ex silentio by mapping this against relevant conventional sources. An evident silence may seem even more paradoxical given the explosion of print culture in the eighteenth century and a wealth of printed evidence for the fiddle tradition in Scotland. The title of the Section adopts a contemporary phrase, the author's choice of words belonging to the Enlightenment concept of the exploration of the senses in the philosophy of 'aesthetics'. Henry Colclough synthesised the development of the instrument in his 'Tutor' with the words: 'They are an Instrument likewise on which the performer can display much taste and humour, both of which are necessary for a player of the Union Pipes to possess, in order to afford that pleasing variety which they are so capable of producing'.

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134 The basis for this is explored in Hugh Cheape, The Pastoral or New Bagpipe: piping in the Neo-Baroque, Galpin Society Journal (forthcoming); see also Ken McLeod, From Hotteterre to the Union pipes, The Seán Reid Society Journal Volume 1 (March 1999), 1.06.1-6.
As a form of bellows-blown chamber bagpipe, the Union Pipe survives today in the versatile Irish bagpipe but the history of this survival and revival lies beyond this thesis. Its revival was bound up with political nationalism in the twentieth century and hence the Union Pipe, renamed as Uilleann Pipe, is described as an instrument native to Ireland and the lineal descendant of an earlier Irish bagpipe. A ‘prehistoric’ is supplied by a considerable number of instruments and parts of instruments which still exist for the period approximately from 1760 to 1860 and offer benchmarks for an organology.\(^\text{137}\) It is difficult to assign dates for the creation of instruments of this class although surviving examples illustrate a process of experimentation and adaptation while traditions within piping have tended to assign earlier dates than are sustainable in terms of the organology.\(^\text{138}\) An argument is proposed in the research paper for the adoption of the term ‘Union’, otherwise variously attributed, for the keyed chanter instrument with the regulator, drawing on the word uairthe for ‘consonance’ and a coming together of sound in music.\(^\text{139}\)

The Union bagpipe, as with the Pastoral Pipe, had an art music role in addition to its tavern and township role. Though the specific evidence is from the second half of the eighteenth century, we see that it was used for chamber music and orchestral and entr’acte performance in the ballad opera and pantomime tradition, and follows earlier patterns of French courtly tradition and Baroque taste. By mid-century, the fashion for ballad opera was wavering in the face of cultural change, driven partly by a new British patriotism and exemplified by Arne’s Alfred and James Thomson’s ‘Rule Britannia’. The ‘celtic fringe’ had lost its sensual appeal and the stock particularly of Scotland was at its lowest in the wake of the Jacobite Wars and during the premiership of the Earl of Bute. Whereas most of the evidence for the Union Pipe, both material and


documentary, resides in Scotland and Ireland, London audiences came in due course to accept the bagpipe again on the stage, possibly in Thomas Linley’s very successful version of ‘The Gentle Shepherd’ with music in the 1780s, but certainly in the later operatic arrangements of the Ossian Cycle in the 1790s. The bagpipe’s acceptability in metropolitan society seemed to owe more to uaithe than to ‘union’, to tonality rather than cultural assimilation.\footnote{Frank Kidson, The Beggar’s Opera: its predecessors and successors. Cambridge University Press 1922, 104; Linda Colley, Britons: forging the nation 1707-1837. Yale University Press (New Haven, CT) 1992; see Eric Halfpenny, An eighteenth-century trade list of musical instruments, Galpin Society Journal Volume XVII (1962),100, for London music-seller and publisher, Robert Brenner, advertising ‘Bagpipes, Scotch or Irish’ in the 1760s.}

This second phase in the development of the bagpipe as a Neo-Baroque instrument, marked by a probable shift in demand, supply and performance, took place, it is suggested, in Scotland and in Ireland as well as elsewhere in England, and in a pattern of diffusion outward from London. It is notable also that the instrument, like the Pastoral Pipe, had its London-published ‘treatise’ in O’Farrell’s Collection of National Irish Music for the Union Pipes (1804). This is a key source that included ‘a Selection of Favorite Scotch Tunes’, was pitched for the ‘Lovers of Ancient and Pastoral Music’ and implicitly recognised the shared tradition.\footnote{NMS H.1995.794.4; NMS A.1947.130; Roderick D Cannon, A Bibliography of Bagpipe Music (as above), 81-82.} Such terms of reference as ‘Irish pipes’ had emerged in Scotland by the late-eighteenth century and this may seem paradoxical in view of the surviving material evidence which seems now to be more copious outwith Ireland. Alternatively the reference may have been to the version of the Union Pipe with a keyed chanter developed in Dublin, whose pre-eminence, not only as Ireland’s capital but also as one of the metropolitan centres of eighteenth-century Europe, may help to explain the emergence of a particular musical culture represented in part by the bagpipe. But on the basis of material evidence alone, it is possible to argue for a Scottish origin for the Union Pipe or at least shared and coterminous development of the instrument between the urban centres of Edinburgh and Dublin and possibly Newcastle.\footnote{Francis O’Neill, Irish Minstrels and Musicians (as above), 156; see also Seán Donnelly, A century of pipemaking, 1770-1870; new light on the Kennas and the Coynes. The Seán Reid Society Journal Volume 2 (2002), 14.1-8.} Such productions must even then have been rare and costly in terms of time and
materials, and it is worth speculating whether more or less the total production
of early known makers such as Kenna and Robertson might in fact have
survived as evidenced by instruments in public collections. To state this
proposition differently, the organology of this instrument is based on very small
beginnings with only one or two isolated makers making perhaps one or two (or
even less) instruments each year. Their production may still be accounted for by
the surviving material evidence and Robertson's role in the development of the
instrument confidently described.

Instruments such as these have depended on repute and tradition which tends in
the literature to be respected, even hallowed rather than questioned. The
elaboration of the Union Pipe to create an 'Irish Union Pipe' is traditionally
credited to Kenna who apparently, moving to Dublin from Mullingar, was
making sets with keyed chanters and regulators between 1770 and 1790. In
Scotland, evidence in record sources shows that, as early as the 1760s, Hugh
Robertson was in business as a musical instrument maker. This coincides with
James Craig's prize-winning plan for Edinburgh's 'New Town' and its period of
rapid development architectural achievement, an economic and cultural picture
that can be readily compared with Dublin. Both pipemakers too were benefiting
from the exponential growth of craftwork and associated trades such as turnery
in their respective new metropolitan markets. Many sets survive with
Robertson's name on them and he is one of the earliest pipe makers to mark his
work and, in fact as far as the evidence goes, the maker of the earliest 'named'
sets of bagpipes in Scotland. The addition of a regulator to the Union Pipe
seems to mark an early point in his career although the surviving evidence and
of instruments shows that he continued to make the 'flat pipe' and simple drone
combination.

One factor undoubtedly sustaining the Pastoral and Union Pipes on a London-
Edinburgh axis and perhaps hastening the chromatic development of the

143 Francis O'Neill, Irish Minstrels and Musicians (as above), 43, adding the note that it was about this
time or perhaps later that the Irish bagpipe became known as the 'Union Pipes'; see also Seán
Donnelly, A century of pipemaking, 1770-1870 (as above), 14.2-6.
144 This is described in more detail in Section 8, 'The Maestros – architects of change'.
145 Eg. Inverness Museum and Art Gallery McK 42L, Musée des Instruments Musicales, Brussels
(European Folk Instrument Collection) MIM M1123.
instrument was the remarkable success of Ossian from the 1760s. Sir John Graham Dalyell, the Lothian laird and antiquary, recalled: ‘The Irish bagpipe has been seen in the London theatres, as well as in our own, and in our concert rooms. It was introduced in the former at the performance of a favourite piece called Oscar and Malvina, founded on one of Ossian’s poems. The powerful emotions of the bard in his speeches and mood against the backdrop of a wild – ‘sublime’ – landscape of mountains, torrents and storms were the ingredients which so strongly appealed to the contemporary mind and translated well to the stage. William Reeve’s Ossian libretto and score (for harp and Union Pipe) of 1791 remained popular until superseded by more military and rhythmic styles of music in the early-nineteenth century. The idea of the ‘sublime’ had emerged from the Enlightenment exploration of the senses and the literary weaving together of the cults of primitivism and imaginative inspiration. The essence of this comes from the writings of Thomas Blackwell (1701-1757), James ‘Ossian’ Macpherson (1736-1796) and Hugh Blair (1718-1800), but a wider appeal for belles-lettres derived from Burke’s Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1757). The second edition of ‘Sublime and Beautiful’ was published in 1759 and conditioned the contemporary mind for the reception of James Macpherson’s masterpiece. The Ossianic landscape of myth and allegory, unequivocally Scottish, was envisaged in terms of an agreeable horror and its sensory perception as a state of delight. Literary impulses, characteristic of Baroque themes, drove and inspired music.\(^{147}\)

The Union Pipe was also specifically patronised by the Highland Society of London, founded in May 1778 and drawing for its membership on Highlanders in the capital. Their patronage of piping must be significant as an indication of taste and perception – of taste insofar as many doubtless enjoyed the playing of the Union Pipe with its Ossian associations, and perception in that the


instrument seems to have been regarded as a traditional element of Scottish, if not of Highland music. *Piobaireachd* was probably not to the taste of all and the Union Pipe may have been regarded as the instrument of *ceol beag* or ‘light music’. The Union Pipes played regularly at Society meetings between 1788 and 1822. 148 The players paid for their services in those years were the names which appear regularly in Scotland and England as the players of the Union Pipe: John Murphy, Dennis Courtney, James McDonnell, Richard Fitzmaurice, Patrick O’Farrell, and John and Malcolm MacGregor.

Those who performed publicly also taught piping, wrote and published music and subsisted by their art in London and Edinburgh - but not in opulence. In a limited sense, these were the markets for instruments and players. In London Geoghegan and O’Farrell offered piping instruction to ‘gentlemen’, as did Donald MacDonald and Fitzmaurice in Edinburgh. MacDonald moved significantly to a concentration on Highland piping and Fitzmaurice published a series of collections of Irish tunes for the Union Pipe and adapted for piano to widen the appeal. 149 Patterns of patronage included piping in different modes as the possibly unique sinecure of John Murphy, ‘Performer on the Union Pipes at Eglinton Castle’ also shows. The much later example of Robert Millar (1769-1865) and his career and manuscripts show the ways in which the tradition and instrument changed in tune with the times, ultimately forming a *coda* in the history of the Union Pipe. His instrument of about 1830 was an ‘Irish’ bagpipe made by an Englishman for a Scotsman, and in its complexity of drones and regulators demonstrates how it had to compete with other instruments and ‘over-perform’ to keep up with changes in musical fashions such as Continental dance forms, marching music, strict tempo and rhythmic accompaniment. His manuscript music preserves an insight into the taste in popular music in Scotland in the early-nineteenth century; it draws on a wide selection of British,


Irish and European popular light classical music of the post-Napoleonic era, but also belongs firmly in North-East Scotland, with music from the regional fiddle tradition, music commemorating and deriving from local landed families from Angus to Banffshire with an emphasis on Deeside and Braemar, and one or two annotations recording performances in the district such as at Mar Lodge in 1839 and 1843.\textsuperscript{150}

The evidence of tradition and of instruments suggests that the Union Pipes continued to be played in the nineteenth century in the North of England, at least by a number of individuals whose character imprinted itself on the community memory. The most frequently quoted name is James Allan (1734-1810) whose ‘Organ Pipes’ (a Robertson of Edinburgh Union Pipe) are preserved. This character illustrates how the culture-province of the minstrel-musician brooked no national boundaries and contributed to the concept of the common pool of music. The ‘English Union Pipe’ has dropped out of the picture but those celebrated as innovators and makers of Small Pipes such as John and Michael Dunn and the Reids of North Shields would have regarded themselves, not necessarily as Small Pipe makers, but as Pipe Makers in a more general sense and certainly made Union Pipes.\textsuperscript{151}

A belief or conviction in autochthonous origins and separate traditions for piping, nursed independently in both Ireland and Scotland, dispensed with any sense of a need for further analysis and has contributed to the neglect of the material culture and potential of an organology. Such a belief, with all its

\textsuperscript{150} John Murphy, A Collection of Irish Airs and Jiggs with Variations, Adapted for the Piano Forte, Violin & Violincello, by John Murphy, Performer on the Union Pipes at Eglinton Castle. Paisley: Andrew Blaikie [1809] [British Library ascribed date; shelf mark g.542], with 77 tunes and a subscription list of 286 names which is discussed in the research paper as insight into contemporary taste and fashion in Scotland; see also Hugh Cheape, From Ticonderoga to Fishmarket Close, Piping Times Volume 52 (2000), 31-35, for comparable patronage of piping by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland; NMS H.LT 116.1 and NMS H.LT 116.2; Roderick D Cannon, Robert Millar – Lowland Piper?, Common Stock. The Journal of the Lowland and Border Pipers’ Society Volume 8 Number 1 (1999), 30-36.

literary, musical and historical apparatus, has not emerged *ex nihilo* but has been fostered in an ideological atmosphere prevalent since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Enlightenment concept of the progress of mankind from rudeness to refinement threw the cultures of Gaelic Scotland and Ireland into sharp focus but caused them to be differently represented. Ireland seemed to come out of this process rather better than Scotland; here the Ossian phenomenon reinforced notions of a primitive society with all its emotional appeal and eased the process of reducing Gaelic civilisation to military achievement and the cult of tartanry. Such characteristics were easily and firmly attuned to Empire and ethnic identity remoulded to serve distant purposes.

In the Union Pipe, we see the bagpipe too following the road from rudeness to refinement, principally from its adoption for performance in the European Neo-baroque. Here it evoked, as contemporaries described it, the ‘ancient and pastoral’. It is a subtle indicator of wider trends in ‘Enlightenment’ Scotland such as a growing economic strength, the moderating religious stance and contemporary advances in science and technology. In spite of the popular theatrical role of the Union Pipe, changing fashion replaced it with the Great Highland Bagpipe, then arguably a new invention, and in Ireland it gave way to the fiddle and was virtually annihilated in the cultural devastation of the Famine and emigration.
Section 7.

The maestros — bagpipe makers, architects of change

The acquisition of a set of Highland pipes by Donald MacDonald for the collections of the National Museums of Scotland in 2003 has coincided with a surge of interest in his work and career (NMS K.2003.939). His book, Collection of the Ancient Martial Music of Caledonia, which had been published as a facsimile reprint in 1974, has now been published in a scholarly edition, his manuscript collections studied in detail and a reasonably representative selection of his instruments secured in public collections. The acquisition has also prompted further consideration of the origins of the ‘Great Highland Bagpipe’.

It is difficult to estimate what proportion of the instruments which Donald MacDonald (1767-1840) produced in a relatively long career have survived but we might assume that it is small. Equally, we cannot be sure what his output of the Great Highland Bagpipe was or how his output varied between different types of bagpipe, such as Small Pipes and Union Pipes which we know he was manufacturing. The same comments apply for consideration of another ‘maestro’ of this period, Hugh Robertson of Edinburgh, whose work seems to now be well represented in public collections. He is remarkable also for being the first pipemaker in Scotland to mark his products.

In terms of named or unmarked instruments, two fine sets of the Great Highland Bagpipe are significant as early examples of a possible archetype, the late-eighteenth century ‘MacCorquodale’s Pipes’ (NMS K.1998.1130) and a ‘Prize Pipe’ awarded to Pipe-Major John Buchanan by the Highland Society of

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153 Hugh Cheape, A Check-list of Bagpipes (as above), 6-7, 9; NMS K.2003.705; NMS K.2003.704 and K.2003.706 are un-named but have been attributed to Hugh Robertson.
London in 1802 and preserved in the Black Watch Museum.\footnote{154} MacCorquodale’s Pipes, made according to tradition in the 1770’s supply important evidence for the form and finish of the Great Highland Bagpipe in this era. Pipe Major John Buchanan’s ‘Prize Pipe’, we can assume, was made in the summer of 1802 or shortly before and its maker was Hugh Robertson, selected by the Highland Society of London in 1781 to be the maker of the first prize bagpipe for their piping competition at Falkirk.\footnote{155} An earlier winner of the Prize Pipe was Neil MacLean who is shown in a remarkable and closely-observed engraved portrait of 1784 playing on a bagpipe which bears the hallmarks of Hugh Robertson’s manufacture.

The succession of the honorary commission of ‘Pipe Maker to the Highland Society of London’ passed in 1812 from Hugh Robertson to Malcolm MacGregor of London, though only briefly, before passing back to Hugh Robertson in 1815. Having charged £10 – 10s (or ten guineas) for the Prize set, Robertson’s price of £8 – 8s was accepted by the Society in preference. He had held the Society’s commission long enough to establish the style to which others would conform. The commission then passed to Donald MacDonald in 1822.\footnote{156}

Although the historical record fixes Hugh Robertson as a maker of Highland bagpipes, for example for the Highland Society of London’s Competitions and in manuscript sources, ‘chamber bagpipes’ such as Union Pipes are now better represented than Highland pipes among his surviving instruments and he listed himself as ‘turner’ and ‘ivory turner’ in the Edinburgh Post Office Directories. All three pipe makers, Hugh Robertson, Malcolm MacGregor and Donald MacDonald, from their surviving products and from references in the contemporary literature, were makers of a range of types of bagpipe for a still diverse contemporary market in the opening years of the nineteenth century. An impressive number of Malcolm MacGregor’s sets are preserved in museum

\footnote{154} See Hugh Cheape, MacCorquodale’s Pipes, The Piper Press No. 10 (January 1999), 27-31; A Duncan Fraser, Some Reminiscences and the Bagpipe, Falkirk 1907, 121; Catalogue no. A 2591, Regimental Museum of the Black Watch, Perth.
\footnote{156} Roderick D Cannon and Keith Sanger, Donald MacDonald’s Collection (as above), 7.
collections, showing what a talented craftsman he was. Telling in respect of the
diversity and versatility of piping in Scotland in this period is an advertisement
in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* for 3 November 1808:

‘D McDonald Musical Instrumentmaker and Teacher of Pipe Music, head of
Lawnmarket, Edinburgh, at the request of a number of young gentlemen, his
pupils, has just published a complete set of INSTRUCTIONS for the
HIGHLAND, LOWLAND, and NORTHUMBERLAND BAGPIPES ....’^157

Eleven or twelve years later, the same author included a similar message on the
title page of his published *Collection of the Ancient Marital Music of
Caledonia*: ‘D. MacDonald begs leave to intimate that he teaches the great
Highland, Northumberland and Irish bagpipes.’ Evidence of the variety of
Donald MacDonald’s experience and work is seen in sets of his bellows-blown
Union Pipes in museum collections.^158

Donald MacDonald was born in Glenhinnisdale, Trotternish, in the north end of
Skye. He is first mentioned in the prize lists of the Highland Society’s
competitions in 1801 when the third prize was awarded to ‘Donald MacDonald,
Piper to the Caithness Highlanders’, referring to his service in the Rothesay and
Caithness Fencibles, a regiment raised for home defence in 1794 and disbanded
in 1799. Assuming that Donald MacDonald might have joined a second
battalion formed in 1795, it might be imagined that this offered an opportunity
to a young man who, as the son of a ‘herd’, had otherwise limited prospects in
his home parish. This unit saw service in Ireland which at the time was feared
to be the likely target of a French Invasion, having been destabilised in British
eyes by the rebellion of the United Irishmen. With the Anglo-Irish Union
Treaty of 1800, the end of the Anglo-French conflict and the removal of
strategic and political threats, Donald MacDonald was probably able to return to
Scotland.^159 When, in Angus Mackay’s ‘Circumstantial Account’ of the

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^157 Hugh Cheape, *A Check-list of Bagpipes* (as above), 5-8, 12-13; Roderick D Cannon and Keith
Sanger, *Donald MacDonald’s Collection* (as above), 5.
^158 Sets of Union Pipes are in the Inverness Museum and the College of Piping, a set of Small Pipes
with three drones in a common stock and chanter in F and other Union Pipe chanters in the National
^159 Alexander MacGregor, John MacDonald – an adherent of Prince Charles, *Celtic Magazine* Volume
III (1877-1878), 462-466; Angus Mackay, *A Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd or Highland Pipe*
Highland Society of London’s Competitions, Donald MacDonald is referred to in August 1806 as ‘now Pipe-maker in Edinburgh’, we have an indication of the beginning of his pipe-making business following his career in the Fencibles. This is confirmed by entries in the Edinburgh Post Office Directories.

Donald MacDonald must now be recognised as a key name in the history of piping in Scotland. Skyeman, Gael and bagpipe maker, he was the first to publish a collection of *pibaireachd* in a systematic staff notation thus precisely signalling the beginning of the transition from an oral to a written tradition. In 1806, he was voted a prize ‘for producing the greatest number of Pipe-tunes, set to music by himself’, an enterprise which later bore fruit in the publication of a *Collection of the Ancient Martial Music of Caledonia called Piobaireachd* in 1819. He was among the first bagpipe makers to mark his products with his name, and he may have been the first to describe the Great Highland Bagpipe as Scotland’s ‘national instrument’, as he does in the introduction to his *Collection of Ancient Martial Music of Caledonia*. As ‘Pipe Maker to the Highland Society of London’ and the makers of sets of Prize Pipes for their competitions, Hugh Robertson and he are undoubtedly the chief architects of Scotland’s ‘national instrument’ as we recognise it today. The form of the instrument began to be fixed probably more firmly by the requirements of the Highland Society’s Competitions beginning in 1781; a dynamic influence of the annual competitions must have been to standardize presentation and playing styles, and the annual award of a Great Highland Bagpipe as first prize set a standard to which each instrument would then conform.

Donald Macdonald’s work which has survived is distinctive, masterly and stands ready comparison with the best of Highland pipe-making of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.\(^{160}\) At present we know that he learnt his piping from the Skye MacArthurs but we do not know where he learnt his trade, whether in Skye (probably doubtful) or whether he served a formal

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apprenticeship, or what he might have owed to other bagpipe makers such as his older contemporary, Hugh Robertson. More detailed comparison of the few surviving instruments could throw some light on the development and adoption of patterns. In brief, the distinctive profile of Scottish pipes in the early-eighteenth century can be inferred for example from a set of bagpipe drones in elder wood in the collections of the National Museums of Scotland (NMS H.LT 31), in the small portrait of a piper (possibly a self-portrait of Joseph MacDonald) on the last page of the manuscript ‘Compleat Theory’ and in the styling of the Lowland bagpipe. This earlier profile and finish changes to the now familiar pattern in the late-eighteenth century.

The process of change within a self-conscious cultural milieu is clearer perhaps in its effects than in its causes. Apart from the literary influences of Ossian, the founding of the Highland Society of London in 1778 seems to set in motion all the impulses for change. The reinstatement of the Highlander can be part-attributed to them, recreated in the atmosphere also of a sense of crisis by which cultural traits such as music were endangered and diminishing towards extinction. The image of the kilted Highlander, espoused by the Highland Societies, depends aesthetically on an impression of uniform and of uniformity, an aesthetic supplied by the wars of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries by which the kilted warrior became in due course the archetype Scot. Marching in step with the emergence of national stereotype was a hitherto invisible ‘Great Highland Bagpipe’, created in fact in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and adopted as archetype in the first quarter of the nineteenth. All pipe makers then conformed to type in producing a bagpipe with such a clear identity in shape and sound, and differences or distinctions in

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163 The bagpipe is frequently mentioned as one element reinforcing a sense of nationhood but has not been noticed in any detail in the sociological discourse whilst undoubtedly it would strengthen the case; see David McCrone, Understanding Scotland. The sociology of a nation. Second edition, London: Routledge 2001, chapter 6.
the products of nineteenth and twentieth century makers are difficult to define and recognise; these are subtleties of finish and discreet ‘signatures’.

An inherited conventional wisdom, as part of a ‘grand narrative’, suggested that the Highland bagpipe was originally hand-made in the Highlands with locally available materials such as holly, laburnum, bone and horn, and that the earlier instrument was an analogue of today’s bagpipe, evolving according to a simplified morphology and therefore existing in more or less the same form as we have it today.\(^\text{164}\) The material evidence contradicts this. Its reputation has of course depended on a mystique of unvarying tradition and stability of design (apart from doubts over the number of drones), in sympathy with the presumed antiquity and continuity of *piobaireachd*. The material evidence and historical context indicate that the Great Highland Bagpipe began to be made by professional turners in the Lowland cities to professional wind-instrument standards and in a standardised form, with three drones, bass and two tenors, and finished with elaborate turned decoration. The same makers, men of skill and versatility, were also makers of other woodwind instruments such as Union Pipes and therefore working more within a Neo-Baroque tradition than a Highland ‘folk’ tradition.\(^\text{165}\) The sense of contrast and paradox is more highly marked in the case of Donald MacDonald whose Hebridean background of extremely modest circumstances represents a more challenging starting-point for a career of such significance for Scottish culture.

The styling and finish of the Great Highland Bagpipe of circa 1800 should be described in a phrase such as ‘from Rococo to Neo-classical’, such is it a creature of its time. In the first place, the level of detail in the contemporary bagpipe owed much to the raw materials available and their potential. Dense, tight-grained, tough, tropical hardwoods such as Caribbean ebony or ‘cocus


\(^{165}\) It is observable that Richard Waite’s portrait of William Cumming shows an instrument of marked Baroque woodwind character; see Hugh Cheape, The Piper to the Laird of Grant, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* Volume 125 (1995), 1169; the same versatility and eclecticism characterises the violin-making tradition in Edinburgh at this time. Matthew Hardie (1754-1826) developed a sophisticated style from the 1780s, basing his work on Classical Italian forms, see David Rattray, *Violin Making in Scotland, 1750-1950*, Oxford: British Violin Making Association 2006, 18.
wood’ could be lathe-turned in ways that native woods could not and a greater
degree of detail added to the instrument with less risk of splitting or chipping.
This alone would explain the appearance of full beading and combing on drones
and stocks although the evolution of this is difficult to date with accuracy (NMS
K.2005.383-4). Such decoration is a typical characteristic of Jacobean and
American Colonial furniture, generally the products of conventional turnery.\textsuperscript{166}
The achievement of a new symmetry and decorative finesse was realised by
many urban craftsmen for whom imports of tropical hardwoods were
abundantly available. Silversmiths in Edinburgh and Glasgow in the mid-
eighteenth century for example were using variegated cocus woods, turned for
toddy ladies, snuff mulls and coffee pot handles and exactly the same timbers
used by the pipe makers. In the case of a named turner, Adam Barclay, it is clear
that he was working for Edinburgh silversmiths and making bagpipes, using the
same materials and turnery techniques.\textsuperscript{167} It is difficult to be precise about
timbers and sources without further scientific analysis since even contemporary
references to ‘cocus’ or ‘coco’ wood must be understood as generics used, for
example, for any imported wood displaying contrasting colours of heart and
sapwoods.\textsuperscript{168}

The first reference to Hugh Robertson as pipe maker survives from 1765,
coinciding with the publication of James Craig’s Plan for the New Town and the
beginnings of Edinburgh’s expansion to the north.\textsuperscript{169} The world of the first
documented Highland bagpipe makers therefore was the world of the
Enlightenment and the Georgian city. Ideas of progress and knowledge came
from the Enlightenment pens of Edinburgh indwellers such as David Hume and
Adam Smith, the very near-neighbours in the Old Town closes and lands of the

\textsuperscript{166} Comparisons between stylistic ‘signatures’ in furniture and spinning-wheel making have been
\textsuperscript{167} National Archives of Scotland RH15/176/9 Colin Mitchell, Goldsmith in the Canongate, 1683-1755;
\textsuperscript{168} Hugh Cheape, The making of bagpipes in Scotland, in Anne O’Connor and David V Clarke editors,
\textit{From the Stone Age to the 'Forty Five. Studies presented to R B K Stevenson}, Edinburgh: John Donald
\textsuperscript{169} I F Grant, \textit{The MacLeods. The History of a Clan, 1200-1956}, London 1959, 491; for Hugh
Robertson’s marriage in December 1754, see Francis J Grant editor, \textit{Register of Marriages of the City of
turners and bagpipe makers. The development of the New Town itself, approximately from 1767 to 1820, neatly coincides with Hugh Robertson's long career in the business of making bagpipes. Hugh Robertson and Donald MacDonald lived in and through a period of intense building and development that offered ideas and exemplars of style and design, as well as an abundance of raw materials. These years also saw Edinburgh develop its self-image of the 'Athens of the North', an illusion taken very seriously, with Calton Hill as the Acropolis and with a self-conscious cultural legacy of Greece and Rome. Architected columns, capitals, bases and mouldings can all be seen in the design of the Great Highland Bagpipe in this period. The 'head' of the chanter carries an ovolo moulding and beading and the 'foot' is modelled as the base of an Attic column. Projecting mounts on chanter and drones reflect ornamentation based on the structural features of the classical column and are evident in the earliest surviving Prize Pipes. These were the material details surrounding the pipe makers in contemporary Edinburgh and which, for example, they would have seen time and again as they attended the Highland Society competitions in the Theatre Royal at the north end of the North Bridge and nearly opposite the Register House; its principal entrance was fronted with pedimented portico and entablature supported on Roman Doric columns. It is suggested therefore that the chanter and drone profiles of the Great Highland Bagpipe drew on contemporary architectural detailing at a time when the instrument was created in a new form. This source of inspiration and design offered a degree of urbanity, sophistication and uniformity which pipe makers such as Hugh Robertson and Donald MacDonald sought.

Confirmation of the contemporary creation of a new instrument in the form of the Great Highland Bagpipe can be sought in another voice of the time, in the songs of Donnchadh Bàn MacIntyre. In response to the Highland Society of London's invitation to enter 'poetical compositions' for their Annual Competitions, Donnchadh Bàn submitted six songs between 1781 and 1789. His initial references to the bagpipe are in brief conventional terms – *piob nam*

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172 See Appendix for *Edinburgh Evening Courant* 29 September 1784.
*feadan siubhlach* — and support in idiomatic style his praise of the Gaelic language and of the leaders of the Highland Society. The emphasis shifts through the songs, as though the author’s awareness grew, to detailed descriptions of the bagpipe, to its style of manufacture — *tuairneireachd* — its finesse, fittings (*acaìnn*), decoration with silks and ribbons (unknown in earlier descriptions), mounts of bone and ivory, wood of hard Jamaican ebony and, perhaps most significantly, its characterisation as a ‘new pipe’ — ‘the new bagpipe that is in Edinburgh’ and ‘the Great Pipe of Falkirk is the most prized pipe in Scotland.’ In his songs of 1783 and 1784, Donnchadh Bàn describes the bagpipe as *’phiob ur seo* and even suggests that it complies with regulations — *sionnsaìr choimh-lionadh gach facail* — inferring perhaps that, as the Competition advertisements made clear, competitors had to submit themselves both to the Society’s patronage and to its rules. In order to legitimize this *piob ur* and *bamhaighstir gach inneal ciùil a’ phiob ur seo* for his audience, he then clothed it with an aura of antiquity, no doubt according with the expectations of his audience, by giving it a mythical and fantastic ancestry as the pipe of *Fionn* and the *Fianna.*

The Great Highland Bagpipe as we recognise it today therefore did not exist before about 1780. This was a new instrument, ‘fit for purpose’, turned from tropical hardwoods, highly decorated and ‘shod’ with new fittings and mounts. The surviving material evidence shows that pre-existing instruments were unlike this in every way. The new instrument must have made a new sound, probably subtly different in degree and timbre, and remarks made by Rev Patrick MacDonald when he edited his late brother’s manuscript for printing in 1803 hint at this.

If architecture provided an aesthetic, commerce provided an incentive. Wartime markets were brisk, with Highland gentlemen and noblemen raising and equipping regiments, and tartan, uniforms and accoutrements increasingly

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173 Angus MacLeod editor, *The Songs of Duncan Ban MacIntyre*, Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society 1952, 270-299; for an anonymous song from Loch Katrine which also notices the ivory and silver mountings of the bagpipe, see Michael Newton, *Bho Chluaidh gu Calasraid*, Acair 1999, 136-137.

174 Hugh Cheape, *A rare instrument by Donald MacDonald* (as above), 21.
available from weavers and outfitters between Edinburgh and Stirling. From recorded prices of about three guineas for a set of pipes around the mid-eighteenth century, they more than doubled in the next fifty years.\textsuperscript{175} The production of the Great Highland Bagpipe was virtually market-driven and the persistence of wartime and ‘siege’ economies and buoyant prices must have helped to keep Robertson and MacDonald in business. It appears that their business remained stable in the serious recession and industrial strife following 1815, to be explained perhaps by the enhanced reputation of the Highland soldier and his culture in the aftermath of war and the publication of \textit{Waverley} with its explosive blend of history and imagination. This reputation was to attain new heights in 1822 but early documentation shows that the theatricality was already a dynamic and entrepreneurial element when the Annual Competition was moved from Falkirk to Edinburgh in 1785.\textsuperscript{176} The demand for spectacle, noticed in detail elsewhere, infers a degree of appropriation and manipulation of Highland culture that served the interests of the establishment in many ways, included it has been suggested political repression.\textsuperscript{177}

This was in essence a small world, limited at first to Edinburgh. A Glasgow pipemaker, whose career mirrors Donald MacDonald’s in many respects, was William Gunn, an economic migrant from the Sutherland Clearances and a weaver turned pipemaker and music publisher.\textsuperscript{178} He, like the others, made different instruments but his Highland bagpipe conformed to the Edinburgh archetype as he himself also played the part of Stage Highlander in the Annual Competitions. The same social group and the same ideology raised the regiments and organised the Annual Competitions, and the pipe makers, though in business on their own account as Hugh Robertson’s succession of entries in the Edinburgh Directories infer, served this group and were variously rewarded by it. The new bagpipe, the ‘Great Highland Bagpipe’ as perceived, was

\textsuperscript{175} Keith Sanger, Who paid the pipemaker? (as above), 28-29; Roderick D Cannon and Keith Sanger, \textit{Donald MacDonald’s Collection} (as above), 7; what is also remarkable is the stability in the price of bagpipes in Scotland throughout the nineteenth century.

\textsuperscript{176} The Annual Competition was staged in the Assembly Room as theatre under the banner ‘Ancient Martial Music’, in five acts with entr’actes of Highland Dances, NMS A.1947.128.


instantly an object with strong ideological connotations, a ‘national instrument’ for Scott’s constructed and imagined ‘national past’ and the instrument rapidly helping to define Scotland to the outside world.

Scotland of the Enlightenment was a land of learning and intellectual distinction, and Edinburgh was one of the cultural capitals of Europe. Ideas on the origins of human society and social progress, at the heart of Enlightenment rationalism, were translated from the enquiry of the few to the curiosity of the many and then subverted by Romanticism in which Scotland, once peripheral, was suddenly centre-stage, owing to the different sorts of genius of James ‘Ossian’ Macpherson and Sir Walter Scott. People’s expectations of the wild ‘sublime’ landscape and its culture were fulfilled by the sounds of Gaelic and the bagpipe. In this melodrama, it was as much what people saw as what they heard (since this was largely incomprehensible) and the new Great Highland Bagpipe was modelled and adorned for histrionic performance. By the early-nineteenth century, the bagpipe had slipped into the repertoire of appurtenances from which, for better or worse, a cultural identity was being formed. It was a mechanism which has produced images that have provided Scotland with a meaning and identity for the outside world, but images which sit uneasily in the frame and have been denounced as ‘distorting’ in the sociological critique.\(^{179}\) At the time however, in the sensitive and skilled hands of the maestros, the new Great Highland Bagpipe, like the uniform tartans of the contemporary weaving trade, became instantly a new object of trade and a potent element of an imagined past. It would take a Gael then to recognise a real Highland bagpipe and Donnchadh Bàn MacIntyre made it clear in 1784 that Scotland had a new art form and a new aesthetic:

\[
A\ 'phìob ùr seo thàinig do 'n bhaile  
A dh' fhaoitainn urram,  
'S i ceann inneal-ciùil an fhhearainn,  
'S na dùthch' uile;  
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\[180\]

[‘This new bagpipe that came to town to get honour is the chief musical instrument of the land, and of the whole country.’]

\(^{179}\) David McCrone, *Understanding Scotland* (as above), 129-131.  
\(^{180}\) Angus MacLeod editor, *The Songs of Duncan Ban MacIntyre* (as above), 288.
Appendix

*Edinburgh Evening Courant* 29 September 1784.

**HIGHLAND MUSIC and POETRY**

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Competition for the Prizes bestowed by the Honourable the Highland Society of London, on the best performers in the ancient Martial Music of Caledonia, will be held, as usual, in Falkirk, at the time of the Tryst, in October next; and it is requested of the Noblemen and Gentlemen who patronise the performers on the bagpipe to cause them attend.

The Highland Society of London likewise offer Prizes for the best and next best poetical compositions in Gaelic, on the restitution of the Highland Dress, and of the estates of the Forfeited Highland Chieftains [sic]. The compositions to be indorsed, with the real name and residence of the author, or with an assumed name or other private mark, and to be transmitted by post or otherways, “To the Secretary of the Highland Society, at the Shakespeare, Covent Garden, London,” at any time before the first of January 1785.
Conclusions

Such is the sound and character of the bagpipe that the comment is made that it could never have been spontaneously invented by one person. It must represent a long process of evolution. The distinctiveness particularly of the Great Highland Bagpipe lends itself to this intuitive insight although it is the author’s contention that today’s instrument has more or less a sole begetter in Hugh Robertson of Edinburgh. Its powerful and all-enveloping sound draws the ear and eye and, after the last two hundred years of conditioning, there is the theatrical expectation of kilted or uniformed figure. There is less appeal in this for the musicien savant. For better or worse, the bagpipe is an emblem of identity and in different ways has contributed to the cultural paradigm and perceptions of a ‘national instrument’.

An historiography for the bagpipe in Scotland is relatively easily traceable in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The record is meagre for the ‘evolution’ of the instrument, in Scotland as elsewhere, and even early texts such as Joseph MacDonald’s ‘Compleat Theory’ (c. 1760) and Rev Patrick MacDonald’s ‘Highland Vocal Airs’ (1784) are predicated on an assumption of antiquity. The foundation of a ‘grand narrative’ was laid with Angus Mackay’s ‘Collection’ of 1838, especially with his ‘Account of the Hereditary Pipers’, and with the growth in published music in the late-nineteenth century. Editing and presentation augmented impressions of a venerable past; the re-issue of William Ross’ ‘Collection’ after 1885 included a foreword, ‘The Bagpipe and its Music’, by Rev Norman MacLeod (1812-1872) in lurid terms: ‘The Music of the Highlands is the Pibroch of the Great War Pipe, with its fluttering pennons, fingered by a genuine Celt, in full Highland Dress, as he slowly paces a Baronial Hall, or amidst the wild scenery of his native mountains’ and more in the same banal and histrionic tone.\footnote{NMS K.2007.58; see Rev Donald MacLeod, Memoir of Donald MacLeod DD. 2 Volumes. London: Daldy, Isbister & Co 1876.} This was ‘Royal Command Performance’ while Ross was the Queen’s Piper and MacLeod a Queen’s Chaplain. Others preferred to anchor their information in factual narrative, such as Fionn (Henry D Whyte) in a series of essays narrowing the focus to clan and regimental pipers
though with the same inference of antiquity. The genre achieved something of an apotheosis in the 400-page *Highland Bagpipe* by the Caithness-born Glasgow journalist, W L Manson.\(^\text{182}\)

Doubts and confusion litter the presumed history and evolution of the Great Highland Bagpipe since its elevation over other bagpipes and its transfiguration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; this process has effectively distorted bagpipe history in the British Isles. Dogmatic assertion and speculation by writers such as Manson and Grattan Flood have dominated the popular literature of the bagpipe and cautious questioning by scholars such as Baines gone largely unnoticed.\(^\text{183}\) A summary by Collinson hints at a confusion at the heart of the subject.\(^\text{184}\) Impediments to a clearer understanding of the instrument in its observable forms today are, on the one hand, the received picture and, on the other, an unseen corollary in the neglect of a hitherto scattered material culture.

The organologist might have to go far to experience clear thinking about the bagpipe. The Museum of Ethnography in Budapest has produced an exemplar for the description and contextualisation of the material culture of the instrument. Zoltán G Szabó’s catalogue, *A Duda. The Bagpipe*, was published in 2004 to accompany the exhibition *Aki dudás akar lenni* (taking its title from the Hungarian folksong ‘If you want to be a Piper …’). By focussing on Central and Eastern Europe, the study usefully shifts the centre of gravity away from the western fringe where popular perception has claimed the bagpipe as its own. The survival of a piping tradition in the region is strongly evident in spite of the displacement of the instrument by the oboe, itself a sixteenth-century derivative of the double-reed pipe. Szabó’s introductory words immediately and elegantly establish the benchmark for his own scholarly field:


Aerophonic instruments that incorporate a reed and airbag have been used in Eurasia and the region of the Mediterranean for thousands of years. It would be difficult, in fact, to name a single nation or ethnic group that has not produced at least some type of simple bagpipe, with many such instruments surviving as living elements of culture even today. In fact, through its near-continuous presence in a variety of areas of musical culture, the bagpipe has exerted an influence on the development of the folk music of virtually every people in Europe, Asia and North Africa.\textsuperscript{185}

In three sentences we have a more concise view of longer-term bagpipe history than, arguably, has ever been achieved in the British Isles. Its starting point is the material culture of the instrument. Description and analysis conventionally has depended on written records. The limitations of conventional sources may be highlighted in the case of bagpipes, for long an oral and pre-literate tradition and difficult to detect with reliability in conventional historical sources; objects therefore offer rich and challenging forms of information and these are the business of museums. The object is at the centre of museum endeavour but requires a definable provenance if it is to be properly understood and interpreted. This is a truism for archaeology for which the object may be the sole source of cultural data. The anthropologist’s insights also regularly depend on material evidence and other disciplines are object-dependent such as art history, architectural history, cultural geography, ethnology and folklife studies.\textsuperscript{186} Hitherto, the history of piping in Scotland has rarely touched on its material culture, apart from occasional token reference to iconic instruments such as the ‘Bannockburn Pipes’ or the ‘1409’ bagpipe which appear as footnotes to the past or supply publishers with cameo illustrations. There is never critical follow-through or testing of provenance, for which museums may be blamed since documentation has generally been poor. But there has been an overall lack of intellectual curiosity about the bagpipe and museums have not been tested on their ‘organology’. Current interest in old instruments and in playing older repertoires has posed questions for an organology of the bagpipe, on acoustics for example; a search for authentic sound and widening horizons of

\textsuperscript{186} A more holistic approach to cultural data and museum objects has been followed on the Continent and in North America; see for example Richard M Dorson editor, \textit{Folklore and Folklife. An Introduction}. University of Chicago Press 1972.
performance have lent a special interest to the current investigation of the ‘Iain Dall’ chanter and the recreation of an eighteenth (or seventeenth) century bagpipe. For an organology of the Highland bagpipe, this early chanter professionally turned from Lignum-vitae must be the most important extant piece of evidence. It survives in private hands in Nova Scotia where it was inspected in 2000. The data obtained from the measurements and reconstruction is yielding results of great significance for the performance of highly esteemed compositions in the piobaireachd tradition.¹⁸⁷ Such work helps to establish that the character of old instruments might be substantially different from merely worn-out versions of the modern Great Highland Bagpipe.

Perceptions of a ‘national instrument’ are founded on a stereotype Great Highland Bagpipe and assumption that it descends from a native ‘ecotype’ or precursor in less developed form. A simplified morphology is generally confirmed rather than countered by surviving relics, and assumptions of continuity from a distant past fallaciously confirmed by reconstructions of historic instruments. These have been building blocks of the sociologists ‘mythic structures’ and the present study questions and makes a serious attempt to dislodge the canonical account of the bagpipe in Scotland. But our denunciation of the Great Highland Bagpipe is tempered by consideration and understanding of the context in which traditions were being created. The Glen family, though serial perpetrators of myths, were serious scholars and collectors and were making sincere efforts to reach back to a lost medieval culture and rescue and reinterpret it.¹⁸⁸ The dismissal of a past for the Great Highland Bagpipe is not a dismissal of Highland piping or the recorded history of a bagpipe in the Highlands. Organologically, the character of the Great Highland Bagpipe is tied firmly to European archetypes in which, for example, drones had been added at an early date.¹⁸⁹ Gaelic society, in the period when it was at

its most unassailable and assertive, adopted the bagpipe as a southern city-made instrument. Changing instrumentation in the Gàidhealtachd is important for the study of social and economic change, and the fact that bagpipes were bought in the south is itself a significant indicator of that self-confidence.

The status quo ante of a scatter of instruments in museum collections is no longer acceptable and a ‘national collection of a national instrument’ has been assembled.\(^{190}\) The process of forming such a collection is dictated by the survival of material evidence and the character and constitution of the museum; as far as is practicable, the process should be systematic and the product should be coherent. The material record for the bagpipe reveals a variety of instrumentation, bewildering perhaps because of expectations raised by the ‘grand narrative’. By the mid-twentieth century the Great Highland Bagpipe was still not significantly represented in national or other museum collections, apart from token instruments usually of nineteenth-century date or instruments or part-instruments associated with person or event. The national collection had its ‘Culloden’ and ‘Waterloo’ pipes, in each case clearly questionable to the eye of the specialist. Also observable are iconic representations of the Great Highland Bagpipe in museums and conservatoire collections at home and abroad. These are what might critically be described as ‘modern’ instruments and of little musicological merit: for example, Highland bagpipes by Forbes of Dundee in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, by Henderson of Glasgow in the Museum of Ethnography in Budapest, and by Lawrie of Glasgow in the Musée des Instruments de Musique in Brussels. There is an evident hiatus between, on the one hand, published histories and public attitude and, on the other hand, material culture and an organological record which has the potential to challenge the accuracy and authenticity of the ‘grand narrative’.

The point has been made throughout the texts comprising this thesis that the origins and evolutionary sequences of the bagpipe are still obscure. Forms of surviving instruments and part-instruments suggest putative Middle East origins and varying forms of reed pipe to which a bag as air reservoir was added.

\(^{190}\) Hugh Cheape, Collecting a culture: a national collection for a national instrument, Common Stock. The Journal of the Lowland and Border Pipers’ Society Volume 21 No. 2 (December 2006), 4-17.
Sculptural evidence in Scotland and Ireland indicates a usage of reed pipes (without bag) in the course of the first millennium, in the eighth century (in ‘Pictish’ sculpture) and possibly in the second century (in the Bridgeness stone).¹⁹¹ The second millennium appears to be the busy period of bagpipe history, with bag and drones augmenting reed pipes. Shawm-type instruments appear in southern Europe and develop later into the medieval oboe. The shawm also seems to emerge as a conical-bore pipe, with six-to-eight stops, a flared ‘bell’ and fixed in an animal-skin bag – a convincing and intelligible bagpipe. Linguistically ‘shawm’ relates to Arabic Zamr.¹⁹² Europe was a continent of popular movement and exchange and the dynamics of this, for matters of cultural detail such as music and instruments, have been little investigated. For the bagpipe, exchange with the Islamic world and the acquisition of Islamic lifestyles must offer a key to origins and patterns of diffusion. The riches of Islam were shared through conduits of culture and learning in the eastern Mediterranean, Venice, Sicily, and Spain, especially Andalusia, and over an extended period but more specifically from the twelfth to the seventeenth centuries.¹⁹³ Historical jihād may urge us that Islam offers only fanaticism and iconoclasm, which are actually difficult to locate unilaterally in the medieval period, and blocks our understanding of cultural exchange, which thrived. The stronghold of the bagpipe in the early ‘middle ages’ was probably south of the Caucasus and Carpathians (to the east) and of Cordoba (to the west), explaining perhaps why Scotland came late to this element of civilisation.

A reason for difficulty in tracing ‘origins’ or lines of development is that fixity of form was not the paradigm of European instrumentation. Early musical texts may be deceptive in indicating a growth of ‘fixed’ scores and organological requirements to play from scores but instrumentation was in a state of flux. The

¹⁹¹ NMS X.FV 27; E J Phillips, The Roman distance slab from Bridgeness, Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Volume 105 (1972-1974), 176-182; this has been taken as the ‘earliest evidence for the bagpipe in Scotland’, as cited in Dr Keith Norman MacDonald, Historians and the Bagpipes (as above), 32.
¹⁹³ Henry George Farmer, Historical Facts for the Arabian Musical Influence. London: William Reeves [1930], 140; Jean Jenkins, Man and Music. A survey of traditional non-European musical instruments. Royal Scottish Museum 1983, in which, inter alia, the author takes careful account of a cultural shift to European standards; Farmer’s thesis challenged the conventional wisdom that western music had derived from the Greek Classical tradition through the sole agency of the medieval church. He proposed a Kulturgebiet of musical learning and performance in Eurasia deriving from Islamic sources.
exploration of new sounds is more evident in the Renaissance and Baroque but certainly took place before. In the selection of instruments observable in the thirteenth-century *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, generally representative of medieval European music-making, some have survived in recognisable form, some have disappeared and other have metamorphosed into different forms or have risen or fallen in status, thus accounting for their presence or absence in conventional sources.\(^{194}\) This in turn leads to too-ready classification of instruments as ‘classical’ or ‘folk’, thus potentially losing them to respective discourses. On the basis alone of the evidence, for example, of the *Cantigas* and of the later rural idylls of the French Court, it would pose difficulties to define the bagpipe as an archetype of ‘folk music’ performance. Similarly instruments used today in ‘folk music’ performance may belong to archetypes perceived as ‘classical’; for example, the *vielle* or ‘hurdy-gurdy’ derived from the thirteenth-century *organistrum*, the *Zampogna* derived from Renaissance wind instruments in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries, and the *Uilleann* pipe derived from Baroque instrumentation in the eighteenth century. The folk-classical dichotomy of the modern mindset makes it more difficult to discern how historically instruments might be adapted for new sound or changing aesthetic or, alternatively, the concept of ‘popular culture’ can be divisive. The anonymity of pipers in the early records suggests that we are dealing with an underclass, but their music was not necessarily ‘folk music’ in the modern sense and the milieu of performance was high-class and high-art. The ‘light music’ of the bagpipe in Scotland may owe more to the Baroque and Neo-baroque than has hitherto been defined, as is certainly the case for Scottish fiddle music; David Johnson’s conclusion is particularly apposite for any consideration of the origins and transmission of the music of the bagpipe in Scotland:

‘Most people do not realise how far Scottish folk-fiddle music was influenced by classical music; it is usually thought of as an indigenous growth, untouched by civilisation, transmitted by illiterate farm workers and vagrant players. But in fact folk-fiddle playing, as it exists in Scotland today, was almost entirely an

eighteenth-century creation; and it was developed by educated musicians, most of whom were at home in the classical music culture.\footnote{David Johnson, Music and Society in Lowland Scotland in the Eighteenth Century. Oxford University Press 1972, 111; see also Thomas Crawford, Society and the Lyric. A study of the song culture of eighteenth century Scotland, Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press 1979, and Thomas Crawford, Lowland Song and Popular Tradition in the Eighteenth Century, in Andrew Hook ed., The History of Scottish Literature Volume 2 1600-1800, Aberdeen University Press 1987, 123-139, where the author stresses the unity of a song culture in which oral transmission was strongly reinforced by print.}

The bagpipe in Scotland has suffered a malaise of misunderstanding and misinterpretation, of misappropriation and manipulation of a lively and vital musical culture. Its treatment might even serve as a metaphor for Scottish history and culture since the eighteenth century. We have a trio of themes on which to base a musicology of the bagpipe, but the instrument has been re-invented, the performer constrained and the music re-crafted for new elites. Today, the constraining fences erected and policed by a patrician elite or social oligarchy now appear to be down and the pastures open to all to roam. Change has been most evident in ‘light music’ and ceòl beag, but piobaireachd too has been seriously questioned and represented as the divorce of tradition from its roots; this subject, arguably, cannot now be seriously addressed without a knowledge of Gaelic. A new generation of players is aware of cultural caesurae but they are equipped with skill and a fierce enthusiasm to play and interpret the music of the bagpipe more imaginatively and musically than it may have been since the late-eighteenth century.\footnote{Quoting Hugh Cheape, Review of William Donaldson, The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society 1750-1959 (2000), ROSC. Review of Scottish Culture Number 13 (2000-2001), 141; see also Allan M MacDonald, The relationship between pibroch and Gaelic song: its implications on the performance styles of the pibroch ùrlar. Unpublished MLitt thesis, University of Edinburgh 1995; see Donald E Meek, The Quest for Celtic Christianity. Edinburgh: The Handsel Press 2000, for the process of misrepresentation and trivialisation of aspects of Gaelic culture and the ways in which the outcomes of modern discourses may be projected onto Gaels from outside. Meek’s conclusion on ‘Celtic Christianity’ as ‘one of the great illusions of our time’ might usefully serve as a premise for exploration of the role of the Great Highland Bagpipe!}
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Making a national collection of a national instrument

[This is the text of the lecture ‘Making a national collection of a national instrument’ presented to the American Musical Instrument Society and the Galpin Society at the Musical Instrument Conference in 3-9 August 2003. Minor corrections and some updating of detail have been inserted]

A national instrument

In the Preface to the first published collection of Highland bagpipe music which was issued about 1819, the claim was made by its author and publisher, Donald MacDonald, that the bagpipe was the ‘only national instrument in Europe’. MacDonald was making his case for producing a collection of bagpipe music in written form, it being widely recognised in Scotland that the Great Highland Bagpipe had no written record and that its music and perhaps the instrument itself were in danger of disappearing. His patriotic aim was matched by a musicological purpose, to make the extraordinary music of the bagpipe more widely available to be played on organ, pianoforte, violin and flute. These aspirations chime convincingly with the tastes and cultural atmosphere of the day. The Scottish Highlands, resounding to the publication success of the poetry of Ossian from the 1760s and coming under the enraptured gaze of European Romanticism, were an object of the greatest curiosity, although an understanding of Highland life and Gaelic culture for most people owed more to Ossian than to any personal knowledge and experience. The Highlands and Islands were still by the turn of the century a terra incognita and their music among Europe’s exotica. Dr Johnson’s comment of 1773 in his Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland still rang true:

‘To the southern inhabitants of Scotland, the state of the mountains and the islands is equally unknown with that of Borneo or Sumatra. Of both they have heard only a little and guess the rest. They are strangers to the language and the manners, to the
advantages and wants of the people, whose life they would model, and whose evils they would remedy' (Chapman 1930: 79).

Donald MacDonald (1767-1840), Skyeman and bagpipe-maker in Castlehill, Edinburgh, made the case for the bagpipe being the national instrument in his important volume *A Collection of the Ancient Martial Music of Caledonia called Piobaireachd*. He describes the crisis for bagpipe music originating in the destruction of Gaelic society and culture following and as a consequence of the Battle of Culloden, and continues:

‘Strangers may sneer at the pains taken to preserve this wild instrument, because their ears have only been accustomed to the gay measures of the violin and “lascivious pleasing of the lute”; but it has claims and recommendations that may silence even their prejudices. The Bag-pipe is, perhaps, the only national instrument in Europe. Every other is peculiar to many countries, but the Bag-pipe to Scotland alone. There in the banquet-hall and in the house of mourning it has alike prevailed. It has animated her warriors in battle, and welcomed them back after their toils, to the homes of their love, and the hills of their nativity. Its strains were the first sounded on the ears of infancy, and they are the last to be forgotten in the wanderings of age’ (MacDonald 1974 [c.1819]: 4).

This may seem a narrow view or peculiar conceit given the universality and pedigree of this instrument, but it does reflect the reputation in Scotland of the Great Highland Bagpipe by the end of the eighteenth century, even with the attrition of Gaelic culture after 1746. The Highland bagpipe was essentially ‘rescued’ and adopted by the British army as its single most powerful ‘marching’ instrument. The involvement of Highland soldiers in Britain’s wars of empire was Gaelic Scotland’s first experience of ‘global war’ and had a powerful cultural and political effect (Stewart 1822: *passim*). The publication of the poetry of Ossian raised the expectations of the outside world for the character and qualities of an ancient people and the curious gaze of Europe was then given sharper focus by Scott’s *Waverley*. The Great Highland Bagpipe was one of the most prominent elements of what was presented to the contemporary world of the late-eighteenth century.
as an ancient culture. People who listened then detected a little-known sound, the *ceòl mòr* or ‘great music’ of the bagpipe, the product of the earlier adoption of the instrument into Scottish Gaelic culture. The art of this species of ‘classical music’, described conventionally as *piobaireacht*, had been recognised, studied and described as such in the early-eighteenth century and, in the form in which it was then heard, seen as a medieval musical repertoire whose origins are clearly still not satisfactorily explained (Johnson 1984: 119-142; Purser 1992: 135). The characterisation of a national instrument and an ancient musical tradition was a familiar expression of the Scottish cultural perspective in the first quarter of the nineteenth century: ‘the Bag-pipe is sacred to Scotland, and speaks a language which Scotsmen only feel. It talks to them of home, and of all the past …’ appears to summarise national sentiment in Donald MacDonald’s Preface. It may then seem a paradox or even a tragedy that Scotland has had no national collection of its national instrument.

*Prospects and product*

This is one facet of what has often been perceived as a cultural shortcoming or even national malaise, that is the careless attitude of Scots to their past. Museums are seen as important elements in the construction and maintenance of national, regional or civic identity, and ‘national history’ museums were an early and recognisable feature of museum development. Almost alone in Europe, Scotland acquired the collections following the founding of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1781, but failed to provide an adequate building for their display (Cheape forthcoming). When a programme was devised to gain support for the concept of a new national museum in 1989, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland, the late Marquess of Bute, opened their campaign with the strong and unequivocal message:

‘Scotland stands alone amongst countries of its size in having nowhere to tell the full story of its people and to show properly its most treasured possessions. This is a disgrace, long recognised by many’ (Cheape 1995: 329).
The reversal of this situation was celebrated with the creation of the new Museum of Scotland which opened to public acclaim in December 1998. This offered a robust statement to counter the suggestion that Scotland has been careless of its culture and material culture, allowing treasures to be lost, destroyed and alienated as objects of trade in the antique markets and sent abroad. Alternatively, there is an attitude inferring that museums are less important than language and music in this context and that Scotland’s distinctive culture derives principally from these. Whatever shade of opinion may be followed, the topic of piping seems germane to most. The lack of a national museum or collection of her national instrument therefore might have seemed to qualify more urgently for some attention.

*Organological beginnings*

Whether as emblem or ingredient of a stereotype, and without here attempting to deconstruct the image, the bagpipe is still widely recognised as the national instrument of Scotland. A claim of a different nature, which can unashamedly be ascribed to personal observation, is that the bagpipe has been variously or poorly represented in national historical, ethnological and musicological collections. This may be identified as symptom of a wider malaise, that is, the dominating influence of English political hegemony, state-centred and teleological, on the writing of ‘British history’. Scotland has tended to connive at this intellectual state of affairs and subscribe to the apotheosis of cultural ‘heroes’ such as William McGonagall. There is no curiosity over covert snubs such as no Scotsman ever being asked to contribute on ‘Bagpipes’ to *Grove’s Dictionary of Music*. Not surprisingly, Ireland was not so submissive and has complained about the under-representation of Irish musicians and composers in the standard sources such as *Grove* (O’Neill 1913: 196). The bagpipe has fallen below the gaze of musicological scholarship and has been unevenly or unfortunately represented in the literature with the exception of more recent work by scholars such as Baines, Cannon and Purser. The bagpipe seems to have been a poor relation in instrumental history, paradoxically perhaps given its
pedigree and its technical and tonal characteristics such as harmonic complexity. It has not been much studied or in any real depth, at least in Western Europe, in folk and traditional music research, again with recent respectable exceptions such as Hubert Boone, Ernst Eugen Schmidt, Zoltán Szabó, Alfonso García-Oliva and Per-Ulf Allmo. In these circumstances, serious contemplation of the bagpipe has needed a critical mass of evidence for instigating an organology.

The bagpipe has not been entirely neglected and examples have been collected for British and Continental museums. If this could be described as a scholarly process, it has quite specific origins. A large international exhibition, ‘The Special Exhibition of Ancient Musical Instruments’, was held in the new South Kensington Museum in London in 1872. The exhibition reflected a concern with the quality of design and workmanship of instruments and became the basis of the extensive collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Engel 1872). This marked the beginnings in the United Kingdom of the study of historic musical instruments, the material culture of music and the systematic collection of musical instruments for museum display and for teaching purposes. Bagpipes were represented by items submitted by J and R Glen of Edinburgh although whether these could be considered ‘ancient’ is now questionable (Bryan 1971: 240-241).

Since the late-nineteenth century other more comprehensive collections have been assembled, for example in the Royal College of Music (established 1883) and Horniman Museum (Dolmetsch Collection) in London, in the Music Faculty (Bate Collection), Ashmolean and Pitt-Rivers Museums in Oxford and in the Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments (see Ridley 1982: 58-64; Myers 1982: 152-154). Specialist collections followed, for example, of keyboard instruments in metropolitan centres such as Edinburgh (with the Russell Collection), London, Paris, Brussels, Vienna, Nuremberg, New York and Washington (Williams 1988: 169-172). In all these instances, the study of the history of music in all its facets and the art and craftsmanship of making instruments of sound were now the principal aims of forming such museum collections.
Where examples of bagpipes, whether Scottish or European, have been collected and placed in museums, they were in the past often acquired for an association with person or event, this association and reputation often being the factor ensuring their survival, or they have been acquired for their aesthetic qualities and craftsmanship and displayed in museums of the decorative arts; this was the treatment for example of the Victoria and Albert Museum’s musical instrument collection (Cheape 1984: 29). Here a specialist collection was subsumed within the larger collections of the Department of Furniture and Woodwork since, for administrative purposes, the collection had to be identified with the predominant material in its make-up. It was, as the argument went, more obvious to allocate the musical instruments to ‘Furniture and Woodwork’ than to ‘Ceramics and Glass’.

From a critical and specialist point of view, there have been few adequate or representative collections of bagpipes, extensively and systematically acquired. The instrument has been the poor relation in musicology, with token examples displayed in the conservatoire collections conventionally dominated by the European orchestral and chamber music tradition and the pantheon of named composers. This may seem an unfair observation to make given one or two remarkable collections. For example, Professor Henry Balfour, as Curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum in the University of Oxford formed a comprehensive collection of bagpipes over the years from 1883 to 1939 and this was left to the Pitt Rivers Museum. This collection was the focus of Anthony Baines’ ground-breaking monograph in the Oxford ‘Occasional Papers on Technology’ series. Paradoxically perhaps for Scotland, the only bagpipe museum in the United Kingdom is in England; the Morpeth Chantry Bagpipe Museum in Northumberland was established in the early 1980s to display the Northumbrian Small-pipes and their music but in the context of bagpipes of the world. The collection had been formed in the early-twentieth century by a small circle of local practitioners and enthusiasts anxious to save and revive the Northumbrian pipes. Their collection was lodged with the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle until a proper home was found for it (Moore 1996: 31). Overseas there are a few notable collections of bagpipes; in the Department of Musical Instruments in the Metropolitan Museum of Art a world-class assemblage of bagpipes resides in the Crosby
Brown Collection (Winternitz 1970: 355; Libin 1977). Museum collections in Poland, in the Czech Republic, in France and in Spain include bagpipes, and special mention must be made of the collection in the Brussels Musée des Instruments de Musique, augmented with bagpipes through the enduring and scholarly efforts of Hubert Boone and others.

A national collection

The first bagpipe in the collections of the National Museums of Scotland, received perhaps significantly or coincidentally in 1872, was a French musette du cours purchased in Rome at the sale about 1830 of the effects of Henry Benedict, Cardinal York, and said to have belonged to his brother, Prince Charles Edward Stewart, a compelling association for a national collection. Distractingly these pipes are described in the records of the Society of Antiquaries as ‘... of the Irish form and mounted with ivory and silver keys’ (NMS H.LT 6). It was reported that they were

‘... purchased by a gentleman from Kelso who was present, in order to gratify a friend who was an amateur of the Irish bagpipe, the late Mr Richard Lees of Galashiels. .... He showed them to Sir Walter Scott, who took a characteristic interest in the relic, and stated that the bagpipe was an instrument of which the Prince was fond, and that he was possessed of several sets. The donor, Mrs Stewart of Sweethope, is the granddaughter of the late Mr Lees of Galashiels, to whom the pipes were presented’ (Proceedings 1872: 504)

One further detail of this providential acquisition is noteworthy; the donation of the pipes was made through the artist and antiquary, James Drummond, whose watercolour studies of Highland sculptured stones and jewellery and weaponry subsequently passed into the national collections after his death in 1876. This was still an era when public galleries were cared for by practising artists rather than trained historians or professional administrators, and Drummond was the Principal Curator of the National Gallery of Scotland and Joint Curator of the National Museum of Antiquities, as well as being
Librarian of the Royal Scottish Academy and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. As a historical painter in the genre established by David Wilkie and William Allan, he formed an extensive personal collection of antiquities which were used by him to recreate the detail and sense of time and place in his paintings. In museological terms, the national collections have been well supplied with antiquities from artists’ studios, for example those of Allan Ramsay, James Drummond, Gourlay Steell, Noel Paton and Skeoch Cumming. Among a remarkable selection of material bequeathed to the Museum by Drummond in 1877 were ‘Pair of old Bagpipes, with mountings of lead and horn’ (NMS H.LT 5) and an ‘Old Scottish musical instrument, called the “Stock-and-Horn”, a species of flageolet, 22 inches in length, the pipe of ebony, mounted with bone or ivory, and the lower part of horn. This instrument, which is well known to readers of the “Gentle Shepherd”, was not uncommon in the southern districts of Scotland in the last century, but is now rarely to be met with. A similar instrument, called the *pibcorm*, is still in use in Wales’ (NMS H.LT 12; *Proceedings* 1878: 377-378). One of three or more surviving Stock-and-Horns, this may have belonged to David Wilkie or David Allan, and may even have been made at their request, as the appropriate shepherd’s pipe for their illustrations of scenes for Allan Ramsay’s ballad-opera ‘The Gentle Shepherd’. Wilkie’s own ‘Gentle Shepherd’ was painted in 1823.

The significance for collecting of person and event remained strong in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century and we should not complain too strenuously if the survival of certain items is rooted essentially in error or a different ideology. The collecting policy of a national historical museum of course tended in these directions of heroes and battles. Another early acquisition for the national collections was a set of Highland bagpipes said to have been played at the Battle of Waterloo, donated by Mrs Younger, Melrose, in 1925 (NMS H.LT 31). It is difficult to judge this attribution since the instrument is a mixture of parts of self-evidently different dates although there is no critical comment alluding to this in museum records. The historical or traditional circumstances were well recorded elsewhere; the pipes were bought from Donald Ross, jeweller in Golspie in August 1917, and it was said that they were played by George Mackay at Waterloo and afterwards by his son James Mackay on the visit of George IV to Edinburgh in 1822, certainly a
defining event in the evolution of Scottish culture and identity. Living latterly in
dunrobin Glen, James Mackay passed the pipes to Pipe Major David Sutherland whose
brother sold them to Donald Ross (Lawrance 1928: 74-75). The drones, of boxwood
mounted with horn, are in fact of mid- or early-eighteenth century date, and are extremely
rare survivals as such, but are mounted in modern, twentieth century stocks. The chanter
is from a different set of pipes and is marked with the name of Duncan MacDougall
(1837-1898) of Aberfeldy. One may suspect that Donald Ross had re-assembled the pipes
for the purposes of a sale. Again, there is no mention of these discrepancies in museum
records. Battles generate tradition and commemoration and none scarcely more than the
Battle of Culloden; a set of pipes with two drones only, reputedly from Argyllshire and
played in the battle, was given to the Scottish United Services Museum (NMS
M.1951.1204). Another set, the ‘Macindeor Pipes’, more incredibly, was said to have
been at Flodden and the set accepted with this attribution (NMS H.LT 77). Is it presumed
that the traditions adhering to the pipes are considered to be true? As a species of oral
testimony, it seems never to have been seriously questioned and poor provenance and the
want of an organology left no benchmarks against which to judge old instruments.

Other criteria for acquisition were of course employed by the National Museum of
Antiquities, demonstrating in this instance some critical acumen. Among the first musical
instruments in the Museum were the Queen Mary Harp and the Lamont Harp, both
deposited on loan in 1880. When the owner’s family suddenly and unexpectedly decided
to dispose of these in 1904, the Museum was given a Treasury grant of £1,000 to acquire
them at auction. The circumstances were recorded in the Minutes of the Society of
Antiquaries:

‘The grant only sufficed for the purchase of the “Mary” harp, and £890 had to be
paid for it. The price was unfortunately enhanced by the quite mythical attribution
to Queen Mary; but for us, the value of the harp consisted not in this, but in its
being one of the three ancient harps existing in the United Kingdom, and in the
beautiful Celtic carving which adorned it. The Council [of the Society of
Antiquaries] therefore felt that it would be a national loss if so fine and rare a relic
were not acquired for the Museum, at however great a price’ (Society of Antiquaries 1904).

By the late-twentieth century, a need for more familiarity with current scholarship and existing collections was manifest and the National Museums had to supply curatorial expertise for an increasing demand for information and research material in areas such as Scottish history and traditional music and song; this was part of the perceived role and reasonable expectation of a national museum. To an extent, other agencies such as the School of Scottish Studies could deal with traditional music and song but it was clear that the museums should have something to say about the material culture which was most obviously within the province of museums. Many of the more testing and more demanding inquires would come from North America and Australasia where the concept of the Great Highland Bagpipe being the national instrument of Scotland was deeply rooted.

The National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland mounted a small exhibition in the Edinburgh Festival in 1976, ‘Pipes, Harps and Fiddles’. This was a modest offering of material but the first exhibition of its kind in the National Museums and attracted donations. The aims of the exhibition included giving some account of the history of the bagpipe in Scotland, as well as of the harp or clarsach and the fiddle, and this exercise highlighted obvious gaps in the national collections and a serious lack of depth and context in the treatment of the subject in the secondary literature. Conventional wisdom in Scotland was woefully lacking in any information on the history of the bagpipe as a musical instrument.

Curatorial time was allocated to musical enquiries in the late 1970s and some research resources built up. This was more casual than formal and directed while the institution deemed it inadvisable to create a ‘musical department’ or ‘piping section’; the staff was still too small to accommodate this and primary responsibility for musical instrument collections was considered to lie elsewhere. Re-visiting this principle again in 1985 on the amalgamation of Scotland’s two national museums, the Royal Scottish Museum and
the Museum of Antiquities, it was decided that the newly created National Museums of Scotland should not create musical or piping sections but should defer to specialist collections such as the neighbouring Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments. The dispersal of the piping material to other collections such as this was then considered but rejected following the case being made for its retention within the National Museums (see Appendix 1). More significantly perhaps for subsequent developments, the Museums already had instrument collections such as the small but outstanding Duncan Fraser Collection acquired in 1947 and virtually unparalleled elsewhere (Fraser 1907). These and a number of military instruments in the collections of the Scottish United Services Museum then came within the new amalgamated museum grouping and a critical mass of material formed. A Collecting Policy was formulated for piping on the grounds that there was a collection of significance and some specialist curatorial expertise within the new national grouping (and not elsewhere), and that this could and should be used in areas of scarce resources to save particular examples of instruments in the public domain; in other words, a collecting policy accepted within the museum community legitimised the acquisition of bagpipes and related material. This focus for a specialist musical instrument collection in Scotland was subsequently recognised and endorsed by the Museums and Galleries Commission in their ‘Review of Musical Instrument Collections’ in the United Kingdom (Arnold-Forster and La Rue 1993: 7, 61, 65, 81, 88, 91). This was followed by the publication of their Standards in the Museum Care of Musical Instruments in 1995 which acknowledged the expertise of the National Museums of Scotland and represented public endorsement of their curatorial role.

By this time it was evident and drew comment that there were large and anomalous gaps in areas of museum collections such as in pipes and piping in that nowhere was the story of the bagpipe in Scotland comprehensively explored. In addition, the concept of the bagpipe, fondly perceived as Scotland’s ‘national instrument’, as a member of a universal family of musical instruments seemed to be only dimly understood. A further idiosyncratic feature of museum collections had become obvious, emerging significantly with the first acquisitions in the 1870s, that there were few sets of the emblematic Great
Highland Bagpipe in the collections of the National Museums of Scotland or in the collections of the community of Scottish museums at large. Those collections which had examples of bagpipes were clearly dominated by types of chamber instruments, so-called ‘Pastoral Pipes’, ‘Union Pipes’ and Small-pipes, many of exquisite workmanship. In addition until this period, perhaps as late as the second half of the nineteenth century, bagpipe makers were still capable of and practised in producing a variety of instruments across a spectrum from Great Pipe to bellows-blown Small Pipe. This collection’s ‘imbalance’ or lacuna is nowhere noticed or discussed but may be partly explained by motivations, interests and fashions in UK museum collecting since the late-nineteenth century. One or two more specific reasons can be suggested for this imbalance in Scottish collections. When museum collections of musical instruments began to be formed in the second half of the nineteenth century, they tended to absorb bagpipes then no longer being played and out of fashion. These same instruments were generally types of ‘Chamber Pipes’ of the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, finely made pieces used for indoor and operatic performance in the formerly prevailing fashion for pastoral and ballad operas (eg. NMS A.1947.105; NMS A.1947.106). But the earlier variety of types of instruments has been largely masked by the success and predominance of the Great Highland Bagpipe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the nineteenth century, the Great Highland Bagpipe had come to be favoured as the military and performing instrument, and had to be kept in service rather than laid aside and discarded. Its practitioners were men of few means who could not afford to relinquish their instruments to museums. A narrowing of the tradition of Scottish piping is also evident in this period and the Great Highland Bagpipe was becoming the predominant instrument in use. The bagpipe tradition was beginning to fade in Europe as a whole with the strident exception of Scotland. The demands of empire and Victorian militarism offered a last gasp to the more ancient bagpipe which had been retrieved from its mountain fastness and made to perform to order (Donaldson 2000). Alternatively, since there was no material evidence for a pre-existence, it could be claimed that the Great Highland Bagpipe never existed as a historical musical instrument. It may be significant that the Great Highland Bagpipe is absent from Hipkins and Gibb’s *Musical Instruments Historic, Rare and Unique* of 1888, apart from an iconic example of dubious ancestry. Research is
showing, for example, that any bagpipe considered in the literature as an ancient Highland bagpipe is evidently not authentic or even a fake (Bryan 1971: 240-241).

The scope of collecting in a large public museum must realistically be controlled by a ‘Collecting Policy’, the policy itself being shaped by the purpose and constitution of the institution (Cheape 1990: 34-37; Cheape 2000: 62-63). Musical instrument collections pose particular problems for collecting and curatorship, aired by the Museums and Galleries Commission in 1992, indicating the necessity for a policy (see Appendix 2). An acquisition policy had been formulated following the Edinburgh Festival ‘Pipes, Harps and Fiddles’ exhibition and revised on the opening of the Museum of Piping in the National Piping Centre in Glasgow in 1996. The intention initially was to fill perceived gaps in the national collections, to look at the concept of building ‘a national collection of a national instrument’ and to inform and guide other collections in Scotland. The Collecting Policy is as follows:

• to form a representative national collection of Scottish and British bagpipes, recognising the considerable variety in sizes and forms of British (including Irish) bagpipes before the nineteenth century.

• to broaden the collection with examples of kindred instruments from Europe, taking account of the history and survival (or attrition) of piping in Western and Eastern Europe.

• to deepen the national collection by acquiring parts of instruments when the opportunity offers (since, as woodwind instrument, the survival rate of sets of bagpipes is poor), double and single reeds, the tools of turnery and manufacture (particularly to record and illustrate the making of bagpipes in Scotland), the material and traditional culture of learning, handling and playing the bagpipes, and examples of bagpipe music (a published tradition only since c.1820).

• to interpret and display the piping collection and to research and publish the history of the instrument especially as represented in the collection, and otherwise to raise the profile of the collection as a ‘national collection’.

13
Piping scholarship, to use a phrase that might have conveyed certain perhaps ambiguous messages in Scotland, is an entity of varying value. For the researcher, the available secondary sources are poor and must rank as distinctly inadequate in terms of musicology. The assembling of a new form of ‘documentation’ has been an imperative. An old problem is that pipers, the traditional practitioners, have been musically illiterate and taught to ignore wider musical contexts or Europe. The traditional method of learning the pipes was by ear and by rote, encapsulated in the Scottish Gaelic word canntaireachd. A way of learning tunes, for example, as quoted in a letter in the National Museums’ collections, was: ‘You can get them off his fingers’ (NMS K.2002.1870-1877; Cheape 2005: 12). The brighter lights of musicological scholarship that shone on the bagpipes seemed to be largely unknown in the world of piping in Scotland; for example references to Baines’ Bagpipes monograph were unknown in the secondary literature and history of piping until recently and the volume lay unused on the library shelves of the National Museums.

The National Museums’ collecting policy has run its course for more than twenty-five years and a selection of over two thousand items assembled for a national collection. It did of course inherit a number of important items, collected as personal relics or as examples of the applied and decorative arts. An outstanding earlier acquisition was the Duncan Fraser Collection of 33 sets of bagpipes and related items brought back from different parts of Europe in the late-nineteenth century and deposited in the Royal Scottish Museum in 1947. More recently the outstanding acquisition was the purchase in 1983 of the Ross and Glen Collection with the collaboration of the Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments where some of it had been on long-term loan (Cheape 1983: iii-vi). At the time, this was the largest single piece of expenditure on piping ever to have been transacted in Scotland. As the contents of a very active shop and business of longstanding, this collection supplied at a stroke one of the most important building blocks of a national collection, that is, a mass of different parts and fragments of bagpipes as well as a range of other musical instruments – the stock-in-trade of the Glens business - giving a detailed picture of the development of the instrument from the early-eighteenth through to the late-twentieth centuries. Given the complication of an
instrument of upward of fourteen separate sections, these instruments rarely survived in their original state, having expanded with playing and shrunk with neglect. Therefore they were rarely collected into museums if in an incomplete state and never as fragments, with the sometimes quirky exception of relics of the gods and heroes – and of Bonnie Prince Charlie. Some outstanding instruments appeared from this business, for example a beautifully preserved Union Pipe by Hugh Robertson of Edinburgh of the 1780s, and Messrs Glens' own trademark, a set of brass Highland pipes of about 1860 which for years hung in the shop window in the Lawnmarket. Between fragments and complete instruments, the principle was established with the 'national collection' at the time to accord more or less equal status to every single item from Glens' shop. In the recesses of the premises was the forensic evidence from which to begin to assemble the organology of the bagpipe.

The essence of the bagpipe is the music played on it but the making of the instrument and setting it up with reeds is a critical preliminary. All these processes are now represented in the 'national collection', including reeds and performers represented in a discography. A complex process has developed from the lone, un-named player-craftsman hand-making his reed pipe to mass-production in specialist workshops with computer-assisted machinery. In Scotland the trade of bagpipe making emerges in the eighteenth century in one-man businesses particularly on the Forth and Clyde estuaries and in and around Glasgow and Edinburgh. Access to the sea, trade and established lines of communication were strong determinants for the location of bagpipe making and, as historical sources tell us more, it is no coincidence that we find the trade of bagpipe making in other Scottish burghs or urban centres such as Perth, Dundee and Aberdeen. These centres were well placed to acquire the raw materials that had come to be favoured for the making of bagpipes, particularly hardwoods from sources in the Caribbean and in tropical West and East Africa. In addition elephant ivory became fashionable for the ferrules, mounts and decorative finials added to sets of bagpipes. The collection demonstrates that, from the earliest datable material, the bagpipe was generally assembled from exotic and imported raw materials.
Bagpipe makers seem often to have been self-taught, taught within the family or trained in apprenticeship as wood-turners. It is a frustration for the historian of piping that they rarely marked their products with their names before the late-eighteenth century when we find the name, for example, of Hugh Robertson in Edinburgh on some surviving bagpipes of the period. Documentation of their work is scarce; ironically, the trade of the bagpipe maker is more or less silent until the nineteenth century. One or two documents such as the early Glen Account Book (Cheape 1983 b: 602) and stray documents survive to show the nature of the business and its distinctive language and culture (see Appendix 3). But the bagpipe makers also led the field in devising and publishing bagpipe music. First was Donald MacDonald, who is now well represented in the collection, with his book of c. 1819, alluded to above, followed by the Glen ‘dynasty’ and other such as William Gunn of Kildonan and Glasgow, a one-man business rarely mentioned in the histories of piping (NMS K.2003.680; Cheape 2006 a: 12-15). These names are all now substantially present in the ‘national collection’.

The ‘problem’ of the Great Highland Bagpipe, in terms of expectations and perceptions in Scotland and further afield, can be illustrated by allusion to a single instrument and the process of its acquisition as a prime example of the ‘national instrument’ (NMS K.2005.197). A set of Highland pipes was among Lots sourced recently at a sale in Montrose and came from North-East Scotland. Beyond this, typical of the salerooms, the item was devoid of provenance. A connection with Gordon Castle was suggested and a further Lot in the same sale included a copy of the Catalogue of Weapons, Battle Trophies and Regimental Colours, Gordon Castle 1907. The Catalogue includes details of the raising of the Gordon Fencible Regiments in 1778 and 1793 with information on the acquisition of military band instruments. Pipers are specified but not instruments and it may be suggested that, if this set were played in this military context, those pipers recruited to the colours would have brought their own sets of pipes. The Gordon Fencibles in 1778, in the absence of other evidence, could well supply a context for this set of pipes and an earlier date than other instruments of this type in the ‘national collection’.

16
The bagpipe appears to be of eighteenth-century date and includes chanter, bass drone, two tenor drones, stocks, blowstick, bag of sheepskin and woollen bag cover in Gordon tartan. It appears to be a remarkable survival. The drones have been turned from a temperate (European or British) hardwood and mounted in conventional early woodwind style with bone and horn. The proportions and style of turning and finish are impressively archaic in terms of the Great Highland Bagpipe and nothing similar survives apart from fragments of instruments and one or two pieces of rare graphic evidence. The blowstick and its stock have been replaced and are late-nineteenth century in date, and the chanter, marked ‘MacDougall/ Perth’ is from a different set of pipes. The design and profile of the drones would not discount them having come from a set of Lowland pipes and from having been mounted in a ‘common stock’. The three drone stocks are of quite extraordinary style, even suggesting a piece of amateur wood-turning. However, graphic evidence from the eighteenth century, as in the work of David Allan, clearly shows a Great Highland Bagpipe of approximately this style.

The two other early complete sets of the Great Highland Bagpipe in the ‘national collection’, the MacCorquodale Pipes (NMS K.1998.1130) of the 1780s and the Donald MacDonald set (NMS K.2003.939) of about 1805, exemplify this problem of dating and interpretation (Cheape 1999: 27-31; Cheape 2004: 9-21); the MacCorquodale set was substantially but expertly ‘rebuilt’ in the 1950s and the Donald MacDonald set is almost unique in the quality of its original state but it is in a slightly later style.

Concluding remarks

Forming what might be tentatively (albeit tendentiously) defined as ‘a national collection of a national instrument’ has been a relatively swift process, being achieved essentially within thirty years by one person. Foundations were already in place with a range of museum specimens but the starting tally was about twenty items and the end product is well over two thousand. This is now the largest and most significant national and international collection of such material in the public domain. The collection is displayed
in the National Piping Centre in Glasgow and also resides in the National Museums' reserve collections; a selection is displayed in the 'conservatoire' museum in the Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments. There have been advantages as well as disadvantages in this being a succinct and largely silent process while public sector employment is constrained by the wider needs and strategies of a national museum. Less fortunate was an institutional denial until recently of a need to appoint a musicologist to the staff.

The principal purpose of a museum collection is display for education and entertainment and research for better understanding of our environment. The larger and more comprehensive a collection becomes, the greater becomes the potential for research, with the qualification that the process is better for being policy-driven rather than random and serendipitous. Musical instruments contribute to the study of the history of music in all its facets and provide performers with a knowledge of early instruments. A museum collection preserves instruments as 'documents', supplying evidence of original design and manufacturing processes. The simple purpose of the 'national collection of a national instrument' is to achieve this and to nourish and grow expectations, conditioned by a distinctive national environment in Scottish history, such as offering an account of the Great Highland Bagpipe and its culture, and prompting fresh perspectives and understanding such as the influence of the Baroque and Neo-baroque on the Scottish musical tradition. Without a 'national collection', these topics remain shadowy and neglected, reflecting perhaps the extent to which the topic has been understood in Scotland, arguably with a lack of intellectual curiosity and a self-perpetuating clarity in the eyes of the beholders which has obviated the need for further study. The observable absence of the bagpipe from musicological or museological scholarship in the twentieth-century, apart from one or two notable modern exceptions, and the evident hiatus between published histories and the material culture suggests lines of enquiry for the future. The inclusion of bagpipes and Scotland by the Museums and Galleries Commission in their survey of 1992-1994, following input from the former National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, helped to redress the balance.
In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the great musical instrument collections were built on the aesthetic and visual qualities of rarity and the classical orchestral and chamber repertoire of performance, with ‘primitive’ instruments occupying the fringes. What might be said to have brought the ‘primitive’ or ‘folk’ instruments more into scholarly focus is the study of the sounds of music and their conditioning by the instruments for which the music was originally conceived (Baines 1982: 3-5). This and an interest in older repertoires led to the repair and restoration of old instruments and has put museum collections under strain; restoration and the achievement of an ‘authentic’ sound has proved to be a potentially destructive process, destructive of original structure and of vital evidence. The ‘national collection’ has adopted a policy of making available instruments under supervision to specialists who thereby construct copies; the historic instrument thus becomes an historic document which can be closely studied without any loss of evidence, form and integrity.

Musicology has extended increasingly to the study of the widest possible range of old instruments, owing not so much to institutional initiative as to private individuals such as Canon Francis Galpin (1858-1945), and has earned its own defining status as ‘organology’. Museum collections are vital for the study of historical forms of instruments, their musical character and technical features, and of how they have changed and evolved. The collection of old and not-so-old musical instruments contributes to more of an understanding about the evolution of music, how instruments were made and tuned, what timbre might have been intended by the original maker, and what pitch instruments were made to, exploring such intractable issues such as what is meant by the note A. The study of music is now more eclectic and wide-ranging, demonstrable for example in the new BA Scottish Music degree being taught in the RSAMD, and concepts of ‘classical’ and ‘traditional’ not now so mutually exclusive (Purser 1992: passim; Cheape 2006 b: 34-37). This helps to bring the bagpipe into the scholarly discourse and widens the potential exponentially for a ‘national collection of the national instrument’.

National Museums of Scotland
Appendix 1.

[Response to Museums and Galleries Commission for bagpipe and musical instrument collection, conservation and care, 1991].

Review of Musical Instrument Collections

We have been asked for a response to the Museums and Galleries Commission on their proposal for a ‘Review of Musical Instrument Collections’ in the United Kingdom.

The National Museums of Scotland [NMS] hold distinguished collections of musical instruments, eg. an ethnographic collection (the Jean Jenkins Collection), collections relating to the bagpipe in Britain and Europe, in some areas rivalling and surpassing collections in London, Nuremberg, Paris, New York and Washington. We have a strong interest in such a Review, its terms of reference, its findings, and its ultimate recommendations, although our curatorial input into musical instruments and musicology is strictly limited. The brief for the Review is satisfactory although we, as a national museum, are more concerned in some issues than others. Our main points of interest (following the layout of the brief) are as follows:

A. Information on the range and scope of musical collections is difficult to provide immediately. NMS collections are included in the main published guides such as Clifford Bevan’s Musical Instrument Collections in the British Isles of 1990 (which is intended as a detailed guide), and also have entries in appropriate gazetteers at home and abroad such as the British Music Yearbook and the ‘European Ethnomusicology Repertoire’ in Paris.

With present resources of staff time, it would be difficult (or impossible) to provide a scholarly account of NMS musical collections. The collections are not geared for sophisticated levels of research, eg into technical details of tuning or timbre, and scholarly enquiries frequently seek information which we cannot provide, eg on
‘pitch’ or acoustic properties of instruments. Given the level of enquiries by post and visitor, published catalogues or sufficient documentation are necessary and highly desirable. But documentation requires to be standardised whereas, at present, standards vary throughout the UK, Europe and North America and they (eg Kurt Sachs’ criteria) are difficult to attain.


B. The NMS share some but not all of the features and problems of musicological collections as suggested in the brief.

The conservation or restoration to playing condition is an issue much discussed but seldom practically addressed. This is fundamental to the existence of some collections eg. the Russell Collection is intended as a ‘playing collection’. The response to the conservation issue has to be a guarded one; at present the consensus within the NMS would be ‘yes’ for conservation and ‘no’ for restoration. Furthermore, very little specialist restoration skills for musical instruments are available in Scotland (ref. *Scottish Conservation Directory* 1991).

Since we have a collection of bagpipe material of national and international significance, our main purpose is collection for preservation so that a reference collection of three-dimensional material is built up in a subject area of ‘ethnomusicology’ that is otherwise poorly documented and inadequately described (by ‘ethnomusicology’ we mean the study of music within its cultural context). The instrument is primitive in origins and universal in adoption and there is much research to be done on eg. materials, varieties of construction, acoustic properties.
The NMS does not make loans for study and playing purposes, does not make special provision for marketing, does not exploit reproduction or recording possibilities except on an ad hoc basis, and does not have a specific policy in UK terms on acquisitions in wider fields. Co-ordination of acquisition with other musical collections in the UK might be appropriate.

C. In the experience of the NMS, the term ‘musical collection’ is difficult to define since a musical collection has evolved as one element in widely based collections of culture, human history, applied and decorative arts (eg. musical instruments as curios or small pieces of furniture), or social history. This situation cannot be as clear cut as others such as, for example, the Bate Collection or the Reid Collection. The NMS has already given some consideration to transferring its musical instrument collections on long loan to Edinburgh University; this may not be entirely in the public interest and other formulae may be appropriate to be considered.

Hugh Cheape

13 January 1991
Appendix 2.

UK Musical Collections Seminar, 13 October 1992

Musical instrument collections held nationwide in a variety of museums and conservatoires pose special problems of curatorship, interpretation and presentation. The NMS was represented at a one-day seminar at the Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC) to discuss musical instrument collections in the public domain and to receive the draft findings of the ‘Review of Musical Collections in the United Kingdom’, the survey commissioned by the MGC in 1991. NMS supplied the MGC review with information and met Dr Hélène La Rue and Kate Arnold Forster when they visited Edinburgh on behalf of the MGC on 9 July 1992.

The draft report and discussions focused on a range of problems highlighted by the process of review:

- musical instrument collections are generally subsidiary elements of larger collections, to their detriment; the public interest was not best served
- lack of musical specialists in national institutions
- lack of specialist committee to oversee respective collections, therefore collections were marginalised and virtues unrecognised
- inadequate funding, specifically evident in lack of established curatorial posts and of specialist expertise in the public domain
- lack of specialist conservation and of active conservation programmes
- shortcomings in documentation; shortcomings in availability of specialist detail freely commented on
- lack of policy on collecting eg. historically, the Victoria and Albert collected instruments as objects of outstanding design and cabinet-making
- lack of policies on access (i.e. instruments available for playing or not available)
• lack of training; proliferation of museological training but not for musical specialists

• need for a formal framework to advise on musical instruments collections nationwide; an acute absence of a formalised curatorial network for musical instrument collections was commented on

A range of desiderata was discussed and these will form the recommendations of the Review to be published early in 1993. The main needs are as follows:

• purchase funds for ‘modern music’, contemporary work, the work of particular makers and specialists

• more information on conservation to be made available; the MGC will extend its ‘standards of care’ documentation to musical instruments and will advise on developing courses in musical conservation eg. at the MTI in Bradford or in the colleges of music (a recommendation strongly endorsed by the Royal College of Music)

• published statement or statements on ethics of conservation eg. to guard against the destruction of evidence in the face of demand for ‘restoration’

• register of historical musical instruments

• standardised documentation, creation of collections database (warning from the Bodleian against standardised choices of fields), centralised listing of work in progress and research

• national body of expertise, a national advisory committee or formalised curatorial network of musical specialists, who might perform a co-ordinating role, to consider matters of general concern such as cataloguing standards, conservation ethics, and access (eg. policy towards playing or non-playing)

• national strategy on collecting, to achieve the best results from limited staff and financial resources, and to focus eg. on declining or disappearing musical traditions
concept of a ‘national collection’, for which the Review solicited opinions, did not generally find favour; rather, strengthen existing provision; there is already a ‘national collection’, though dispersed; more information is needed to corroborate this notion

General discussion and conclusions can be summarised in the following terms:

• increased funding

• raise standards

• information exchange, via information mechanisms and co-ordinating network

Hugh Cheape
14 October 1992
Appendix 3.
[examples of ephemeral documentation]

K.2003.1061
Letter written in ink about 1876 on a printed letter form headed ‘MEMORANDUM’ and ‘From Donald McPhee, Teacher and Maker of the Great Highland Bagpipes, 26 Thistle Street, South Side.’ Donald MacPhee (1841-1880) was a pipe maker in Glasgow, with a shop also at 17 Royal Arcade, and was reputed to be the best piper in Scotland. He published a Bagpipe Tutor, a Collection of Marches, Strathspeys and Reels, Jigs and Hornpipes, and two books of Piobaireachd music. The letter was written to John MacGregor (1820-1888) who was Piper to Sir Robert Menzies of Menzies and Weem.

To John McGregor
Sir
I had a visit from an acquaintance of yours and he told me that you wanted some cane. I am out of cane just now but I intend [for intend] going to Belfast for some cane soon and if you let me know what sort [for sort] you would like I will send it to you when I come home. Send the size you want it over.
I have a fine pipe on hand just now. The party that ordered them says that he cannot pay for them. I have other orders that I might but [for put] them in for but they [for they] are too large in the ivory and the orders I have are for light virls as they are for gentlemen and they do not care for heavy pipes. I want £8 - - for them but if you could get a market for them I would allow you £1 - - for your trouble.
I would send them through [for through] if required for inspection at any time if you think that you could get them off. They are a very fine pipe, just finished this week.

K.2005.461.2
Draft letter in French for Messrs J and R Glen of Edinburgh, dated 18 April 1882, concerning the ordering of a quantity of cut reed (roseau) and its dispatch in some form
of basket container (corbeille). A sample (échantillon) had been sent to the recipient. The consignment to be shipped from Marseille.

K.2002.1367.9
Letter written in ink on a small piece of paper, with instructions for making up pipe-bag seasoning:

David Glen & Sons
1 Greenside Place
Edinburgh

Dear Sir
Regarding mixture for Bag
Pure Lard equal quantities Resin
Melt them until they come to the boil let stand until cold (if you are making as much as will do twice or thrice) and it will firm up, then when you wish to use it take about a Teacupful and slightly heat it, do not put it in hot.
Pour it in chanter stock and give the bag a good rub to spread it well over the inside then let it lie for an hour or two. Clean out stocks with a thin stick or with a small piece of rag or end. If you can get archangel Tar put a small piece into mixture after melting and stir it until it melts a Teaspoonful will do for 2 Teacupfuls.
Yours sincerely
D Glen and Sons
We have it in tins all ready for use if you don’t manage.

NOTES
3 Classification numbers refer to the documentation of objects within the collections of the National Museums of Scotland [NMS]. Full details of every item are available on the NMS database.
4 The National Museums of Scotland were represented on the MGC Review Committee for Musical Instrument Collections and their input acknowledged. The particular circumstances and shortcomings for musical instrument collecting in Scottish museums were outlined in a ‘response’ to the Review (see Appendix 1).
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ELLEN HICKMANN – ARND ADJE BOTH – RICARDO EICHMANN (HRSG.)

Studien zur Musikarchäologie V

Musikarchäologie im Kontext
Archäologische Befunde, historische Zusammenhänge, soziokulturelle Beziehungen

Music Archaeology in Context
Archaeological Semantics, Historical Implications, Socio-Cultural Connotations

Vorträge des 4. Symposiums der Internationalen Studiengruppe Musikarchäologie
im Kloster Michaelstein, 19.-26. September 2004

Papers from the 4th Symposium of the International Study Group on Music Archaeology
at Monastery Michaelstein, 19-26 September, 2004

2006

Verlag Marie Leidorf GmbH · Rahden/Westf.
The Early History of the Scottish Bagpipe

Hugh Cheape

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG


A NATIONAL INSTRUMENT

Scotland is a country whose culture is strongly associated with the bagpipe and the music of the bagpipe. It has become, with tartan, an icon of Scotland and a symbol of nationhood. This prominence owes much to the adoption of the bagpipe by the army, particularly in the nineteenth century, and its enlistment in Britain's wars of empire. This more recent military career of the Scottish bagpipe has influenced the music and the style of the instrument itself. The extent of this influence and the changes it induced are only now being realised and understood as a result of more thorough research into the cultural background and roots of bagpipe music in Scotland.

The claim that the bagpipe was the national instrument of Scotland was made in 1819 by Donald MacDonald from the Island of Skye, erstwhile soldier, piper, bagpipe-maker and music publisher, in the Preface to A Collection of the Ancient Martial Music of Caledonia called Piobaireachd. This was a patriotic enterprise to produce bagpipe music, hitherto an oral tradition, in written form, conscious as he was of the destruction of Gaelic society and its culture following the Jacobite Wars of the early-eighteenth century and the defeat of a Highland army at the Battle of Culloden, the last battle on British soil in 1746. His claim was couched in terms of a response to crisis:

"Strangers may sneer at the pains taken to preserve this wild instrument, because their ears have only been accustomed to the gay measures of the violin and 'lascivious pleasing of the lute'; but it has claims and recommendations that may silence even their prejudices. The Bag-pipe is, perhaps, the only national instrument in Europe. Every other is peculiar to many countries, but the Bag-pipe to Scotland alone. There in the banquet-hall and in the house of mourning it has alike prevailed. It has animated her warriors in battle, and welcomed them back after their toils, to the homes of their love, and the hills of their nativity. Its strains were the first sounded on the ears of infancy, and they are the last to be forgotten in the wanderings of age."

Community memory in the early romantic era had created a past and Highlanders were proud of their contribution to British feats of arms in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. As this contribution was sustained in Queen Victoria's wars of empire, the notion grew that Scotland's bagpipe was originally a Highland instru-

1 Cannon 1988, 73-75, 171-173.
2 MacDonald 1974, 4.
ment (Fig. 1). Its imagined pedigree and perceived antiquity seemed to be confirmed by a set of Highland bagpipes with richly carved 'celtic' ornamentation, a set of historically appropriate initials, a Highland galley and the date 1409 in Roman numerals which was acquired by the National Museums by bequest in 1912. This instrument is now understood to be reconstruction of late-nineteenth century manufacture.

Controversially perhaps given this well-entrenched conviction of the early-nineteenth century, we now assume that the bagpipe was in fact a late arrival in Scotland. We have little information about it, either written, graphic or material, before the fourteenth century and very little has yet been recovered by archaeology to lay foundations for an organology of the bagpipe in Scotland. Similarly, little is known about the iconic Great Highland Bagpipe before the sixteenth century when it came to compete with the harp as the chosen instrument of Gaelic society towards the north and west of the country. The harp seems to have a much longer if interrupted history in Scotland, a triangular-framed harp being shown for example on the ninth-century Dupplin Cross and commonly depicted in Pictish iconography from the eighth century. Evidently holding a socially and professionally exalted position from the twelfth century, the harp began to go out of fashion in the sixteenth century and its music to be taken over to some extent by the players of other instruments.

The received history of the bagpipe in Scotland has little to tell us of this process and, in its more conventional renderings, has even been characterised recently as the triumph of sentiment over fact. In the first place, the early history of the bagpipe is equated with a putative history of the Great Highland Bagpipe, and secondly, a reasoned evaluation is hindered by a popular belief that the bagpipe was 'invented' in Scotland. There is a case perhaps for making such a claim, in a limited sense for the Great Highland Bagpipe which in effect and in its modern but 'traditional' form can be said to have been invented in Scotland, but such a line of reasoning tends to elide important and self-evident roots of Scottish culture back into medieval and classical Europe (Fig. 2). By the early-nineteenth century, as we have seen, the Great Highland Bagpipe was being described as the 'national instrument'. It is evident in the romantic and literary histories that, though much was imagined, nothing was then known about the early history of the bagpipe in Scotland and that a variety of different types of Scottish bagpipe still then in existence was not recognised; although such a variety is strongly evidenced in museum collections today and among a new performer community.

Conventional histories have offered suggestions on origins. Our attention is drawn to references to pipes in scriptural and classical sources. Scots know their Bible and Latin was regarded as late as the seventeenth century as the national language. But there is undoubtedly ambiguity, and transliteration and translation mislead; the term *tibia*, 'shin bone', we understand can also mean 'flute' or 'pipe', and in other words made of bone. Dictionaries confirm this for Classical Latin but do not distinguish between flute and pipe. Anthony Baines quoted a Classical Greek source, Aristophanes, poet and dramatist of the fourth century BC, who harangued a group of street musicians with: "You pipers who are here from Thebes, with bone pipes blowing the back end of a dog." Dogskin bags with blowpipes and bone chanters are still credible bagpipes but these are not high status instruments or performers and Aristophanes was one of the greatest of the ancient writers of satirical comedy. It is no doubt significant that similar depreciatory and abusive terms could be used in the Hebrides in the seventeenth century. A contemporary poet, composing in a formal and literary Gaelic, devised a comic and mocking satire against two pipers in his community in the *Seachas na Piob ò Thìs* or 'The History of the Bagpipe from the Beginning of Time':

"The bladder of a pig being blown excessively, The first bagpipe that was not melodious That came from before the Flood [...]"

"Musical sweetheart of the black Fiend" tantalized the master-poet. Satire and humour were being used to insult the upstart piper and this literary fashion may have been symptomatic of contemporary changes and a loss of pre-eminence of the harp at the expense of the bagpipe. This is seen as part of, and possibly initiating, a series of songs or poems in Scottish Gaelic alternately praising and dispraising pipers and their instruments. It was in the ancient tradition of 'flying' or verbal and poetic contest. One other example demonstrates the entertainment value. The "mock elegy on a bad piper and his bagpipe" preserved in the Turner Manuscript depends on the exaggerated and sustained praise of a piper from Kintyre, but suddenly the tone changes:

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4 Cheape 1999, 10; Manson 1901, 53–54, 299–300.
6 Baines 1973, 63.
7 Gillies 1786, 291–292.
"But I am tired of praising you
And your beast of a pipe and its stinking skin,
After it being filled with spittle, great is my disgust of it.

It is the oil of the chain shackles
That will be filling the hide,
And the dirt choking the beast.

A bag of sticks under your arm,
Its appearance more horrible than deadly nightshade,
Often the sweat is on your brow
Giving hands and wind to the 'Grizzled One'.

A PREHISTORY

With so little known about the bagpipe in Europe in the course of the first millennium of the Christian era, one or two elements may be teased out of the known history since they represent, however remotely, aspects of the wider context, socially and culturally, of piping. A distance-marker stone, now in the National Museums of Scotland, raised at Bridgeness, Falkirk, at the east end of the Roman Wall in honour of the Second Legion carries sculpted panels including a figure of a musician playing a double pipe. It is dated to AD 142 and represents the earliest graphic evidence in Scotland for music and context, since this depicts a ceremony of animal sacrifice for the ritual cleansing of the Legion. After the 'fall' of the Roman Empire the milieu of urban life and forms of bureaucratic government were in decline and trade and movement of people, goods and culture in suspension. We are given some insights into the ways of life of 'Celtic' peoples, in the first place in Gaul through the writings of Greek and Roman authors and secondly in the so-called Irish Sagas such as the 'Cattle Raid of Cooley', giving as the late Professor Kenneth Jackson described "a window on the Iron Age", in other words a glimpse into prehistory. What is absent from all these descriptions is a detailed impression of the culture of music and song, although some early evidence on, for example, horns and trumpets, is illuminating. What is clearly highly developed and of great importance for the Gauls of France and the early Gaels is language and the spoken word, eloquence and oratory, and the training of memory, all important and highly prestigious elements in later Gaelic culture in Ireland and Scotland. They were trained in 'schools' of rhetoric and Romans looked to employ orators from Gaul as tutors for their sons. It was said of the Celtic peoples that they believed that eloquence was of greater power than physical strength. The theme of the 'schools' as training ground for the professional performers seems to run from these Continental beginnings, through the bardic schools of Ireland and Scotland, down to the schools of piping of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Ireland has the oldest vernacular, that is non-classical literature in Europe and the earliest written prose in remarkable manuscript compilations made between the seventh and ninth centuries by a professional learned class, the Fili. These prose narratives were derived, as far as we can tell, from traditional tales which circulated widely, for example the 'Story of Mac Da Tho's Pig' and 'Bricriu's Feast', in both of which stories the warriors contended for the 'champion's portion' at the feast, exactly the same scenario occurring in Classical authors' descriptions of the Gauls as early as the second century BC. Feasting and the celebration of heroic virtues were also highly characteristic of Highland and Hebridean society in the late-medieval and early-modern period, a feature most strongly evidenced in Gaelic song and also in music-making. Continuity from a prehistoric past seems remarkably clear, particularly in the survival of language and literature, but any speculation must be cautious. Antiquity cannot be assumed for music and musical instruments but it can be seen in attitudes, values and the expectations of reciters and players, listeners and patrons. At some point in Highland history therefore the bagpipe met the expectations of Gaelic society.

And what about other lands beyond the Roman Empire? Most of Pictland (that is, Scotland north of the Firth of Forth) was outside the former Roman Empire and therefore not necessarily subject to the same crises visited on other parts of Europe following its fall. This is a period conventionally labelled as the 'Dark Ages' but appears in Pictish culture as a comparatively 'light age'. Given the symbol stones and their iconography, we could infer a settled and organised society rather than a barbarian chaos. The many conventionalised designs and motifs include harp and triple pipe, opening up the intriguing possibility that these and their music were a part of the material culture of Scotland before the ninth century. Were these Biblical motifs copied by the artist-sculptors of Pictland or do they hold a mirror to aspects of life in the Scotland of the eighth centu-

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8 Cameron 1894, 332.
9 N.M.S. FV 27; Phillips 1974, 176-182.
10 Chadwick 1970, 45-47.
ry? Recent commentators such as Purser have argued cogently for the strong likelihood of the latter position: "the sculptors could, and probably did work from original instruments which they had seen played by live musicians." Such motifs at least contradict any notion of the remoteness or isolation of Scotland. Historians of the harp have made very fair claims for the instrument in Pictish society and the early Irish law tracts such as the Senchas Mor, dating possibly to the 7th or even 6th centuries AD, allude to music-making and are clear about the high status of the harper. Without offering any conclusions at this stage of the research, we may point to the significance of and focus for research in a music motif mentioned repeatedly in the early Gaelic narrative literature, this is the triad of 'rejoicing music', 'sleeping music' and 'lamenting music'. Given that the role of the harper is always clearer in the early period, the pipe or triple-pipe may have a role to play in this context. The same distinctions continue into the modern period and are made with respect to music-making with the harp and bagpipe in Dunvegan in the seventeenth century, are introduced as conventional storytelling elements in folktales, and are used to represent the consummate skill of the piper who has received the gift of piping - buaidh na piobaireachd - from his fairy and supernatural benefactor. The same terminology in the Gaelic prose-tale narratives of the ninth century is still well-known in Gaelic today, gean traighe, that is music for dancing and singing, suain traighe, music for slumber, and gil traighe, music for wild longing and lamenting. Significantly, we are led into consideration of modes and tonality rather than rhythm or metres (which are more readily analysed), and similarly in the first attempts to set out a proper description of the Great Highland Bagpipe about 1760, in the Compleat Theory of Joseph MacDonald, the author discusses modes in his section on 'Keys' which he also terms 'taste', no doubt thinking in terms of Gaelic blas:

"As there are no flat Notes in a Pipe, so there can be no flat Keys. Yet it is surprising what a grave taste they have contrived for Laments, which is a quite distinct style from the rest. In several Passages of these there are to be found some very expressive Sentiments of Lamentation, or melancholy; and indeed it is hard to say if more cultivated Geniuses could render the composition of so small a compass more expressive. [...] The Key for Laments excludes C altogether, because it is sharp. Laments dwell much upon the lowest Notes, and takes the freedom of all the Notes excepting this. There are other Keys that exclude this Note also."

A EUROPEAN BACKGROUND

In the wider Europe the bagpipe appears to have spread rapidly in the circumstances of what historians have called the 'Twelfth Century Renaissance' when towns and town life, trade and trade routes developed dramatically, and music circulated as part of a minstrel and troubadour culture in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. At this time Scotland's and England's economies began to change radically with the reorganisation of landholding, the beginnings of forms of capitalist farming and startling innovations detectable in the surviving dateable and provenanced material culture, for example in metalworking, glass and pottery. Absent from the material record is anything organological such as pipes or bagpipes. Nothing of the importance and status of the Carnyx has been recovered in Scotland archaeologically to throw light on the use of woodwind instruments in prehistory. A small 'whistle' of brass, 14 cm in length, with six finger-holes was excavated at a site, Tusculum, in North Berwick. A considerable number of 'Jews Harps', dateable to different periods, have been recovered and provide some material evidence of a rich and protean musical tradition. More specifically three tuning pegs or pins (Scottish Gaelic cnagan) for the Highland harp or clarsach have come from the National Museums' excavations at Finlaggan, Islay, the former centre of the Lordship of the Isles. These items can be dated to the fourteenth century.

The bagpipe must have been played widely throughout Europe, especially in the period from the twelfth century, when we first begin to learn more about it, until the seventeenth century when the pipes began to be displaced in music-making by new orders of instruments. The evidence for the bagpipe in Scotland in this period matches the evidence for it in the wider Europe but is not so plentiful. From the 1100s, our sources are documentary (then becoming more common), graphic evidence in the form of manuscript illumination with angels, monkeys, rabbits and pigs playing bagpipes, and carvings in stone and wood surviving usually in churches and monasteries. As a matter of note, the earliest surviving representations of the bagpipe in Scotland are the sculpted figures of the late-fourteenth and early-fifteenth centuries at Melrose and Roslin in southern Scotland. They (the piper on the Abbey at Melrose is a pig) are shown with single-drone instruments, most close-

16 N.M.S. H.L.30.
17 N.M.S. SF 3019.
ly resembling the Spanish gaita of today rather than an imagined proto-Highland bagpipe. Melrose of course was a Cistercian monastery, strongly dependent culturally on its links with France (Fig. 3). Roslin is a collegiate chapel, a cosmopolitan status symbol and aristocratic fashion statement of medieval Scotland. These vivid representations pose questions on the status of the pipes and pipers and contemporary attitudes towards them. If the pipes were an angelic instrument but also notionally played by pigs, a medieval symbol for gluttony and sin, attitudes were ambivalent. We learn about it in Mediterranean countries such as Spain and Italy, the Netherlands and in England. Players or minstrels travelled the roads and seaways of Europe and provided some of the most popular entertainment in court, castle and burgh. Payments by the kings of England for music and minstrelsy are documented in this period and patronage was a matter of fashion as well as taste, to be emulated by other ranks of society. The earliest possible references to piper-minstrels in Scotland are for the reign of David II (1329—1371). They are certainly travelling folk, possibly from England or the Continent, rather than court appointments. They brought news and gossip as well as music and song to a highly localised world. The function of the bagpipe was therefore to provide music for song and dance, and also evidently for work, to enliven and quicken toil.

A sense of Europe as an entity with its own cultural traits (such as music) emerged, particularly under the influence of the Christian church and pressure from without. Under attack from Islam, the counter-attack was launched by the Papacy and a series of military expeditions was mounted in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries to recover Jerusalem and the Holy Land from the Muslims. Conquest, as ever, was followed by colonisation in the Middle East, and trade followed the flag. The linking of Western Europe to the Eastern Mediterranean and new contacts with the Arab world also reintroduced Western Europe to the arts and sciences of the Greek and Roman, a civilisation which had evolved with the learning of Islam. Armies and traders brought back musical instruments such as the lute and other string instruments and wind instruments such as the shawm also widely distributed throughout Asia. There were Scots in the First Crusade in 1095 and they drew comment from their French comrades, “drawn from their native swamps, with their bare legs, rough cloaks, purses hanging from their shoulders, hung about with arms, ridiculous enough in our eyes but offering the aid of their faith and devotion to our cause.”

The passionate pursuit of the Crusade as the established and principal aim of Latin Christen-

dom was the most marked and best recorded characteristic of the restless twelfth century. The same period saw the Norman Conquest of England and part-settlement of Scotland, and the experience of the British Isles in common with all of Western Europe of the expansion of trade, commercial life and towns. This period, the ‘Twelfth Century Renaissance’, may provide a key to understanding the spread of the bagpipe and its music throughout Europe. Perhaps this is the period which saw a more elaborate and fixed form of instrument evolving with the marriage of chanter, bag, blowpipe and drone or drones. Forms such as the droneless bagpipe are less common in the iconography after this. This was also the period which saw a resurgence of Gaelic literature in Irish society with the Finn mac Cumhail cycle of stories and the beginnings of a ballad literature which certainly flourished in both Scotland and Ireland. This was a popular song form borrowed from Europe in the twelfth century and whose history in Gaelic Scotland has been reconstructed largely from the evidence of more than 2,500 lines of Ossianic poetry in the early-sixteenth century manuscript known as the ‘Book of the Dean of Lismore’.

LOWLAND BAGPIPE

The comment is now usually made that the bagpipe was a late arrival in Scotland and derived from European models. This is probably a safe generalisation at this stage in our knowledge and with the evidence available. Arguably the pipes were of no particular interest until they played the music that people wanted to hear and this concept may provide a starting point. As we have seen, the pipe or bagpipe was not unknown here but the Wars of Independence and protracted hostility of England, particularly between 1296 and 1356, may have made it the instrument of a hostile power; the popular suggestion that Bruce’s army marched to Bannockburn to the sound of their own pipes may be difficult to sustain.

The patronage of court and castle in Scotland is evident in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries for travelling minstrels from the south and from the North Europe littoral. There is also evidence for early bagpipe music in the song and dance tradition of Scotland. The fifteenth century ushered in a period of prosperity when Scotland was more closely integrated with Europe and this suggests a

18 Collinson 1975, 88.
17 Montagu 1976, 72.
20 Rüts 1939, xvi—xviii.
context in which the bagpipe, in common with other cultural traits, might have spread into Scotland. Significantly, James I (1424–1437), skilled according to the court writers as a poet and musician, counted playing the pipes as one of his talents although the Latin term of the original text can translate as 'fiddle'. Such a brief allusion speaks volumes, at least for the place of music in everyday life. Material prosperity is reflected in the then significant creation of burghs of barony as trading centres, legally distinct from the royal burghs which were still to enjoy monopolies such as foreign trade. The 'burgh of barony' emerges as a distinct concept by 1450 and, with its busy life of markets and fairs, was a focus of cultural change and innovation. The culture of the 'burgh of barony' in the fifteenth century would have much to tell us about the history of the bagpipe in Scotland. From this period of the late-fifteenth century we have the first references to the employment of pipers as town minstrels suggesting that the burghs with their new wealth were imitating courtly patterns of patronage. Evidence also of this material prosperity is the fine Renaissance architecture, created especially during the reigns of James III (1460–1488) and James IV (1488–1513). Symbolic of that time and of a 'golden age' which was to end at the Battle of Flodden (and the death of the king) is the Great Hall of Stirling Castle.

Royal patronage customarily extended to music and pipers as we can read in the Treasurer's Accounts and we sense that piper-minstrels are by this time home-grown in Scotland. Patronage was always a matter of fashion and imitation and there must have been growing employment for pipers in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; they moved easily between the royal courts, the big houses and the burghs. In terms of both courtly and popular music, the tone was probably European and international and the music largely the popular songs of the day. Surviving musical fragments may corroborate this. There is very little to draw on by way of examples but the tune "Hey ca' throu", to select one randomly, retrieved by Robert Burns (1759–1796) and recorded in the Scots Musical Museum (published in 6 parts, 1787–1803) seems to be an early work-song. The tune fits the pipe scale and the bagpipe is frequently described as being played to accompany work. Dance music would have been common and is no doubt with us in different guises. References to dancing to measures from Spain, Italy, Germany, Naples and Aragon are seen in the fifteenth-century comic poem, 'Cockelby's Sow'21. Dancing 'in the round' was probably common to most of Europe. The atmosphere of this old style of community dance has survived in the festivities and celebration of the Breton Pardons when the favoured music for dancing is played on the Breton bagpipe or binou. Dancing and music must have been universal in late-medieval Scotland and we have the impatient reproof of the Augustinian canon, Robert Richardson, in his Commentary on the Rule of St Augustine in 1530, almost on the eve of Reformation in Scotland: "Good God! How much time is wasted on vain music in England and Scotland to the neglect of divinity and sound learning." He was of course addressing his brother Canons Regular whose simple chants were being usurped by over elaborate and vamped versions which Richardson characterised as "for the sake of carnal minds, not of spiritual". Augustinian houses, founded in Scotland from the first half of the twelfth century and the reign of David I, were evenly spread through the Lowlands from south-west to north-east22.

Music and dancing and popular entertainment drew the censure of the Reformation Church, established in Scotland in 1560, and pipers frequently appear in the records of the church courts for their misbehaviour or for their effect on the discipline of the citizens; drunkenness or dancing to the music of the pipes on the Sabbath are the most frequently cited crimes. The pipers themselves were either vagrants or filled the office of burgh musician, a common sinecure in seventeenth and eighteenth century Scotland. The records of most of the burghs of Scotland are filled with references to pipers and Sir Walter Scott, in his novel Old Mortality, has described the typical duties and remuneration of the Town Piper; with the office were:

"the Piper's Croft, as it is still called, a field of about an acre in extent, five merks, and a new livery-coat of the town's colours yearly; some hopes of a dollar upon the day of the election of magistrates, providing the Provost were able and willing to afford such a gratuity; and the privilege of paying, at all the respectable houses in the neighbourhood, an annual visit at spring-time to rejoice their hearts with his music, to comfort his own with their ale and brandy, and to beg from each a modicum of seed-corn."23

Scott has also commented on the vigour and importance of the tradition with so many of the pipers hereditarily holding office and being raconteurs and poets. With the material evidence available in museum collections, we see that the typical instrument of the burgh pipers was a bellows-blown bagpipe with three drones set in a single

21 Dauney 1838, 45–47.
large stock, a generally slightly smaller instrument than the Great Highland Bagpipe and easier to maintain and to play for extended periods such as feasts and weddings when community dancing might last all night. The office of burgh piper declined to extinction in the early-nineteenth century in a period which coincided with Burgh Reform and the perceived utilitarian needs of the people (Fig. 4). In terms of the instrument and its music, the tradition was to some extent shared with England, the Lowlands of Scotland, the Border country, and the north of England forming a musical ‘culture-province’ or Kulturgebiet. An elegy for the piper of Kilbarchan, Habbie Simson, who died at the turn of the seventeenth century captures the spirit and context of the tradition, referring also to tunes:

“Kilbarchan may now say alas!
For she hath lost her game and grace,
Both Trixie and the Maiden Trace;
But what remeed?
For no man can supply his place —
Hab Simson’s dead.

Now who shall play ‘The day it daws’
Or ‘Hunt’s Up’ when the cock he craws?
Or who can, for our kirktown cause,
Stand us in stead?
On bagpipes now nobody blows,
Sin’ Habbie’s dead.”

HIGHLAND BAGPIPE

It is a matter of frustration or, alternatively, deeply significant that we have so little evidence for prehistory but the archaeological discovery may yet be made that supplies a ‘missing link’. The chances of an instrument or part-instrument surviving are very slim; its material, of the most susceptible organic nature, is almost the first to de-grade in the soil. The so-called ‘pipes’ from the sixteenth-century marine site of the wreck of the Mary Rose are of great musico-lological importance but belong to an arguably distinct ‘pipe and tabor’ tradition and to medieval minstrelsy. The Great Highland Bagpipe is therefore a later but remarkable phenomenon in European and British history. The question of where it comes from is not as important to us and to modern scholarship now as the compelling question of why it takes root in Highland society, why it flourishes and why it develops in the form that it did.

The question of when the bagpipe appears in Scotland, or is adopted in Scotland, and the question of when it may have been embraced by Highland society is an intriguing one. It is intriguing not so much as for establishing a chronology or definitive date but for getting a sense of a process of diffusion and a process of adoption. If, for the sake of argument, we regard the Hebrides as being on the North-West fringe of Europe, the appearance of the bagpipe there after a busy existence in a notional centre round the Mediterranean – the medius terrae, ‘middle of the world’ for the classical and medieval mind – could be likened to the rings moving outwards on water from the point of impact of a stone, a process described by scholars as ‘ripple theory’. Within Scotland there is a view that the Hebrides is not a ‘fringe in the medieval period but is at the epicentre with Ireland of a great corridor on a north-south axis on the Atlantic littoral. This area of the ‘Atlantic Littoral’ has its own history, distinct from the neo-classical civilisation of the Mediterranean, and is best viewed with a conventional map turned upside-down. The fringe then appears as a great highway, stretching “up the map” from the North Cape to Iberia, and the Highlands and Islands centre-stage and the linguistic and cultural cross-roads which they undoubtedly were. Places seen today perhaps as peripheral were linked by sea to Europe more directly than most parts of Mainland Scotland. This offers the interesting possibility that the bagpipe arrived in Scotland by way of an Atlantic corridor, and that its closest relation is the Spanish gaita which itself seems to represent the archetype bagpipe of the European Middle Ages, a mouth-blown instrument with a conical-bore chanter and a bass drone with large bell top. Against this idea is the likelihood that trade, communication and cultural contacts with the Continent through England, France, Germany and the Netherlands formed a carrying stream which brought the pipes into Scotland.

The bagpipe emerges therefore as a strong and fully-formed instrument in Scotland’s Highlands and Islands in the early-sixteenth century but it undoubtedly grafted itself onto a vigorous pre-existing tradition of literature and music which was the preserve of a professional caste and long-established traditions of teaching and learning, with ‘schools’ of poetry and networks of patronage in the assertive and confident culture of the Highlands and Islands. The story is notable and unique for Europe. A process of diffusion in European culture brought the bagpipe into a highly distinctive society and culture in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. This was a ‘kingdom’ within a Kingdom and included some of the old province of Ulster in Northern Ireland all under

\[^{24}\text{Eyre-Todd 1895, 270–274.}\]
the control of the one extended family of Clan Donald whose power was so great as to bring about its downfall at the hands of the Kings of Scots. This culture-province of the ‘Lordship of the Isles’ was abolished in 1493 and this was followed by a period of political and social readjustment when families and clans consolidated their positions territorially and built their reputations as leaders and patrons of the arts.

One of the earliest pieces of evidence for the Great Highland Bagpipe is pictorial. The Piper to the Laird of Grant, William Cumming, painted in 1714, symbolises the musical and social context in which the bagpipe had taken root and flourished in Gaelic Scotland (Fig. 5). The pipes had been a relatively late arrival in the Gaidhealtachd but they were quickly absorbed into a society experiencing change and flux in a period known to tradition as the ‘Age of Forays’ – Linn nan Creach. William Cumming is one generation of a ‘dynasty’, a remarkable family of pipers and musicians to the family of Grant chieftains. The hereditary piper became an inseparable part of Gaelic tradition as the poet, bard and harper had been before him. Clan chieftains were proud of the pipers who attended their households. Notable of piping dynasties were the MacCrimmons with the MacLeods of Duvegan, the Rankins with the MacLeans of Duart and of Coll, the MacArthurs in Clan Donald, the MacIntyres of Rannoch, the MacGregors of Glen Lyon and the Cummings of Badenoich. Piping schools or ‘colleges’ were run by the MacCrimmons, the Rankins, the MacArthurs and the MacGregors, and pipers were sent from far afield for tuition with the acknowledged master, especially the MacCrimmons. The music taught in the ‘colleges’ was generally ceol mor, a type of classical music in extended form.

Outstandingly, what comes down to us from these times is this distinctive and potent musical form – piobaireachd or ceol mor – and this is still considered as a high manifestation of the art of playing the Highland bagpipe. It reached something of a zenith in the seventeenth century and must be seen as a unique and valuable contribution to the European musical tradition. Piobaireachd is played with a theme or melodic groundwork, usually of eight ‘phrases’ with four stresses in each phrase. It is significant that the term urlar, ‘ground’ or ‘floor’ is used for this in Scottish Gaelic. The ‘ground’ is followed by a series of strictly defined and more or less stylised variations built on this. The variations chime in their melodic flow with the stressed notes of the theme. The tune becomes more technically complex as they progress from the ground through the variations to end with a musical flourish, the performance of which reveals the player’s skill. The terminology used for these in Scottish Gaelic has been preserved and is still familiar to most pipers today – *siubhal, dibis, taorladh, crunladh, crunladh-amach* – and such terms point us to the origins of this musical form in medieval Gaelic song and harp music. Of the many tunes which have survived, some are short and do not incorporate all these variations; they are however simple and beautiful. Other tunes are much longer with the full range of variations amounting to a tour de force, making great demands on the player and the instrument and emphasising the importance of training.

Pipes were played within the strong panegyric tradition of the clan, and music reflected the activities of the clan and its changing fortunes. As well as “praising famous men”, pipers clearly had a strong social role such as playing for dancing and to accompany day-to-day activities. Lighter music would for example ease the burden of heavy work such as in the harvest field or rowing boats. The survival of this light music in the earliest musical collections (manuscript and printed) shows that it co-existed with piobaireachd and was universally enjoyed in Scotland. The light music repertoire of the Highland pipes was shared with the Lowland tradition which had also thrived on patronage and a lively social role.

The political, economic and social changes experienced in Gaelic Scotland in the second half of the eighteenth century affected piping equally with Gaelic culture. The decline of clanship in its original tribal and cultural sense eliminated the patronage of the clan chieftains on which piping had depended and thrived. The reshaping of Britain and its evolving Empire in this period gave the Highland bagpipe a new role, saved it and in some senses reinvigorated it. The army which won and held Britain’s colonies and imperial territories recruited pipers. This was encouraged by the contemporary improving clubs and societies such as the Highland Society of London, founded in 1778, which also instigated competitions to preserve the music of the pipes and encourage its playing.

The developing association with the army produced new styles and forms of music such as marches and quicksteps which, with the music played at competitions, emerged as ‘exhibition’ music. The music, which had been transmitted orally as was characteristic of much of the pre-literate Gaelic tradition, came to be notated down (and adapted to conventional musical notation) and then published, helping its preservation and proliferation into our own day.

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CONCLUSION

No one doubts the universal character of the bagpipe as a musical instrument but its history (and possible prehistory) in Scotland demonstrate a particular vigour and a tradition blended in with other cultural forms such as song and dance. These roots and inter-relatedness have not been widely perceived and understood until recently, least of all perhaps in Scotland itself which has long felt a sense of ownership of the bagpipe. The early history of the bagpipe is now becoming clearer with concentrated research of the instrument and its context as well as the enterprise within the National Museums of Scotland of forming a ‘national collection of a national instrument’, illuminating aspects of the evolution of the bagpipe within Scotland since about 1600 and demonstrating how Scotland has ‘invented’ a bagpipe – and a sound.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to my colleague in the National Museums of Scotland, Dr Ulrike Al-Khamis, Department of World Cultures, for making a translation of the summary of my text.


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Fig. 1 Pipe-Major William Ross in a portrait by Kenneth MacLeay for Queen Victoria, 1866, illustrating the acme of imagery of the Great Highland Bagpipe in the nineteenth century. The elaborate uniform and the accessories of ribbons and banner on the instrument were considered appropriate for William Ross as 'Piper to the Queen'.
Fig. 2 Piper playing a bagpipe with single drone, carved on a wooden panel from Galloway, South-West Scotland, late-fifteenth century. The image belongs essentially to medieval Europe but also helps to throw light on the early role of the bagpipe in Scotland.
Fig. 3 Carving in stone on Melrose Abbey, South Scotland, of a pig playing a single drone bagpipe, dating probably to the rebuilding of the Cistercian monastery around 1385. This is one of the earliest representations of the bagpipe in Scotland but it shares all its characteristics with medieval iconography and sculpture.
Fig. 4 Geordy Sime, Town Piper of Dalkeith, South Scotland, in an etched portrait of 1789 by the Edinburgh artist and caricaturist, John Kay. The piper is playing the characteristic Lowland bellows-blown bagpipe and is represented as a figure associated with traditions then passing out of use.
Fig. 5 William Cumming, Piper to the Laird of Grant, portrait by Richard Waitt, 1714. This striking image symbolises the social and musical role of the bagpipe in Gaelic Scotland, particularly as it had emerged in the late-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
Musician and milieu: piping, politics and patronage through three centuries

Hugh Cheape
National Museums of Scotland

The John Macfadyen Memorial Trust Annual Lecture and Recital
Stirling Castle
19 March 2004
The John Macfadyen Memorial Trust Annual Lecture and Recital, 19 March 2004
[Subject]
Musician and milieu: piping, politics and patronage through three centuries

I Introduction: preliminary remarks and tribute to Sir Alistair Grant, acknowledgement of privilege and opportunity offered by the Macfadyen Memorial Trust

II Historiography and historical treatment

III Early period and ‘origins’

[Music – Murray Henderson]
‘Lament for the Earl of Antrim’

IV The pipes in Britain and Ireland

[Music – Allan MacDonald]
‘MacLeod’s Controversy’ or Iomarbhaidh Mhic Leoid

V The medieval period

VI The bagpipe in Scotland

[Music – Allan MacDonald]
‘Macintosh’s Lament’ – line of Ground to introduce song

[Song – Rhona Lightfoot]
‘Macintosh’s Lament’ or Cumha Mhic an Toisich

VII The Highland bagpipe

[Interval]

VIII Classical period and relations with Ireland

IX Classical music and composers

[Music – Murray Henderson]
‘MacLeod’s Salute’

X Bardic roots

XI Coda - material culture and different evidences

[Music – Allan MacDonald]
‘Lament for Ronald MacDonald of Morar’

XII Concluding remarks

[Song – Rhona Lightfoot]
Eadarainn
I Introduction

The written and received history of the Great Highland Bagpipe reflects in many of its parts the triumph of sentiment over fact. An uncritical acceptance of the inherited and much rehearsed traditions bred a distrust of questioning and the constraining of what might be called bagpipe scholarship. We were disinclined to revisit or to rewrite history. An orthodoxy had emerged from surprisingly modest origins in the first half of the nineteenth-century and it was elaborated by repetition, speculation and guesswork in the second.¹ The urge to formulate a narrative for the history of piping was not an ignoble one, indeed it was undertaken in the conviction that the tradition was then in crisis and that its written history would reinforce and elevate it, and save it from elimination by condescension and attrition. But it is the prerogative of every generation to rewrite history and if that process is undertaken in a scientific manner, by research and the discovery, sifting, analysis and interpretation of evidence, then this too has its virtues.

II Historical treatment and historiography

In the late 1970s, I was asked to handle inquiries to the National Museum of Antiquities from different parts of the world about Scotland’s national instrument. Such inquiries were often searching, not only about bagpipes themselves but also about the musicology of piping and historical context. I was dependent on a conventional wisdom and found it, on the whole, unsatisfactory and inadequate for arriving at answers to the questions which were crossing my desk. I myself began to have doubts over what I had been told and could read in the standard histories of piping in Scotland – not that there was a large literature to draw on – and my own

doubts translated into questions which reflected the inquiries that we received: questions on the origins of piping in Scotland, on the emergence of piping in the Highlands and Islands, on the comparative fortunes of piping in the Lowlands and Highlands, and on the origins and evolution of what we know as the Great Highland Bagpipe. If these questions were not deemed worthy of reconsideration (which I felt they indeed were), then the subject might as well be consigned to, as a sceptic alluded to Thomas Carlyle’s dense prose, ‘that great dust-heap called history’. Looking to wider contexts of history and musicology, the certainties – convictions – which we held on these matters seemed flawed, and any firm conviction of certainty sounded, as in any matter of compelling human interest or significance, a knell of doom, if not perhaps for civilisation, then for the subject of the Highland bagpipe.

In contemplating now a necessarily broad canvas, we do not wish to get caught up in the issue of ‘origins’ but it may be worth making reference to this topic because of its enduring fascination and a need for a modicum of definition. Experience shows that the search for origins may lead us into error since it is rarely realistic to formulate explanations for the recent past in terms of a remote past. The origins of a phenomenon such as the bagpipe might be defined in terms of its supposed or imagined beginnings but this will explain very little of the phenomenon as we know it today. Moreover fallacy invariably follows the pursuit of origins; as we investigate topic A, we may have to draw on topics B and C, and speculation and conclusion by default may emerge from the latter. If I may suggest an example of possible fallacy, I was aware that as we have pursued the topic of the origins of piobaireachd for which evidence is scarce, we might seek explanations in the origins of the MacCrimmons, thus seeking a cause or a beginning which might explain. The literature of piping has commonly committed this solecism. I have argued recently that the origins of the MacCrimmons, in so far as this can be revealed, will tell us very little, or nothing, about the origins of piobaireachd.²

III Early period and 'origins'

In spite of obvious pitfalls therefore, since at least we should recognise some of them as they open up before us, let us speculate a little on origins. The bagpipe is an instrument with a very long history, and probably a very long prehistory, and realistically we cannot do much more than employ the phrase, lacking the proper rigour but with an undeniable charm, that its origins are 'lost in the mists of time'. Such is the potency of the instrument and its powerful association with Scotland that we might like to imagine that we had 'invented' the bagpipe. Like many details or idiosyncrasies of our culture, particularly those that contribute to ethnic identity, this is true in the sense that what we have now was effectively invented here. Their roots however may be traced back into medieval and classical European history and more remotely perhaps into a receding prehistoric past. In terms of the history of European 'civilisation', the bagpipe seems to have been a relatively recent arrival whose origins can be suggested, through a restricted evidence in archaeology, in the Middle East and Egypt. Forms of reed-pipe with a single reed had a wide distribution in Asia, Europe and North and East Africa and wind-instruments of this general type seem to represent the forerunner of bagpipes and similar instruments.³

Historians of the bagpipe have striven to provide some notion of 'origins' by tabulating and rehearsing all traces and references to such a wind-instrument, but the process falls into error by virtue of the considerable changes and stages of evolution in the instrument which we recognise today. Thus the discovery of a bronze whistle-type or reeded pipe in Iraq provided an intriguing musicological glimpse but tells us almost nothing of the origins of the bagpipe as we know it today.⁴ What is here significant is that in the area of the alluvial plains of the Tigris and Euphrates, particularly the former Sumeria of 2,000 or 3,000 BC, the people used systems of writing, wheeled vehicles and the plough and these are the earliest traces of phenomena recognised by us as key building blocks of civilisation.

References to pipes always catch our attention and have been collected. They proliferate in scriptural and classical sources, but here the problem is one of language, identity and ambiguity, in so far as translation may mislead and misidentify and we cannot always be sure of meaning, sense or allusion. The notorious Emperor Nero of the first century BC was said to be utricularius, a term identified as a ‘bagpiper’, though in fact the word is rare in classical sources. The largest of the Classical Latin dictionaries, that of C T Lewis and C Short, gives a single citation for the term, besides an inscription, to an account of Nero by the Roman historian and biographer, Suetonius, and the source suggest an inventive play on words and a veiled insult using utriculus, the standard term for parts of the abdomen. A recurring term is tibia, Latin ‘shin-bone’, and seems to have been transferred to ‘flute’ or ‘pipe’, inferring that the instrument therefore might once upon a time commonly be made of bone. The dictionaries give so many citations of its use in Classical Latin to confirm its general meaning, but rarely to distinguish for our purposes between a flute and a pipe. A reference to street musicians quoted by Anthony Baines from a Classical Greek source is telling in its detail. Aristophanes, Greek poet and dramatist of the fourth century BC, harangues a group of street minstrels: ‘You pipers who are here from Thebes, with bone pipes blowing the back end of a dog’. 5 In fact a dog-skin bag with blowpipe and bone chanter is an entirely credible bagpipe but we infer, too, ideas and attitude towards the status of these musicians and the place occupied by them in society; it is abundantly clear that, in the Graeco-Roman world, the bagpipe was an instrument of low-caste musicians coming at first from western Asia and passing on their art. Clearly also there is a significant contemporary message about prejudice against the city of Thebes and its folk, once powerful but then reduced to small-town status. Moreover the Athenian was one of the greatest of the ancient writers of satirical comedy, and significantly we find the same deprecatory and abusive terms employed by the detractors of bagpipes in the seventeenth-century Gàidhealtachd. This is surely reminiscent of Niall MacMhuirich’s Seanchas na Piob o Thuis (‘The History of the Bagpipe from the Beginning of Time’) with his satirical treatment:

‘The bladder of a pig being blown excessively,

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The first pipe-bag that was not melodious
That came from before the Flood.

And the tone strengthens and the insults come thick and fast in the style of bardic poetry which itself has a long history. This is satire and humour, par excellence, and we learn from notes in John Mackenzie’s Sar-obair nam Bard Gaelach that Niall MacMhuirich’s cruel shafts were directed against two South Uist pipers who had disturbed his sleep after his returning from Bardic School in Ireland. Hearing this, Niall’s father’s reaction is important to note: Math thu fhein, a mhic, tha mi faicinn nach bu thuras caillt’ a thug thu a dh’ Eirinn (‘Good on you, son, I see that it wasn’t a wasted journey to Ireland’).

Given the huge significance of satire in the Gaelic, as in the European literary tradition, the abuse of the upstart piper provided much sport and there is a quantity to choose from. Piping of course has never pleased everybody and aesthetic reactions have always varied. Dare I say that good and bad pipers have always existed, offering scope for the odium of comparison and the missiles of abuse: ‘Musical sweetheart of the Black Fiend’ as MacMhuirich claimed. We have tended to place much emphasis on this poetry in the context particularly of what scholars have identified as a series of ‘praise’ and ‘dis-praise’ (moladh ‘s di-moladh) of the pipes, and suggested that such an outpouring was a symptom of the contemporary loss of pre-eminence of the harp. The series of challenge and response is certainly rich in detail but may not be more significant than the literary raw material of the ancient poetic ‘flyting’ or verbal contest and the odd piper an amusing and vulnerable focus of satire. A ‘Mock Eulogy on a Bad Piper and his Pipe’ by the Kintyre poet and piper, William McMurchy, printed in Rev Alexander Cameron’s Reliquiae Celticae in 1894 (but never noticed in the literature of piping), turns exaggerated and sustained praise of a local piper into insult. After fifteen verses of exaggerated and hyperbole, the mood changes:

‘But I am weary of praising you

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And your beast of a pipe which has a stinking smell,
Filled with disgusting slavers.

It is the oil of the coal-fish
That is being waulked into its skin,
And breaking wind choking the beast.

A bag of sticks under your arm
More bitter than the henbane its screaming,
Often is the sweat on your brow
Giving hand and breath to the ‘Grizzled One’. 8

From the ridiculous, then, to the sublime: I would like to move to the first recital –
‘Lament for the Earl of Antrim’, attributed to Donald Mòr MacCrimmon and
commemorating the death in 1636 of Ranald or Randall Mac Sorley Buidhe
MacDonnell, Viscount of Dunluce and first Earl of Antrim. If we may assume that
this attribution is correct, there is a wonderful irony in that, his father, the great Sorley
Buidhe, having fought with the Earl of Tyrone against the English, Ranald achieved
his ennoblement in 1620 by siding with Queen Elizabeth and King James. The
MacCrimmon patron, MacLeod of Dunvegan – Ruairidh Mòr – and MacDonald of
Sleat were involved in the expedition of 1593-1594 against English forces in Ulster,
assisting the archetypal Gaelic warrior-hero, Red Hugh O’ Donnell, the ‘darling of the
poets’, thus strategically strengthening the ties between Ireland and Gaelic Scotland.
This piece symbolises for me the coming together of politics and patronage with
piping, and serves to recall the dramatic events of the years 1593 to 1607 and the war
between Tudor England and Gaelic Ulster. There may be further significance in the
tradition of Donald Mòr MacCrimmon’s musical training in Ireland and certainly a
commemoration of the patronage of Clan Donald South.

8 National Library of Scotland MS 73.2.2; Alexander Cameron, Reliquiae Celticae Vol II. Inverness
1894, 330-332. See Appendix for the complete text.
Little, if anything is known about the bagpipe and next to nothing about piping in Europe in the course of the first millennium of the Christian era. It would seem fruitless in the absence of further research or discoveries therefore to pursue origins, and yet there are one or two elements to tease out of the known history since they represent, however remotely, aspects of the wider context, socially and culturally, of piping. After the fall of the Roman Empire the milieu of urban life and forms of bureaucratic government were in decline and trade and movement of people, goods and culture in suspension. We are given some insights into the ways of life of ‘Celtic’ peoples, in the first place in Gaul through the writings of Greek and Roman authors and secondly in the so-called Irish Sagas such as the ‘Cattle Raid of Cooley’, giving as the late Professor Kenneth Jackson described ‘a window on the Iron Age’, in other words a glimpse into prehistory. What is absent from all these descriptions is a detailed impression of the culture of music and song, although some early evidence on, for example, horns and trumpets, is illuminating. What is clearly highly developed and of great importance for the Gauls of France and the early Gaels is language and the spoken word, eloquence and oratory, and the training of memory, all important elements in later Gaelic culture. They were trained in ‘schools’ of rhetoric and Romans looked to employ orators from Gaul as tutors for their sons. It was said of the Celtic peoples that they believed that eloquence was of greater power than physical strength. The theme of the ‘schools’ as training ground for the professional performers seems to run from these Continental beginnings, through the bardic schools of Ireland and Scotland, down to the schools of piping of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{9}

Ireland has the oldest vernacular, that is non-classical, literature in Europe and the earliest written prose in remarkable manuscript compilations made between the seventh and ninth centuries by a professional learned class, the \textit{Fili}. These prose narratives were derived, as far as we can tell, from traditional tales which circulated widely, for example the ‘Story of Mac Da Tho’s Pig’ and ‘Bricriu’s Feast’, in both of

which stories the warriors contended for the ‘champion’s portion’ at the feast, the same scenario occurring in Classical authors’ descriptions of the Gals as early as the second century BC.¹⁰ Feasting and the celebration of heroic virtues were also highly characteristic of Highland and Hebridean society in the late-medieval and early modern period, a feature most strongly evidenced in Gaelic song and also in music-making. Continuity from a prehistoric past seems remarkably clear but any speculation must be cautious. Antiquity cannot be assumed for music and musical instruments but it can be seen in attitudes, values and the expectations of reciters and players, listeners and patrons. At some point in Highland history therefore the bagpipe met the expectations of Gaelic society.

And what about other lands beyond the Roman Empire? Most of Pictland was outside the former Roman Empire and therefore not subject to the same trauma visited on other parts of Europe following its fall. This is a period conventionally labelled as the ‘Dark Ages’ but appears in Pictish culture as a comparatively ‘light age’. Given the symbol stones and their iconography, we could infer a settled and organised society rather than barbarian chaos. The many conventionalised designs and motifs include harp and triple pipe, opening up the intriguing possibility that these and their music were a part of the material culture of Scotland before the ninth century. Were these Biblical motifs copied by the artist-sculptors of Pictland or do they hold a mirror to aspects of life in the Scotland of the eighth century?¹¹ Such motifs at least contradict any notion of the remoteness or isolation of Scotland. Historians of the harp have made very fair claims for the instrument in Pictish society and the early Irish law tracts such as the *Senchas Mor*, dating possibly to the seventh or even sixth centuries AD, allude to music-making and are clear about the high status of the harper.

Without offering any specific conclusions (which would be premature), I would point to the significance of and potential focus for research in a musical motif frequently

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mentioned in the early Gaelic narrative literature, for example in the ninth-century epic tale, Táin Bó Fraoch; this is the triad of rejoicing music, sleeping music and lamenting music. The role of the harper is clearer in the early period and in this context, especially because the three modes are sometimes personified as mythical harpers. The pipe or triple-pipe may also have a role, hitherto obscured, to play in this context. The same distinctions continue into the modern period and are made with respect to music-making with the harp and bagpipe in Dunvegan in the seventeenth century, are introduced as conventional storytelling elements in folktales, and are used to represent the consummate skill of the piper who has received the gift of piping - buaidh na piobaireachd – from his fairy and supernatural benefactor. The same terminology in the Gaelic prose tale narratives of the ninth century is still known in Gaelic today, gean traighe, that is music for dancing and singing, suain traighe, music for slumber, and gúl traighe, music for lamenting or wild longing.\textsuperscript{12} Significantly I believe we are led here into consideration of modes and tonality rather than rhythm or metres (which may be more readily analysed), and similarly in the first attempts to set out a proper description of the Great Highland Bagpipe about 1760, in the Compleat Theory of Joseph MacDonald, the author discusses modes and their character in his section on ‘Keys’ which he also terms ‘taste’, no doubt thinking in terms of Gaelic blas:

‘As there are no flat Notes in a Pipe, so there can be no flat Keys. Yet it is surprising what a grave taste they have contrived for Laments, which is a quite distinct style from the rest. In several Passages of these there are to be found some very expressive Sentiments of Lamentation, or melancholy; and indeed it is hard to say if more cultivated Geniuses could render the composition of so small a compass more expressive. .. The Key for Laments excludes C altogether, because it is sharp. Laments dwell much upon the lowest Notes,

and takes the freedom of all the Notes excepting this. There are other Keys that exclude this Note also.\textsuperscript{13}

The second recital is \textit{MacLeod’s Controversy} or \textit{Iomarbhaidh Mhic Leòd}

\textit{V The medieval period}

The bagpipe must have been played widely throughout Europe, especially in the period from the twelfth century when we first begin to learn more about it, until the seventeenth century when the pipes began to be displaced in music-making by new orders of instruments. From the 1100s, our sources are references in written sources (then becoming more common), graphic evidence in the form of manuscript illumination with angels, monkeys, rabbits and pigs playing bagpipes, and carvings in stone and wood surviving usually in churches and monasteries. As a matter of note, the earliest surviving representations of the bagpipe in Scotland are the sculpted figures of the late-fourteenth and early-fifteenth centuries at Melrose and Roslin. They (the piper on the Abbey at Melrose is a pig) are shown with single-drone instruments, most closely resembling the Spanish \textit{gaita} of today rather than an imagined proto-Highland bagpipe. Melrose of course was a Cistercian monastery, strongly dependent culturally on its links with France. Roslin is a collegiate chapel, a cosmopolitan status symbol and aristocratic fashion statement of medieval Scotland. These vivid representations pose questions on the status of the pipes and pipers and contemporary attitudes towards them. If the pipes were an angelic instrument but also notionally played by pigs, a medieval symbol for gluttony and sin, attitudes were ambivalent.

We learn about the bagpipe in Mediterranean countries such as Spain and Italy, the Netherlands and in England. Players or minstrels travelled the roads and seaways of Europe and provided some of the most popular entertainment in court, castle and

\textsuperscript{13} Roderick D Cannon, \textit{Joseph MacDonald’s Compleat Theory of the Scots Highland Bagpipe (c.1760)}. The Piobaireachd Society 1994, 67,
burgh. Payments by the kings of England for music and minstrelsy are documented in this period and patronage was a matter of fashion as well as taste, to be emulated by other ranks of society. The earliest possible references to piper-minstrels in Scotland are for the reign of David II (1329-1371). They are certainly travelling folk, possibly from England or the Continent, rather than court appointments. They brought news and gossip as well as music and song to a highly localised world. The function of the bagpipe was therefore to provide music for song and dance, and also evidently for work, to enliven and quicken toil.¹⁴

A sense of Europe as an entity with its own cultural traits emerged, particularly under the influence of the Christian church and pressure from without. Under attack from Islam, the counter-attack was launched by the Papacy and a series of military expeditions was mounted in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries to recover Jerusalem and the Holy Land from the Muslims. Conquest, as ever, was followed by colonisation in the Middle East, and trade followed the flag. The linking of Western Europe to the Eastern Mediterranean and new contacts with the Arab world also reintroduced Western Europe to the arts and sciences of the Greek and Roman, a civilisation which had evolved with the learning of Islam. Armies and traders brought back musical instruments such as the lute and other string instruments, and wind instruments such as the shawm, also widely distributed throughout Asia. There were Scots in the First Crusade in 1095 and they drew comment from their French comrades ‘drawn from their native swamps, with their bare legs, rough cloaks, purses hanging from their shoulders, hung about with arms, ridiculous enough in our eyes but offering the aid of their faith and devotion to our cause.’¹⁵

The passionate pursuit of the Crusade as the established and principal aim of Latin Christendom was the most marked and best recorded characteristic of the restless twelfth century. The same period saw the Norman Conquest of England and part-settlement of Scotland, and the experience of the British Isles in common with all of Western Europe of the expansion of trade, commercial life and towns. This period,

¹⁴ This is explored in Hugh Cheape, *The Book of the Bagpipe*. Appletree Press 1999, 42-44.
significantly, has been described by historians as the ‘Twelfth Century Renaissance’ and, I would suggest, is a key to understanding the spread of the bagpipe and its music throughout Europe. Perhaps this is the period which saw a more fixed form of instrument evolving with the marriage of chanter, bag, blowpipe and drone or drones. This was also the period which saw a resurgence of Gaelic literature in Irish society with the Finn mac Cumhail cycle of stories and the beginnings of a ballad literature which certainly flourished in both Scotland and Ireland. This was a popular song-form borrowed from Europe in the twelfth century and whose history in Gaelic Scotland has been reconstructed largely from the evidence of more than 2,500 lines of Ossianic poetry in the early-sixteenth century manuscript known as the ‘Book of the Dean of Lismore’.

**VI The bagpipe in Scotland**

The comment is now usually made that the bagpipe was a late arrival in Scotland and derived from European models. This is probably a safe generalisation at this stage in our knowledge and with the evidence available. Arguably the pipes were of no particular interest until they played the music that people wanted to hear and this concept may provide a starting point. As we have seen, the bagpipe was not unknown here but the Wars of Independence and protracted hostility of England, particularly between 1296 and 1356, may have made it the instrument of a hostile power. The popular suggestion that Bruce’s army marched to Bannockburn to the sound of their own pipes cannot necessarily be sustained.

The fifteenth century ushered in a period of prosperity when Scotland was more closely integrated with Europe and this suggests a context in which the bagpipe, in common with other cultural traits, might have spread into Scotland. Significantly, James I (1424-1437), skilled according to the court writers as a poet and musician, counted playing the pipes as one of his talents. Such a brief allusion speaks volumes. Material prosperity is reflected in the then significant creation of burghs of barony as trading centres, legally distinct from the royal burghs which were still to enjoy
monopolies such as foreign trade. The ‘burgh of barony’ emerges as a distinct concept by 1450 and with its busy life of markets and fairs was a focus of cultural change and innovation. The culture of the ‘burgh of barony’ in the fifteenth century would have much to tell us much about the history of the bagpipe in Scotland. Evidence also of this material prosperity is the fine Renaissance architecture, created especially during the reigns of James III (1460-1488) and James IV (1488-1513). Symbolic of that time and of a ‘golden age’ which was to end at Flodden is the Great Hall of Stirling Castle.

Music was an important part of European courtly culture and Scotland’s royal patronage extended to music and pipers as we read in the Treasurer’s Accounts. We sense that piper-minstrels are by this time home-grown in Scotland and names emerge from the record. Patronage was always a matter of fashion and imitation and there must have been growing employment for pipers in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; they moved easily between the royal courts, the big houses and the burghs. In terms of courtly and popular music, I suspect that the tone is European and international and surviving fragments may corroborate this. There is very little to draw on by way of examples but the tune ‘Hey ca’ thro’, to select one randomly, retrieved by Robert Burns and recorded in the Scots Musical Museum seems to be a work-song which the transferred sense of the word ‘call’ endorses. Dance music would have been common and is no doubt with us in different guises. References to dancing to measures from Spain, Italy, Germany, Naples and Aragon are seen in the fifteenth-century comic poem, ‘Cockelby’s Sow’.16 Dancing ‘in the round’ was probably common to most of Europe. The atmosphere of this old style of community dance has survived in the festivities and celebration of the Breton Pardons when the favoured instrument for dancing is the binou. It is a matter of frustration or, alternatively, deeply significant that we have so little evidence for prehistory but the archaeological discovery may yet be made that supplies a ‘missing link’. The chances of an instrument or part-instrument surviving are very slim; its material, of the most susceptible organic nature, is almost the first to de-grade in the soil. The so-called ‘pipes’ from the sixteenth-century marine site of the wreck of the Mary Rose are of great musicological importance but belong to an arguably distinct pipe and tabor

tradition and to medieval minstrelsy. The Great Highland Bagpipe is therefore a later but remarkable phenomenon in European and British history. The question of where it comes from is not as important to us (and to modern scholarship) as the compelling question of why it takes root in Highland society, why it flourishes and why it develops in the form it does.

The question of when the bagpipe appears in Scotland, or is adopted in Scotland, and the question of when it may have been embraced by Highland society is, for me, an intriguing one. It is intriguing not so much as for establishing a chronology or definitive date (which is so elusive) as for getting a sense of a process of diffusion and a process of adoption. If, for the sake of argument, we regard the Hebrides as being on the north-west fringe of Europe, the appearance of the bagpipe there after a busy existence in a notional centre round the Mediterranean – the medius terrae, ‘middle of the world’ for the classical and medieval mind – could be likened to the rings moving outwards on water from the point of impact of a stone, a process described by scholars as ‘ripple theory’. It may justly be claimed that the Hebrides is not a ‘fringe’ in the medieval period but is at the epicentre with Ireland of a great corridor on a north-south axis on the Atlantic littoral. This area of the ‘Atlantic Littoral’ has its own history, in many respects distinct from the neo-classical civilisation of the Mediterranean, and is best viewed with a conventional map turned upside-down! The fringe then appears as a great highway, stretching ‘up the map’ from the North Cape to Iberia, and the Highlands and Islands centre-stage and the linguistic and cultural cross-roads which they undoubtedly were. Places seen today perhaps as peripheral were linked by sea to Europe more directly than most parts of Mainland Scotland. This offers the interesting possibility that the bagpipe arrived in Scotland by way of an Atlantic corridor, and that its closest relation is the Spanish gaita which itself seems to represent the archetype bagpipe of the European Middle Ages, a mouth-blown instrument with a conical-bore chanter and a bass drone with large bell top. Against this idea is the likelihood that trade, communication and cultural contacts with the Continent through England, France, Germany and the Netherlands formed a carrying stream which also brought the pipes into Scotland.
Macintosh’s Lament – a line of Ground to introduce the song; song Macintosh’s Lament or Cumha Mhic an Toisich

INTERVAL

VII  The Highland bagpipe

A process of diffusion in European culture brought the bagpipe into a highly distinctive society and culture in the case of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. This was a ‘kingdom’ within a Kingdom and included some of the old province of Ulster, particularly the glens of Antrim which had come into the possession of Clan Donald by marriage towards the end of the fourteenth century. The conditions which had created this ‘kingdom’ had grown out of the Viking invasions of the Hebrides in the ninth and tenth centuries and the free hand which the Gaels (and Gaels of mixed Norse descent) had before the Treaty of Perth of 1266, most remarkably concentrated in the career of Somerled. His descendents were the founders of Clan Donald and, following the Wars of Independence, came to adopt the title of ‘Lord of the Isles’. Their territories became the largest and most powerful province in Scotland and included the Western Isles and much of the adjacent Mainland and also for a time the Earldom of Ross. In the words of Hector Boece, writing before 1522, ‘the sepulchres of our ancient kings and the ancient monuments of our race’ – the heart of the kingdom - were to be found within the Lordship and there was a strong perception that this was a direct line from the earliest Kings of Scots. The Lords of the Isles undoubtedly had pretensions to the kingship of Scots, well seen in the Treaty of Westminster-Ardtornish of 1462 apportioning the Kingdom between Clan Donald, the Earl of Douglas and King Edward IV of England. The Lordship came to an end as a legal entity in 1493 with its forfeiture by James IV though this was followed by several attempts in the course of the sixteenth century to resurrect it.
The historical and cultural framework offered by the Lordship of the Isles is most important for the history of piping though this framework is its antecedent. In the past it has been an undervalued phase of Scotland’s history, with the sources scattered and not as accessible as they would be if they were in English or Scots.\textsuperscript{17} The forfeiture of 1493 was followed by a period of political and social readjustment when clans and families tried to consolidate their positions and reputations, making peace with the Crown, obtaining charters for their lands, expropriating smaller clans and annexing territories. Leading roles were played by the House of Argyll to the south and the MacKenzies to the north, being commissioned by the Crown to keep the peace and subdue disorder among the lieges but certainly in the process looking after their own and their kins’ interests. The Campbells in the course of the seventeenth century took over the Southern Isles and Maclean territory, a major episode in Hebridean history though the records of Central Government are largely silent. The MacKenzies took over the earldom of Ross and Lewis. In 1623 their chieftain was made Earl of Seaforth, confirming the position of power which they had won. Within the area of the former Lordship territories, in Harris and the Uists, Skye and the Small Isles, with the adjacent Mainland districts of Moidart, Arisaig and Morar, kin, ‘clent kindreds’ and feudal supporters of the Lords of the Isles rose to prominence, especially the leading families of Clan Donald - Clan Donald Sleat and Clan Ranald, Macleans of Duart and MacLeods of Dunvegan and Harris; these were all members of the ‘Council of the Isles’ which, by the fifteenth century, had been at the heart of the governance of the Lordship and traditionally met at Finlaggan in Islay. The MacLeans were already extending their power, from the second half of the fourteenth century, westwards to Coll and Tiree, eastwards into Morvern and Ardgour, and, at the expense of other clans such as the MacKinnons in Mull and the MacInneses and MacMasters of Ardgour, into Islay. The Battle of Traigh Ghruneart of 1598 symbolises this expansionism and local power politics, when Maclean of Duart, asserting a feudal right to part of Islay, was decisively defeated and killed by MacDonald of Dunyveg. This extraordinary period has been dubbed \textit{Linn nan creach} (‘The age of the devastations’) and was tellingly and intelligently summarised by the historian of Clan Donald who identified the absence of strong central control as the cause:

\textsuperscript{17} See for example Jean Munro and R W Munro eds., \textit{Acts of the Lords of the Isles 1336-1493}. Scottish History Society Fourth Series Vol 22 (1986).
'After the death of Angus, the Islanders, and the rest of the Highlanders, were let loose, and began to shed one another's blood. Although Angus kept them in obedience while he was sole lord over them, yet upon his resignation of his rights to the king, all families, his own as well as others, gave themselves up to all sorts of cruelties, which continued for a long time thereafter.\textsuperscript{118}

Art and culture seems to have emulated what went before; for example the hereditary families of professional poets such as the MacMhuirichs and poets in the Maclean and MacLeod households had been accorded the status of 'nobles' in the Gaelic law tracts of the seventh and eighth centuries, and they maintained a senior position into the medieval and early modern periods. In the same law tracts, the professional class was classified as \textit{aes dana}, literally 'the people of gifts', and included besides the literary men, physicians, lawmen, the craftsmen in stone, metal and wood, and the musicians. They continued to carry on their craft hereditarily in families, received the support and patronage of the great noble families and, in return, composed or crafted for their patrons, and in the case of some families conducted a school and made it a convention that practitioners of their art would make circuits of famous schools.

In this same approximate period we begin to see the decline in the position and role of the clarsach and the rise to prominence of the bagpipe, a development with beginnings in the sixteenth century. One or two families of musicians emerged to establish piping dynasties, coming to prominence in the seventeenth century. This was also a period of profound change for other reasons, with the involvement of the Highlands in national and international wars and the raising of troops for service on the Continent. Four Scottish armies, for example, were raised for the invasion of England in the course of the Civil War, larger fighting forces were required and the armies raised by James Graham, Marquis of Montrose, with Alasdair Mac Colla, and the Highland Host raised to occupy the disaffected Covenanting districts of south Scotland in 1678, saw unprecedented numbers of Gaels under arms. Earlier military actions had depended on

\textsuperscript{118} J R N Macphail, \textit{Highland Papers Vol 1}. Scottish History Society Second Series Vol 5 (1914), 52. This period has been analysed in I F Grant and Hugh Cheape, \textit{Periods in Highland History}. London 1987, 105-136.
set-piece tactics and small bodies of men, for example the Battle of Carinish in North Uist in 1601, vividly recalled in Gaelic tradition but involving only a handful on each side. At the Battle of Harlaw in 1411, when Donald Lord of the Isles, as a grandson of Robert II, may well have had the kingship of Scotland in his sights, James I being a minor and captive in England; in the ‘incitement’ or brosnachadh, encouraging on the troops to battle, only a few were addressed, a select band of the fighting men of the clan, although, it is said that the army of the Lord of the Isles amounted to 10,000 men.

This was a confident and assertive society which lived by a culture of display. In the same period we have the evidence of Highland dress and tartan, not a primitive style of dress but the invention of Gaelic society as a response to a new heightened dress-sense in Renaissance Europe. Contemporary comment generally makes the distinction that the Great Highland Bagpipe was a military instrument, well-suited to encourage the men in war with its carrying sound. This was of course the Piob Mhòr, but later Gaelic sources make the further distinction of a Piob Bheag or ‘Small Pipe’, ideal for playing for dancing or indoors. In 1983 the National Museum of Antiquities acquired a set of bellows-blown pipes which had belonged to Malcolm Macpherson, Calum Piobair, and our family source for this gift made it clear that professional pipers in the past would typically have both a ‘Great Pipe’ and a ‘Small Pipe’.

The pipes – or at least the so-called Great Highland Bagpipe - are not readily detectable in early sources and, significantly, barely mentioned in Gaelic sources before the late-sixteenth century. When they merit mention, the reference is immediately to an instrument of resounding, almost explosive power. Terms such as sgal, gàirich, torman, nuallanach and so on all serve to emphasize the vigour and power of the bagpipe and contrast sharply with descriptions of the music of the harp. Various readings can be taken from these Gaelic terms and ‘carrying sound’ can easily become ‘noise’. Many considered the bagpipe a vulgar incomer and nuisance and a case before the Justiciary Court in Edinburgh in February 1701, in which

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19 I am grateful to Phosa Macpherson for her account of her family and, grandfather, Calum Piobair.
Captain Simon Fraser, the future Lord Lovat, was accused of rape turned on the evidence that a piper was art and part in this crime: 'the great bagpipe was blown up in the next room that her cryes might not be heard and the said Captain still prosecuting his wicked designe of ravishment'.

VIII Classical period and relations with Ireland

A constant but hitherto understated factor in the history of the Lordship of the Isles was its relationship with Ireland, with a constant traffic across the North Channel from earliest times but then highlighted in the historical annals and in the memoranda of the Celtic church. Columba himself was of a leading family of Donegal and must have brought many of his kin in his wake. Mercenary soldiers were fighting there since the thirteenth century, not only against the English but also against rival groups of Irish. They were often termed 'gallowglasses' in the literature, for gall-oglaigh, and were a measure of the large numbers of fighting men that could be mustered by the Lordship at almost any time in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. No specific assessment has been made of this factor although, for example Henry VIII negotiated a force of 8,000 from the Lordship in 1545 and several invasions were made into other parts of Scotland such as Donald Balloch of Dunivaig's fleet of 25 galleys in the Clyde in 1453. The ubiquity of the galley, as a decorative motif on monuments as well no doubt as a strategic and tactical weapon of great significance, offers a further cultural phenomenon linked to the power and success of the Lordship. Patronage also is strongly evident with four known 'schools' of stone-carving and more than six hundred carved stone monuments surviving in the West Highlands and Islands - an outstanding material culture record by any standards.

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21 National Archives of Scotland
22 These details are drawn together and analysed in I F Grant and Hugh Cheape (cited above), 115-118.
23 K A Steer and J W M Baumer, Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands. The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland 1977; see also Ian Fisher, Early Medieval Sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands. Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland and the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland 2001.
The bagpipe seems to slip easily into the cultural format of training in and transmission of literature and music, a pride in the social arts and high value put on them in the milieu of Gaelic society, and the intense interest of the leaders of that society in supporting the arts and supplying patronage in conventional fashion. What were their motives? To provide leadership and impress by example, certainly, but to conform to the model and behavioural pattern of their ancestors whose fame, deeds and generosity were kept before them in poetry and song by the bards. The catalyst for an honourable and heroic career was the expectation of the people. The adoption of the Great Highland Bagpipe falls in and marks a period of change in Gaelic society, but the extent and nature of change has not been usefully charted for our purposes by historians. The topic has been the domain of the language and literature specialists and so we are comparatively well informed on language shift – in other words the decline in the use of ‘Classical Gaelic’ and the rise of vernacular Gaelic – but ill-informed on other social and cultural matters. The nature and content of entertainment was changing but we are still uncertain on the extent of its association with traditional and ancient learning. The context has been explored - the consequences of the fall of the Lordship of the Isles, the struggles for territorial and political power by families and clans, resistance to the centralising strategies and hostility of the Scottish Crown and the wedge driven between Gaelic Ireland and Gaelic Scotland. Cultural symptoms are evident, as I have described, in the decline of the position and role of the clarsach and rise to prominence of the bagpipe, beginning in the sixteenth century, and the emergence of the piping dynasties in a virtually institutional sense in the seventeenth century. In spite of changing environment and changing fashions, other factors combined to create a confident, assertive and successful culture to form something of a ‘golden age’, particularly in the seventeenth century. Máire Herbert in an essay in Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies in 1989, reappraising an early Irish Gaelic narrative text, writes:

To read any early medieval narrative is, in a sense, to reverse the expectation which the reader brings to modern literature. The public of the early narrative did not seek to discover the unique world-view of a particular author, but rather, sought recognition of familiar codes and conventions shared from one
work to another. Assessment of a medieval text entails ... the reconstruction of the ‘horizon of expectation’ of those for whom the text was originally composed. This involves identification of the signals by which the text disclosed itself to its public. Moreover it entails concern with both text and context, with the location of the work within the historical and cultural worlds which shaped its creation.24

Writing and assembling the history of the bagpipe in Scotland had to some extent run up a cul-de-sac with its reliance on old secondary sources, recounting and restating of a narrative which was unchanging and unchangeable, the extrapolation from limited information, assumptions made about an obscure past, description rather than analysis and failure to recognise intractable problems implicit in moving from a prehistory of legendary material to historical sources. Into this scholarly stasis came changing outlooks, assumptions and research methodologies in late-twentieth century record scholarship in Scottish History. Suddenly from the 1970s there was a growing corpus of Scottish research usefully fed by the work of the Scottish Record Office (now the National Archives of Scotland) and their in-bringing of significant, often huge deposits of family muniments, either for adding to the national archives or for cleaning, conserving and cataloguing; significant examples abound - a papal dispensation letter found in a pigeon’s nest in North-East Scotland and the recovery of lost records, the MacDonald Papers brought in for cataloguing and the Campbell of Breadalbane Muniments added to Gifts and Deposits.

Has the subject been adequately handled on our new horizons? Like the curate’s egg – good in parts. Reasons might be sought, in academic fashions for example, or in historical causes such as the poor survival of primary sources for the Highlands and Islands, or archival disasters such as the wanton treatment in history of the Scottish Records or the destruction of the Public Record Office in Ireland in 1922. Added to this are difficulties of interpreting the records with much of the sometimes too-often quoted evidence accessible only in secondary sources, assumptions about genealogies and the inadequate use of bardic poetry; here we must note an unease with Gaelic

literary sources which hold a mirror to the social, political and intellectual world in which all this took place – in *piobaireachd* for example was not formal performance music created quintessentially as part of contemporary politics? In terms of the surviving Gaelic sources, there is a mystique around the subject, confined for our purposes by summaries, but yet with a wealth of definitions, knowledge, insights, with a limited language range also used subtly and figuratively, and understanding of contemporary society. The evident unevenness of treatment within Scottish and British history was never usually questioned, for example the expropriation of Clan Gregor offers a striking example in Highland history. Here the deliberations of government are abundantly available and readable in the printed records of the Privy Council, and the dry words contrast starkly with MacGregor poetry. Some of the *bardachd* is still on the lips of Gaelic singers today, whereas we would be hard put to quote verbatim and from memory from the records of government – or I may be doing you a dis-service.\(^{25}\)

The role of Ireland in Scottish and Highland history has in some areas been understated. I would go so far as to hint at something of a ‘conspiracy’ in Scottish and English history whereby Ireland could be effectively ‘buried’. In Tudor and Stewart times, Ireland was a major threat in terms of Spanish imperialism and the Counter-Reformation, and the response was the Elizabethan conquest of Ireland followed by the Stewart plantations of Ulster in the seventeenth century which drove a political and cultural wedge between the Irish and Scottish Gaeltachts. Ireland and her reputation had to be reduced in the interests of British *real politik*. For different reasons such as strategic threats from France in the eighteenth century, the politics of Irish Home Rule in the nineteenth century, and Irish independence and wartime neutrality in the twentieth century, Ireland was consistently unfashionable and invisible in Scottish history. Other historiographical influences have moulded attitudes – the elevation of the English constitution in so-called ‘Whig History’ and the literature of Romanticism and Sir Walter Scott in particular. The threat of invasion, to open England’s western flank, was ever-present in the medieval period.

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Ireland’s response is characterised by modern historians as a Gaelic retrenchment and revival, a process whereby the tribal kingdoms pushed some of the Anglo-Norman invaders back into the English Pale around Dublin and absorbed the rest. When the *Annals of the Four Masters* recorded the passing of Red Hugh O’ Donnell in 1505, we get by contrast a sense of an expanding *Gàidhealtachd* and of the triumph and urbanity of Gaelic culture:

“This O Donnell was the full moon of the hospitality and nobility of the North, the most jovial and valiant, the most prudent in war and peace, and of the best jurisdiction, law and rule of all the Gaels in Ireland in his time; for there was no defence made in Tyrconnell during his time, except to close the door against only the wind; the best protector of the church and of the learned; a man who had given great alms in honour of the Lord of the Elements ... and a man who may be justly styled the Augustus of the North-west of Europe.”

The political poetry of the period has been interpreted as a Gaelic world or *Gàidhealtachd* surrounded and under siege by non-Gaels, and a song to the Earl of Argyll on the eve of the Battle of Flodden in 1513, urging him to rescue the Gael from the Saxons, is often quoted:

“Against the English, I tell you, before they have taken our native land.
Let us not give up our country, let us make harsh and mighty warfare,
anxiously watching over our inheritance/patrimony just like the Gael of Ireland.

Send out your summons from east and west to the Gael who came from Ireland, drive the English back over the high seas, let Scotland not be divided again ...”

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This is from the Book of the Dean of Lismore and has been used to suggest a pan-Celtic movement against Tudor expansion. But Ireland was looking after itself and the Scottish Gaelic dimension seems to indicate only opportunistic links between them after the forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles. A more developed political sense of national identity appears about 1560 when Ireland came under severe political pressure from England and we still have to appreciate and explain fully the political and cultural ramifications of Hebridean involvement with Ireland between the 1570s and the ‘Flight of the Earls’ in 1607. This is the same period which saw the Highland bagpipe convincingly establishing itself. The passing back and forth of soldiery included booty, merchandise, language, literature, scholars, churchmen and, of course, music. And Ireland was only the first step onwards to the Continent. Lines of trade opened up between France and Spain and the West Highlands, especially through the entrepôt ports of Galway and Limerick. The Highland chieftains consumed the best of foreign culture and their taste is endlessly praised in Gaelic song. The departure of the Ulster Gaelic earls for the Continent in 1607, so movingly recounted in the Annals of the Four Masters, was a serious blow to this sense of Gaelic nationality and to its culture. A symbol of internationalism and urbanity is the Chief of the Mackays of Strathnaver who became the first Lord Reay. He succeeded to the chiefship in 1614 and died in 1649 in Copenhagen and was buried in Kirkiboll at the Kyle of Tongue. He was commemorated in the Lament by Padruig Mor MacCrimmon. His military career, like so many contemporary Scots, spanned the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) when he raised a regiment and fought under Gustavus Adolphus, campaigning in Norway, Sweden, Poland and Germany. His patronage and stature was recognised throughout Scotland: *A h-uile fear a theid a dholaidh, gheibh e dollar o Mhac Aoidh.*

IX Classical music and composers

Rightly, much time and energy has been expended in investigating and speculating about the origins and the intrinsic nature of *piobaireachd*. This is still, it must be said,

a subject that continues to intrigue. There are wider contextual issues and influences to be detected in European history but the essence of the origins and development of *piobaireachd* lie in Gaelic culture; in this context, the MacCrimmons seem to have enjoyed an exaggerated fame. The reputation, achievements and origins of the MacCrimmons have been much debated and this is a well-worked and much written-about topic within the investigation of the history of piping. They are, and rightly, a matter of curiosity and fascination to the piping community in that, history or myth, they provide a human focus and a narrative, and some means of comprehending the complex subject of Highland piping and of *piobaireachd*.

An orthodoxy which developed in the generations since the early-nineteenth century has depended on a limited number of facts and an uncritical acceptance of their reiteration. Some MacCrimmon evidence has been ignored. A traditional tale on the origins of the MacCrimmons, ‘The story of MacCrimmon’ – *Sgialachd Mhic-Cruimein* – was published in the periodical *An Gaidheal* in 1876. It was subscribed ‘Donull Mac-Leoid’. The story is set in the Western Isles at the time of the Norse invasions and occupation, in other words notionally in the tenth century, when powerful Norse warriors and chieftains came over to the Hebrides to take possession of land. One of these new lords was said to be MacCrimmon who was given Galson and who had rule over the rest. Once every three years he had to go over to Bergen to see the Norwegian king and to report to him. On one of these trips he wanted to acquire a boatload of timber. On arrival he was summoned to see the Queen, an exceptional, fearsome individual, and he was challenged by her to match the fire in the royal chamber. If he were to win the challenge, he would get two cargoes of timber free. He returns to Lewis and taking advantage of an exceptionally dry season, cuts the blackest and deepest of Lewis peats and wins the contest back in Bergen. During the feasting after this competition, he admires the Queen’s two daughters and is again challenged by her to find girls as beautiful and skilled as them back in his own country. On his return to Lewis, he tutors his own three daughters in the arts of dancing and then wins the contest back in Bergen. He gains the prize of another two boat-loads of timber and weds his daughters to three princes of Norway. Notions of the race and origins of the MacCrimmons are of less significance beside the messages
and symbolism, exemplified by the evidently innate skill and cunning of MacCrimmon.

A more obvious consideration is the significance of the music of the MacCrimmons which is perceived as descending from the past to the present by two lines, both lines deriving from the last two of the MacCrimmons, Iain Dubh and Domhnall Ruadh of the early-nineteenth century, and supplying Highland piping with a devotional unguent and apostolic succession. Before more recent advances in record scholarship, our knowledge of the MacCrimmons depended largely on Angus Mackay’s account of the ‘Hereditary Pipers’ prefaced to his Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd of 1838 in which pre-eminence is given to ‘The MacCrummens, Hereditary Pipers to the MacLeods of Macleod, or of Dunvegan’. This information was repeated and consolidated in the twentieth century with material from the MacLeod Papers. The unequivocal nature of this narrative and lack of interest in questioning and expanding it outside a circle of the faithful was bound to draw fire. It has recently, in William Donaldson’s The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society 1750-1950, been subjected to close and critical scrutiny and some fascinating material has emerged such as the intense exchanges of letters and articles in the Oban Times in the late-1800s about piping and piobaireachd. He analysed for his thesis, as he himself has described, ‘millions of words devoted to the pipe and its culture from the late-Victorian period onward’. More dramatic was the blow struck in 1980 with the publication of The MacCrimmon Legend: the Madness of Angus Mackay which denounced the so-called ‘Piper’s Bible’ as unreliable, faulty and deceptive, not least in its account of the MacCrimmons, and its author as kleptomaniac and psychotic. The resulting polemic has enlivened and arguably sharpened the discourse.

Angus Mackay certainly seems to advance the reputation of the MacCrimmons at the expense of the other known piping dynasties whom he briefly describes, but this should not blind us to the virtues and intrinsic interest of his story. This was arguably his own inherited tradition - the history and legends, the seanchas, doing the rounds in the Skye ceilidh-houses. His account bears the stylistic stamp of the literature of his own day but it is essentially Gàidhealach, holding a mirror to the oral tradition
surviving in the early-nineteenth century and, I would claim, does not invent or
embroider in any way. By contrast the contemporary essay in Gaelic by the Rev Dr
Norman MacLeod, Caraid nan Gàidheal, published in the periodical Cuarterean nan
Gleann in 1841, invents and embroiders but this is intelligible within the intellectual
and linguistic parameters which he had set himself. The essay opens with the first
printed and supposedly authoritative reference to an Italian origin for the
MacCrimmons. The point is not elaborated, although we might have expected from
Rev Norman MacLeod some corroborative information on medieval events such as
the Crusades or trading activities linking Italy with the Hebrides; alternatively
drawing on traditional material, he might have explained the skill of the
MacCrimmons by reference to Italy’s proverbial reputation in Gaelic as the home of
magic and the ‘black arts’. Nach robh e ‘san Eadailt far an d’an ionsaich e an sgoil
dubh?’ (‘Was it not in Italy where he learnt the black arts?’) was asked of the great
early-seventeenth century commander, Domhnall Duaghail MacKay. MacLeod follows
the outline of Angus Mackay’s text (because, as I believe, he translated it directly into
Gaelic) but interpolates at one or two points. The first comes after the first sentence
where he writes (here translated):

‘The first of his name came with MacLeod from a town in Italy called
Cremona, he was a harper, a famous musician in his own day and
generation. He took the name of the place in which he was born and all
those who descended from him they called Children of the son of
Crumen.’

Hebridean or certainly Skye tradition recognises the pre-eminence of the
MacCrimmons, at least in one or two generations and I am sure that it is a reflection
of local oral tradition that Angus Mackay’s main text is all about Domhnall Mòr
MacCrimmon, clearly a larger-than-life character of the late-sixteenth century. Angus
Mackay recounts the succession of MacCrimmon pipers but not as a genealogy or
sloinneadh, which we might expect since this would enhance their status, but more as
sgeulachd or tradition. He begins with Iain Odhar and his words are heavy with
significance as he describes him as ‘the first of whom we have any account’, since he
earlier comments ‘the first establishment of the MacCrumsens as hereditary Pipers to MacLeod of MacLeod is beyond traditional record but is probably coeval with the constitution of one of this profession as an important functionary in the following of a chief.’ Iain Odhar was noted for his powers of memory, significant for the composition and retention of extended pieces of music such as ceòl mòr. Powers of memory and a trained mind were among the skills of the bardic orders:

‘He was succeeded by his son Donull Mor, ie. Big Donald, who, under his father’s instructions, became eminent in Piobrachd playing, and while he was yet young, he acquired the special favour of MacLeod, who resolved to give him all the instruction that could be had. He therefore sent Donald to Ireland where a celebrated Piper, who had gone from Scotland, had established a college of celebrity. .... On his return to Skye, MacLeod, as might have been expected, was very much pleased with the progress of his Piper while in Ireland, and ever since that time the MacCrumsens have been allowed to be the best Pipers in Scotland; so much so that no one was esteemed a perfect player unless he had been instructed or finished by them.’

Music MacLeod’s Salute

X The bardic root

Perhaps the most intriguing piece of information imparted here by Angus Mackay, apart from a succession of stories of conventional feats of courage and cunning, is the achievement of excellence and concept of formal training in the ‘schools’ in Ireland. This was part of the pattern set by the bardic orders from a period probably as remote as the fifth to seventh centuries. This was that crucial period of European retrenchment when Ireland contributed so significantly to the culture of Europe, particularly with the spread of Christianity and Irish monasticism. The monastic orders of the Celtic church appeared to set themselves the task of the virtual re-

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29 This discussion is drawn together in Hugh Cheape, ‘The MacCrimmon Piping Dynasty and its Origins’ (cited above).
evangelisation of Western Christendom and went out as missionaries and teachers from Ireland and Scotland. Best known of course are the missionary journeys of St Columba in Britain and St Columbanus in Burgundy, Switzerland and North Italy. The close integration of church with secular society seems to have been a unique aspect, with the Scoto-Irish monastery organised on a tribal pattern and Latin and Gaelic being the languages of teaching and communication. Monastic learning drew scholars from Britain especially in the seventh century and brought Ireland a great reputation for learning and for stored wisdom. Historiographically, Ireland was referred to as a land of ‘saints and scholars’.

Bardic schools have been described as a ‘national force’ overlooked by historians. They were the training ground of a professional literary caste with responsibilities to society. The poet was the file, the professor of literature and professional man of letters; as denoting a Gaelic poet, this key term, used in both Ireland and Scotland, has been replaced by ‘bard’ in English. Poets occupied a high social position and were an ‘estate of the realm’, enjoying privileges and wealth. The bardic schools were in effect, the ‘universities of Gaeldom’, and significant in the wider context since Europe’s universities were dominated by the church and higher education was run by the church for the church. Europe therefore lacked a secular intellectual institution such as the bardic schools. The subjects studied were grammar, language, literature, law, history, genealogy, and others. Young men also enrolled in bardic schools to learn Latin as preliminary to clerical studies on the Continent. The art of poetry, with a dignity and formality of style, used an elaborate system of metres described generally as dàn direach or ‘straight metre’. The poets used a standard literary language which remained almost unchanged for hundreds of years and formed a lingua franca from the Butt of Lewis to Cape Clear. The bardic school was not necessarily conspicuous as a building; it might only be a tiny hut, but the ‘school’ was the professor of poetry, the ollamh, and so it was easy enough and indeed second-nature for the school itself to go on circuit. Some details of the bardic school were set down in the Memoirs of the Marquis of Clanricarde published in 1722:
'Concerning the poetical Seminary or School ... it was open only to such as
were descended of Poets and reputed within their Tribes. ... The
Qualifications first required were reading well, writing the Mother-tongue, and
a strong memory. ... The Structure was a snug, low hut, and beds in it at
convenient distances, each within a small apartment without much furniture of
any kind. No windows to let in the day, nor any light at all used but that of
Candles, and these brought in at a proper season only. ... The Professors gave
a subject, determining the number of rhymes, and clearing what was to be
chiefly observed therein as to syllables, quartrains, concord, correspondence,
termination and union, each of which were restrained by peculiar rules. The
said subject having been given overnight, they worked it apart each by himself
upon his own bed, the whole next day in the dark, till at a certain hour in the
night, lights being brought in they committed it to writing. ... Every Saturday
and on the eves of Festival Days they broke up and dispersed themselves
among the Gentlemen and rich Farmers of the country, by whom they were
very well entertained and much made of till they till they thought fit to take
their leave in order to resume their Study. ... As every Professor or chief Poet
depended on some Prince or great Lord that had endowed his Tribe, he was
under strict ties to him and family, as to record in good Metre, his marriages,
births, deaths, acquisitions made in war and peace, exploits and other
remarkable things relating to the same. He was likewise bound to offer an
Elegy on the decease of the said Lord, his Consort, or any of their Children,
and a Marriage song when there should be an occasion. ... The last part to be
done, which was the Action and Pronunciation of the Poem in the presence of
the Maecenas or the Principal Person it referred to, was performed with a great
deal of ceremony in a Consort of vocal and instrumental music. The Poet
himself said nothing, but directed and took care that everybody else did his
part right. The Bards having first had the Composition from him, got it well by
heart and now pronounced it, keeping even pace with a Harp, no other musical
instrument being allowed for the said purpose than this alone, as being
masculine, much sweeter and fuller than any other.'

Ireland experienced a period of consolidation and expansion in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This followed a process of assimilation of Anglo-Norman settlers of the twelfth century who became absorbed into Irish-Gaelic society. An often quoted example is the English-appointed Lord Justiciar of Ireland, Fitzgerald, 4th Earl of Desmond, otherwise ‘Gerald the Rhymer’ who composed courtly love poetry in syllabic metre in (Irish) Gaelic and may have been the originator of this genre, though certainly not the sole begetter. Examples of his verse are in the anthology by Tomás O Rathile, Danta Grádh (1926). The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were a period of Gaelic cultural revival, the age of the great codices and books of the Irish language with learning, story and verse gathered together for the use of the leading Gaelic families. There were also commentaries on the Irish law tracts and medical treatises in Irish, mainly translations from Latin, which date from this period, for example the Leabhar Brea, the ‘Speckled Book’ compiled by the MacEgan bardic family and the ‘Yellow Book of Lecan’ of the 1390s. Significant of this cultural resurgence therefore were the Statutes of Kilkenny of 1366 and 1367, promulgated by the English parliament to stem this movement and to keep the races apart, proscribing the use of Gaelic and ruling against Gaelic laws and customs. The bards, poets and scholars thrived because the resource-base expanded; the old Gaelic noble families were the principal patrons but the Anglo-Irish nobility also patronised the Gaelic men of letters. The nobles came to appreciate the poets laureate whose propagandist business it was to sing the praises of their patrons, memorise their genealogies, celebrate their victories, and lament their deaths. This period moved onto the next with the break-up of the old aristocratic order and patrician houses first in the Elizabethan and then Cromwell and Williamite wars of the seventeenth century. This was accompanied by confiscations and plantations (or enforced re-settlements), the downfall of literature and the closing of the bardic schools in the late-sixteenth century. The bards complained of the corruption of their art and the dwindling and evaporation of patronage and reward. This is exemplified by the complaint of a bard, Mahon O’ Heffernan, whose poetry had no place in the new order in the early-seventeenth century. ‘My son, do not cultivate the poetic art’: 
I ask, who will buy a poem? Its meaning is the true learning of sages. Would anyone take, does any one want, a noble poem which would make him immortal?

Though this is a poem of close-knit lore, I have walked all Munster with it, every market-place from cross to cross – and it has brought me no profit from last year to the present.

An art like this is no profit to me, though it is hard that it should die out. It would be more dignified to go and make combs – why should anyone take up poetry?31

The dissolution of the bardic orders in Ireland was outlasted by many of the same cultural traits in Gaelic Scotland, and the history of the MacCrimmons reveals many of these traits. They were an aboriginal tribe of South Harris with links back into Ireland, but the MacLeods of Harris and Dunvegan, the Sioil Thormoid, granted them lands in return for performing a service and they emerged with high social status in common with the clan chieftain’s poet and harper. Domhnall Mòr MacCrimmon’s training in Ireland, as we have learnt, is consistent with earlier patterns and there are references to both pipers and harpers travelling between Ireland and Scotland ‘on circuit’ – air chuairt as it was described. The training of the learned orders of Gaelic society, including poets and musicians, was structured, formal and disciplined, and included exchange between Scotland and Ireland and travel between centres and the patrons of the greater Gàidhealtachd.

This sense of movement and exchange evident in the Gaelic arts has other important dimensions. The trade of the West of Scotland and of Ireland was with Spain and France, to a lesser extent with Germany. Other links with Europe were in education, in the education for example of the sons of the Catholic gentry in the Scots Colleges in Spain, France and Germany, remembered in the characteristic sobriquets ‘Spanish John’ or ‘French John’. The Franciscan missions between Scotland, Ireland and the

Continent, and the ‘Wild Geese’ or mercenary soldiers fighting in Continental wars in the eighteenth century were further elements of these lines of communication. The poets (and musicians) were aware of European politics and probably often more familiar with political currents in Paris and in Rome than in London, for example to be seen in the aisling poetry of the period of the Jacobite wars and vividly revealed in John Lorne Campbell’s literary and political anthology *Highland Songs of the Forty Five* (1933).

There are many historical loci in which to detect a less exclusive and much wider and shared world than the rarified presentation of MacCrimmon and Borerraig that has characterised the literature of the Great Highland Bagpipe; to choose an example largely unknown to the Anglophone world of piping but which leaps off the page of the literature of Gaelic. Robert Macintyre, Piper to Clanranald in Benbecula, competed in the Highland Society competitions, winning a third, second and first prizes in 1787, 1788 and 1790 respectively. He was praised as a master above all other pipers, including also the oinseach, in a song by Alexander MacDonald, *An Dall Mòr*:

......
I congratulate your powers of memory,
I congratulate your fingers,
I congratulate your reputation and your generous praise.
......
I do not care who should get displeasure over it,
It is Rob who is the master of every piper.
They had for a while the honour of the race of Leòd
When those folk had the oinseach,
Clan Mac Arthur then had her,
The rowdy pipers of the squabble.
She is now in Castle Tioram
And the nobles glad at getting this ....

The period of proscription, 1747-1782, following the Jacobite Wars and catastrophic defeat at Culloden, has in past historical treatment been interpreted as a fatal blow to Gaelic culture and piping. A thorough analysis of this topic by John Gibson from a North American perspective has concluded that the old-style piping and dancing lived on in the West Highlands and Islands until the mass emigrations of the nineteenth century. ‘Rumours of my death have been much exaggerated’ seems an appropriate aphorism. The evidence was to be found in Cape Breton and Mainland Nova Scotia. It is still difficult to tell to what extent ceol mòr changed or shifted in this period although we are on the brink of offering more convincing accounts of this process. The piping tradition of Gaelic Scotland seemed to survive intact the economic, political and social changes of the period. Scotland was of course in the eighteenth century a country where much music was made, and even the ‘fiddle pibroch’, provides a quirky example of contemporary taste; one or two may date to the first two decades of the eighteenth century. In the years between about 1710 and 1800, Scottish fiddlers were experimenting with the pibroch form and they can be seen in early collections such as those of Patrick MacDonald (1784), Donald MacDonald (c.1819) and Angus Mackay (1838) with their arrangements for violin, 'cello and piano.33

Lament for Ronald MacDonald of Morar
c.1700; ‘the best player upon the pipes living’, and composer of ceòl mòr

XI Coda – material culture and other evidences

To consider the material culture of the bagpipe and of piping is to shift the perspective away from books and conventional sources to objects. Music, of course, remains in the frame because with the objects we may come into direct contact with the sound. This is not exactly ‘straight’ history in which we have a given narrative or can even construct a narrative. In fact the record is disjointed and paradoxical, while being in

the final analysis complementary. With objects, I would include descriptions of
objects as part of the historical record, and a description of a piping school is in fact
rare evidence; in 1772, Thomas Pennant described the house of the MacArthur pipers
at Peingown (‘the Pennyland of the Smith’), two miles south of Duntuilm in the north
end of Skye. One of the MacArthurs was then piper to Sir Alexander MacDonald of
Sleat:

‘Take a repast at the house of Sir Alexander MacDonald’s piper, who,
according to antient custom, by virtue of his office, holds his lands free. His
dwelling like many others in this country, consists of several apartments, the
first for his cattle during winter, the second is his hall, the third for the
reception of strangers, and the fourth for the lodging of his family, all the
rooms within one another. ..... The owner was quite master of his instrument,
and treated us with several tunes. In feudal times the MacDonals had in this
island a college of pipers, and the MacLeods had the like.' 34

Bagpipes as wind-instruments, and musical instruments with many separate parts and
sections, are not good survivors. Even with part or all of an old instrument, it is still
difficult to achieve answers to questions on volume, pitch, the scale and repertoire. It
is also difficult to date them. Tradition has identified antique bagpipes - the
‘Bannockburn Pipes’, the ‘Flodden Pipes’, the MacCrimmon Pipes, and several
‘Culloden Pipes’ - but serious doubt has to be cast on all or most of these. One notable
set of pipes which came to dominate the literature of the late-nineteenth century was
the so-called ‘1409 Pipes’, gifted to the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland
in 1911 under the will of Robert Glen of the Edinburgh Bagpipe Making family. This
set has been shown to be a fake or an imaginative reconstruction of what might have
been a Highland bagpipe of the early-fifteenth century. 35

A reputedly old Great Highland Bagpipe, quoted as being of early-nineteenth or
eighteenth century date, rarely survives intact and close inspection reveals later

35 Robert Glen, ‘Notes on the ancient musical instruments of Scotland’, Proceedings of the Society of
Antiquaries of Scotland Vol 14 (1879-1880), 120-122; J F Bryan, ‘A note on the Glen 1409 pipes’,
chanter, new blow-stick and replacement drone sections. The case may be easily
proved if there is a maker’s name on the pipes, such as in the conventional position
lightly impressed on the front of the neck of the chanter, but as far as evidence goes,
no maker of the Great Highland Bagpipe before Donald MacDonald and Hugh
Robertson marked their products. The number and variety of pieces in a bagpipe
therefore makes it difficult to define and date the instrument with precision, and
certainly difficult to draw inferences on styles and techniques of manufacture of
particular localities and periods. Another obvious diagnostic detail is the raw material
and whether the bagpipe has been made from native or imported hardwood. We might
assume that early Highland bagpipes have been made from laburnum, boxwood or
fruitwoods but most have been made from tropical or sub-tropical hardwoods and it is
significant that exotic woods were sought by wind-instrument makers from an early
period. We note that in both the MacDonald and MacLeod Papers, sets of pipes were
being commissioned for MacCrimmons and MacArthurs from makers in the cities to
the south, and that patterns of trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries linked
the Clyde and the Forth to the Caribbean, South America and West Africa, the sources
of tropical hardwoods bought by cabinet-makers and wood-turners.\footnote{Traditions about
fairy gifts of a ‘speckled chanter’ \textit{(feadan breac)} or a ‘black chanter’ \textit{(feadan dubh)}
which bestowed matchless skills – \textit{buaidh na piobaireachd} as it was called - are
common, a motif perhaps recalling the innovative use of new exotic hardwoods
capable of changing the tone and volume of a bagpipe chanter. Caribbean or South
American ebony, densely heavy and close-grained, black or brindled in appearance,
must have caught the ear and surprised contemporaries. For many it would be second-
nature to suggest supernatural origins.}

An encouraging number of old chanters has survived of putative eighteenth or late-
seventeenth century date. Often such chanters are broken and this begs the question as
to why it might not have been discarded since its quality will have been seriously
impaired. Chanters were evidently not abandoned or discarded as we might do in the
modern disposable age and I have been impressed at the extensive repairs on many

\footnote{Hugh Cheape, ‘The making of bagpipes in Scotland’, in Anne O’Connor and David V Clarke eds.,
\textit{From the Stone Age to the Forty Five. Studies presented to R B K Stevenson}. Edinburgh 1983, 569-615;
paid the pipemaker?’, \textit{Piping Times} Vol 41 Number 8 (1988), 28-29.}
old chanters, dating, say, to the early nineteenth century or before. They tell a complex story of the costs of replacement and the availability or otherwise of materials; choice was not a decision which the pipers of old had. In the National Museums we have assembled a relatively large collection for our national instrument, particularly over the past twenty-five years, which I hope will be of use to future generations of researchers and musicians. There are many fine instruments from the British Isles and Europe but, paradoxically perhaps for modern scholarship, there is now more evidence for the history of piping in Scotland in a rich gathering of fragments of bagpipes, of joints, stocks, drone sections and drone tops.  

Generally different questions are posed by these objects. One of the most insistent questions in my own mind since the beginnings of our twenty-five years of collecting was why there was a comparative wealth of Scottish bagpipe evidence for every type of bagpipe but the Great Highland Bagpipe; it was not all ‘Irish’ as the older books and catalogues claimed. This picture was repeated in every museum collection with such material at home and abroad. I would have to think hard to remember which museum in Scotland then had anything really significant in the area of Highland bagpipes. What was memorable was the selection of chamber pipes and bellows-blown pipes which no one could explain in any detail, and I am referring to the years before 1981-82 when the Lowland and Border Pipers Society was founded. Evidently a varied and eclectic tradition – perhaps a more European one – had faded and died, and had then been gleaned and gathered into museum collections, particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century following the founding of the Victoria and Albert Museum and the South Kensington Musical Exhibition of 1872. Chamber bagpipes had conclusively fallen out of fashion in the first half of the nineteenth century, to be replaced exclusively by the Great Highland Bagpipe. The obvious reluctance of Highland pipers to discard their instruments meant that in this critical period of the beginnings of musicology and ethno-musicology, almost no examples of the still current piping tradition of the Highlands were collected. One of the curious documents marking this change in fashion is the ‘Lists of Prices of Bagpipes etc. manufactured and sold by Alexander Glen, Bagpipe Maker, Edinburgh’ forming an

and satire. Given the bardic circles in which Iain Dall moved and the contemporaneity of the ‘Fernaig Manuscript’ for example, his *Crosanachd* may be the music for a lost composition in syllabic verse with changes of rhythm to mark a dialogue style.\(^{83}\) Iain Dall seemed to favour, perhaps delight in, the *crosanachd* form or, alternatively, the piece may be a crafted musical reworking of the literary form with the very clear changes of rhythm through the variations representing the challenge and response of satirical dialogue. However this piece may be interpreted, its significance has been lost in the conventional literature of *piobaireachd* and the first correction to make would be to adjust the title to reflect the piece’s bardic significance, for example, ‘The *crosanachd* (or contention) of the blind poet’.

The Fernaig Manuscript, compiled between about 1688 and 1693, is associated with patrons and poets of Iain Dall’s own country and includes several *crosanachd* pieces, suggesting that this literary style may have had significant currency in Wester Ross.\(^{84}\) In reviewing Iain Dall’s reputation and poetry, it is worth considering that he would have regarded himself as one of the learned order of poets, even of the *Aos Dàna*, since by his day the *crosanachd* was part of their stock in trade, but he had been condemned by blindness to the role of musician.\(^{85}\) There are allusions to Fionn texts in his songs and in classic bardic fashion he represents himself as *mar Oisean an dèigh nam Fiann* (‘as Ossian after the Feinne’ i.e. the last of the race). He uses *fear ealain* (‘man of art’ or

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‘artist’) as the Corrie’s form of address to him and opens the lament for the loss of a patron in classic terms:

\[ Mi \ an \ diu \ a' \ fàgail \ na \ tire \]

.....
‘Today I am leaving the land,
Travelling across the slope of the forest,
What has left my pocket empty of silver
Is that my patron is in the grave.’\textsuperscript{86}

\textit{Brothers in music and economics}

In his extempore verses on ‘The Court at Tongue’, Rob Donn commented on the disregard, even disdain and ignorance, by then shown to both piper and poet: \textit{Oir ’s bràithrean ann an ceòl sinn, an còmhradh beòil ’s am feadaireachd} ...('Since we are brothers in music, both in conversation and in piping’), recalling a shared inheritance of a guild or fraternity of the learned orders.\textsuperscript{87} For the artists and performers, the sharpest consequence of change was the failure of patronage. By the late-eighteenth century this was an economic issue as well as a social anxiety. A beautifully crafted dialogue song from Ulster in bardic \textit{rannaigheacht mór} metre, dated by O’Rahilly to the 1740s, argues for the merits of music against the harsh imperatives of modern economics. The blind harper, Giollamhuire Mac Cartain, laments the loss of patronage and despairs, as Oisean after the Fianna, for his profession. In one of the manuscript versions an additional verse encapsulates the bard’s frustration and bitterness against cattle and crops:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{86} John Mackenzie, \textit{Sar-Obair nam Bard Gaelach}: op. cit., 98.
\textsuperscript{87} Hew Morrison ed., \textit{Songs and Poems in the Gaelic Language by Rob Donn}. Edinburgh 1899, 426.
\end{flushright}
Ní ar mo cheól-sa atá locht
(truagh nach bhfuil mo chorps i gcré)
acht ortsa, a Dhonnchadh na mbó,
ós binne leat bró na mé.

[‘It is not my music that is at fault
(pity that my body is not in the clay),
but it is you at fault, Donncha of the Cows,
since you find the sound of a quern sweeter than me’].

Awareness of change and its implications for the arts was universal throughout the Gàidhealtachd and the closure of the schools of piping was a clear symptom. There is more than a hint of disgust or despair evident in MacCrimmon and Rankin history that their status – or what remained of it – no longer depended on their inherited learning, so that genealogy, history or even pseudo-history had no value in the new era of the economic imperative. A poignant and telling note is offered from Rankin tradition; Counduillie, younger son of Neil, last piper to Maclean of Coll, was seen practising his chanter by the Coll factor, Bàilidh Threaslan, who warned him: Cuir bhuait sin! ‘Nuair bhios cach comhla ris na h-uaislean, bithidh tusa comhla ris na coin [‘Put that away! When the rest are in the company of the gentry, you’ll be with the dogs’].

Conclusions

Looking at the individual and celebrated piping families within their own terms of attainments, survival and longevity, and striving to fix

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88 Tomás Ó Rathile, Measgra Dánta I. Cló Ollscoile Chorcaí 1972, 68.
89 ‘Fionn’ [Henry Whyte], History of the Rankins, op.cit. 197.
genealogical detail such as succession over generations and dates of service, may limit our view; there must still be doubt and ambivalence in the historical and traditional record, for example in variations in MacCrimmon succession between six and twelve generations, and this distracts us from further analysis of the MacCrimmon record and consideration of context. The study of specific texts for the illumination of specific topics also may lead to them being laid aside where they fail to agree with a conventional wisdom, whereas even contradictions may corroborate rather than challenge some aspects of the tradition.

Although the secondary literature and narrative histories of piping allude to some of these details, with due respect they fail to supply an adequate understanding of contemporary society compared with the insights that can be derived from Gaelic sources. The narrative in parts for example seems to have been over-dependent on translations which have never been questioned, thus denying a richness and variety in Gaelic. In addition to crosanachd discussed above, a slight example might suffice; Lasan Phadraig Chaogaich, part-attributed to Iain Dall, has been acknowledged by the Piobaireachd Society editors as in error in their translation as ‘squinting’, in favour of ‘blinking’ or ‘winking’. The word caogach can indeed mean ‘squint-eyed’, as Angus Mackay retails, but arguably a figurative, even proverbial sense must be more significant than the literal, the nuanced rather than the direct.

It is still difficult to build a clear picture of the emergence of the piping families and their possible association with group structures such as the learned orders of the medieval Gàidhealtachd. In this context greater emphasis could be placed on the group as opposed to the individual or the succession of individuals which has been an over-simple way of
presenting the piping families. This is not to disregard or underestimate
the importance of the individual or the individual skill or brilliance of
Patrick Mor MacCrimmon or Charles MacArthur, as is represented by the
traditional narratives, but it tends to elide and lose, underestimate or even
misrepresent human bonds and relationships that supplied the essential
glue in clan and kin structures and gave such groups their status and
longevity. Arguably group structure and group consciousness may be as
important, and sometimes more important, than musicality in the
interpretation of piobaireachd and in turn, this broader, almost
‘anthropological’ interpretation of piobaireachd may add insights to the
understanding of the group and its dynamic in different or archaic
societies as well as of the music itself.

The interpretation of early history and genealogies depends heavily on
issues of perception and identity. Factors such as links with Ireland,
bardic or other status-conferring origins, the pursuit of excellence and the
maintaining of schools become clearer within the model of a unified
Gàidhealtachd and a medieval Gaelic culture province. The homogeneity
of the Gàidhealtachd within the period c. 1200-1650 and easy
assumptions of commonality have now been challenged and the ‘Sea of
Moyle’, Sruth na Maoile, presented as both a real and a psychological
barrier rather than the ‘bridge’. Wilson McLeod’s analysis of Classical
Gaelic, bardic poetry shows that Gaelic Scotland played a secondary and
marginal role in a culture province, the unity of which he suggests has
been overstated. In view of the Tudor conquest and English military
subjugation of Ireland, the emergence of a Scottish state and the
Reformation, cracks were bound to appear in the Gaelic culture province.

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90 Wilson McLeod, Gaelic Cultural Identities in Scotland and Ireland, c. 1200-c. 1650. Oxford
Most of the surviving bardic poetry belongs to Ireland, and Scotland’s contribution both in terms of locus and corpus was peripheral. Ironically perhaps, the piping families contribute a significant footnote to the redistribution of cultural assets in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. When the arts of poetry and music continued to flourish in Gaelic Scotland, albeit at a perceived lower level, the pipers could only aspire and function by aligning themselves and associating themselves with Scottish families with Irish links and origins. The emergence and short-lived success of the piping dynasties can be seen as a significant facet of the divided cultures of this Gàidhealtachd. Equally, the centrality of Ireland in cultural expectations in the classical period emerges from the deeper levels of evidence for the piping dynasties.

In considering traditional origins for the piping dynasties, it might fairly be claimed that the links with Ireland are less than explicit or lack more substantial evidence than other features. Adopting Wilson McLeod’s stern admonition and conclusion as a guiding principle - ‘assumptions should be challenged, hypotheses advanced with caution and romanticism excised’ - we might usefully hypothesise by moving firmly away from accepting a narrative of autonomous development for the individual families. The argument has been offered here of very clear analogies to be found in bardic origins and the learned orders, features such as resemblances in metric style, social structure, and cultural idea and mood between the bardic orders and the piping families, and between historical phenomena which may have no other connection. It is argued above that these cultural substrata were more than sufficient to create Highland piping. The other side of a hypothetical coin is that the piping families are part and parcel of the emergence of vernacular literature in Scottish Gaelic in the seventeenth century. Predicated on both arguments are fresh
understanding of the Great Highland Bagpipe and *piobaireachd*, and insights into preconceptions and stylistic tenets of the pipers; these include a shared outlook and *Weltanschauung* with the professional bard and seanchaidh, a shared outlook intensely conservative in nature and whose relevance was eroded by changing social and political mores, isolation and then by economic circumstances, reflected finally in the closure of the schools of piping in the 1760s and 1770s, a while after the end of the Jacobite wars. The concomitant of change, both cause and effect, were decline of patronage, loss of status and loss of privileges, so that the old assumptions – *saor bho chàin sa bith* – dwindled into fossilized and proverbial phrases preserving old values. The words of Mahon O’Heffernan in the early seventeenth century are crisply matched by the MacCrimmon’s disavowal of the approaches of new patrons for teaching and performance in the early nineteenth:

‘Such an art as this is no profit to me,
Though it is a misfortune that it should fall to the ground ...

\(^{91}\)

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National Museums Scotland/Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama
May 2007

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Traditional origins of the piper dynasties

Hugh Cheape

The learned orders

The historical narrative of the Great Highland Bagpipe conventionally includes mention or some account of the leading piping families, kin such as MacCrimmons, MacArthurs, Mackays, Rankins, MacGregors and others who performed a role hereditarily in the service of clan chieftains. Their status is variously described in familiar secondary sources.¹ Conventional accounts have never ventured far beyond the autonomous development of the individual families, although their individual histories and traditions can yield significant details associating them with other groups and group structures and linking them to Ireland and the learned orders of medieval Scotland. This perspective has largely been lost in the face of a narrower historiography. The present account revisits this perspective and explores ‘bardic’ origins, links with Ireland and a context for the piping families own pursuit of excellence.

Forty years ago, the paper delivered by Professor Derick Thomson at the Third International Congress of Celtic Studies in 1967, ‘Gaelic Learned Orders and Literati in Medieval Scotland’, dramatically opened a new dimension in Scottish cultural history. He explored the concept of a literary and professional class in medieval Gaelic society whose

significance and links with Ireland had hitherto not been noticed by scholars and writers. He then concluded:

The Scottish evidence suggests that there was a close correspondence with Ireland in the organisation of society, and especially in the organisation of the learned and literary orders, but that Gaelic Scotland leaned heavily on Irish initiative, periodically and consistently importing literary, medical, scribal and musical professionals from the *maior Scotia*, and even when these immigrants became thoroughly naturalised, continuing to send them back to Ireland to the springs of the native learning.²

Derick Thomson’s analysis concentrated on the leading professions of law, medicine and the church, all highly regarded in medieval Europe, but looked also at the other learned orders of administrators, historians, genealogists, poets and musicians, that is, the guardians of the fame and memory of clan and community. He described also how the piper usurped the place of the harper as the principal musician but this might have been ‘a fresh development which does not link up with the work of the other learned orders as the work of the harper does’.³ It is the contention of this paper that deeper levels of evidence for the piping families suggest that the latter do indeed link up with the learned orders through descent, professional affiliation and emulation.

*The hereditary pipers*

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Angus Mackay’s ‘Account of the Hereditary Pipers’ of 1838 seemed to create the exemplar from which later descriptions have been drawn, especially with regard to the MacCrimmons and throughout the secondary literature on piping. Record evidence survives, particularly in the MacLeod muniments, to demonstrate their status and role but Angus Mackay places them in an artistic context. His text clearly infers a ranking of the respective families of MacCrimmon, MacArthur, Mackay, MacLean or Rankin, Campbell and MacIntyre, with the first named earning a long account, the second a shorter one and the others a matter of a few sentences. Clearly this is a very partial picture but it offers important messages for a group dynamic. Points common to each account are that they were one of a number of leading families performing a service hereditarily for the families of clan chieftains and that they were endowed with land in return for their service, that they played the bagpipe and taught mainly *piobaireachd* – ‘that particular class of music which cannot be acquired except by several years of assiduous study and practice’ – and that they taught and transmitted their art and maintained schools for this purpose.\(^4\)

Angus Mackay’s ‘Account’ is full of story and incident in its opening sections and reads more as an exercise in storytelling than a history of piping. This makes more sense of the space given to the MacCrimmons and MacArthurs as the leading families nearest to Angus Mackay’s own *dùthaich*. This is an exercise in the retelling of clan history from the teller’s own district, with a series of interlinking vignettes of local hero figures, not only the chieftains but also their renowned and gifted followers. Mackay’s narrative chimes with a wider storytelling genre identified by scholars that was largely about events of the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries and which might often assimilate historical fact to patterns of heroic legend.\textsuperscript{5} An evident richness of popular lore was further enriched in this context by the intimate association of person and event with song and pipe tune. The clan ingredient is a strong binding element in this material and would have fulfilled the expectations of the original audiences, among whom we might assume had been the young Angus Mackay. His own father, John Mackay (1767-1848), who had been a pupil of the MacCrimmons, may well have been the teller of the tales in Raasay and the original context the Raasay \textit{taigh-cèilitidh}. Angus Mackay’s ‘Account’ is a good example of oral material passing from Gaelic, we can presume, into written form in English with more or less editorial shaping by others such as James Logan.\textsuperscript{6}

A background of hero and international tales and episodes common to storytelling over the centuries in Ireland and Scotland (and beyond) can be sensed in the ‘Account’ which is, ironically perhaps, still more lively and spontaneous than, for example, the literary and high register storytelling issuing from the pen of Rev Dr Norman MacLeod, \textit{Caraid nan Gàidheal}, in the same period of the 1830s and 1840s.\textsuperscript{7} When Norman MacLeod’s prose retelling of MacCrimmon history in \textit{Cuairtear nan Gleann} in 1841 has been drawn on as evidence, it has arguably diluted rather than enriched Angus Mackay’s ‘Account’.\textsuperscript{8} Some corroboration of a continuing vitality of oral tradition in Skye concerning the MacCrimmons can be drawn from the essays published by Dr Neil Ross

\textsuperscript{7} [Rev Dr Norman MacLeod] \textit{Cuairtear nan Gleann} 6 (August 1840), 134-137.
(1873-1943) in the *Celtic Monthly* in 1910.\(^9\) A further significant genre in Highland history writing, germane to this account, has been identified, that is, a substantial but often neglected corpus of traditional genealogical histories compiled between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries and whose importance lies, at the very least, in the circumstances of an overall paucity of indigenous source material.\(^{10}\) This genre emerges as the learned orders of the medieval *Gàidhealtachd* declined but it clearly drew on the classical tradition in terms of material, mindset and transmission and has acted in part as a conduit between élite and popular culture.

Angus Mackay’s ‘Account’ is not of course the first written evidence in English for the hereditary piping families and their status. Samuel Johnson, whom Angus Mackay quotes on the Rankins and the Lairds of Coll, recalled that he had heard the Highland bagpipe in Armadale, Dunvegan and Coll in the autumn of 1773. His insights into Highland society and the impact of contemporary changes ‘which the last Revolution introduced’, included a more than adequate contemporary account from the pen of an outsider on Gaelic culture following the important observation, echoed by others, that ‘the use of the bagpipe begins to be forgotten’:

> ‘Some of the chief families still entertain a piper, whose office was anciently hereditary. *Macrimmon* was piper to *MacLeod*, and *Rankin* to *Maclean of Col*. .... The tunes of the bagpipe are traditional. There has been in Sky, beyond all time of memory, a college of pipers, under the direction

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of Macrimmon, which is not quite extinct. There was another in Mull, superintended by Rankin, which expired about sixteen years ago. To these colleges, while the pipe retained its honour, the students of musick repaired for education.'

The quality of critique here well befits the great lexicographer and he no doubt would have stood by the accuracy of his observations and the information that he relayed. This and other references carry an inference of antiquity and continuity which is not necessarily borne out by the evidence as we have it. It may have been an impression put over by the respective piping families themselves and is also implicit in Angus Mackay's account. A slighter but more telling observation is made in a collection of folklore made about 1700 by James Kirkwood, in response to the research instigated by the Welsh polymath, Edward Lhuyd. The evidence gathered in this and other cognate sources of the same period is of a different order, not least because Lhuyd's contacts such as Rev John Beaton of Kilninian, Mull, and Rev Robert Kirk of Aberfoyle were connected with the old learned orders and had exemplary linguistic qualifications. Beaton himself commented extensively on Kirkwood's text for Lhuyd. The bagpipe here falls into place in an élite musical culture with the other instruments of the chieftain's hall:

'The Greatest Music is Harp, Pipe, Viol and Trump. Most part of the Gentry play on the Harp. Pipers are held in great Request so that they are train'd up at the Expence of

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Grandees and have apportion of Land assigned and are design’d such a man’s piper.\textsuperscript{12}

The seventeenth-century context of these comments still places the harp first in a descending order of prestige and allows also that it was \textit{uasal} to play the harp. The bagpipe occupies a lesser and more servile position in the scheme. The wire-strung harp or \textit{clarsach} was the musical instrument \textit{par excellence} and some harpers were hereditary musicians and bards, for example to the Lords of the Isles as well as Irish leading families. We see that harpers, in tune with their high status, readily moved back and forth between Ireland and Scotland. The \textit{turais in Albainn} was a commonplace in early Irish literature and the closeness of Antrim to the west coast islands made travel easy. Evidence for this is scattered but significant. Ruairi Dall O Catháin was an Irish harper who spent most of his life in Scotland in the course of the seventeenth century and seemed to have made his home among the big houses of Perthshire.\textsuperscript{13} A pre-eminent example of the poet-harp is Roderick Morison, \textit{An Clarsair Dall} (c. 1656-c. 1714), serving MacLeod of Dunvegan.\textsuperscript{14} Silis na Ceapaich’s Lament for Lachlan Mackinnon, the blind harper, alludes to the range and versatility of the trained musician, prefiguring perhaps the later range of the trained piper:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Cha chluinn mi chaoidh Socair Dhàna,}

\textit{Cumha no Fàilte no Oran,}

....
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{12} J L Campbell ed., \textit{A Collection of Highland Rites and Customes copied by Edward Lhuyd from the Manuscript of the Rev James Kirkwood (1650-1709) and annotated by him with the aid of Rev John Beaton}. The Folklore Society 1975, 3-6, 7-8, 49.


\textsuperscript{14} Op. cit.
['I will never more hear Free Verse, 
Lament nor Salute nor Song,']^{15}

*Clan panegyric*

The musical and poetical allusions in the above lines describe clan panegyric, the public and celebratory composition and transmission of salutation, eulogy and elegy within the social structure of the clan by the hereditary poets and musicians. This is the substantial and crucial background to the emergence of Highland piping and without which, arguably, it cannot be adequately described or understood. There is in this sense nothing new about piping, its origins and meaning lying clearly and emphatically within a group and group structure with status and highly developed mores. Performance was within the cultural milieu of the chieftains' households, with families such as MacLeod of Dunvegan and MacLean of Duart, both of whom maintained successions of poets, harpers and then pipers and were generous patrons of the arts.

Inter-clan politics and matters of diplomacy such as marriage alliances were also vital sparks for poetic composition, and visits to chiefly houses were important features of bardic practice. The theme of Silis na Ceapaich's Lament of about 1725 is the end of the harper’s visits. The poem, ‘I spent six nights in Dunvegan’, in the ‘Book of Clanranald’, recalled the lavish hospitality accompanying the diplomatic marriage of the daughter of Rory Mor MacLeod in 1613.^{16} Celebration in music and

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song was in turn the conventional response to the patrons' liberality, and consequently references to personal qualities, professional etiquette, reciprocal obligations and historical example suffuse the literature. Encomiastic verse tended to celebrate the main line of the clan but the continuing composition and transmission of praise music and song spread out from the main areas of patronage so that the cadet families and other branches could celebrate the achievements of the group or clan and reinforce aristocratic identity.

*Trade, science and the centrality of Ireland*

This culture belonged to a context which embraced both Scotland and Ireland, while tacitly and consistently acknowledging that Ireland was the wellspring of this learned and literary tradition. Ireland seems to have been the source and conduit by which European learning and musical traditions (such as hymn metres and ballads) reached the *Gàidhealtachd* of Scotland. Ireland was also the entrepôt for Scotland on the western European and Atlantic trade routes and an intellectual source for other significant areas of learning. The centrality of Ireland in a medieval Western European context has been firmly and consistently written out of the Scottish historical tradition. For the understanding of Highland piping, its historical context, as well as broader issues of cultural roots and mores, we ignore Ireland at our peril.

Among the professional orders, Professor Derick Thomson gave prominence to the Beatons who were conspicuous and well-established members of the professional learned orders both of Ireland and Scotland. Their example is relevant to our study of the piping families because,
given surviving evidence, ingredients of their history throw a strong light on the group structure into which the piping families seem to fit. The Beatons were hereditary physicians in different parts of Scotland, in successive generations and different branches of the family, from the early-fourteenth to the early-eighteenth centuries. Surviving medical manuscripts are the most numerous and copious of the Gaelic manuscript corpus and it is strongly evident that manuscripts were highly valued, inferring the premium and status of ‘classical’ learning and the highest standards of literacy. Martin Martin described a substantial medical library in South Uist about 1695, comprising all the recognised authorities of European medicine of the late medieval period: ‘Fergus Beaton hath the following ancient Irish manuscripts in the Irish character: to wit, Avicenna, Averroes, Joannes de Vigo, Bernardus Gordonus, and several volumes of Hippocrates’. 17

The study of medicine was carried out in ‘schools’ maintained by the leading hereditary families, generally based on their respective landholdings in Islay, Mull, Skye and Uist but also peripatetic and following the itineraries of leading practitioners. 18 Beaton genealogy significantly claimed origins in Ireland in that the founder of the family was a descendant of the Niall of the Nine Hostages, the eponymous ancestor of the most powerful kindred in early Ireland, the Úi Néill. Migration from Ireland to Scotland was linked by the family historians to the marriage of an Ó Cathain to Angus Og, Lord of the Isles, in the late-thirteenth century or about 1300. The Beatons (or MacBeths) were included in the prestigious Tochradh Nighean a’ Chathanaich, her

17 Donald J MacLeod ed., A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland Circa 1695 by Martin Martin, Gent. Stirling 1934, 155.
retinue consisting of ‘seven score men out of every surname under O’Kain’.\textsuperscript{19}

Other medical dynasties recognised similar origins and associations such as the O Conachers, later MacConachers, who came from Ireland and settled as physicians in Lorne. A rich source of information on this extraordinary historical saga is the manuscript corpus, testifying so vividly to their refinement, their learning, their intellectual networks and their internationalism. Notes and marginalia add piquancy to this wealth of information. A note added to a treatise on the ‘humours’, quoting a range of Classical and Arabic authorities, was written in Ireland probably by one of the O Conachers about 1600:

\textit{Mise fear na droch litreach do graibh seo a baile thighearna Bheinne Edair/ Eoin Mac Dhomhnaill agus is fada om dhuthidh an diuigh mi} ['I am the man of the bad writing who scribed this in the homestead of the Lord of Ben Edar/ John son of Donald, and far from my country am I today'].\textsuperscript{20}

\textit{Bards and pipers}

The legendary and historical reference in Gaelic literature was to Ireland and this well of learning continued to be comprehensively drawn on by the bards in Scotland, underlining also the importance of attendance at the schools in Ireland. Poets offered praise poems equally to patrons in Ireland and Scotland and continued to go to Ireland for their training in

\textsuperscript{20} Donald MacKinnon, A Descriptive Catalogue of Gaelic Manuscripts. Edinburgh 1912, 6-8.
institutional practice and bardic metrics. The evidence that we have to hand suggests that Scotland’s role particularly in the bardic literary tradition was sustained from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries and is exemplified by the MacMhuirichs, localised on the West Coast and islands. The early-sixteenth century ‘Book of the Dean of Lismore’ from a Central Highland context demonstrates also the links with Ireland; it was compiled in a context in which the cultural and political links with Ireland were entirely implicit and the literary heritage shared. Ireland’s centrality to the context of piping is incontrovertible.

The MacMhuirichs are the outstanding Gaelic literary family, sustaining a long hereditary succession as bards between approximately the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries. They were descended from the O Dálaigh Irish bardic family, probably responsible for a bardic school and recalling appropriately a leading member of their family as ollamh ereann 7 alban or ‘chief poet of Ireland and of Scotland’.21 They were classically trained poets in the service of the Lords of the Isles, holding lands in Islay and Kintyre by virtue of their office, and later moving to serve the Clanranald chiefs by whom they were endowed with lands in South Uist. The lands of Driomasdal and Stadhlaigearraidh have been known by tradition in Uist as baile nam bard, ‘the township of the bards’, and these lands continued to be held on favourable terms well into the eighteenth century.22 A deposition taken from Lachlann MacMhuirich in August 1800 was printed in the Appendix of the Highland Society’s ‘Report on Ossian’ and included his account of the family’s literacy and the shared

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learned culture of Ireland and Scotland. A letter in the same Report had been written in 1763 by Rev John Macpherson, minister of Sleat, recollecting that, when he was in Uist about twenty years previously,

‘... there was an ancient little family, the head of which united the professions of the bard, genealogist and shennachy. The bard of that family whom I had occasion to know, was a man of some letters, that is to say, he and his ancestors, for many ages, had received their education in Irish Colleges of poetry and history, and understood the Latin tolerably well’.  

Implicit in both these accounts is the change that had taken place in the family’s status. The experience of the chieftains and leading families in the seventeenth century was of political and economic pressure which steadily undermined the old regime. The trained professional poets alluded to this time and again in this period. The early-seventeenth century poet, Cathal MacMhuirich, composed a lament for four MacDonald chieftains who died in 1636; this is a stately bardic elegy of forty stanzas with the expected allusions to a climate turned hostile and a land turned barren. The bard recalls his patrons’ generosity (‘their gifts of clothing were never refused to the poets’) and spells out what their death means:

‘Because the Clan Ranald have gone from us
We cannot pursue our learning;
It is time for the chief poet [ollamh] to go after them

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Now that presents to poets will be abolished'.

The social and political circle of the clan chief around the end of the seventeenth century was described in some detail by Martin Martin. Writing between about 1695 and 1703, he could still list physician, orator, poet, bard, musicians and craftsmen as among the chieftain’s dependants within a framework of rights and obligations. More significantly, he described in some detail the change and decline in the position of the ‘orator’ or file, ‘in their language called Aos-dana’, as he saw this in his own time. Change is axiomatic but it contributes an anxious and reiterated note in bardic verse of the seventeenth century. A changing world saw decline of the learned traditions of poetry and a more rapid and cataclysmic decline to extinction in Ireland. The complex of causes of this are beyond this paper but included the Tudor conquest of Ireland, plantation, legislation and the breaking of the power of Irish chieftains. Scottish Gaelic poets held on longer to traditional tenets of bardic verse and used them to remind the chieftains of their duties of patronage, a convention which, as Martin Martin hints, had come to be regarded as ‘insolent’. An earlier mock elegy for a harper, Lachlann MacBhreatnaich, preserved in the Book of the Dean of Lismore, castigates him for his excessive demands for reward. A poem by Cathal MacMhuirich, Sona do cheird, a Chalbhaigh (‘Blissful your trade, Calbhach’), is heavy with irony and anger directed at the slovenly poet who had moved into his bardic domain.

But the dynasties of professional poets had shrunk to one or two, with families such as MacLeod of Dunvegan, MacLean of Duart and Campbell of Argyll. The career of Niall MacMhuirich, between the early 1660s and about 1720, with MacDonald of Clanranald, spans and reflects these changes. He demonstrates his loyalty to traditional values, reiterating the place and privileges of the poet and the expected generosity of patrons. His elegy for example to the chief of Clanranald who died in 1686 praises him as ‘guardian of our school of poets’. 29 MacMhuirich was composing both in the literary language and in the vernacular language and style. This cultural crossover and conservatism are traits which go far to explain the emergence of the piobaireachd form and the fact that it was predicated on schools.

The emergence of the bagpipe within the cultural ambit of the Gàidhealtachd can be observed in this period. It is seldom mentioned as a musical instrument in Gaelic sources before the mid-seventeenth century; the bagpipe does not figure in classical bardic poetry where there is only reference to the clarsach. 30 An early reference to the bagpipe in a Highland context is to their being played by men in Argyll’s forces at the Battle of Pinkie in 1547. But a more obviously prestigious role developed for the bagpipe in Gaelic society, with the popularity of and need for a martial instrument in the military involvement of Highlanders in national and international warfare, and in the more prominent role of Highlanders within the state of post-Reformation and post-Union of the Crowns Scotland. Scottish Gaelic society, politically and culturally, was at its most successful, assertive and confident in the seventeenth century.

A distinction may be drawn between, on the one hand, the use of the bagpipe evolving *sui generis* as a military instrument and, on the other, its grafting onto earlier traditions. In the former case, examples proliferate over Europe of an often ephemeral role in armies of a low-caste bagpipe as musical instrument. In the latter case, it emerged within a cultural milieu of professional music-making and reflected something of a redistribution of the functions of the learned orders. There would bound to be shifts from time to time in lines of demarcation between poets and historians, as we have seen, and an evident professional shift from harpers to pipers is one major feature of these seventeenth-century changes. The piper appears to take over harpers’ subject-matter and they probably also take over their metres. The learned orders and literary professions share in and connive at an increase and acceptance of demotic practice and of a putative downsizing of status, although simultaneously these shifts offered new opportunity for bardic challenge and response; significantly the pipers’ voice is not evident in the *moladh* and *di-moladh* series which alternate elevation and ridicule of the bagpipe. John MacCodrum’s ‘Dispraise of Donald Ban’s Pipes’ recounts the pathetic career of the instrument before it was acquired by Donald MacAulay of Paible in North Uist, including its use by two possible harpers whose art was clearly going out of fashion and who were suffering loss of status:

*Bha i seal uair aig Maol-Ruanaidh O Dòrnan*

....

Malrooney O Dornan had her for a while,
Who would put the tunes clumsily out of order;
She was for a while with MacBheatrais
Who would sing the songs [dàin],

16
When the clarsach was forsaken
And esteem for it failed.\textsuperscript{31}

\textquote[\textquoteright The history of the pipe from the beginning\textquoteright, \textit{Seanchas Sloinnidh na Piob o thús}]{\textquote[\textquoteright The history of the pipe from the beginning\textquoteright, \textit{Seanchas Sloinnidh na Piob o thús}, is the poem generally ascribed to Niall Mòr MacMhuirich (c. 1550-c. 1630) who describes the bagpipe as harsh and barbaric. According to John Mackenzie, the editor of \textit{Sar-obair nam Bard Gàidhealach}, the poem was composed on returning from the bards' college in Ireland and earned the poet extemporary congratulation from his father: \textit{Math thu fhein a mhic, tha mi faicinn nach bu thuras caillt' a thug thu dh' Eirinn} (\textquote[\textit{Well done, son, I see your trip to Ireland has not been wasted}]{\textquote[\textit{Well done, son, I see your trip to Ireland has not been wasted}]). The survival of this piece to be recorded and printed in the late-eighteenth century is a tribute to its appeal and it is often quoted as reflecting the parvenu status of the bagpipe.\textsuperscript{32}} The poet refers to the antiquity of the instrument itself – \textit{thàinig o thus na dilinn} – but finds a catalogue of distasteful, low-caste elements to fuel the satire. Mackenzie adds the editorial comment, dating to 1836, that \textquote[\textit{the bagpipe was never a favourite with the bards, but was rather regarded by them as trenching on their province}]{\textquote[\textit{the bagpipe was never a favourite with the bards, but was rather regarded by them as trenching on their province}}.\textsuperscript{33} The sense of merciless mockery is heightened by the title depending on the key terms \textit{seanchas} (lore or history) and \textit{sloinneadh} (the tracing of pedigree and ancestry), the tracing of descent being the primary function of the professional poet. If the \textit{moladh} and \textit{dimoladh} songs fit into a bardic \textquote[\textit{flyting}]{\textquote[\textit{flyting}} series, the sense of the bagpipe being grafted firmly onto an ancient tradition is reinforced. As significant as the contempt for the instrument or its practitioners who had seldom

\textsuperscript{31} William Matheson ed., \textit{The Songs of John MacCodrum}. Scottish Gaelic Texts Society 1938, 68.
\textsuperscript{32} Derick S Thomson, Niall Mòr MacMhuirich, op.cit. 18-19.

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had status to boast of, is the bardic controversy, the *iomarbhaidh*, a term with a complex literary history, included but essentially obscured within the *piobaireachd* canon.

*Schools and memory, law and poetry*

Many of the features of the cultural and political changes of the seventeenth century may be part interpreted, not as autonomous developments as has been the treatment of the Highland bagpipe, but as devolving elements of Irish literary history. The literary professions of Gaelic Scotland and Ireland included, as we have seen, musicians such as harpers who might also enjoy bardic status, and the evidence for their craft and literary context is remarkable.\(^{34}\) Gaelic possesses the oldest vernacular literature in Europe and learned orders who taught and transmitted it. This is a far cry from the piper of late-medieval and modern period but this provides evidence to contextualise him. This learning in its broadest sense, which is still evidenced in Scotland at a late date, depended on the Irish dimension, and bardic poetry frequently demonstrates familiarity with what were in effect very old and time-served ingredients; the menu is complex with, *inter alia*, origin legends and pseudo-history, schematised in written form between the eighth and eleventh centuries and composed in both prose and poetry (to be more easily remembered and handed on), Classical mythology (also through translation) as well as panegyric verse and song. Evidence running parallel describes the social and cultural framework which produced and sustained such learning, with features such as differing status of learned practitioners, the schools and their teaching and practitioners’ duties and

obligations. Such features later characterise the piper’s profession. The early law tracts are the principal source.

The Irish Law Tracts, the *Corpus iuris hibernici*, consisted of a number of manuscript treatises devoted to special subjects, copied and recopied with glosses and commentaries from the seventh and eighth centuries down to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.\(^3\) This dense series of canonical texts remained largely unknown from the late-medieval period until the late-nineteenth century. They were, in a sense, discovered as founding textual material for Celtic philology, then emerging as the discipline of historical linguistics. The first edition of *Grammatica Celtica* in 1853 by the Munich professor, Johann Kaspar Zeuss (1806-1856), firmly embedded the Celtic languages in the Indo-European family. He was followed in the exploration of Old Irish by scholars such as Whitley Stokes (1830-1909) and Kuno Meyer (1858-1919) whose transcriptions and discussions of early Gaelic sources remained until recently outside the view of scholars in Scotland. The range of subjects covered involved poets and historians as well as jurists, and reflects the old status quo of the *Aos Dána* as a professional caste and the custodians of learning in the broadest sense.

The early Irish laws form a complex of information to be used with some care, recognising the probably deliberate use by the early jurists of archaic forms (for example to exclude the uninitiated) and the highly schematic and conventionalised view of early Gaelic society that emerges. Successive generations of scribes, following the adoption of the Latin alphabet and introduction of writing in the vernacular which came with Christianity, added glosses and commentaries to canonical texts to

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explain words and interpret the law. Scholars have suggested that text
glossed by the later scribes might be so archaic that the glossators could
not necessarily themselves understand what they were copying. The best-
known of the texts was the collection of Brehon Law tracts called the
Senchas Mór or ‘Great Tradition’, originating in one of the Irish schools
of learning, possibly in Munster, about the first half of the eighth century.
The label senchas indicates the importance of oral tradition and a process
whereby oral tradition was being committed to writing. The laws were
handed down as a form of oral tradition and, significantly, metrical forms
survive in the texts possibly also as mnemonic devices. The ‘men of
learning’ thus committed the ‘law’ to writing, transmitting material from
a pre-literate tradition which included different forms of aphoristic moral
and ethical teaching. The law tracts are the first written evidence of the
learning of such schools and the custodians of the law-lore were the filidh
or ‘poets’. Law and poetry ran together in the courses of study of these
schools where students were trained to commit texts to memory. Memory
training was thus a consistent element and probably as important in the
later ‘schools of piping’ as in the earliest schools of learning.

The poets were at the pinnacle of the learned class and the file was the
highest grade of poet. It has been frequently suggested that the file had
inherited attributes of a priestly or druidic caste of the pre-Christian
period, thereby further extending back in time a pedigree for this class.
The etymology of Druidh for ‘druid’ is obscure but can now be taken as
meaning ‘magician’ or ‘wizard’, and druidheachd to mean the secret lore
and art of the druid.36 The church appears to have reduced or abolished
the religious and supernatural functions of the ‘druid’, otherwise the
practices, function and beliefs of the druids are still obscure. The survival

of druidism and its latter-day influence on imagery of pre-Christian Europe or 'celtic society' are irrelevant for this account but they offer particles of evidence for the emergence into history of the arts such as literature and music and for a creative synthesis of Christian and pre-Christian elements. An important part of the status of the *Senchas Mór* derived from its semi-sacred origin, ascribed to a commission of nine including St Patrick who thus seems to act as the benign Christian agent of this synthesis. A sense of schema and due form supply a philosophical spine to this status and can be sensed in many areas of the later bardic discourse and arguably feed through into the *piobaireachd* form.

One part of the *Senchas Mór* was the *Uraisecht Becc* or 'Small Primer', judged to be possibly as early as the second half of the eighth century. The 'Primer' is a treatise or manual on status, with the qualifications and privileges of the different grades of poet, ranking in a scheme of seven grades, imitating probably the seven grades of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Material on the grades and privileges of the poets circulated in Scotland and can be seen in a Gaelic manuscript of about 1400 which is part of the former Kilbride Collection. Status and privileges were enshrined in the arrangement of the king’s court and the early laws describe the seating protocol in the king’s hall. The king was at its head with his wife on his left, and on her left the judge or law man, termed the *brithem*, an office still recognised and described in the seventeenth century. Facing the king and his wife were the poets and the harpers, clearly enjoying precedence over most of the company and the placing of the musicians denoting their availability to accompany the poets.

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38 Donald Mackinnon, op.cit., 84, 177-178.
Metrics and music

The poets were defined as Aos Dána, as we have seen, the people of art or poetry, literally the 'folk of gifts'. Privileges belonging to the office of 'chief poet' or ollamh have been taken as an indication of supernatural powers, a feature inferred as linking them with priestly antecedents and offering some explanation of the known powers of bardic satire. Status may give a sense of fixity and stasis but the aspiring poet could move up the hierarchy, and success and movement depended on learning and scholarship, deriving from inheritance and the schools, and networks and ties in society such as kinship and clientship. The most important feature of the poet's status for our account is that he had the rights and privileges of the highest ranks of society. The ruler within this tribal society then aspired to have the most skilled exponents of a learned profession at his court and would suitably endow them. The Aos Dána therefore were the providers and custodians of a culture common to Ireland and Scotland and an t-Aosdana bards survived in Scotland while they disappeared in Ireland. This collective term also survived in Scottish Gaelic but in a restricted sense as a title associated with non-literate bards composing eulogy and elegy in the vernacular and professing certain rights and duties. In this respect the seventeenth-century vernacular poets were heirs of the professional poets of earlier eras. The same attributions could describe the later leading pipers. The poets composed in what is described as 'stressed metre', an archaic variety of metre and stanza; by comparison, the encomiastic verse in the literary language of the poets

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was composed in ‘syllabic metre’. Described in Gaelic as dàn, this was the literary province of the prestigious filidh and probably came in with Christianity and was influenced by late-Latin language and metrics. It has been argued by Rev William Matheson that stressed metre may have pre-dated syllabic and then survived its demise. Most significantly for this account, this particular brand of the native poetic tradition does not survive in the medieval manuscript compilations but has been preserved in the oral tradition and may be compared to piobaireachd both in terms of its skilful composition and its patterning. Matheson has pointed out the application of the term iorram to stressed metre bardic composition and the same amibivalent term, itself a word of doubtful etymology, is known in ceòl mòr.\(^{41}\) In stressed metre bardic pieces, the stanza will consist of a number of lines of two stresses, concluding with a line of three stresses, the line being repeated as a form of cadence. The stanzas might be longer or shorter, the length of verse might vary and the effect was cumulative, heightened by a closing cadence. This music in words can be sensed for example in one of the closing cadences of the vernacular Elegy to Sir Lachlan Maclean of Duart of about 1649 by the Maclean bard, Eachann Bacach (‘Hector the Lame’), and it is official elegy rather than private grief:

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\begin{align*}
Gum\ bu\ mhath\ do\ dhiol\ freasdail \\
An\ taigh\ mòr\ am\ beul\ feasgair; \\
Uisge\ beatha\ nam\ feadan \\
Ann\ am\ piosan\ 'ga\ leigeil, \\
Sin\ is\ clàrsach\ 'ga\ spreigeadh\ ri\ ceòl. \\
\end{align*}
\]

[‘The entertainment you provided was good

In a big house at nightfall,
Whisky of the still’s worm
Being poured into goblets,
All that and a harp being incited to music’

As the Maclean inheritance of patronage of the arts and courtly poetry was particularly distinguished, so their role within the attributed ceòl mòr corpus is sufficiently distinctive to hint at a more complex and Maclean-aligned tradition. The remains of this tradition was gathered in by David Glen from sources such as John Johnston of Coll and published in 1900 in The Music of the Clan MacLean. Taking as an example one of the pieces of music specifically annotated by Glen to record the personal playing style of John Johnston, Cas air amhich, a Thighearna Chola, the structure, phrasing and style of the tune in this instance may be readily compared to stressed metre composition in vocal music. There is an obvious congruency between musical and verbal phrase sequence. Here as elsewhere the phrasing of a ‘line’ of ceòl mòr readily reflects, perhaps mimics, the variations and complexities of verbal composition in bardic poetry, moving from the dotted crotchet in one phrase to quavers and semi-quavers to accommodate words and syllables in the following phrases and moving on in a cumulative sense to the end of the ‘line’ with a repeat phrase to act as closing cadence. Significantly, stressed metre composition in the vernacular, well suited to oral transmission and preservation, seems to emerge in pace with bagpipe ceòl mòr in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and within the ambit of the chiefly houses and patrons. There must have been an innate prestige of imitating or drawing on the stressed metre song of the bards. The panegyric role of piobaireachd could realistically draw on or be grafted onto the unlettered

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but not untutored vernacular eulogy and elegy of the bard. Given the
evident status of the bagpipe and the musician-minstrel, both in the
greater Gàidhealtachd and in Europe, the piper could not readily graduate
to the rank of filidh or match his music to the literary language.

The musician is naturally eclectic and congruency in the piobaireachd
form can also realistically be sought with syllabic metre though the
evidence may not be so readily glimpsed. Historically the music of the
Great Highland Bagpipe, as practised by the piping families, can be
contextualised within the wider bardic tradition of Scotland and Ireland.
Clan panegyric, the public and celebratory composition and transmission
of eulogy and elegy of the clan by the hereditary poets and musicians, lay
at the core of the bardic tradition and characterised the piobaireachd
tradition. Three categories of performers are evident in the courtly
musical tradition of the Scottish Gaelic aristocracy, the filidh, the bard
and the musician in descending order of prestige and performance; these
were the ready and extensive sources of inspiration and material. The first
category, the filidh, composed in the literary language and in syllabic
verse but little survives of this apart from some heroic or Ossianic
ballads. The continuing popularity of the Ossainic ballads in the Scottish
Gaelic tradition helped to keep the memory of dàín alive. They were of
two sorts, the duan which was recitative and more of a chant, and the
laoidh or ‘lay’ which was more of a tune, the difference of course being
in the metre rather than the music but here as elsewhere in the Gaelic
tradition there will be links with the piobaireachd form which further
research will reveal. To propose an example, the so-called ‘Harlaw
Brosnachadh’ was still strongly current in oral tradition in the eighteenth
century and manuscript versions survive. It was first published in a
version in Ranald MacDonald’s ‘Eigg Collection’ of 1776. There are unanswered questions on different and complex levels of style and technique of construction and of metrics. At a simpler level, the formulaic and rhetorical techniques of the ‘Brosnachadh’ and the celebration of the kindred in a series of epithets may yet find an echo in piobaireachd. The alphabetical chant with phrases accumulating in quartettes and building effect on alliteration is an exercise in rhetoric whose musical equivalent may be sensed in piobaireachd. The diction of the Brosnachadh might speculatively have been consciously imitated in, for example, the doubling of the taorludh variation in piobaireachd.

A further example might be proposed for a search for instrumental equivalence in the professional syllabic poetry of the period 1200-1650. The simple term, syllabic metre, stands not just for the fixed number of syllables in each line, together with internal and end-rhyme, but for a range of variations on this theme of dàn direach. A number of different metres were used in bardic poetry and were schematised by name, and as the classic anthology Bàrdachd Ghàidhlig demonstrates, were widely used in Scotland. When we consider that the end-product of bardic composition was sensory, the aligning of ceòl mòr with species and examples of dàn direach may be a natural response. A candidate for such alignment may be the variety of syllabic metre termed snéadhbhairdne whose verses are built on two couplets with sequential lines of eight and four syllables respectively. A praise poem of the 1550s in this metre, an Duanag Ullamh, survives in a number of sources and its patterning and ‘sound’ may be suggested as obviously influential for Highland piping:

Loingeas leathann làidir luchdmhor
Dealbhach dionach
Sleamhain sliosréidh ro-luath ràmhach
Dairchruaidh direach.\(^{45}\)

Performance as we have seen was within the cultural milieu of the chieftains’ households, with families such as MacLean of Duart and MacLeod of Dunvegan, both of whom maintained successions of poets and harpers and then pipers, and were generous patrons of the arts. At these levels of patronage, groups and successions of poets and musicians were maintained and there are poetic references which throw light on these fraternities and also their artistic relationships.\(^{46}\) *Piobaireachd*, significantly, described the role that developed with the use of the bagpipe in the Highlands and Islands. The question that has exercised those who have struggled to explain the origins of *piobaireachd* and of the Great Highland Bagpipe is whether the instrument evolved *sui generis* or was grafted onto an earlier tradition or traditions. Metrics and music would suggest the latter and this is reinforced by subject-matter, in which encomia predominate in the surviving corpus of bagpipe ‘classical’ music. This encompasses widely salutes to chieftains and leading men of the clans, laments on their passing in battle, or through accident and natural causes, the celebration of feats of arms, gatherings and incitement to war with rallying cries and slogans, the commemoration of human bonds and relationships in kin and clan, the reinforcement of group identity and the energising of group consciousness.

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The piper dynasties

The most prominent piping families in the historical narrative of the Great Highland Bagpipe were MacCrimmon, MacArthur, Mackay and Rankin, as recounted by Angus Mackay, and most accounts add MacGregor to this roll of honour. Each of these kin demonstrates links with Ireland or with the bardic tradition in ways to demonstrate that this broader context supplies important evidence to explain their origins and cultural influences on their art.

Information on the origins of the MacCrimmons is found in the Bannatyne Manuscript, an eighteenth-century compilation of traditions of the MacLeods of Dunvegan. It is generally agreed to have been the work of Sir William MacLeod Bannatyne (1749-1838), Lord President of the Court of Session and great-great-grandson of the celebrated Sir Norman MacLeod of Berneray. He was said in his day to be the greatest authority on the history of the Highlands, although as chronicle and celebration of the ancestry of the Macleods, the Bannatyne Manuscript is flawed history. Compared to others in the genre of Highland and Hebridean genealogical histories, the Bannatyne Manuscript itself may be said to be late in date and tainted in its description of the origins and ancestry of the MacLeods.\(^47\) The thesis of longevity and particular blood connections was the vital imperative in telling the story of the kindred and therefore compellingly self-evident in the Bannatyne Manuscript.

The Bannatyne Manuscript supplies the tradition that the MacCrimmons were indigenous leaders in South Harris and that they also occupied the islands in the Sound of Harris. The version of events reflects significantly the Norse invasions with the ancestors of ‘Paul Balkason’ conquering the district of Harris, then in the possession of three aboriginal tribes; the north was held by the ‘Clan Vic Eaich’, the central area by ‘Clan Vic Vurichie’, and the south and islands belonged to the MacCrimmons. This trio of names, in spite of anachronisms or misspellings, is important for a brief insight into early tribal structure which further research could well illuminate, particularly by comparison with information on tribal structures enshrined in the Irish law tracts. Although it has been argued that ‘MacCrimmon’ might derive from a Norse name, it is more likely that we have evidence of pre-Norse people and tribal structure. ‘Clan Vic Vurichie’ could be a form of the name appearing in later Gaelic as Mac Mhuirich, and bears comparison with the naming of the MacMhuirich bardic family with an eponymous ancestor, Muireadhach Albannach, of approximately the early thirteenth century.

In a later section of this treatment, the Bannatyne Manuscript describes how according to tradition there were three brothers MacCrimmon in Harris in the late-fifteenth century, Patrick, Angus and Finlay, one of whom was the father of Iain Odhar who was said to have been piper to Alasdair Crotach, the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth century MacLeod chieftain. He was said to have been founder of the Skye ‘school of piping’ and it is furthermore stated that this chief gave the MacCrimmons the farm of Boreraig and lands on the south side of Loch Dunvegan free of rent. Traditions naturally cluster round such a figure of repute and his era which spans the years from around 1480 until 1547, but this, at least
intuitively judged, seems to be one of the more persuasive pieces of information to derive from the Bannatyne Manuscript.

Other traditions also associate the MacCrimmons with the learned orders and literati of the medieval Gàidhealtachd. A North Uist tradition for example claimed that the first MacCrimmon was a Harper.\(^{48}\) The firm tradition of the MacCrimmons themselves was they had received the first of their learning at a school in Ireland.\(^{49}\) Alexander Nicolson refers in his *History of Skye* to the MacCrimmons being ‘skilful players of the harp’, inferring a close connection between harp music and pipe music when this begins to emerge about the beginning of the sixteenth century.

The survival of the apparently less than common name of MacCrimmon may also owe something to reputation and prestige, and a search for eponymous ancestor or ancestors throws up eponyms that suggest that the MacCrimmons were probably of Irish rather than Scots Gaelic origin. There are significant references which make the name *Crimthann* the more likely eponym. St Columba’s baptismal name was *Criomthann*, a familiar ‘little fox’, and one of the best known of the early bards was *Criomthann*, a man whose reputation lived on as one of the *File*. Another important bardic exemplar is *Rumann mac Colmain* who died about AD 747 and who had been *ollamh* to one of the Irish ‘high kings’. The *ollamh* combined the native tradition and the new Christian learning. This poet had blood connections with the kingship and also strong ecclesiastical connections and is said to have been regarded in Ireland as an equivalent to Virgil and Homer.\(^{50}\)

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The MacArthurs were pipers to the MacDonalds of Sleat, living at Hunglater and Peingown in the parish of Kilmuir and, about two miles south of Duntuilm, close to the former head houses of the clan chiefs.\textsuperscript{51} There were other pipers serving the chiefs of Sleat in their separate territories, beside the MacArthurs in Trotternish in the north of Skye. Eighteenth-century sources show a piper in Sleat and a piper in North Uist. As the traditional account by Angus Mackay shows, the MacArthurs served the MacDonald chieftains hereditarily, they kept a teaching establishment or ‘college’ of piping and they composed and taught \textit{ceòl mòr}. A particular detail of mutuality and reciprocation is added describing how a young MacCrimmon was sent to the MacArthurs for six months to study ‘MacArthur’s particular graces’.\textsuperscript{52} Skye tradition adds the detail that their name was rendered as \textit{MacArtain}, a name form more familiar in Ireland, and that, though they were a family of master-pipers, they were descended from a clerical dynasty.\textsuperscript{53}

 Compared to other dynasties, the service of the MacArthurs with the MacDonalds of Sleat was comparatively short, being little more than three generations. Angus Mackay describes them as ‘Pipers to MacDonald of the Isles’, a cachet which lends prestige to the family, and reference is made to MacArthurs in Proaig in Islay as ‘for many generations’ pipers and armourers to the MacDonalds of Islay. A further reference in ‘Notices of Pipers’ to an Angus Dubh who was said to have been piper to MacDonald of Islay in the seventeenth century seems to be spurious and an attempt to link different families. The presence of MacArthurs in Islay in the seventeenth century may be linked to the

\textsuperscript{53} Personal communication from Dr John MacInnes, 2005.
Campbell of Cawdor occupancy. An Islay tradition recorded by Hector Maclean (1818-1893) told of skill in piping being acquired by the ‘Big Ploughman’ from a supernatural source and how MacCrimmon secured *buaidh na piobaireachd* with the former’s fairy ‘black chanter’; he concluded: ‘the people of Islay say that it was in this manner that the music went from Islay to the Isle of Skye’, borrowing perhaps from the concept of a move in artistic centres of gravity consequent on the forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles. 54 Other piping traditions from Islay concern the motif of the piper and his dog in the cave and the *cluais-chiùil* (i.e. the skill to take words from music) in the piper’s warning to his master associated with Dunyvaig. Another tradition chimes more strongly with a link with the Lords of the Isles when MacDonald offered MacArthur a reward for his superior performance: *làn boineid de dh’ airdiod ‘s de dh’ òr.* 55

The *Clann an Sgeulaiche* MacGregors from Glenlyon in Perthshire were notable as prize-winners of the Highland Society competitions. 56 Though they come to the historian’s notice early as a family or dynasty, they are not accorded mention or status by Angus Mackay in his ‘Account of the Hereditary Pipers’. Their cognomen is highly significant in terms of a link to the learned orders. MacGregor genealogy is briefly recorded in the Book of the Dean of Lismore. A prose colophon includes the traditional genealogy of the MacGregor chiefs and descent from Kenneth mac Alpin, giving them a royal pedigree and placing them at the centre of the Gaelic

kingdom of Scotland.\textsuperscript{57} Significantly for our purposes, the writer, Duncan MacGregor, added that he drew on the ‘history books of the kings and great men’ (\textit{do sgiobh seo a leabhraibh seanachaidh nan righ agus ro-dhaoine}).\textsuperscript{58}

The early history of the MacGregors shows that they had established themselves as a clan in the late-fourteenth century and, as the dominant family in Glen Orchy, held the lands of Glenstrae and acted as a client kindred and vassals of the Campbells. The MacGregors then collided with and were displaced by the Campbells in the vigorous expansionist phase of the Clan Campbell in the late-sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{59} The Register of the Privy Council records attempts to punish and restrict the clan, and unrelenting political pressure brought a reaction in the slaughter of the Colquhouns in Glenfruin in 1603. The MacGregors went on in the pursuit to threaten Dumbarton, whose citizens – the ‘black-hatted folk’ – had gone out to support the Colquhouns. The stark consequence of this tactical triumph was the proscription of the name and outlawing of the clan. The precarious existence of the MacGregor territorial kindred thereafter left the professional kindred in uncertain circumstances. This and the conventional recall of traditional values was the refrain in a song on the Battle of Glen Fruin preserved in the MacLagan Manuscript:

\begin{center}
\textit{Tha mi 'g iargain mun fhineadh} \\
\textit{Gus an trialladh gach filidh} \\
\textit{....}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{59} Martin MacGregor, ‘Surely one of the greatest poems ever made in Britain’: the Lament for Griogair Ruadh MacGregor of Glen Strae and its Historical Background, in Edward J Cowan and Douglas Gifford eds., \textit{The Polar Twins.} Edinburgh 1999, 119.
[I am lamenting the kindred
To whom every poet would be journeying].

The patronage of literature and learning was as much part of MacGregor culture as of the other leading kin as is clearly shown in the concentration of MacGregor poems in the Book of the Dean of Lismore. The chief had a family bard at the time of the compilation of the Book of the Dean and early-fifteenth century poem to the MacGregor chieftain refers to poets (fìli), bards and harpers, and poet-bands (na cliara). The earliest Scottish reference to clàrsach or clàrsaich is in an early-fifteenth century eulogy to a Clan Gregor chieftain. At a later date, within their own kindred and further afield, the MacGregor pipers were of the family known as of the Sgeulaiche. At this stage of research, their longer-term pedigree is not known with any certainty. Their family cachet is conventionally translated as ‘Storyteller’, with a deeper meaning of chronicler or historian and, as such, we suggest, descended from a family of the learned orders. Their function might be distinct from the poet as is made clear in an account of the bardic organisation written in 1692 by a Divinity student from Strathspey on behalf of Professor Garden of Aberdeen University; the writer described the first in rank as the poets or ‘philies’, and ‘the second degree’ as ‘Skealichin’ (sgeulaichean) or ‘Sheanachin’ (seanchaidhean), being ‘narrators of antiquitie and old historie especialie genealogies of great persons and families’. The writer further glossed Sgeulaiche as ‘properlie signifying ane historian’. While the ‘historian’ appears here to be operating at a secondary level in the

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60 Derick S Thomson, Scottish Gaelic Folk-Poetry Ante 1650, Scottish Gaelic Studies Vol VIII Pt I (1955), 17.
learned orders, the range of uses of words such as scél in Irish sources is not as potentially disparaging as English usages might seem to be.

Some corroboration of the status and role of the ‘historian’ is contained in the information on poets, historians and physicians gathered by Edward Lhuyd and Robert Wodrow at the turn of the eighteenth century. The relatively high social rank and influence of the ‘historian’ was built on history being virtually synonymous with genealogy. Rev John Fraser of Coll described the ‘Bardi, poetici and Seneciones, peculinaire to every family … The Seneciones were such as meddled with history, and the true stateing of genealogys, and descents of familys, whose records were so sacredly keepe, that it’s admirable how farr back they could recurr.’ Rev John Maclean, the poet Maighstir Seathan, places the historians firmly in the learned orders with his reference to historians who served the Maclean chieftains hereditarily until about 1660 when the last of them died and the office lapsed as the Campbells of Argyll subverted Maclean control: ‘The last of them that was eminent in that office, called Muldonich McEoin, was 34 years at the schools in Ireland’. Separation of function between bard and historian was not necessarily a rule. The MacMhuirich bards held their lands in Uist hereditarily – mar dhuais bardachd - so long as they maintained historical and genealogical records for Clanranald – a chumadh suas sloinne agus seanchas chlann Dònail, ‘that they would sustain the genealogy and history of Clan Donald’.

In his Diomoladh Pioba Dhomhnaill Bhàin, John MacCodrum bracketed the Rankins, personified in Con-duiligh, with the MacCrimmons and MacArthurs as the leading piping families. The point is made as a matter

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of general knowledge to heighten the sense of ridicule of a North Uist piper of the poet's own day.\textsuperscript{65} The Rankins' traditional claim seems to have been principally of aristocratic descent rather than membership of the learned orders; their family histories maintained that they were of the same stock as the Maclean chieftains (\textit{bho 'n aon fhreumh}), and that \textit{Cù-duiligh mac Raing} was the great-great-grandfather of \textit{Gill'-Eathain na Tuaighe} from whom the Macleans are descended. The Macleans came to prominence in the late-fourteenth century within the ambit of the Lordship of the Isles and in a client relationship to the Lordship.\textsuperscript{66} They established their own power bases in the sixteenth century as the dominant family in Mull, Morvern, Ardgour, Coll and Tiree. The superior claim of the Rankins and their highly distinctive historical name give them a particular significance.

The Rankins have been described as hereditary pipers to the Macleans of Duart and also to the Macleans of Coll.\textsuperscript{67} Their status in Coll seemed to be secure in the late-eighteenth century when Johnson and Boswell stayed in the island and when the two travellers were also shown \textit{Taigh Raingich} hard against Breacachadh Castle.\textsuperscript{68} The first Rankin to hold office was \textit{Cù-duiligh mac Raing} who was claimed as one of the noted ancestors of the Macleans and contemporary with the first Macleans to have possession of lands in Mull. Rankin history exemplifies the persistent and besetting problem of evidence and discrimination in handling sources. Conventional record sources corroborate that the Rankin 'dynasty' served Maclean chieftains or gentry for about four generations only.\textsuperscript{69} Family and oral tradition goes deeper but must pose questions as to reliability or

\textsuperscript{69} Keith Sanger, Mull Pipers, \textit{Piping Times} 1990, 38-43.
historical veracity. Not surprisingly perhaps, a fount of information about the Rankins emerged with descendants of Neil Rankin, piper to Maclean of Coll. Counduillie Rankin Morison of Dervaig in Mull was the principal informant of Henry Whyte whose essay on the Rankins, written at the beginning of the twentieth century, demonstrates at the least how pervasive stock motifs in piping history could be; anecdotes on musical skills deriving from supernatural sources, tests of mastery, the master-player’s ‘hidden tune’ or *port-falaich*, and schooling with the MacCrimmons fulfil our expectations about piping history.\(^{70}\) The essay however also contains important historical material for our purpose, particularly relating to the nineteenth century with verifiable fact and also more or less reliable family memory.

Counduillie’s son, Neil Rankin Morrison, of Kengharar in Mull, delivered a paper at the AGM of the Gaelic Society of Inverness in February 1934. He described how he drew on the oral tradition of the area of Mull where the Rankins were pipers although he names none of his sources. He commented that so little of their history was written down that he was reliant on the oral tradition of the old folk (*beul-aithris nan seann daoine*) and that it was, for him, clearer and surer than any written history.\(^{71}\) This is tendentious argument which may not reassure us but in another context, Neil Rankin Morrison supplies from family tradition a vital account of Eachann Bacach, the seventeenth-century ‘court poet’ of Maclean of Duart.\(^{72}\) Within the assumed limits of family tradition therefore, with all that this implies, there is a sincerity, integrity and coherence in the Morison accounts. The essential details were briefly

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delivered, that Cù-duiligh mac Raing was the first piper that was in Mull, that he was taught music and trained in Ireland, that he came to Mull with the early Maclean chieftains, that he began to teach music in Mull and founded what the family considered to be the first school or college of piping in Scotland. The school, here using the term Oil-thigh, was at Kilbrennan in Mull and was kept up until about 1758 when it is said that they had sixteen pupils. This brief account notionally extends over a greater period than the historical four generations and unequivocally links the family learning with Ireland. A very distinctive naming pattern may serve to abbreviate an historical pedigree to suggest, in this case, that the eponymous Cù-duiligh lived in the late-seventeenth century. The claim of shared descent with the chiefs, contest skills and the schools in Ireland hint at a longer pedigree which seems to have been dislocated with the much-described political and economic decline of Maclean fortunes in the 1670s and 1680s.

Another version of the shared descent of the Rankins and the Macleans may be inferred from the folio Highland genealogies commonly referred to as MS 1467. This is a vital document for medieval Scotland that awaits fuller scholarly treatment. Authoritative suggestions have been made as to authorship, dating and purpose which commend the document as evidence in the present context. The scribe of the genealogical sections may credibly have been a MacMhuirich, Dubhghall Albanach mac mhic Cathail, writing in Ireland about 1400, and recording genealogies of those important families that recognised the authority of the Lords of the Isles. The Maclean section begins with Lachlan and Eachann who can

75 Donald Mackinnon, op.cit., 72, 106; Colm Ó Baoill, Scotticisms in a manuscript of 1467, Scottish Gaelic Studies Vol XV (1988), 124-125.
be dated from infeftments by Donald, Lord of the Isles, to the 1390s. The
descent includes important naming patterns and includes a version of
‘Cuduig mac Raingce’ who, uncharacteristically in this source since
there is little additional information forebye proper names, is qualified as
Abbot of Lismore, an early church foundation, putatively of the sixth or
seventh century and with links to Ireland. The name Lismore is also
familiar in Ireland, not least in the prestigious monastic site and early
foundation in Waterford. The genealogies of MS 1467 suggest
compilation of materials from different sources and a relative reliability.
Recent research also has suggested that the background and descent of
the main line of the Macleans might have derived status from the
medieval learned orders, especially ecclesiastics and a possible Judex.\(^{76}\)
In the case of the MacMhuirichs, there is extensive evidence linking the
poets to clerics, for example in a number of church appointments in the
fifteenth century.\(^{77}\) The Book of the Dean of Lismore was the scribal
work of clerics and the Rev John Maclean (c. 1680-1756), minister of
Kilninian, was also the learned poet, Maighstir Seathan, whose verses in
praise of Edward Lhuyd set perceived parameters for the learned orders:

\[\text{Gach Fili’s Bard, gach Leigh, Aoisdáin, is Draoi} \]
\[\text{....} \]
\[\text{‘Every Poet and Bard, every Physician, Eulogist and Druid,} \]
\[\text{Every Craftsman and Historian too; every noble art,} \]
\[\text{That Gathelus brought with him over from Egypt,} \]

\(^{76}\) [W F Skene ed.] Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis. Edinburgh 1847, 358; William F Skene, Celtic
It was in Gaelic that they wrote when working with the pen.\(^\text{78}\)

Angus Mackay’s account of the Mackays of Gairloch as hereditary pipers includes four generations and spans a period of nearly two hundred years, but concentrates on the life and achievements of Iain Dall Mackay. *Am Piobaire Dall* was remarkably long-lived, being born in 1656 and dying in 1754. He was the son of a piper to the Mackenzies of Gairloch and was sent to the MacCrimmon piping school. His apprenticeship lasted seven years and has given rise to a number of anecdotes and proverbial lore. He is said to have composed twenty-four pieces of *piobaireachd*, some of which have survived.\(^\text{79}\) This interesting aperçu even offers a challenge to the understanding of what sort of music might be inferred by the application of the word *piobaireachd*. Significantly, Iain Dall’s countryman, John Mackenzie (1806-1848), included him in the anthology *Sàr-Obair nam Bard Gaelach*, and his career travelling round the big houses and composing songs to patrons would seem to mark him out as a bard. A subtle distinction might be indicated for his status as a poet by his preference for travelling between different patrons and his avoidance of exclusive attachment to a single family. His music also is addressed to different patrons. His surviving songs include for example his *Beannachadh Bàird* or ‘Bard’s Blessing’ in honour of Mackenzie of Gairloch and is a classic of the genre with the expected literary norms, tropes and allusions.\(^\text{80}\) As the poet *air chuairt*, on circuit widely between the Reay country and Skye, he has been considered as a significant


member of the ‘Talisker circle’ of poets and musicians and, in Skye, particularly addressed his attentions to the MacDonalds of Sleat in significant panegyric terms. Another patron, a son of Lord Reay, was the object of the famous lament of about 1696, *Cumha Choire ’n Easa*, in which the personified Corrie converses with the poet. This is a highly sophisticated composition and the poetic device of the conversation occurs in one or two other celebrated instances, in *Oran na Comhachaig* of about 1600 where the poet converses with an owl, and in Roderick Morison’s *Oran Mòr Mhic Leòid* of 1693, using the Echo as one side of the dialogue.\(^{81}\) Iain Dall includes a reference to Roderick Morison composing a *fàilte* or ‘salute’ to *Coire ’n Easa*, and, as members of the ‘Talisker circle’, it would be surprising if these two ‘echo’ songs were not related in some way or that the piper’s might not be imitative.\(^{82}\)

A further strong though unconfirmed bardic reference may lie in the *piobaireachd* attributed to Iain Dall, *Crosanachd an Doill*, unambiguously and conventionally translated as ‘The Blind Piper’s Obstinacy’ but capable of further interpretation. In the first place, ‘obstinacy’ seems the least likely behavioural epithet to attach to Iain Dall in any context. The word *crosanachd* had a range of meanings from peevishness and perverseness to a literary style of alternating verse and prose, or verse constructed on two or more people conversing. The sense of perverseness may derive latterly from the literary usages of *crosanachd* in prompting critical reaction and counterclaim from the object of this versifying. It was a verse style which was associated with the ‘poet-band’ or *cliar chrosan* who used it for their brand of mockery

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and satire. Given the bardic circles in which Iain Dall moved and the contemporaneity of the ‘Fernaig Manuscript’ for example, his *Crosanachd* may be the music for a lost composition in syllabic verse with changes of rhythm to mark a dialogue style. Iain Dall seemed to favour, perhaps delight in, the *crosanachd* form or, alternatively, the piece may be a crafted musical reworking of the literary form with the very clear changes of rhythm through the variations representing the challenge and response of satirical dialogue. However this piece may be interpreted, its significance has been lost in the conventional literature of *piobaireachd* and the first correction to make would be to adjust the title to reflect the piece’s bardic significance, for example, ‘The *crosanachd* (or contention) of the blind poet’.

The Fernaig Manuscript, compiled between about 1688 and 1693, is associated with patrons and poets of Iain Dall’s own country and includes several *crosanachd* pieces, suggesting that this literary style may have had significant currency in Wester Ross. In reviewing Iain Dall’s reputation and poetry, it is worth considering that he would have regarded himself as one of the learned order of poets, even of the *Aos Dàna*, since by his day the *crosanachd* was part of their stock in trade, but he had been condemned by blindness to the role of musician. There are allusions to Fionn texts in his songs and in classic bardic fashion he represents himself as *mar Oisean an dèigh nam Fiann* (‘as Ossian after the Feinne’ i.e. the last of the race). He uses *fear ealain* (‘man of art’ or

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‘artist’) as the Corrie’s form of address to him and opens the lament for the loss of a patron in classic terms:

\[ Mi \ an \ diu \ a' \ fàgail \ na \ tire \]

.....
‘Today I am leaving the land,
Travelling across the slope of the forest,
What has left my pocket empty of silver
Is that my patron is in the grave.`

Brothers in music and economics

In his extempoire verses on ‘The Court at Tongue’, Rob Donn commented on the disregard, even disdain and ignorance, by then shown to both piper and poet: \textit{Oir 's bràithrean ann an ceòl sinn, an còmhradh beòil 's am feadaireachd} ...(‘Since we are brothers in music, both in conversation and in piping’), recalling a shared inheritance of a guild or fraternity of the learned orders. For the artists and performers, the sharpest consequence of change was the failure of patronage. By the late-eighteenth century this was an economic issue as well as a social anxiety. A beautifully crafted dialogue song from Ulster in bardic \textit{rannaigheacht mór} metre, dated by O’Rahilly to the 1740s, argues for the merits of music against the harsh imperatives of modern economics. The blind harper, Giollamhuire Mac Cartain, laments the loss of patronage and despairs, as Oisean after the Fianna, for his profession. In one of the manuscript versions an additional verse encapsulates the bard’s frustration and bitterness against cattle and crops:

\footnote{86 John Mackenzie, \textit{Sar-Obair nam Bard Gaelach:} op. cit., 98.}

\footnote{87 Hew Morrison ed., \textit{Songs and Poems in the Gaelic Language by Rob Donn.} Edinburgh 1899, 426.}
Ni ar mo cheól-sa atá locht
(truagh nach bhfuil mo chorp i geré)
acht ortsa, a Dhonnchadh na mbó,
ós binne leat bró na mé.

[‘It is not my music that is at fault
(pity that my body is not in the clay),
but it is you at fault, Donncha of the Cows,
since you find the sound of a quern sweeter than me’].

Awareness of change and its implications for the arts was universal throughout the Gàidhealtachd and the closure of the schools of piping was a clear symptom. There is more than a hint of disgust or despair evident in MacCrimmon and Rankin history that their status – or what remained of it – no longer depended on their inherited learning, so that genealogy, history or even pseudo-history had no value in the new era of the economic imperative. A poignant and telling note is offered from Rankin tradition; Counduillie, younger son of Neil, last piper to Maclean of Coll, was seen practising his chanter by the Coll factor, Bàilidh Threaslan, who warned him: Cuir bhuit sin! 'Nuair bhios each comhla ris na h-uaislean, bithidh tusa comhla ris na coin ['Put that away! When the rest are in the company of the gentry, you'll be with the dogs'].

Conclusions

Looking at the individual and celebrated piping families within their own terms of attainments, survival and longevity, and striving to fix

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88 Tomás Ó Rathile, Measgra Dánta I. Cló Ollscoile Chorcaí 1972, 68.
89 ‘Fionn’ [Henry Whyte], History of the Rankins, op.cit. 197.
genealogical detail such as succession over generations and dates of service, may limit our view; there must still be doubt and ambivalence in the historical and traditional record, for example in variations in MacCrimmon succession between six and twelve generations, and this distracts us from further analysis of the MacCrimmon record and consideration of context. The study of specific texts for the illumination of specific topics also may lead to them being laid aside where they fail to agree with a conventional wisdom, whereas even contradictions may corroborate rather than challenge some aspects of the tradition.

Although the secondary literature and narrative histories of piping allude to some of these details, with due respect they fail to supply an adequate understanding of contemporary society compared with the insights that can be derived from Gaelic sources. The narrative in parts for example seems to have been over-dependent on translations which have never been questioned, thus denying a richness and variety in Gaelic. In addition to crosanachd discussed above, a slight example might suffice; Lasan Phadraig Chaogaich, part-attributed to Iain Dall, has been acknowledged by the Piobaireachd Society editors as in error in their translation as ‘squinting’, in favour of ‘blinking’ or ‘winking’. The word caogach can indeed mean ‘squint-eyed’, as Angus Mackay retails, but arguably a figurative, even proverbial sense must be more significant than the literal, the nuanced rather than the direct.

It is still difficult to build a clear picture of the emergence of the piping families and their possible association with group structures such as the learned orders of the medieval Gàidhealtachd. In this context greater emphasis could be placed on the group as opposed to the individual or the succession of individuals which has been an over-simple way of
presenting the piping families. This is not to disregard or underestimate the importance of the individual or the individual skill or brilliance of Patrick Mor MacCrimmon or Charles MacArthur, as is represented by the traditional narratives, but it tends to elide and lose, underestimate or even misrepresent human bonds and relationships that supplied the essential glue in clan and kin structures and gave such groups their status and longevity. Arguably group structure and group consciousness may be as important, and sometimes more important, than musicality in the interpretation of piobaireachd and in turn, this broader, almost ‘anthropological’ interpretation of piobaireachd may add insights to the understanding of the group and its dynamic in different or archaic societies as well as of the music itself.

The interpretation of early history and genealogies depends heavily on issues of perception and identity. Factors such as links with Ireland, bardic or other status-conferring origins, the pursuit of excellence and the maintaining of schools become clearer within the model of a unified Gàidhealtachd and a medieval Gaelic culture province. The homogeneity of the Gàidhealtachd within the period c. 1200-1650 and easy assumptions of commonality have now been challenged and the ‘Sea of Moyle’, Sruth na Maoile, presented as both a real and a psychological barrier rather than the ‘bridge’. Wilson McLeod’s analysis of Classical Gaelic, bardic poetry shows that Gaelic Scotland played a secondary and marginal role in a culture province, the unity of which he suggests has been overstated. In view of the Tudor conquest and English military subjugation of Ireland, the emergence of a Scottish state and the Reformation, cracks were bound to appear in the Gaelic culture province.

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Most of the surviving bardic poetry belongs to Ireland, and Scotland’s contribution both in terms of locus and corpus was peripheral. Ironically perhaps, the piping families contribute a significant footnote to the redistribution of cultural assets in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. When the arts of poetry and music continued to flourish in Gaelic Scotland, albeit at a perceived lower level, the pipers could only aspire and function by aligning themselves and associating themselves with Scottish families with Irish links and origins. The emergence and short-lived success of the piping dynasties can be seen as a significant facet of the divided cultures of this Gàidhealtachd. Equally, the centrality of Ireland in cultural expectations in the classical period emerges from the deeper levels of evidence for the piping dynasties.

In considering traditional origins for the piping dynasties, it might fairly be claimed that the links with Ireland are less than explicit or lack more substantial evidence than other features. Adopting Wilson McLeod’s stern admonition and conclusion as a guiding principle - ‘assumptions should be challenged, hypotheses advanced with caution and romanticism excised’ - we might usefully hypothesise by moving firmly away from accepting a narrative of autonomous development for the individual families. The argument has been offered here of very clear analogies to be found in bardic origins and the learned orders, features such as resemblances in metric style, social structure, and cultural idea and mood between the bardic orders and the piping families, and between historical phenomena which may have no other connection. It is argued above that these cultural substrata were more than sufficient to create Highland piping. The other side of a hypothetical coin is that the piping families are part and parcel of the emergence of vernacular literature in Scottish Gaelic in the seventeenth century. Predicated on both arguments are fresh
understanding of the Great Highland Bagpipe and *piobaireachd*, and insights into preconceptions and stylistic tenets of the pipers; these include a shared outlook and *Weltanschauung* with the professional bard and seanchaidh, a shared outlook intensely conservative in nature and whose relevance was eroded by changing social and political mores, isolation and then by economic circumstances, reflected finally in the closure of the schools of piping in the 1760s and 1770s, a while after the end of the Jacobite wars. The concomitant of change, both cause and effect, were decline of patronage, loss of status and loss of privileges, so that the old assumptions – *saor bho chàin sa bith* – dwindled into fossilized and proverbial phrases preserving old values. The words of Mahon O’Heffernan in the early seventeenth century are crisply matched by the MacCrimmon’s disavowal of the approaches of new patrons for teaching and performance in the early nineteenth:

‘Such an art as this is no profit to me,

Though it is a misfortune that it should fall to the ground

...’

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National Museums Scotland/Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama

May 2007

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The Pastoral or New Bagpipe: piping and the neo-baroque

Hugh Cheape

The museum record

The Pastoral and Union Pipes represent one of the more intriguing topics to emerge from the surviving material record of piping in Scotland, intriguing because of the number of instruments that survive and because of their generally high quality of workmanship, detail and finish. Surveys of any significant collections of bagpipes in museums in Scotland or in the United Kingdom might even give an impression of this type of bagpipe being the ‘national instrument’, such is the comparative wealth of the material evidence and the occurrence of the name in different forms in catalogue records. But this instrument in its different versions is more or less invisible in the written histories of the bagpipe in Scotland or the United Kingdom. It has received comparatively generous treatment in Ireland but cultural politics have until recently disfavoured recognition of any existence, or pre-existence, beyond Ireland. If its history is still to be written, which is our contention here, it appears to be a musicological enigma with very little information on its emergence, no clear chronology of this process, and minimal information on its makers or the demand for and supply of this what has undoubtedly been a remarkable instrument.

On the basis of the surviving material record, the Pastoral and Union Pipes appear quintessentially to be creations of the eighteenth century and of professional wind instrument makers or turners, that is skilled lathe workers, of this period. This nomenclature is adopted here to describe them since these are the names, in the first place ‘Pastoral’ and later ‘Union’, evident in the contemporary written record and the ‘Pastoral or New Bagpipe’ used as title in the 1740s. Later and more recent naming has wandered from these terms, especially when this instrument appeared to fall out of use in the nineteenth century, and we find other terms such as ‘Irish Pipes’, Uilleann Pipes or ‘hybrid-Union pipes’ freely and categorically used in the late-nineteenth and twentieth-century literature. To date, there is no clearly discernable evidence on where this type of instrument may have first been made or by whom,
though suggestions may be made. Without exception among the many examined none of the earliest surviving instruments seems to carry any trace of maker’s mark, or insufficient evidence is traceable at present for such to be recognised or identified. Records of provenance of instruments in public collections are generally poor. At the least, comparisons may be made between instruments or parts of instruments and conjecture offered.

In its earlier form of the ‘Pastoral Pipe’, this is a very distinctive instrument in terms of European bagpipes of the period, with long chanter and with drones in a common stock, bellows-blown, and apparently adapted for indoor playing and with other instruments. Undoubtedly the Pastoral and later Union pipes were designed to make bagpipe music appeal to sophisticated and discriminating audiences and to fit in a social and even musical context of violin, piano or harpsichord, flute and oboe. This bagpipe might be said to represent a largely unnoticed, uncharted but nonetheless significant facet of the changes implicit in the evolution of European music in the successive phases of Renaissance, Baroque and Classical. Forms of music were changing, for example with the invention of opera and cantata, and instruments were adapted and discarded without comment or nostalgia. In this context therefore, its origins might be more readily traced in European woodwind than in folk instrumentation. The Pastoral Pipe itself, as a new form of bagpipe which is our contention, must have borrowed or derived acoustic concepts from the baroque oboe with its narrower bore and smaller tone-holes, since such features characterise its chanter compared to traditional forms. The oboe itself was developed in this period from the early woodwind shawm. This is a conceptual link that may help to identify early pipe makers in the ranks of wind instrument makers in the large urban centres, principally London. In terms of other bagpipes, the Pastoral Pipe might be seen as taking its basic form and proportions from the so-called ‘Lowland’ or ‘Border’ bagpipe, although the technology developed and the standards achieved may well have influenced in turn the development of the latter, particularly in relation to its characteristic common-stock mounted drones and the use of bellows; the assumption has been that the latter was a precursor of the Pastoral Pipe in the Scottish piping tradition although strictly speaking the evidence for this is meagre.
Pastoral Pipes

Baroque instrumentation

In a European context the Pastoral Pipe seems to follow culturally in the steps of instruments of the musette type. The musette was essentially a bellows-blown small pipe developed by leading professional musicians in metropolitan France in the course of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries for courtly and aristocratic performance and for inclusion in orchestras and consorts. It began to acquire its own repertoire or part-repertoire of music that today might be played by the recorder. This type of instrument then gave rise to at least two contemporary published works, those of Borjon (1672) and Hotteterre (1738), that described it in comparative detail. Sufficient numbers of these instruments survive in European collections to offer vivid testimony to the finesse and intentions of their makers. By contrast with the musette, the Pastoral pipes are always larger instruments and have conical rather than cylindrical bore chanters. French makers also moved to producing sophisticated and finely-crafted conical bore cornemuses as larger instruments for different styles of ensemble playing. The musette de Poitou, which is mentioned in connection with the cornemuse in ensemble music-making in the French Court in the mid-seventeenth century, was probably a chanter played without the bag en concert for royal and aristocratic audiences and drew on distinctive regional musical traditions. It was played with the hautbois de Poitou, essentially also a sort of bagless chanter. It remains difficult, without further specific evidence particularly on makers, to establish a chronology of change and development or a pattern of possible diffusion from courtly music-making to alehouse and from France to England and Scotland. The concept of diffusion from the Continent seems also to be challenged by such evidence as exists for piping on the British mainland. References to pipes and pipemaking in Pepys’ Diary indicate fine instruments being made and played in London at the time of the Restoration, if not before 1660, and an Aberdeenshire laird’s journal describes an occasion of lively and of sophisticated music-making in a public-house in Penrith in 1729, involving performance on small pipes, double chanter small pipes and ‘big pipe’, all being blown or ‘winded’ with bellows.

In accounts of the development of the Lowland bagpipe and the small pipes of Scotland, they are conventionally regarded as being bellows-blown instruments, but
the introduction of the Pastoral Pipe may mark an earlier or first adoption of bellows for British bagpipes. Bellows have long been used as a means of supplying air for wind instruments such as the organ, from Roman times since an assumed invention in the third century BC. The use of bellows for playing bagpipes can be considered a significant step in the sophistication of the instrument. The dry air or ‘caul’ wind is less damaging to the reeds, as any piper knows, as humidity emanating from the player’s breath causes swelling of the fibres, subsequent shrinkage and deterioration. A small set of bellows with leather stitched to two wooden boards is strapped round the player’s waist; the outer board with an inlet valve is tied to the player’s arm at the elbow and is drawn out and compressed slowly to maintain a steady supply of air to the reeds through a connecting pipe into the bag. A non-return valve is fixed into the connecting-pipe to prevent leakage of air from the bag back into the bellows, and a similar valve is set into the outer board of the bellows to keep them ‘staunch’ while playing. Bellows had been commonly used to supply air to smaller instruments such as the portative organ since the medieval period, and they are shown specifically and in some detail with the bagpipe in Michael Praetorius’ Syntagma musicum of 1619, explaining the various forms of secular music and musical instruments current at the time. Bellows have remained in use for example with French bagpipes, the Uilleann pipes of Ireland, the Northumbrian pipes, Scottish Lowland and Small Pipes, as well as with bagpipes in Eastern Europe. They have been made and used again in Scotland in observable numbers since the founding of the Lowland and Border Pipers’ Society in 1981.

The earlier manifestation of this ‘new’ bagpipe in England and Scotland therefore was the so-called ‘Pastoral Pipe’, a name evidently adopted, or at least proposed, at the time while the term ‘pastoral’ was popularly current and part of the verbal coinage of the Baroque. It is suggested on the basis of the very meagre surviving material evidence that this instrument was developed in the first half of the eighteenth century, probably for theatrical light opera and entr’actes performance, as well as for dance music and the playing of traditional airs. Such instruments may well have been used for example in the popular and fashionable music dramas of the time, principally for example in John Gay’s ‘Beggar’s Opera’ (1729) and also in versions of the pastoral drama, ‘The Gentle Shepherd’, by the writer and poet, Allan Ramsay (1688-1758). The early instruments, probably created by musical instrument makers firstly in
Pastoral Pipes

London and later in Edinburgh and Dublin, had only two drones, bass and tenor, and the chanter, and are comparable in overall size to the Lowland or Border bagpipe. There are certain characteristics that distinguish the Pastoral Pipe. The bass drone in most of the surviving instruments is constructed in three sections and four ‘joints’ and is ‘folded’ or ‘returned’ through the stock to maintain the full sounding length while keeping the instrument reasonably compact. The length of the bass drone proportionate to the sounding lengths of the other drone or drones points to the acoustic significance of harmonising with the low pitch of the chanter. The chanter, made in sections or ‘joints’ like other woodwind instruments such as flute and oboe, had a long narrow conical, but not necessarily straight-sided, bore, usually with subtle detailing of enlargement and reduction to influence tuning and the chanter’s ‘behaviour’. The finger or tone holes are repositioned and reduced in size compared to conventional chanters so that the linear distance from the reed seat to the top holes (thumb and finger) is greater and the distance or ‘reach’ from top to bottom holes is also greater. Taken with the narrower bore, the effect is to soften the sound and lower the pitch. The construction of the instrument in its different components suggests that its sound was designed to blend as much as to stand out.

A fine and perhaps typical example of the Pastoral Pipe chanter in the National Museums, acquired from the Skeeoch Cumming Collection, is 517mm or 20¼ins in length. Another and possibly older example is 510mm or 20ins in length. Shorter examples, such as 466mm or 18¾ins, demonstrate that there was probably no fixed standard of pitch in these instruments. They make interesting comparison with contemporary oboes in terms of styles of turning, profiles, bores, vent holes and sectional construction and more may be learnt for an organology of piping by more detailed examination of these instruments as a class of Baroque woodwind. The bore of these ‘long chanters’ expanded from about 4mm at the reed-seat and ‘throat’, opening out towards about 13mm or 14mm at the ‘mouth’ and 16mm or 17mm at the ‘bell’. The seven finger holes on the front of the chanter were more or less evenly spaced and between 4mm and 5mm in diameter. Surviving early chanters will sometimes show signs of finger holes being altered, such as being enlarged to sharpen a note relative to its neighbours. Similarly there may be evidence of the ‘throat’ being enlarged in order to sharpen the top hand or upper octave notes by lowering the reed seat. Such modifications might be made subsequent to the chanter’s manufacture,
Pastoral Pipes

when a properly made reed could not be obtained or fashions were changing. The mouth of the chanter, usually mounted with a finely-turned but narrow sole, was on an extension piece with one or two sound holes defining the sounding length and pitch; this has been conventionally described as the ‘foot joint’ or the ‘bell’ and extended the chanter length by about one-third and, with the column of air lengthened, allowed the instrument to be more easily overblown into a second octave. Opinions seem to vary on how easily or successfully this could be achieved.

It has been observed that if the foot joint is removed, the dimensions and superficial appearance of the chanter resemble the later Union and Uilleann pipe chanter, a similarity that has given rise to interesting speculation over the development of the latter. A corroborative detail is the treatment and traditional ‘finish’ of the mouth of the later chanter with a small bone or ivory ferrule rather than a ‘sole’. The slim shape and surface profile of the ferrule resemble the tenon of the earlier ‘Pastoral’ chanter, turned to receive the ‘foot joint’ and amounting to what might be seen as a ‘fossilized tenon’. The suggestion has been made that the pitch of the chanter might be spontaneously raised by removing the ‘foot joint’, possibly even to achieve a change of key in performance. Realistically bagpipe makers in Britain or Ireland must have wanted to raise the pitch of the chanter by shortening the sounding length or increase its versatility, and reconstructed and finished it in a form which enabled the seated player to ‘stop’ it on his knee. The ‘fossilized tenon’ gave a neater finish to the mouth of the shorter chanter for this ‘stopping’ movement. Furthermore it has been suggested that the Pastoral Pipe was a Scottish adaptation of the Union Pipe and the essay on the ‘Bagpipe’ in the standard work of reference, *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (fifth edition, 1954), slightly perversely dubs the Pastoral Pipe as the ‘hybrid Union-pipe’, inferring that the former derived from the Union Pipe rather than the opposite process. Ironically perhaps, it is observable from the material record in two fine examples in the National Museums of Scotland that the Pastoral Pipe was still being made in Scotland in the early-nineteenth century and a generation or two after the Union Pipe had evolved *sui generis*. This characterisation and naming seems to have been exclusively the proposal of William Cocks of Ryton; Anthony Baines adopts the term in his monograph for the naming of two examples in the Balfour Collection and other writers of the twentieth century have used the same name.10
Pastoral Pipes

Pipers’ precept

In the prevailing context of scarcity of written evidence, a detailed insight into the Pastoral Pipe is supplied by a ‘tutor’ and book of music, *The Compleat Tutor for the Pastoral or New Bagpipe*, which was produced in London by John Geoghegan in about 1746. This ‘small Treatise’ on the bagpipe, measuring 238x140mm in a portrait format with 28 pages, is the first book of bagpipe music printed in Britain and is a remarkable document, opening a window onto a particular stage of the evolution of the bagpipe in Europe. It infers in its title and text contemporary change and innovation in bagpipe making and playing, and the use of the term ‘pastoral’ relates it closely and possibly uniquely to contemporary musical fashion; Geoghegan may in fact be the sole begetter of the name ‘Pastoral Pipe’. The author commends his work to all practitioners or, as he puts it, ‘the Professers of this antient pastoral Musick’, and the assumed naming of ‘Pastoral’ for the bagpipe must have had an immediate appeal to cultivated audiences of the early-eighteenth century and a significant imitative aesthetic. Significantly also for the evolution of the instrument, he commends his Treatise to

‘... the Makers of the Instrument, one of whom I am informed has of late invented a Way of fixing two Keys to the Chanter or Pipe whereon the Notes of Musick are made, which perform a Note more than any other Pipe or Hautboy, and make some flat and sharp Notes with great Exactness. But since I have not met with any Pipe of that kind, I hope it will satisfy them that I have made this scale so as to explain the Manner of making all the Flats and Sharps independent of any Keys’ (p. 1).

The text is prefaced by an engraved plate with a carefully drawn scene showing a man dressed in greatcoat and tricorn hat standing on a terrace in a classical and sylvan setting. He is playing what must be assumed to be a set of the ‘Pastoral or New’ pipes of the book’s title. The instrument has a long chanter, distinctive swan-necked bag and the effect artistically heightened with the chanter stock held in what appears to be

7
Pastoral Pipes

a swan’s beak, and two drones in a common stock lying horizontally over the player’s left arm; with the bag under his right arm but left hand uppermost on the chanter, we seem to have a closely-observed representation of a particular player rather than a reversal of image in printing from the plate. The bagpipe is inflated by bellows. The instrument inferred within the text has two drones only, bass and tenor. It can be a matter of conjecture whether this might represent the author himself or be designed to enhance the appeal of piping for a young, socially aspiring performer or audience. The printing of this book in the 1740s invites speculation that its author and other ‘Pastoral or New’ pipers might have felt a need to distance themselves from other forms of bagpipe, those for example perceived as Scottish or Highland, which might be identified with the contemporary threat to the state from Jacobitism and Highland culture.¹²

A conspicuous characteristic of the ‘Treatise’ is the use of a printing type with cursive letter-forms imitative of handwriting, a style achieving informality without compromising legibility. The author may have been consciously imitating other music treatises such as Hotteterre’s (1738). Neither in the title, text or music with one or two exceptions is there any stronger link with Ireland though Geoghegan’s name suggests an Ulster or Leinster background, variously spelt over time (and suggesting pronunciation) as Gegan, Geghan, Gehagan or Geogan and deriving probably from a Gaelic original, Mac Eochagáin. The tune ‘Gahagan’s Frisk’ (p.11) may be the compiler’s own composition and co-incidentally may indicate the pronunciation colloquially of his name. As we find Scots in the business of music and literature making their way to London in the first half of the eighteenth century, this epicentre of patronage and performance attracted practitioners also from Ireland, as it attracted, for example, writer such as Edmund Burke and Oliver Goldsmith. James Thomson, author of The Seasons, and Tobias Smollett were also immigrants from Scotland. More or less contemporary with Geoghegan’s Compleat Tutor, James Oswald, moving from Edinburgh to London in 1741, began the publication of his Caledonian Pocket Companion about 1745 and both men were associated with the music publisher, John Simpson. The title page of The Compleat Tutor bears the rubric: ‘Printed for & Sold by John Simpson at the Bass Viol & Flute in Sweetings Alley opposite the East Door of the Royal Exchange, London, Where may be had Bagpipes, & Books of instructions for any Single Instrument.’ John Simpson, a London maker
of Baroque woodwind instruments, may be a key to understanding the emergence of the Pastoral Pipe.

The author of *The Compleat Tutor* describes the pipes as being ‘improved’ or ‘brought to such perfection’ to achieve the same range as the flute or oboe (‘Hautboy’) and the first of two finger charts projects a scale from Middle C to Top D, being two octaves and a note, and in practice more than a flute. The bagpipe is here classified with Baroque woodwind. As Geoghegan writes (quoted above), keys he has heard about but has not seen. The upper octave is to be achieved by increasing the air pressure or ‘overblowing’ with the bellows from the upper E: ‘The high Notes or what are call’d pinch’d Notes in the Flute begin in E which must be rais’d by closing the Arm somewhat more than in sounding the other Notes’ (p. 4). Increasing the pressure on the pipe bag is entirely feasible but introduces a risk of instability in the sounding of the reeds, though no such caution is offered by the author. A smooth transition across octaves must have involved more complicated and sophisticated handling. The second finger chart shows a chromatic scale of semitones achieved by cross-fingering alone, a technique probably difficult to achieve with fluency across the range. In terms of technique also, Shakes and Graces are described with care and are evidently an established feature of bagpipe playing. Geoghegan adds a significant onomatopoeic point: ‘They are called curling Notes, which is the properest Epithet could be given ’em, the sound of them almost plainly expressing the Word.’ He continues, effectively describing the Scottish ‘birl’ (no doubt rhyming with ‘curl’), and defining D as the tonic note: ‘The first and chiefest Curl is perform’d by the little Finger of the lower hand on the Chanter which is done by a doubling the little finger on the lower hole …’ (p.6-7).

The portrait illustration and the text, if not one or two surviving instruments, make it clear that the Pastoral pipe was then in existence and apparently in a relatively developed form though without any of its own literature. Evidently piping was still in a largely pre-literate state since even personal bagpipe-music collections such as the ‘Dixon Manuscript’ of 1733 and Joseph MacDonald’s manuscript of about 1760 are extremely rare. The ‘Tutor’ was clearly aimed at a new ‘gentleman-amateur’ and literate market: ‘I have known some young Gentlemen, who had not only a fine Taste for all sorts of Musick, but also a fine Genius, to have a great Desire to play the
Bagpipe, yet have been hindered from what their Inclinations so urged them to, by this instrument’s wanting a Scale or Gamut to learn by, which all other Musical Instruments of any Value have.’

The ‘Tutor’ includes nineteen pages of music and 40 tunes, and offers a rare and invaluable insight into early-eighteenth century repertoire. This is not self-evidently bagpipe music (as later published collections for example for the Union Pipe are) nor does it appear to have any stronger affinity to Scotland or Ireland than to England. The selection does not appear to draw on older tradition, if compared with the seventeenth-century manuscript collections such as the Skene Manuscript, but uses more contemporary material as found in published sources such as ‘Playford’s Dancing Master’. We might infer that this is a song and dance tune selection popular then in London and borrowing fashionably on the vernacular of Ireland and Scotland, and that the Tutor’s popularity might be enhanced by demonstrating that currently popular music could also be played on the bagpipe. Irish naming in tunes is exceptional and tunes may have been chosen as subliminal or oblique ‘signatures’ by the author, tunes such as a jig ‘The Humours of Westmeath’ (p. 18) and ‘Castle Barr’ (p. 26), presumably for Castlebar in County Mayo, hinting perhaps at family links of John Geoghegan. Several of the pieces are more likely to belong to a contemporary fiddle repertoire such as the two-part common time ‘Scotch Measure’ (p.10) and ‘Highland Rant’ (p.14), or be familiar as Scottish song airs such as ‘Tweedside’ (p.11) and ‘The Lass of Levinstone’ (p.15). As such they are as likely to have been sourced in the Playfords’ Collections or James Oswald’s work for the publisher, John Simpson, in London as in Scotland. The modal ‘Jigg call’d Whip her and gird her’ (p.10) may well be an original bagpipe composition as well as another ‘Scotch Measure’ in A Major (p.17). An elaborate six-part piece with the abbreviation ‘D.C.’ for da capo (p.16) originates perhaps exclusively within the bagpipe tradition; ‘A Bagpipe Concerto call’d the Battle of Aghrem, or the Football March’ might be said to set up an extraordinary marker for the origins and background of John Geoghegan and his ‘Tutor’. It must also represent a residual form of piobaireachd music surviving in Ireland. It is a heroic piece in the ‘bardic’ tradition and the structure is explained as an ‘air’ or urlar prefixing four battle-cries representing the provinces of Connaught, Munster, Ulster and Leinster, followed by the ‘lamentation of the women’ and concluding with a shout, signalled perhaps in this instance by an octave leap in
the last bar. In terms of what Geoghegan reproduces, the whole piece in its original orally transmitted form is almost certainly not included here, due probably to the limited appeal of its extended nature and complexity (or obscurity) for an English audience. Its survival or popularity is suggested in the title indicating that it may have been a traditional prelude for seasonal Ball Games involving large teams from township or parish. While clearly assembling a repertoire for the Pastoral Pipe, Geoghegan seems also to want to define a repertoire, and to define a repertoire that draws strongly on Irish tradition. If this is music for the ‘New Bagpipe’, it has potential for dramatic and theatrical performance while bridging the old and the new and giving Ireland a locus in the rapidly changing world of contemporary eighteenth-century music and public performance.

A diagnostic and probably unique feature of this copy of Geoghegan’s Compleat Tutor is an eleven-page additional section entirely in manuscript, almost certainly all written by the same hand. The section includes fifteen tunes and, it is suggested, was compiled and written in Scotland or by a Scot and must represent a personal repertoire (see Appendix). The printed tune ‘Blind Paddy’s Fancy’, for example, has the title ‘Had the Lass till I win at her’ added in manuscript in the same hand as the closing section, neatly illustrating how the music naturally crossed national boundaries and the tunes came to be widely recognised and remembered, and differently branded with their respective regional or national names (p. 20). Compared with the Dixon Manuscript of pipe music from the same period, the genre of dance and song tunes and their settings are comparable but hint at quite distinctive regional affiliations. Only ‘Pinkie House’, named for a mansion in Midlothian, gives any local reference here. The first tune in the additional section, ‘The Maid that’s made for Love & me’, has words of verse and chorus added, for example with a closing line of such typical early-eighteenth century piquancy, ‘What kind of Nymph the Heavins decree, the Maid that’s made for Love & me’. The holograph selection includes inter alia ‘Clout the Cauldron’, ‘The Flagon’, ‘She rose and let me in’, ‘Thro’ the wood Laddie’, ‘The Yellow Hair’d Laddie’, ‘My Mother’s ay glowing o’er me’ and ‘Bessie Bell and Mary Gray’, a ballad or folksong claimed for late-seventeenth century Perthshire. A further multi-parted version of the 6/8 rhythm ‘Whip her and gird her’ is included, in this instance qualified as for ‘Great Pipe’. The parts of this latter tune written down
Pastoral Pipes

here in manuscript may represent the earliest piece of music recorded for the Great Highland Bagpipe; further research may suggest that, written here in G, in common with one or two others in this manuscript section, this extended version of 'Whip her and gird her' with characteristic runs of semiquavers was either recorded from or alternatively adapted for the Highland instrument. The latter diagnosis would seem more probable except that, uniquely in the manuscript, the author has introduced a shorthand indicator of 'gr' under quaver and semiquaver groupings. This may be taken for 'graces' as discussed by Geoghegan earlier in the Tutor (p. 6-7).

Organological beginnings

In setting benchmarks in the material culture for a clearer picture and understanding of the Pastoral Pipe, a set of pipes in the Duncan Fraser Collection in the National Museums of Scotland offers vital organological evidence. This set seems to accord closely with Geoghegan's description of the Pastoral pipe. Writing at the turn of the twentieth century, these pipes were described by Dr Fraser, significantly, as 'Old Irish Bagpipes' although no provenance is given. They are made from a dark brown hardwood, though possibly using one or two different species, and are bone and horn mounted. They have a long 'flat' chanter with foot joint, possibly of a fruitwood, with an overall length of 510mm (or 20in) and two sound holes, with a reed seat of 6mm, narrowing to the throat, and a bore diameter expanding to 13mm at the tenon joint and 16mm at the chanter mouth or bell. The two drones are tenor and 'folded' or 'looped' bass. The shortened bass is achieved by a return section of two pipes modelled as a pair of 'treble' drones discreetly linked by a small connecting pipe between the drone-tops. This set was bellows-blown according to the low placing of the blowpipe in the skin of the bag and its cylindrical 'connecting pipe' style, although the bellows are missing. Exceptionally the skin bag has survived and may conceivably be 'original'. It is sealed along the seam with a generous welt and may in time be able to tell us more about the pressure used for inflating the pipes and 'overblowing' technique, and about characteristics of the three reeds used in the early Pastoral Pipe. Closer examination also may reveal residues suggesting how the bag might have been 'seasoned'. The style and finish of this set, particularly in terms of the chanter, drone tops and modest beading on the common stock, would suggest that this set was made, if not in London,
in Scotland, probably in Edinburgh or one of the east coast burghs, in the early to mid-eighteenth century.

Another set, possibly of a slightly later date judging by the more lavish use of ivory for mounts and ferrules, is illustrated by Grattan Flood in 1911 and described by him curiously in the caption as ‘Set of Bagpipes, probably old Northumbrian’ and as ‘A Set of Northumbrian Pipes’ in the list of illustrations. Given the author’s claims for Irish origins for pipes and piping and his ready attribution of an Uilleann pipe pedigree, it is immediately surprising to the student of this subject that he has not associated this instrument with the Uilleann pipes. Alternatively Grattan Flood’s term of reference reflects a contemporary awareness of the survival of the Union Pipe in England and for which he would still draw a distinction. This is a two-drone set, the bass lengthened by a return section, with a chanter and foot joint entirely in the model of the eighteenth-century Pastoral Pipe and probably to be associated with the workshops of London or Edinburgh, although the ‘finish’ of the drone tops in a ‘lotus-column’ style could suggest an Edinburgh source. This instrument is now preserved in the collections of the National Museum of Ireland.\textsuperscript{18}

\textit{Restoration England and Scotland}

Contemporary English musical life helps to explain the evolution of the Pastoral Pipe in the first instance more readily than Scottish or Irish musical life. In 1642 stage plays such as the courtly ‘masques’, an elite form of musical entertainment since the late-sixteenth century, had been prohibited and musicals and drama continued to be illegal during the period of the Commonwealth. The Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660 was followed by the removal of the ban on the theatre and a fresh emphasis on social skills such as making music, singing and dancing. Musicians, players and actors, tumblers and other entertainers, who had been unemployable in London for about a quarter of a century, reappeared from country retreats where they had been eking out livelihoods in other trades or living under the patronage of those sympathetic families who continued to stage private musicals and drama. That a musical culture was maintained is suggested by the appearance of the first three editions of John Playford’s \textit{The English Dancing Master} during the Commonwealth,
Pastoral Pipes

beginning in 1651. His 105 tunes included one or two recognisable as Scottish such as ‘The Broom of Cowdenknowes’. Popular entertainment then returned to the capital. In this context high and low art or serious and light music, as we would tend to perceive them, were far from mutually exclusive and routes between church, court and alehouse were not proscribed and seemed to have been followed by most. The serious and the profane in music were equally enjoyed and performed, and a composer such as Henry Purcell (1659-1695), successively organist at Westminster Abbey and the Chapel Royal, wrote music for the court and church as well as for the theatre and the bawdy vernacular in song. Ideals of Baroque music were that it should be eloquent and expressive in order to affect mood and convey emotion, but there was also a strong and popular exotic and scatological vein, and audiences also expected and looked for a range of musical allegory and symbolism. Clearly different instruments, or combinations of instruments, could be the vehicles for symbolic meaning so that, for example, the ‘lascivious lute’, identified by playwrights since Shakespeare as the instrument of seduction, would introduce a libidinous note. The bagpipe was regarded as a ‘pastoral’ instrument for reproducing the music of the countryside and what could be classed as the songs of shepherds. As the instrument of the god, Pan, it could also represent the profane as against the sacred of stringed instruments. Hogarth’s representation of uncouth music-making in an engraving of 1726 for Samuel Butler’s Hudibras included the bagpipe. Its sound was also expressive of a primitive social (and rural) harmony. Arcadia could be evoked by composers developing motifs associated with the pipes, as was achieved by Italian composers such as Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713), or imitating or even using bagpipes in classical performance. In France the late-seventeenth century enthusiasm in court culture for the ‘pastorale’ is linked to the pastoral operas by the great Jean-Baptiste Lully and Jean Phillippe Rameau who used bass notes to recreate a drone effect of the musette. It was therefore entirely apt to recreate a pastoral instrument that was a bagpipe.

The move of the Court to London in 1603 and the civil and religious wars in the seventeenth century are given as reasons why Scotland had little or no classical music of its own; the labels ‘cultural desert’ and ‘cultural stagnation’ have been applied. The courtly tradition of music-making, singing and dancing had given form to taste and patronage, and its earlier strength and pervasiveness can be gauged by what remained,
such as keyboard and lute manuscripts, as it waned in the seventeenth century. A further argument has been proposed that Covenanting theology and Presbyterian discipline worked to eliminate frivolous music-making. Many in Scotland could denounce Restoration culture: ‘Nothing to be seen but debauch and revelling’ or ‘novel and superfluous pomp’ or ‘as much drinking and carousing as in former times’.

Certainly Protestant reformers of the late-sixteenth century expressed their disapproval of the courtly and Italianate tradition in the strongest terms, recalled in and symbolised neatly perhaps by the short-lived career of David Riccio, the secretary of Mary Queen of Scots. They also turned their attention to popular music-making, largely as a manifestation of the pre-Reformation ecclesiastical and political regime. The lively tradition of seasonal festivals, mapped on the Roman Catholic church’s Calendar of Saints’ days, May Day rituals, street plays and popular balladry was regularly censured as an element of the maintenance of civic order and popular control rather than an overall dislike of music-making. Protestant Scotland’s censure of music is liberally quoted whereas the context of government and burgh ordinances generally reveal intelligible expediency rather than a particular animus against music or dilettantism.

London: rus in urbe

The young John Clerk of Penicuik (1675-1755), travelling and sojourning in Vienna, Rome and Leiden, and having music lessons on harpsichord and violin, commented that his homeland was devoid of music. This easy judgement on the legacy of the seventeenth century bypasses vernacular music-making or abrogates the need to search for it in Scotland. Manuscript sources, though few, illustrate consistently that a training in keyboard, strings or voice could still be a desired accomplishment and daughters of the ‘big house’ such as Balcarres and Panmure often achieved this and recorded their art. John Clerk’s stricture cannot realistically have included folk music, that is for example orally transmitted music whose vigour apparently dispensed with much need to write it down. An interest in Scottish music in England in the closing decades of the century points also to this particular vigour. This has led to the measured and cautious judgement that Scottish music was ‘astonishing in its quantity and sometimes in its quality’. Successive editions of Playford’s Dancing
Pastoral Pipes

*Master* included an increasing quota of Scottish tunes reflecting a dramatic growth in popularity for the genre. Highly suggestive too of this enthusiasm is Henry Playford’s *Collection of Original Scotch Tunes (full of the Highland Humours)* printed in London in 1700 and 1701, the spelling of whose tune titles suggests that they might have been taken down from word of mouth in the capital. In printed form therefore Scottish music was available largely in England and principally in London where, according to a retrospective comment, ‘an inundation of Scotch songs, so called, appears to have poured upon the town by Tom D’Urfey and his Grub Street brethren’. Evidence from, for example Allan Ramsay, points to a continuing popularity of folk songs current in the seventeenth century being arranged with old and new lyrics as ‘folk music’ in the earliest published collections. Composers and arrangers such as Henry Purcell and John and Henry Playford adopted and adapted Scottish music for English audiences at concerts and in theatres. If the genuine article might not be available, they would supply material ‘in the Scots manner.’ Popular imitation pieces such as ‘Within a mile of Edinburgh Town’ and ‘Katherine Ogie’, ‘composed by English wits’, were even said to have been then accepted in Scotland as Scottish songs. Under an earlier title, ‘Twas within a furlough of Edenborough town’, this was one of Henry Purcell’s Scottish pieces with words by Thomas D’Urfey. Such tunes would fit the pipe scale and Geoghegan’s *Tutor* includes music of this genre such as the so-called ‘Scotch Measures’, suggesting a coalescing of music fashion and instrument.

London and its cosmopolitan musical life therefore seem to hold the key to a better understanding of the early history of the Pastoral and Union Pipe. In the Baroque era London saw the more dramatic blend of the scatological and the pastoral, the popular and the elite, which, speculatively, gave rise to the ‘Pastoral or New Bagpipe’. From the early-eighteenth century London was the destination of musicians, singers, composers, actors and playwrights from England, Scotland and Ireland. It was distinctly cosmopolitan with European musicians crowding there and Italian opera appealing to the cultured and appearing to eclipse any native tradition. The demand for new music seemed insatiable, for theatrical performances, civic celebrations, court entertainments and church services. Symptomatic of this atmosphere and fashion was the arrival of George Frederic Handel in London in 1710, bringing with him his enthusiasm for the artistic freedom of Italy and for opera in the vernacular. Italian
Pastoral Pipes

composers came to London as visitors or holders of appointments and produced a stream of operas, performed in the theatres such as Haymarket. Public interest in performance was keen and opera-singers enjoyed typically excessive, if short-lived, popularity. Effects of such fame might even include caricature by William Hogarth to whom is also attributed (wrongly) a satirical representation of the ‘Beggar’s Opera’ complete with a bagpipe. Professional musicians proliferated and the demand for professional quality instruments matched this trend for public music-making. The patronage of nobility and middle classes included hire of professionals to perform and teach music, song and dancing, and weekly concerts for amateurs were staged in taverns and music-rooms. A growing public was drawn to the theatre but not always by the high prices and unintelligible arias.

A reaction set in against the metropolitan vogue for Italian opera and against a dilettante set considered to be its chief patrons. John Rich, a London theatre impresario, caught this shift in taste and from 1715 introduced light stage entertainment and comic masques designed to compete with opera and the strictly classical. John Gay (1685-1732), dramatist and poet, was writing for the stage from about 1712 and had probably honed his skills and could judge his audience when his masterpiece was launched; ‘The Beggar’s Opera’ opened on 29 January 1728 in Lincoln’s Inn Fields and ran for an exceptional 63 nights. Part political drama, part moral drama, it also mocked the conventions of Italian baroque opera. Gay’s witty and highly satirical play involved the romantic and financial trials of a highwayman and was fitted to music chosen from popular songs of the day. The Walpole era in British politics with its extensive venality provided the occasion for contemporary satire. Britain’s first ‘prime minister’, Sir Robert Walpole, governed fairly continuously between 1721 and 1742 and was savaged by Swift, Pope and Fielding as well as Gay who all contributed magnificently to English literature’s satirical canon. Gay cut through the intricacies of contemporary political life with its power struggles, factions and shifting alliances by representing Walpole in his satire as impresario of larceny and receiver of stolen goods. If the bagpipe did indeed play its part in the unmasking of political corruption, it might be judged as raising rather than lowering the vision, as sonata rather than scatology, in that the satire offered a moral corrective issuing from the popular and the pastoral. The theme of the pastoral in the Baroque supplied variations to suit the tastes of different cultures and political worlds.
The music of ‘The Beggar’s Opera’ was the street song and the repertoire of the ballad singer, and all familiar and popular songs to simple melodies. The libretto was arranged with accompaniment for a small orchestra and the bagpipes may have been introduced to heighten the burlesque if, for example, the graphic evidence of an anonymous drawing of about 1728, wrongly attributed to William Hogarth, may be relied on. The ‘Beggar’s Opera Burlesqued’ shows the Opera being performed at a Fair with ballad sheets on the wall to the left and the gallows in the background; the orchestra of ‘rude instruments’ consists of a dulcimer, a hum-thrum (a bladder on a bowstring), a salt-box and a bagpipe. From a musicological perspective, it may be claimed that the artist might not have represented the ‘piper’ as he did without having seen such a figure himself. This seems to be the first credible representation of the Pastoral Pipe and in a telling context and could set a date for the Pastoral Pipe described above (NMS A.1947.105). John Gay took the Beggar’s Opera song-airs from printed sources such as Thomas D’Urfey’s ‘Wit and Mirth, or Pills to Purge Melancholy’ rather than directly from traditional folksongs, the study or collecting of which in England had not yet begun. But the instant success of ballad-opera induced a significant change of fashion including the collection and arrangement of folk-songs for concert performance and, arguably, the development of an instrument for the performer. Performance and collection, demand and supply, fruitfully fed off each other. D’Urfey had published six volumes of ‘Wit and Mirth’ by 1720 and Gay had a set of these volumes and drew directly on them. Songs drawn from ‘Wit and Mirth’ for the Beggar’s Opera were well known as Scottish, such as ‘My mither says I mauna’ and ‘The wind has blown my plaid away’. Other popular Scottish folk songs derived from William Thomson’s Orpheus Caledonius, popular airs such as ‘Oh the broom’ (alternatively ‘The Broom of Cowdenknowes’) and ‘The Lass o Patie’s Mill’, and it has been claimed realistically that Gay must have had a copy of this work. With a collection of fifty songs set for voice and continuo, it was published in London in 1726 by the singer and teacher, William Thompson, under the classical title (playing to the appeal of Purcell’s Orpheus Britannicus) which placed Scottish music and song centre-stage in the pastoral and appealed to the London as well as Scottish public. The list of 498 subscribers in the 1733 edition offers impressive testimony to the contemporary popularity of Scottish music and song among nobility and gentry, the even spread of this appeal throughout England as well as Scotland and the
independent exercise of female taste; the numbers of husband and wife subscribers, each in some instances taking multiples of sets, are significant details.

*Edinboro' town*

If John Gay's sources for the Beggar's Opera were published, inspiration for their use in ballad-opera lay also in oral currency. In theatre or street, everyone could sing along to 'Lumps of pudding' or 'Lillibulero', and John Gay's known sojourn in Edinburgh in 1729 must have convinced him of the currency of his Scottish airs. As a protégé of Lady Catherine Hyde, Duchess of Queensberry, he is said to have visited Edinburgh many times, to have been lodged in Queensberry House in the Canongate and to have frequented Jenny Ha's Change House across the street. He also used to visit Allan Ramsay's shop in Creech's Land in the High Street, a meeting place of the capital's wits, where he was remembered:

"The late William Tytler Esq. of Woodhouselee had frequently seen Gay among these literary gossips, and described him as a pleasant-looking little man with a tye-wig. He recollected overhearing him desire Ramsay to explain many of the Scottish words and allusions to national customs that occur in The Gentle Shepherd, which he engaged on his return to England to communicate to Pope, who was already an admirer of the beauties of that fine pastoral." 29

Allan Ramsay, poet, bookseller and wigmaker, was already well-known and published by the time of the appearance of the Beggar's Opera. Ramsay himself collected songs and wrote words for them, and published a selection, but without the music, in *Tea-table Miscellany* first published in 1724. 30 This was a successful venture and ran finally to eighteen editions, subtly aimed at the parlours of polite society and modern manners of taking tea. His 'Gentle Shepherd' was predated on this but was performed as a pastoral play only with the spoken word and no music. Following a production of the ballad-opera in Edinburgh in 1729, Ramsay's play was re-versioned with music drawing on Scottish folksong. This in turn was produced in London in Drury Lane in the following year, adapted by Theophilus Cibber as 'Patie
and Peggie or the Fair Foundling’. Gay’s sequel to the Beggar’s Opera, ‘Polly: an Opera’, then captivated the town when the libretto was prohibited by the Lord Chamberlain but it was published and sold in 1729 and went on to be published in Dublin in 1730 and 1735 where, again, ‘folk music’ was introduced to the stage. Many ballad-operas were produced, particularly between 1728 and 1733, but the genre seemed to be exhausted and nothing lived up to the 1728 production which continued to be re-staged. One or two were built on a Scottish folk story-line such as ‘Patie and Peggy’, ‘Flora or Hob in the Well’ and ‘The Highland Fair, or the Union of the Clans’, but it was the music that sustained audience demand. Of the 27 pieces of music and melodies used in ‘Polly: an Opera’, for example, over half were Scottish or identified with Scotland and appeared in Orpheus Caledonius, testifying to the continuing and extraordinary popularity of Scottish music as a form of the Neo-Baroque.\(^{31}\) The market success of Ramsay’s Scottish songs and the subscription lists of William Thompson offer also a convincing measure of musical taste and interest in the early-eighteenth century, and the appeal of ‘traditional’ music to polite and professional society. The decade or so from 1728 saw a synthesis of the traditional and classical in music through the medium of drama, and the possible emergence of the Pastoral Pipe as an unexpected acolyte in the ‘Temple of Apollo’. Classical formats were published in words and basses or ‘catches for German flutes and a bass’, but, if Hogarth is to be believed, the gentrified bagpipe added a particular piece of exotica for metropolitan audiences.\(^{32}\)

The cultural tone of early-eighteenth century Scotland was set by the Revolution Settlement of 1690 which appeared to set up the Presbyterian Church in an unassailable position in its control of the mores of Scotland. This was an outcome of the Glorious Revolution of the preceding year and the considerable disruption to public life ensuing and the onset of severe famine in 1692 may help to explain the remark of John Clerk of Penicuik about the cultural state of Scotland. Little wonder then that opera was infrequent before the second half of the eighteenth century and attempts to set up theatres in Glasgow, Aberdeen and Dundee were vigorously opposed and at first they failed to flourish. An orthodoxy inherited from the seventeenth century expected piety and proper religious observance, and the established church defined offences against doctrine and discipline in numerous ‘acts of assembly’; these were enforced energetically by the church courts of kirk session
Pastoral Pipes

and presbytery, and clergy as well as laity were prosecuted. Typically, conformity
excluded music-making and dancing, and all boisterous social gatherings such as the
ever popular ‘penny weddings’ or ‘penny bridals’. Robert Wodrow, chronicler of the
Covenanting movement, recounted sourly how in August 1728 ‘a company of
Strollers and Comedians came to Glasgow … to act the Beggar’s Opera. The
Magistrates were applied to for a room, and Bailey Murdoch, who is too easy, as is
said, by a mistake gave a kind of allowance of the Weighouse to act in. They acted
two or three days, and had very few except the first day. After that they got not so
much as to pay their musick’.33

Allan Ramsay opened a theatre in 1736 in Carrubber’s Close on the north side of the
High Street in Edinburgh but it was closed within six months due to the hostility of
the church. But in spite of this determined suppression, theatre and concerts were
becoming popular and the rigid opposition of the church weakening, or customary
church censure withering, before the climate of public opinion. Contemporary
enthusiasm for the production of Rev John Home’s Douglas in the Canongate
‘playhouse’ in 1756 has been identified by historians as signalling the triumph of
moderatism over the stricter attitudes of evangelicalism. It was also the decade of
mid-century when more beneficial effects of the Union began to be felt. The play was
condemned by the presbytery of Edinburgh, Rev Alexander Carlyle describing their
stance: ‘… the High-flying set were unanimous against it, as they thought it a sin for
a clergyman to write any play, let it be even so moral in its tendency.’ Many members
of the establishment including clergymen were visiting the theatre and, when Carlyle
himself defied the summons to appear before the Presbytery to answer for his
conduct, the case ultimately was dropped. Theatre in Scotland was becoming an
acceptable entertainment and Carlyle described how rapidly mores were modified: ‘It
is remarkable, that in the year 1784, when the great actress Mrs Siddons first appeared
in Edinburgh, during the sitting of the General Assembly, that court was obliged to fix
all its important business for the alternate days when she did not act, as all the
younger members, clergy as well as laity, took their stations in the theatre on those
days by three in the afternoon’.34

The St Cecilia’s Day concert of 1695 is recorded in detail and marks a significant
point in the emergence of concert performance in Scotland. ‘The Order of the
Pastoral Pipes

Instrumental Music for the Feast of St Cecilia, 22nd November 1695' seems to belie absolutely any sense of Scotland falling behind in the arts, although economic affairs were suffering severe downturn. The orchestra consisted of more than 30 performers, of whom were '19 gentlemen of the first rank and fashion, supported by 11 professors or masters of music'. Perhaps significantly the proportion of gentlemen-amateur to professional musicians is greater than in comparable London circles and this seems to set the tone for eighteenth-century music-making in Scotland. Lack of currency of course meant that the prospects were poor for southern and continental professionals. The programme was almost exclusively Italian but the interests of participants included 'folk songs'; General John Middleton, whose instrument was the flute, sung 'a song with much humour, which he sometimes accompanied with the key and tongs', evidently his 'party-piece', and one of the German 'professors' used to give benefit concerts in which his female pupils performed. Two of the girls were recalled: 'They were both fine performers on the harpsichord. Their excellence ... lay in the genuine performance of Scots songs, which they sung in a plain but fine taste, and accompanied by a thorough bass ...'.

In spite of clerical disapproval, unsteady patronage and the changing political scene around the Union of the Parliaments, music-making continued in Edinburgh and Allan Ramsay's eloquent 'To the Musick Club' of 1721 is piquant witness. Oblique comment is offered perhaps on the 'export' of Scottish music in 'your country's fame', but he pursues his claim for the native idiom of national song in words which remarkably prefigure performance and fashion in the next generation, including the recherché reference to piping:

'And shew that music may have as good fate
In Albion's glens, as Umbria's green retreat;
And with Correlli's soft Italian song
Mix Cowden Knowes, and Winter nights are long:
Nor should the martial pibrough be despis'd;
Own'd and refin'd by you, these shall the more be priz'd.'

The Musical Society of Edinburgh's concerts began in St Mary's Chapel in Niddry Wynd in 1728 with membership fee of one guinea a year. Though exclusive, membership included the Edinburgh professional and merchant classes, many of
whom were string and woodwind players and formed the orchestras. The ‘Motetti of Bassani and the Sonatas of Corelli’ were said to summarise their music but the native idiom, particularly in the form of Ramsay’s Scots songs, was added to their programmes and was adopted by the ‘professors’. Whether this was individual taste and preference or was market-driven must still be a matter of speculation. The Italian master of music, Francesco Barsanti, printed a collection of Scottish tunes with figured basses in Edinburgh in 1742, *A Collection of Old Scots Tunes*. His selection of thirty tunes must represent the core Scottish repertoire of the day and also the triumph of the Scottish musical tradition in the Neo-baroque. Edinburgh concert programmes for August 1752 and January 1754 included Signora Passerini’s Scots songs, ‘Tweedside’ and ‘The Bush aboon Traquair, set in parts by Signor Geminian’. A benefit concert for Nicolo Pasquali (1718-1757) on 17 January 1754 included his new cantata, *Tweedside*, ‘newly set in the Italian manner, for the sake of variety, by Signor Pasquali, with various symphonies of Violins and Flutes’.

*Music in the provinces*

Aberdeen and Glasgow also hosted concerts and music societies, and their citizens demonstrated great enthusiasm for music-making.³⁸ Glasgow’s eighteenth-century cultural life has suffered for being too readily compared to Edinburgh, and Alexander ‘Jupiter’ Carlyle’s caustic comments allowed to stand: ‘It must be confessed that at this time [1743] they were far behind in Glasgow, not only in their manner of living, but in those accomplishments and that taste that belongs to people of opulence, much more to persons of education.’ Following a series of cutting social judgements on its citizens, he supplies an important insight into public music-making which might have included pipers:

‘There never was but one concert during the two winters I was at Glasgow, and that was given by Walter Scott Esq. of Harden, who was himself an eminent performer on the violin; and his band of assistants consisted of two dancing-school fiddlers and the town waits.’³⁹

Aberdeen, whose Musical Society was founded in 1748, is a particularly important case in point for its distinctive blend of humanism, a conservative background of
Pastoral Pipes

Episcopacy, the two music schools of St Nicholas’ and St Machar’s, an inheritance of a big house ‘court culture’ and a rural hinterland which has boasted the richest ballad tradition in Scotland and beyond. Aberdeen was the source of the first published secular music in Scotland, the *Forbes Cantus* of 1662, whose preface confidently claimed the city as ‘the Sanctuary of the Sciences, the Manse of the Muses, and the Nursery of all the Arts’. Corelli and Scarlatti were as revered here as elsewhere but, in practical terms, Aberdeen was not a destination for many Continental masters of music. An evident individuality of taste might disapprove of overly figuring and embellishing settings and Reverend John Skinner of Linshart poked fun at the ‘dowf and dowie … dull Italian lays’ to the tune of ‘Tullochgorm’. Aberdeen as a cultural centre therefore demonstrates distinctive characteristics which offer perhaps some explanation of an evident survival of the Pastoral and the Union Pipe tradition in North-East Scotland. In terms of the material culture, the final chapter of the organology of the Pastoral Pipe may belong to the North-East.

Nicolo Pasquali’s setting for the folk-song ‘Tweedside’ in 1754 ‘for the sake of variety’ seems to set the tone for Scotland’s Baroque or Neo-baroque and the concept of changing fashion. In the 1740s, John Geoghegan wrote about the Pastoral Pipe: ‘Those of good Genius who are dispos’d to play this Instrument may be able to improve the Musick of it very much beyond what at present it is’, suggesting that a new instrument and new technique, adopted from shawm and oboe, would enable players to extend the range and thus the repertoire of the bagpipe and bring it into the orchestra. The author refers in passing to the addition of keys to the pipe chanter. In the Jacobite ballad, ‘The Piper o’ Dundee’, the piper is described as playing a Continental tune, ‘a spring brent new frae ‘yont the seas’, and then playing ‘anither key’. The ballad has credibly been attributed to James Hogg (1770-1835) but musical metaphor for political allegory may still be significant. Popular music-making, as later evidenced by a voluminous Chapbook literature, could hold a mirror to political life. The ‘Piper’ who could play ‘anither key’ might survive in the ‘spoils system’ which then came to control Scottish politics. The fortunes of the bagpipe and popular music-making, lacking generous narrative source material of its own, might be better reconstructed with a clearer understanding of the changes and chances of political life. Edinburgh, where the earliest references to bagpipe makers in Scotland occur, offers a good starting point. According to a spectator who went to live there in 1774,
Edinburgh was 'the seat of several of the most ingenious men in Europe' and 'a thoroughfare into all Scotland'.⁴³ Edinburgh, town and gown, was at the heart of the Scottish Enlightenment with its intensive and extensive philosophical enquiries into the nature of Society. It was also a centre of British political power following the rise of 'management' and the control of Scotland by the Campbells of Argyll and then by the Lord Advocate, Henry Dundas; the exercise of power through control of the electorate and resort to expediency then replaced party politics and Jacobite intrigue. The backdrop to cultural life comprised the Hanoverian monarchy, parliament and courts, changing patterns of trade and commodities, the experience of a 'global war' and the quarrel with the American colonies and all these are glimpsed and reflected in changing social structure and fashion. Emancipation from too close clerical control may have added dancing to church-going as participatory entertainment, and certainly dancing became more fashionable than theatre and Domenico Corri a hero of the hour in the 1770s. Our spectator, journalist and playwright, Edward Topham (1751-1820), described one aspect of fun and fashionable life in 1775 and hinted at the blending of musical instruments as Carlyle had described 'fiddlers and town waits' in Glasgow thirty years earlier:

'You know 'tis a custom in London for some of the principal Dancing-masters to have balls for their benefit; but here it is a general thing, from the one most in vogue, to the humble teacher of a reel to the drone of a bagpipe. Each has his ball and his public at a particular season of the year in the Assembly Room ... the Dancing-masters enliven the entertainment by introducing between the minuets their High Dances (which is a kind of Double Hornpipe) in the execution of which they excel perhaps the rest of the World. I wish I had it in my power to describe to you the variety of figures and steps they put into it. Besides all those common to the hornpipe, they have a number of their own which I never before saw or heard of: so amazing is their agility, that an Irishman, who was standing by me the other night, could not help exclaiming in his surprise that 'by Jesus, he never saw children so handy with their feet in all his life'.'⁴⁴
Pastoral Pipes

Performers and makers

Change is axiomatic if its character is not always clear and the evolution of the Pastoral Pipe in the second half of the eighteenth century is evident at least in the material culture. It evolved into what came to be termed the ‘Union Pipe’ although the stages of evolution have not been precisely charted. It has conventionally been equated with the development of the short chanter and the addition of keys, and also with the addition of the regulator. This probably occurred either in Dublin or Edinburgh, or both, in the 1770s, the same period in which ‘this northern people’ had so impressed their observer, Edward Topham.

The extraordinary fashion for music-making and musical entertainment is reflected very simply in the transmission of a huge national fiddle repertoire in printed form. Just as the Italianate violin and classical instrumental technique were copied, so the bagpipe and to some extent its music evolved in the eighteenth century. But the fiddle seemed to elbow aside the bagpipe and, in its developed, Neo-baroque form of Pastoral Pipe, it tended to be marginalized. At one level its maintenance was always more problematical and its production uneconomical; this may explain the emergence of turners as pipe makers in the second half of the eighteenth century who sought the prestige of making the Neo-baroque instrument but had to constantly diversify to make a living. The early recorded makers such as Adam Barclay and Hugh Robertson made different types of bagpipe and produced wood turnery for other trades such as silversmiths.45

The bagpipe and Pastoral Pipe did survive in various forms but perhaps always as more exotic than mainstream instrument. It was noticed in Edinburgh on 14 December 1776 and details sketched on the flyleaf of a music manuscript. An instrument with long chanter and two drones was here described as ‘a flatt set of pipes’.46 Geoghegan’s Tutor continued to be printed and new versions were composed into the early-nineteenth century. A final edition of about 1809 was printed in London but with a new bias in favour of Scotland in its selection of tunes.47 A manuscript collection of reels and strathspeys opens with a finger chart for the Pastoral Pipe, showing a piper assembling a personal repertoire of tunes in a way more characteristic of the fiddle tradition.48
A function or a vogue for the ‘flatt set’ must have been sustained as evidenced by surviving instruments. Some of these are very fine indeed, such as sets made by Hugh Robertson, and fine instrument were made that survive and bear no ‘signature’. This anonymity can be measured against evidence for public performance in Edinburgh where plays and playlets were produced regularly in the later-eighteenth century, but in the early years of legitimate theatre when writers and composers preferred to publish profane endeavours anonymously. Many of these were by local dramatists and in a localised setting. Several titles conjure up the possibility of musical accompaniment and bagpipe continuo. ‘Hooly and Fairly, or the Highland Lad and the Lowland Lass’, staged at the Theatre Royal in April 1789, recalls a song or pipe tune. Burlesque or slapstick, the Theatre Royal staged a play ‘Harlequin Highlander, or a Trip to Roslin Castle’ in April 1773, recalling the popular contemporary air and song ‘Roslin Castle’. Extending into two octaves and usually scored for flute or violin, this tune was certainly also played on the pipes. A dramatic set of Pastoral Pipes in the Duncan Fraser Collection might, entirely speculatively, be suggested as a performance instrument for such a context, playing ‘Roslin Castle’ as a theme and *basso continuo*. The pipes are in ebony, ivory and brass-mounted, with long chanter, straight bass drone, baritone, tenor and a single regulator with five keys.

Pastoral Pipes by Hugh Robertson exist in comparative quantity and may even represent most of his production of this genre. An ivory set of drones with bass, baritone and tenor display the characteristic ‘lotus-top’ styling of Robertson’s turning and are probably from a set of Pastoral Pipes by Hugh Robertson who consistently described himself as ivory turner in the Edinburgh Directories from the 1790s. An inscription on the drone stock commemorates a gift in 1804 and there is a sense in which the set could be said to be conservative in style. He was certainly making sets with one or two regulators as well as short chanters by this date and there was no fixed format in the face of a probably fickle market which, to an extent, must have driven experimentation. Two sets in ebony, ivory and brass-mounted attributed to Robertson were sold at Sotheby’s on 4 November 1998. They each have a four-key regulator and, in one case, it seems that the regulator might have been an addition to the set. A very fine representative example by Robertson is in the Inverness Museum, in ebony and brass and ivory-mounted, with three drones but with no significant
provenance, and a set in the Museum of the Conservatoire of Music in Brussels. The so-called ‘Jamie Allan’s Organ Pipes’ which were reputed to have been a presentation set from the Duchess of Northumberland to the famous (or notorious) piper, Jamie Allan (1734-1810), is by Hugh Robertson of Edinburgh. They are in ebony with ivory and silver mounts, the long chanter and bass drone, tenor drone and single regulator. English makers such as John Dunn (1764-1820) of Newcastle was a maker of Pastoral and Union Pipes. He is credited with being the first to add keys to Small Pipe chanters although the tradition could well relate also to Pastoral and Union Pipes.

If styling and perhaps tone and pitch were conservative in Scotland compared with modifications to the instrument in Ireland or more particularly Dublin, the long chanter Pastoral Pipe continued to be made in Scotland. At this stage the adoption of specific terms such as ‘Pastoral’ or ‘Union’ for these instruments is unnecessary and has no currency within the period itself. One or two examples of chanters with foot joints are in the national collection, for example a nineteenth-century chanter of 466 mm or 18¼ inches in length, and 6 mm at the reed seat and 13 mm at the bell. Other modifications to Scottish instruments were to add a third drone and to model the drone stock with separate chambers for the drone and regulator reeds; this might have been adopted, known in earlier musette technology, for different reasons such as to achieve a better balance or relatively greater volume with double (regulator) reeds and single (drone) reeds.

Aberdeen has been singled out as a musical centre of some distinction. For our purposes evidence of bagpipes and makers adds to this distinction. A set of Pastoral Pipes in a light hard wood, possibly boxwood, with three drones and one regulator is in the collections of the Highland Folk Museum, Kingussie. The drone stock is marked ‘NAUGHTAN/ ABD’, recording John Naughtan of Aberdeen who is known as a turner and musical instrument maker from 1824. Unusually, this set has ‘W G Troup/ Stonehaven/ 1826’ engraved in the drone stock mount, further localising this set in North-East Scotland. Several other sets of Naughtan’s pipes survive, including a Pastoral Pipe by Naughton in the Fife Folk Museum at Ceres in Fife. Other Aberdeen makers of this period were James Sharp, who marked a set of Union Pipes now in the Crosby Brown Collection in the Metropolitan Museum, John Davidson of Aberdeen and J Massie who is known from two or three surviving instruments.
Two sets of Pastoral Pipes of early-nineteenth century are in the national collection, are late examples of this type of instrument and in the case of one of them has a possible link with Aberdeen. It was acquired in the London salerooms by the National Museums in 1985. Though said in the sale details to have come from Aberdeen, some notions of the background of this instrument can be established. A manuscript book of music was acquired in the same sale although it had been offered as a separate lot. This had belonged with the pipes apparently to a William Mackie of Aberdeen, whose name as owner and copyist appears twice in the book, and seemed to date to about 1830. A notebook contained copies of correspondence regarding the maintenance of the pipes between 1887 and 1889 in Dublin and Aberdeen. It is suggested that by this late date there was little residual knowledge in Scotland about how to set up the instrument, for example with new reeds. It is a very fine instrument, of ebony mounted with ivory and silvered metal ferrules, but with no maker’s name or other marking; it is bellows-blown and the bellows are made with mahogany boards and ivory and silvered metal mountings. The chanter is 522mm or 20½ ins long with a detachable foot joint, single tone hole and four silver keys with ‘salt-spoon’ covers. The conical bore expands from 6mm at the reed seat to 13mm at the bell. The chanter has had a fifth F Sharp key which has been removed and the hole plugged. Such signs of the adjustment or redesign of a chanter is not uncommon with the surviving corpus of Pastoral and Union Pipes. Four drones are set in a common stock fitted with a cut-off lever, including looped bass in four sections connected by metal U-bends, baritone, tenor and treble, and two regulators, each with four keys, mounted on the wall of the stock. The pipes have a leather bag of rectangular shape with very long neck leading to the chanter stock. The second set of pipes seems to be of the same date and by the same maker.\(^5^5\)

A small number of surviving tune books and manuscripts dating from approximately the 1740s to the 1840s offer an insight, as we have seen, into the repertoire of the Pastoral Pipes. It is immediately clear that this is not necessarily a consolidated, conservative or homogeneous Scottish tradition. A book of manuscript music belonging to William Mackie, mentioned above, comprising 37 pages bound into stiff card covers, dates to the early-nineteenth century. A list of 172 tunes includes the details of a missing further page with four tunes. The selection of tunes reflects the
Pastoral Pipes

popular song and dance music of the early-nineteenth century and is an eclectic mix with a North-east of Scotland bias, for example not only with its local fiddle tunes such as ‘Miss Forbes’ Farewell to Banff’ but also the title ‘Ye Banks and Braes of Bonny Doon’ corrected to ‘Don’. It consists of predominantly ‘modern’ dance and song airs, with the Waltz the most popular, reflecting the popularity of the Waltz as an early-nineteenth century dance form. Minuets, quadrilles, quicksteps and cotillions are included, in greater number than reels, jigs and hornpipes and reflect the use of the Pastoral Pipe as a ‘modern’ performance instrument. Many of the tunes such as ‘Speed the Plough’ and ‘Sleepy Maggie’ are still familiar. Others are no longer known, at least under these names, for example ‘the Slashers’, ‘Quick March from Oscar and Malvina’, ‘The Duke of Wellington’s New Grand March’, ‘Comet Waltz’, ‘Staten Island Hornpipe’ and ‘Britain’s Lament for Nelson’.56

Epilogue

By the mid-nineteenth century the Pastoral Pipe had dropped out of the bagpipe narrative which, in Scotland, had been appropriated increasingly exclusively for the military and theatrical Great Highland Bagpipe. Within a generation its players disappeared and practical knowledge of it was lost, to the extent that expertise had to be sought in Dublin, probably in vain, for the maintenance of William Mackie’s Pastoral Pipe in Aberdeen in the 1880s. Coinciding with the beginnings of the systematic study of historic musical instruments following the South Kensington Exhibition of 1872, the Pastoral Pipe was an obvious candidate for museum collection but achieved a transcendence to museum status so thorough as to lose all trace of its origins and aesthetic. The Pastoral Pipe had been an intricate part of the cultural transformation of the Baroque and, with the oboe, contributed the eloquence and expression expected of Baroque and Neo-baroque music. Its role as a pastoral instrument offered a low-key but compelling ‘native’ response to a national identity built on the oratorio and easily bridged elite and popular streams of culture. With its distinctive basso, it reflected the quintessential of the experimental and imitative in an aesthetic of new sounds.
Pastoral Pipes

The Pastoral Pipe developed in the course of the eighteenth century as a complex instrument to make and set up, and failed to develop its own literature compared to the contemporary fiddle. Its repertoire drew on both ancient and modern ‘traditional’ music but always courted modern respectability by offering it for violin, ’cello, flute and keyboard. In this process, Scotland and Ireland, as wellsprings of traditional music, became significant parts of the geography of the Baroque but then lost themselves to versions of Romanticism. The Pastoral Pipe holds a mirror to this cultural trajectory and subsequent silence. Its style and finesse carried it forward but its non-literate and non-published career, with the glowing exception of John Geoghegan in the 1740s, cast this extraordinary record into the shadows. The primary sources for recovery and re-evaluation of these aspects of the Baroque and Neo-Baroque are the instruments themselves and these offer an unrecognised component for the organology of British music in its European context.

National Museums of Scotland

Appendix

John Geoghegan’s Compleat Tutor (NMS A.1947.129); the list of tunes for the Pastoral Pipe in the eleven-page manuscript section:

The Maid that’s made for Love and me
The Mayjor
Minuet
Clout the Cauldron
The Flagon
The Major
Pinkie House
She Rose and let me in
Thro’ the wood Laddie
The Yellow Hair’d Laddie
White Boy’s March
Moll Ro in the Morning
My Mother’s Ay Glowering oer me
Whip her and Gird her (Great Pipe)
March
Bessie Bell and Mary Gray

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Pastoral Pipe chanter with ‘foot joint’, of boxwood, overall length 517 mm or 20¼ in. Mid or early 18th century.
NMS H.LT 67

2. Set of Pastoral Pipes, bone and horn mounted, with chanter and ‘foot joint’ of 510 mm or 20 in., and bass and tenor drones with a ‘looped’ bass modelled as a pair of ‘treble’ drones.
NMS A.1947.105.

NMS A.1947.129.

4. ‘The Beggar’s Opera’ in caricature wrongly attributed to William Hogarth, 1728, based on an anonymous drawing showing orchestra of bagpipe, dulcimer, ‘hum-thrum’ and salt-box. The music was drawn from Thomas D’Urfey’s *Wit and Mirth* and William Thompson’s *Orpheus Caledonius*.

5. Pastoral Pipe, ebony, ivory and brass mounted, late 18th or early 19th century, but with no maker’s mark. The instrument has a straight bass drone, and baritone and tenor drones and a ‘regulator’.
NMS A.1947.106.

6. Presentation set of ivory Pastoral Pipes, possibly by Hugh Robertson of Edinburgh (c.1730-c.1821). An inscription dates their gift to 1804. Hugh Robertson was recorded as ‘Ivory Turner’ in the Edinburgh Directories from the early 1790s.
Pastoral Pipes

7. ‘The Bagpiper’ by Sir David Wilkie, c.1812. The artist has given us a credible representation of the Pastoral Pipe with the neck of the chanter turned in a decorative style observable on 18th century chanters.

8. Pastoral Pipe and manuscript book of music belonging formerly to William Mackie of Aberdeen, 1820s. The bagpipe is of ebony, mounted with silver and ivory, chanter with four keys, and four drones and two regulators.

NMS H.1995.1 and 3.

REFERENCES

1 See for example Hugh Cheape, A Check-list of Bagpipes in the Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments, Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments 1983, iii-iv.
4 For example National Museums Scotland [NMS] A.1947.110 A-B and NMS LT 6. Documentation in more detail is available on all instruments cited from NMS.
5 A Duncan Fraser, Some Reminiscences and the Bagpipe, Edinburgh: William J Hay 1907, 244-246; NMS A.1947.112.
8 Jeremy Montagu, The World of Medieval and Renaissance Musical Instruments, David & Charles 1976, 18-19, 36; see for example NMS K.2005.634.1 for a bellows valve sculpted in ivory to maintain a free flow of air and standing ‘proud’ of the surface of the top board.
11 NMS A.1947.129; Roderick D Cannon, A Bibliography (as above), 8-9, 76-79.


16 A Duncan Fraser, *Some Reminiscences* (as above), facing p. 40.


24 Roger Fiske, *Scotland in Music* (as above), ix, 11.


27 Joseph Burke and Colin Caldwell, *Hogarth. The Complete Engravings*, New York 1988; but see Jeremy Barlow, *The Engraved Musician. Hogarth’s Musical Imagery*, Ashgate 2005, 88, 91-92, 225, for a detailed discussion of the attribution to Hogarth, the artwork ‘Beggar’s Opera Burlesqued’, Hogarth’s careless depiction of the bagpipe and the detail of the dulcimer not appearing in any other burlesque group and not otherwise used by Hogarth in his artwork. Barlow suggests that the genteel-looking piper might be playing a French *cornemuse* although the evidence reviewed in Footnote 7 offers examples of British bellows-blown bagpipes in the 1720s.

28 Frank Kidson, *The Beggar’s Opera* (as above), 65


31 Frank Kidson, *The Beggar’s Opera* (as above), 84-85; Oswald Doughty, *Polly: an Opera. Being the second part of the Beggar’s Opera written by Mr Gay*, Daniel O’Connor 1922, passim.

32 Frank Kidson, *The Beggar’s Opera* (as above), 87, 103; Oswald Doughty *Polly: an Opera* (as above); John Purser, *Scotland’s Music* (as above), 173.


Pastoral Pipes

41 Henry George Farmer, Concerts in 18th Century Scotland (as above), 106; Henry George Farmer, Music Making in the Olden Days (as above), 57-58.
44 Edward Topham, Letters from Edinburgh (as above), 339, 341.
46 National Library of Scotland Advocates MS.5.2.25
47 Roderick Cannon, A Bibliography of Bagpipe Music (as above), 76-79, 88-89.
48 National Library of Scotland Advocates MS.5.2.22; David Johnson, Music and Society in Lowland Scotland (as above), 112-113; see also Hugh Cheape, Stock imagery in piping, in Common Stock Volume 9 Number 2 (1994), 10-18.
50 NMS A.1947.106; George Penny, Traditions of Perth, Perth 1836, 39; Angus Mackay, The Piper’s Assistant, Edinburgh 1842, 21.
51 NMS K.2003.706; this set is probably by the same maker as NO 112 in the Pitt Rivers Museum.
52 Inverness Museum and Art Gallery McK 42L; William A Cocks, James Allan’s Organ Pipes, in Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle Fourth Series Volume 6 (1935), 213-216, although another source suggests that James Allan’s presentation pipes were a set of Small Pipes made characteristically in solid ivory, equally credible as being also the work of Hugh Robertson of Edinburgh.
53 NMS K.2003.707; see also Hugh Cheape, A Check-list of Bagpipes in the Edinburgh University Collection (as above), 9.
56 NMS H.1995.795.3.
Union Pipes

‘Taste and Humour’: The Union Pipe of Britain and Ireland

Hugh Cheape

Perceptions and material culture.
Modern perception of the Union Pipe has defined and described it in terms of Ireland’s culture and the Uilleann bagpipe of today. By contrast the instrument’s surviving ‘material culture’ suggests that the Union Pipe has been a shared and Neo-Baroque tradition and that an integrity has been ignored or laid aside in sustaining modern perceptions. The mind-set of today will still regard the North Channel as an edge or a boundary, rather than a ‘highway’ with the same community living on both sides of it, and such a view makes the recognition of shared cultural traits more difficult. The Union Pipe has crossed and re-crossed the Sea of Moyle - *Sruth na Maoile* – and its points of departure and coming to land are still difficult to define with certainty. This essay draws principally on the evidence of material culture to breath some life into a shared tradition and to create an awareness of a past richness and vitality in Western culture.

Assuming that the so-called ‘Pastoral Pipe’ represents a first or earlier stage in the development of a chamber bagpipe for art music and light opera performance in Britain in the eighteenth century, the so-called ‘Union Pipe’ clearly represents a subsequent evolutionary stage. The evidence for this lies principally in the material culture and ‘organology’ of the instrument and an argument developed by mapping this against relevant conventional sources. This historical process of evolution from one to the other seems to us, perversely for a musical instrument, a quiet one and very little documentation is detectable to chart this apart from the tangible evidence of the surviving instruments. An evident silence may seem even more paradoxical given the explosion of print culture in the eighteenth century and a relative wealth of printed evidence for the fiddle tradition in Scotland. The architects of change, whether makers or performers, seem to have made no claims or left no specific written or verbal account of it and we depend in the first instance on opinion, recollection and tradition. To evoke the spirit of this time, a contemporary phrase is adopted into the title of the essay, alluding to the then widening of the range of the bagpipe to play a chromatic
scale. At a deeper level and arguably more significantly, the author's choice of words belongs to the Enlightenment and specifically to the concept of the exploration of the senses characterising the philosophies of the eighteenth century, particularly in the philosophy of aesthetics. Henry Colclough introduced his 'Tutor' with an essay synthesising the development of the instrument and an engraved portrait of him survives playing on a Union Pipe: 'They are an Instrument likewise on which the performer can display much taste and humour, both of which are necessary for a player of the Union Pipes to possess, in order to afford that pleasing variety which they are so capable of producing'.

As a form of bellows-blown chamber bagpipe, the Union Pipe survives today most obviously in the highly versatile Irish Uilleann bagpipe but the history of this survival and revival lies beyond this account. A 'prehistoric' is supplied by a considerable number of instruments and parts of instruments which still exist for the period approximately from about 1760 to 1860. This material offers some detailed evidence and the benchmarks for an organology of the Union Pipe. It had a wider melodic range than the standard bagpipe of the day, achieved in the earlier stages of development by overbloowing and cross-fingering (as in the Pastoral Pipe) and later by adding keys to the chanter. This latter innovation would achieve chromatic performance, extend the scale beyond the octave and avoid destabilising the tonality of the reeds, particularly in the drones. Regulators, which were 'stopped' pipes with keys and mounted in a common stock with the drones, were also added to the instrument in the second half of the eighteenth century and were used to provide chord accompaniment and harmonies to the chanter melody. It is notoriously difficult to assign dates for the creation and manufacture of instruments of this class although surviving examples illustrate a process of experimentation and adaptation. The process is shadowy and traditions within piping have tended to assign earlier dates than are sustainable in terms of the organology.

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1 National Museums Scotland [NMS] K.2006.18; Colclough [nd], 3; Cannon 1980, 93-94; O'Neil 1913, 189; Cheape, forthcoming.
Definitions and origins.
As a matter of definition, the modification of the chanter for a shorter sounding length, thus raising the pitch, and the subsequent addition of keys to increase the range could be said to mark the emergence of the Union Pipe. Alternatively, the addition of the regulator might have more categorically created it. The term ‘Union’ has been variously accounted for, for example with reference to the Act of Union which abolished the Irish parliament in 1801, such a reference causing the term ‘Union’ to be hurriedly abandoned and with disdain in favour of Uilleann at the turn of the twentieth century. Otherwise it belonged in the social context of wakes and weddings with the different sense of ‘union’ implicit. A further explanation derived ‘Union’ from the joining of drones and chanter with regulators.\(^3\) The term may have been used to characterize tonality or a coming together of sound in music, symbolised perhaps by the musical challenge of matching regulator to chanter. The word ‘union’ itself may have been derived from the Gaelic _uaithne_ which means ‘concord’ or ‘consonance’ and effectively translates into English as ‘union’.\(^4\) _Uaithne_ has traditionally been used as a metric term to describe a type of rhyme in syllabic poetry, or _Dàn Direach_, in which vowels and consonants assemble into a rhyming scheme and _comhardadh_.\(^5\) The specific meaning of the term had survived the decline of syllabic verse and it would certainly have been current in colloquial Gaelic, less so perhaps in Scotland than in Ireland where it had a romantic association as the name of a mythological harp. If in the mid-eighteenth century many of the pipers and pipe makers in Ireland were native Gaelic speakers, _uaithne_ might be said to have tripped off the tongue to describe harmonious sound. The sense would be that of ‘union’ because of its literary and musical rather than political association. According to tradition in Ireland, the ‘elder Kenna’ was one of the first improvers of the Union Pipe; a craftsman from Mullingar, Westmeath, he must have been a Gaelic speaker by the pronunciation of his surname, with the stress on the end vowel preserving the older form of his family name, _O Cionaodha_, a surname common in his native Leinster.\(^6\)

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\(^3\) Flood 1911, 209; O’Neill 1913, 43.
\(^4\) O Donnabháin 1977, 1292.
\(^5\) Watson 1959, xxxvi-xxxviii.
\(^6\) O’Neill 1913, 156; Woulfe 1923, 466; Donnelly 2002, 2.14.
The Union bagpipe, as with the Pastoral Pipe, had an art music role in addition to its tavern and township role; it was used for chamber music and orchestral performance in the ballad opera and pantomime tradition of the eighteenth century. London abandoned ballad operas in the late 1730s and, when a new era of opera effectively began in the 1760s, both popular interest and more elite fashion patronised and demanded a more English production.\(^7\) Such a cultural trend may be part-explained by the emergence of a form of British ‘nationalism’, a British patriotism and a new national identity as a by-product of the Union of Parliaments and wars of empire.\(^8\) Dr Thomas Arne (1710-1778) and his masque *Alfred* of 1740 seemed quintessentially to symbolise a more patriotic taste in English opera. Symbolic, too, of the cultural atmosphere is the authorship of *Alfred*, including ‘Rule Britannia’, by the poet and London-Scot, James Thomson (1700-1748), another of the eighteenth-century economic migrants. The ‘celtic fringe’ had lost its sensual appeal and the stock particularly of Scotland was at its lowest in the wake of the Jacobite Wars and during the premiership (1761-1763) of the Earl of Bute. The scurrilous pamphlet campaign of John Wilkes beginning with the significantly named *North Briton* in 1763 also contributed to Scotland’s bad press. Whereas most of the evidence for the Union Pipe, both material and documentary, resides in Scotland and Ireland, London audiences came in due course to accept the bagpipe again on the stage, possibly in Thomas Linley’s very successful version of ‘The Gentle Shepherd’ with music in the 1780s but certainly in the later operatic arrangements of the Ossian Cycle in the 1790s. The bagpipe’s acceptability in metropolitan society probably owed more to *uathne* than to ‘union’, to tonality rather than cultural assimilation.

**Dublin and Edinburgh.**

This second phase in the development of the bagpipe as an essentially Neo-Baroque instrument, marked by a probable shift in demand, supply and performance, took place, it is suggested, in Scotland and in Ireland as well as elsewhere in England, and in a pattern of diffusion outward from London. The assumption has been in the literature and in popular currency that the development of the Union Pipe took place exclusively in Ireland. In view of its survival (or revival) as *Uilleann* pipe and strong advocacy in its support or defence as a by-product of political and cultural

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\(^7\) Kidson 1922, 104.

\(^8\) This significant trend has been highlighted by Colley 1992.
nationalism in the twentieth century, the Union Pipe is described as essentially a musical instrument native to Ireland. This is understandable and explicable in terms alone of the advancing fortunes of the metropolitan centre of Dublin. The pre-eminence of Dublin, not only as Ireland’s capital but also as one of the leading centres of eighteenth-century Europe, may help to explain the emergence of a particular musical culture represented in part by the Union Pipe.

The extravagance of Dublin life and an aping of London ways had drawn the satire of Swift. This was a busy port and the entry-point for raw materials and manufactured goods, an administrative, judicial and social centre, and a ‘court city’ as well as market and financial centre. Dublin was the social and economic centre for the whole of Ireland, including in this period Ulster and the north, until its supremacy was finally challenged by Belfast’s emergence as an autonomous regional capital. There was a cruel contrast between city and countryside beyond, serving to draw people into a city growing famous on its economic strength and prosperity. The city’s expansion was dramatic with a trebling of population over the century, from under 60,000 to over 180,000, with the period of rapid growth being in the middle decades rather than in the later period of ‘Grattan’s Parliament’ which conventionally has been characterized as the ‘high’ period. This reign of economic and social supremacy was then checked following the Union in 1801. It must be no coincidence that the brief references to the beginnings of pipe-making in Dublin appear to chime with this demographic pattern.

Dublin was the place of seasonal and permanent resort for the Irish gentry and spending classes. It hosted the business of parliament and the courts, and the quickening of political life brought so many into the city in search of patronage and positions in the civil and military establishments. Publishing and the book trade thrived beyond the control of British copyright restrictions and added a significant dimension to the cultural life. Entertainment in theatre, clubs and coffee houses, public assemblies and balls was typical of the period and offered steady employment for musicians. They could then afford to ignore the distant attractions of London and it is significant that those who stayed are well recorded in the annals of folk music and

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9 For example see Flood 1911, passim.
those who crossed the sea to England are not. Drawing in both skilled and unskilled labour, Dublin had labour-intensive manufacturing processes and manufactured commodities involving wood and metal working; these small factories and skilled artisan workshops, servicing the main craft centres of wood and fine metal production, were run by craft workers of whom pipe makers such as Kenna must have been typical. Eighteenth-century Dublin determined Irish cultural development.

Such terms of reference as ‘Irish pipes’ had also emerged in Scotland by the late-eighteenth century and this may seem paradoxical in view of the surviving material evidence which may now be more copious outwith Ireland. Joseph MacDonald, writing about 1760 en route to India, supplies a rare and significant insight into naming although the reference is derogatory within the flow of his own thesis and the comparison offered: ‘This insipid Imitation of other Music is what gives Such a Contemptible Notion of a Pipe, because it must come so short of it, even in the most variegated kind of Pipe, which is the Irish Pipe. This they have neither a regular Sett of Music or Cuttings for, but they have diversified it into Surprising Imitations of other Music’. Practitioners and makers in Scotland still used the term ‘Union Pipe’ and continued to do so through the century and into the next. On the basis of material evidence alone, it is possible to argue for a Scottish origin for the Union Pipe or at least shared and coterminous development of the instrument between the urban centres of Edinburgh and Dublin and possibly Newcastle. By extension, the term ‘Irish Pipe’ might have had a specific application, to a version of the Union Pipe, for example with a keyed chanter.

A frequently retailed and more specific tradition associates the development of the Union Pipe with James Kenna in the late 1760s or 1770s, ‘originally a maker of household spinning-wheels, and a mechanic of conspicuous excellence’. He is known to have made pipes of boxwood, with chanter with a narrow tapering bore and without keys but the same may be said of the Edinburgh maker, Hugh Robertson, many more of whose products seem to have survived. As inventor or supplier, such productions must even then have been rare and increasingly costly in terms of time.

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11 Cannon 1994, 77; see also for example Penny 1836, 39 and Halfpenny 1962, 100.
12 O’Neill 1913, 156; see also Donnelly 2002, 1-8.
and materials, and it is worth speculating whether more or less the total production of early known makers such as Kenna and Robertson might in fact have survived as evidenced by instruments in public collections. To state this proposition differently, the organology of this instrument is based on very small beginnings with only one or two isolated makers making perhaps one or two (or even less) instruments each year. Their production may still be accounted for by the surviving material evidence and Robertson’s role in the development of the instrument more confidently described.

Tradition also associates the Union Pipe with the gentry, art music and elevated taste, with ‘a great superiority in mellower tone and greater compass … rendering it very melodious and agreeable in a private apartment’. 13 This is demonstrable both for Scotland and Ireland where ‘gentlemen’ performers on violin, cello, flute and oboe proliferated in the train of musical fashion. Irish tradition in the first instance seems to be richer in individual stories of ‘gentlemen-pipers’ and with implications for interpreting audience and demand for instruments. The ‘first performer on the improved instrument’ was said to have been Lawrence Grogan of Johnstown Castle, County Wexford, a gentleman piper commemorated in the jig, ‘Larry Grogan’. His floruit was said to be in the early-eighteenth century, so his instrument might have been a Pastoral Pipe and the combination of ‘big house’ and Neo-Baroque music entirely convincing. Another name to consider in this context is John Geoghegan whose Compleat Tutor for the Pastoral or New Bagpipe was published in London about 1746. If he were one of the gentlemen-pipers, his fame has withered at home in Ireland. 14 Scotland also had its ‘gentlemen-pipers’ in the eighteenth century but their reputation has tended to be enshrined principally within the Gaelic tradition, with names such as Raghnall mac Ailein Oig of Morar, Fear Bhàlaidh of North Uist, Iain Mac Eachainn ‘ic Iain of Strathmore, Ronald MacDonald of Laig and others.

An early set of Union Pipes in Ireland, dated to about 1760-1770 and from County Carlow in Leinster, is illustrated in O’Neill’s Irish Minstrels and Musicians. Dating of instruments such as this seems speculative, or by repute and tradition which tends in the literature to be respected, even hallowed, rather than questioned. This set in ivory has two drones and a bass return section on the Pastoral Pipe model, but has a five-

13 Dalyell 1849, 4.
keyed regulator and a short keyless chanter in C or D and would appear to be the type of 'improved' bagpipe that is referred to in the contemporary literature. This instrument is closely comparable to surviving Edinburgh-made Union Pipes, for example the work of Hugh Robertson. Another identifiably early set, also comparable to the County Carlow instrument and even possibly by the same maker, is in the collections of the National Museum of Ireland. It has ivory and silver-mounted drones, tenor or baritone and bass with U-bend return section, and a five-keyed regulator and has been referred to in the literature as the 'Lord Edward Fitzgerald' set. The chanter, in a dark hardwood, is 366mm or 14¼in, probably in C, and marked 'Egan'. A silver ferrule on the stock carries the date '1768' and the set can probably be dated to about this time or probably slightly later. The chanter might conceivably be considered to be a replacement for an earlier Pastoral 'flat' chanter and the ivory and silver stock and drones conceivably to be an Edinburgh-made instrument. The use of ivory and the modelling of the drone tops in a wine-glass or lotus-top style could, in the absence of further evidence, be taken as 'signature' of the style of Hugh Robertson.\textsuperscript{15}

The elaboration of the Union Pipe to create an 'Irish Union Pipe' is traditionally credited to Kenna who apparently, moving to Dublin from Mullingar, was making sets with keyed chanters and regulators in Dublin between 1770 and 1790. O'Neill adds the conjecture that 'it was about that time, or perhaps later, that the Irish bagpipe became known as the "Union Pipes"'.\textsuperscript{16} Dr Charles Burney, the busy historian of music and a Scot by descent, writing in 1775 to Joseph C Walker, author of \textit{Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards}, may well be making reference here to a regulator in his phrase 'in two parts', inferring possibly harmony or counter-melody:

\begin{quote}
'The instrument at present in use in Ireland is an improved bagpipe, on which I have heard some of the natives play very well in two parts without the drone, which I believe is never attempted in Scotland. The tone of the lower notes resembles that of a hautbois and clarionet, and the high notes that of a German
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{16} O'Neill 1913, 43; Donnelly 1983, 7.
flute; and the whole scale of one I heard lately was very well in tune, which has never been the case of any Scots bagpipe that I have yet heard’.\(^\text{17}\)

In comparing this material with Scotland, much the same picture emerges. Evidence in record sources now shows that as early as the 1760s Hugh Robertson was in business as a musical instrument maker. This coincides with James Craig’s prize-winning plan for Edinburgh’s ‘New Town’ and its period of rapid development and architectural achievement, an economic and cultural picture that can be readily compared with Dublin. Many sets survive with Robertson’s name on them and he is one of the earliest pipe makers to mark his work and, in fact as far as the evidence goes, the maker of the earliest ‘named’ sets of bagpipes in Scotland. The addition of a regulator to the Union Pipe seems to mark an early point in his career although the surviving evidence of instruments shows that he continued to make the ‘flat pipe’ and a simpler drone combination. An ebony, ivory and brass-mounted set is in the collection of the Inverness Museum and Art Gallery (McK 42L). The chanter is clearly marked ‘ROBERTSON’ in three places and the drones consist of bass and return sections, tenor and treble in a common stock. A further Robertson set is in the European Folk Instruments collection in the Musical Instruments Museum in Brussels (MIM M1123). With the evidence to hand, Hugh Robertson’s early chanters seem generally not to carry keywork, probably to be pitched at about C or D, and to be ‘finished’ at the mouth with a very slim ferrule or mount designed for ‘stopping’ or ‘tipping’ the chanter to achieve the upper octave.\(^\text{18}\)

**National music.**

This instrument, like the earlier Pastoral Pipe, has its ‘treatise’ in *O’Farrell’s Collection of National Irish Music for the Union Pipes* printed and published in London by John Gow in about 1804.\(^\text{19}\) This later collection contrasts significantly with Geoghegan’s *Compleat Tutor* in its overt claim for ‘National Irish Music’, reflecting a shift in perception, and a selection of, for the most part, what might now be recognised as Irish traditional music. The inclusion in the selection of ‘Carolans Farewell to Music’, ‘Carolans Dream’ and ‘Carolans Receipt for Drinking Whiskey’

\(^{17}\) O’Neill 1913, 43; Donnelly 2002, 2-6.

\(^{18}\) Cheape 1983, 5-7; Sanger 1988, 28-29.

\(^{19}\) NMS H.1995.795.4 and NMS A.1947.130; See Cannon 1980, 81-82.
may have been designed to lend national pedigree and authenticity. This may reflect as much the personal preference of the compiler rather than a defining repertoire for the Union Pipe since other and later Union Pipe publications such as Colclough’s are more eclectic. O’Farrell’s ‘Collection’ also reflects the concept of the Union Pipe as a shared tradition. Of his 69 tunes across 36 pages, over two-thirds are clearly drawn from an eighteenth-century Irish tradition and the layout of the book can be inferred from the title, beginning with ‘a Variety of the Most Favorite Slow & Sprightly Tunes, set in proper Stile & Taste’ followed by ‘a Selection of Favorite Scotch Tunes’. Some tunes in the earlier section of the book would be more difficult to categorise as Irish, for example two slow jigs ‘Drunk at night and dry in the Morning’ and ‘When the Cock crows it is day’, and some tunes in the Scottish section would sit comfortably in either. Tunes in the Scottish section such as ‘Cummalum’ and ‘Humours of Ballymanus’ reflect the musical culture-province of Ireland and Scotland and use similar highly characteristic melodic figures respectively as in ‘Drops of Brandy’ and ‘Atholl Highlanders’. Some of the ‘Scottish’ tunes are given a Pastoral or Union Pipe and Neo-Baroque treatment with multiple parts, for example ‘Maggie Lawder with New Variations’ (adding three extra parts to a traditional two-part tune) and ‘Lass of Patty’s Mill with Variations’.

The O’Farrells belonged originally to County Longford but nineteenth-century tradition described ‘Patrick O’Farrell’ as a native of Clonmel on the borders of Waterford and Tipperary. Very little biographical information on O’Farrell is preserved, rather suggesting that having moved to London he never returned; the tune ‘O’Farrell’s Welcome to Limerick’ may commemorate a rare and fondly remembered return to the land of his fathers. Evidently he was resident in London where he published his Collection and where he had possibly been playing pipes and teaching before that date. Like other musicians in Scotland and Ireland, a transition to London was still considered profitable and his Irish musical culture a commodity, perhaps readily ‘traded’ in theatre entr’acte performance. Probably following this volume of about 1804, he began to publish O’Farrell’s Pocket Companion for the Irish or Union Pipes, with over three hundred pages in small, pocket format, coming out in parts possibly between about 1805 and 1811. The earlier Collection was advertised on its

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20 See Chambers 1890, 172-175; MacLachlan 1854 (NMS K.2007.58.24)
Union Pipes

title page as being available from the author at 65 Swallow Street ‘where Gentlemen may likewise be accommodated with real toned Irish pipes’, the latter phrase offering a hint as to how the tone or timbre might have been changing.\textsuperscript{21}

The author proposes to produce a book of instruction and chooses his words in such a way as to appeal to contemporary taste, giving also an indication of how ‘traditional music’ could still be perceived at the turn of the nineteenth century; it will be ‘acceptable to the Lovers of Ancient and Pastoral Music’. O’Farrell claimed the same impediment to learning as John Geoghegan in the 1740s: ‘Gentlemen often expressing a desire to learn the Pipes have been prevented by not meeting with a proper Book [of] Instructions, which has induced the Author to write the following Treatise.’ He describes a versatile instrument, using the name ‘Union Pipes’, and alludes to the addition of the regulator, ‘able to play any kind of Music’ and which ‘with the additional accompaniments which belong to it produce a variety of pleasing Harmony which forms as it were a little Band in itself.’ The chanter will play two octaves, overblowing to move from D to E and into the upper octave. O’Farrell calls them ‘pinched notes’ and chanter to be placed on the knee to ‘stop the wind’. Elaborations or embellishments in the music are described in terms of ‘shakes’, ‘curls’ and ‘tipping’. He later describes the performance of the regulator in detail, with its four keys for Low F sharp, G, A and B, and he supplies a chart to demonstrate the potential range of harmonic agreement. The instrument therefore typically had one regulator to be worked with ‘the wrist or Heel of the lower hand’. Later tutors such as Colclough’s refer to the addition of a bass regulator and describe its use with ‘little Regulator’ and ‘middle Regulator’ to produce ‘a Chord of Four Notes, thereby rendering the Instrument similar to an Organ, and making it as it were a little Band in itself’, adopting O’Farrell’s same phrase ‘as it were a little Band in itself’.\textsuperscript{22} In O’Farrell’s instructions, advice is offered for posture as well as technique, the player seated with bellows tied round the waist and the drones to lie under the arm and near the body, especially in order to keep the regulator within easy reach of the hand. The author is not prescriptive on left or right hands or respective sides for the bellows or bag.

\textsuperscript{21} NMS H.1995.795.4; Woulfe 1923, 523-524; Cannon 1980, 82-85.
\textsuperscript{22} Colclough [nd], 3, 12.
Union Pipes

Oscar and Malvina.

One factor undoubtedly sustaining the Pastoral and Union Pipes and equally hastening the chromatic development of the instrument was the remarkable success of Ossian from the 1760s. Sir John Graham Dalyell, the Lothian laird and antiquary, recalled: ‘The Irish bagpipe has been seen in the London theatres, as well as in our own, and in our concert rooms. It was introduced in the former at the performance of a favourite piece called Oscar and Malvina, founded on one of Ossian’s poems’. The impact of James Macpherson’s ‘Ossian’ in all its facets has only recently begun to be assessed in a scholarly atmosphere and with less prejudice. The status of the poetry as ‘translation’ and its intrinsic merits have continued to be argued over but the wide-ranging influence of the Ossian phenomenon throughout Europe can now be recognised. Enlightenment preoccupation with social change and the progress of mankind included varying degrees of concern over a rudimentary level of economic and cultural life of the Highlands. Ossian challenged contemporary views on primitive society and put new concepts of Gaelic antiquity at its heart. The national and international popularity of the poetry of Ossian grew rapidly following its first publication between 1760 and 1763, and remained strong for approximately the next half century in spite of a shift from acclaim to controversy. The perceived compositions of an ancient Gaelic bard and his circle offered compelling alternatives to classical models and the new mores of the modernising, commercial culture of the day. They ushered in the Romantic era in Europe where there was little or no concern over questions of authenticity; the flowing rhythmic prose of the Ossian epics inspired poets, artists, playwrights and musicians, and were transformed into new formats. They also inspired the revival and creation of national epics such as Finland’s Kalevala. The powerful emotions of the bard in his speeches and mood against the backdrop of a wild - ‘sublime’ - landscape of mountains, torrents and storms were the ingredients which so strongly appealed to the contemporary mind and translated well to the stage. They added a new selection of fierce some features to a gentle Arcadia of earlier generations and a new set of responses to the stirring, the dramatic and the dangerous. The idea of the ‘sublime’ had emerged from the Enlightenment exploration of the senses and was given form in the essay by the young Irish orator, Edmund Burke, in his Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the

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23 Dalyell 1849, 39.
Union Pipes

*Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). The second edition of *Sublime and Beautiful* was published in 1759 and must have conditioned the contemporary mind for the reception of James Macpherson’s masterpiece. The Ossianic landscape of myth, metaphor and allegory was envisaged in terms of an agreeable horror and its sensory perception as a state of delight.\(^{25}\)

The Ossian phenomenon as a shared tradition also excited an interest in Ireland in historical sources, language and cultural matters. Findings drew on a native scholarly tradition of describing an historical Gaelic civilisation, characterising Ireland as being the ‘isle of saints and scholars’ in the Christian ‘dark ages’. The founding of the Royal Irish Academy in 1785 enhanced the exploration of Ireland’s cultural achievements and the researches of Sir George Petrie on behalf of the Academy helped to construct a civilised self-image for Gaelic Ireland. Petrie’s own *Ancient Music of Ireland* was one of several collections of the early-nineteenth century that raised the status of a native tradition of Irish music. This was transmitted into Irish nationalist ideology as the century progressed. The music of the itinerant harp players and teachers was the focus of patronage at the Granard Grand Balls in County Longford in 1781, 1782 and 1785, probably drawing on the example of the Highland Society of London’s patronage for Highland music. The founding of the Belfast Harp Society followed, with the stated aims of reviving and perpetuating the ancient music and poetry of Ireland. The Belfast Harp Festival, held in 1792, attracted ten harpers, mostly old men from Ulster and Connacht, and the young Edward Bunting was commissioned to record their music. Memories of the career, status and music of the last of the bards, Turlough O Carolan (1630-1738), were extensively recorded and supplied a benchmark for understanding and interpreting traditional music, but it is important also to register the influence on O Carolan, as a composer, of Italianate Baroque art music.\(^{26}\)

The bagpipe with its native and traditional associations was clearly a preferred instrument for musical accompaniment while the reputation of the harp lay in solo performance. In the form of the Union Pipe, the bagpipe which by this time was tried

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\(^{26}\) O'Neill 1913, Chapter 6 and Chapter 8; see also Kidd 1994, 1201-1204, and Cunningham 1986, 122-123, for the development of this ideology.
and tested translated readily to an orchestral and philharmonic role. One of the most popular operas of the period was *Oscar and Malvina*, drawing on James Macpherson’s *Temora* and portraying Oscar, the son of Ossian, and his beloved, Malvina, in dramatic interludes. Following the death of Oscar, Ossian lives on into old age, celebrating the exploits of the warrior-heroes and attended by Malvina. In 1791 the London actor-composer, William Reeve, then in his mid-thirties, took over an unfinished piece from William Shield, *Oscar and Malvina*, for Covent Garden, finished it and it was an immediate success. The full title printed on the front of the score published by the well-known London music publishers, Longman and Broderip, in 1791 was ‘The Overture, Favorite Songs, Duetts and Chorusses in the Grand Pantomime Ballet of Oscar and Malvina as performed with universal applause at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden Together with a Selection of the most favorite Scots Airs and the Battle Piece, the whole adapted and the new Music composed by W. Reeve’.\(^{27}\) The published score includes the names of the main performers such as Mr Meyer on the Harp and Mr Courtney on the Union Pipes, and these performed in the overture and at different stages throughout the piece, particularly providing a change of tone for allegro movements. The opera was then staged regularly in Covent Garden in the 1790s, and the overture continued to use the bagpipe. Subsequent published scores from about 1800 and 1805 record the Harp with Mr Meyer and the Union Pipes in the allegro movement although no piper is named. It was reported in 1791 that Mr Courtney, teacher, performer and composer, played on the Union pipe ‘with much effect’ but his death was reported in the *Scots Magazine* in September 1794.\(^{28}\) This ‘rondo’ (as it is described in the printed score) became a set piece in the overture and a vignette on the front cover of O’Farrell’s *Collection of National Irish Music for the Union Pipes* of 1804 shows him playing the Union pipes in *Oscar and Malvina*. It has been suggested that he might have played in a revived version of the piece by Mr Byrne produced at Covent Garden on 20 October 1798.\(^{29}\) The no-doubt expected tone in such a performance was unequivocally Scottish and the piper in the small oval portrait is shown seated with his pipes and wearing a plumed military-style Highland bonnet with chequered headband and tartan trews.

\(^{27}\) Reeve 1791, 1-30.
\(^{28}\) O’Neill 1913, 195; *Scots Magazine* 1794, 588.
\(^{29}\) Flood 1911, 183; NMS H.1995.795.4 and A.1947.130.
The Ossianic mood of course was dark and mysterious, the tone stately and sombre, and it may be fair to comment that the bagpipe overtures of the Ossian Cycle were soon overtaken by fashion. The long duration of the Napoleonic Wars bred more of a taste for military music and contributed strongly to the development of marching music for the bagpipe. The last recorded printing of William Reeve’s score was in London in 1817, and significantly signalling changing public taste in a version edited as ‘Overture to Oscar and Malvina with the Highland March and Battle Pieces’. In spite of sometimes dramatic changes in pace (for example in early-nineteenth century European dance-music fashions), good melodies will survive and it is notable that some Ossianic Union pipe music survived to be included in nineteenth-century Highland bagpipe collections. The most prominent example is the ‘Highland March’ itself, adapted from a contemporary melody and known to later generations as the brisk 6/8 March and dance tune, ‘Atholl Highlanders’. *The Caledonian Repository of Music adapted for the Bagpipes* published by William Gunn in Glasgow in 1848 includes *Mùr Oisein* or ‘Ossian’s Hall’ (page 93) and *Guil Fhinn* or ‘Fingal’s Lament’ (page 94), presented respectively as 2/4 March and Reel. Sombre music is entirely absent from Gunn’s book which is subtitled a ‘Collection of Strathspeys, Reels, Jigs and Quicksteps’, and this may have influenced David Glen to include ‘Fingal’s Weeping’ and ‘Ossian’s Hall’ in his *Collection of Highland Bagpipe Music*, the largest ever collection of pipe music achieving its final form in seventeen parts about 1900. Fingal’s Weeping’ (Third Part, page 2) is scripted as a sprightly Quickstep, ‘Ossian’s Hall’ (Seventh Part, page 7) as a Reel, and perhaps more surprising is the 6/8 found later in the collection, ‘Oscar’s Jig’ (Tenth Part, page 21), a comparatively simple melody with a feel of the eighteenth century.

**Patronage and the Highland Societies.**

The Highland Society of London was founded in May 1778 with Lieutenant-General Simon Fraser of Lovat as its first President and the membership drawing on Highlanders in the capital. Their aims were charitable, towards the economic development of the Highlands, the cause later taken up also by the Highland Society of Scotland, and the preservation of the Gaelic language, its literature and Highland music.\(^\text{30}\) The Society gave grants and awarded prizes, of most immediate relevance

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\(^{30}\) Cheape 2000, 7-14.
for a competition for the music of the Great Highland Bagpipe. The first competition
was held at the Falkirk Tryst on 12th October 1781. Hugh Robertson was
commissioned to make a set of pipes as the First Prize. The Highland Society’s
patronage of piping extended to the Union Pipe and must be significant as an
indication of contemporary taste and perception – of taste insofar as many doubtless
enjoyed the playing of the Union Pipe, and perception in that the instrument was
regarded as a traditional element of Scottish, if not of Highland music. Piobaireachd
was probably not to the taste of all and the Union Pipe may have been regarded as the
instrument of ceol beag or ‘light music’. The Society commissioned a full programme
of music for its annual and seasonal meetings and the Union Pipes played regularly at
Society meetings between 1788 and 1822.31 The players paid for their services in
those years were the names which appear regularly in Scotland and England as the
players of the Union Pipe: John Murphy, Dennis Courtney, James McDonnell,
Richard Fitzmaurice, Patrick O’Farrell, and John and Malcolm MacGregor.

In London Geoghegan and O’Farrell offered piping instruction to ‘gentlemen’, as did
Fitzmaurice and Donald MacDonald in Edinburgh. The former published a series of
six short collections of Irish tunes for the Union Pipe and adapted for piano, from his
lodgings in Mid Rose Street between about 1805 and 1810.32 This as with other
bagpipe collections was designed to appeal to a wider, genteel market and to provide
music for girls and young ladies learning the piano. It is no doubt significant that
tunes such as ‘Miss Smollett’s Favorite’, ‘Miss Ann Robinson’s Jigg’ and ‘Miss
Duff’s Jigg’ appear in one of Fitzmaurice’s ‘New Collection’. Evidence or inference
suggests that there was no ‘gentlemen-piper’ caste in Scotland compared to Ireland -
or not one sufficient to sustain the teachers - and patrons do not seem to have been
performers. Musicians of note such as Niel Gow and William Marshall were
performing and teaching for the ‘big houses’ and the former’s published collections
were dedicated to the Houses of Gordon, Buccleuch and Eglinton. Patterns of
patronage certainly included piping as the much later example of Robert Millar shows
(see below) and the possibly unique example of John Murphy, ‘Performer on the
Union Pipes at Eglinton Castle’.33 An earlier instance of a provincial living being

31 Dalyell 1849, 17; Macinnes 1988, 127, 149.
32 Fitzmaurice [1805]; for a more accurate dating to 1807 or 1808, see Sanger 1998, 35.
33 Murphy [1809].
Union Pipes

made from music in North-East Scotland is shown in an advertisement of March 1783 by a fiddler-composer who also produced printed collections for the violin: ‘Isaac Cooper, Musician in Banff, returns his most grateful thanks to those who have employed him in the musical way, and begs leave to inform them that he still continues to teach the following instruments viz. The Harpsichord, The Violin, The Violincella, the Psaltery, The Clarionet, The Pipe and Taberer, The German Flute, The Scots Flute, The Fife in the regimental stile, The Hautboy, The Irish Organ Pipe, how to make flats and sharps and how to make the proper chords with the Brass keys, and the Guitar, after a new method of fingering (never taught in this country before, which facilitates the most intricate fingering)’. 34 The Union Pipe with one or two Regulators was therefore already being played in Scotland by 1783 and the name ‘Irish Organ Pipe’ recognised. John Murphy’s Collection of Irish Airs and Jiggs with Variations Adapted for the Piano Forte, Violin, & Violincello points the way for the musician to make a living. His sincible was worthy of quotation on the title page of his book; the recently re-built Eglinton Castle in Ayrshire was one of the most prestigious addresses in Scotland in the time of Hugh Montgomerie, 12th Earl of Eglinton (1740-1819), John Murphy’s patron and generous head of the list of subscribers. His book contains forty pages with 77 tunes, and most significantly the list of 286 subscribers, of whom 139 ordered two or more copies and eight ordered six copies. Here we have a picture of musical taste and fashion in early-nineteenth century Scotland and a roll-call of the main names of South West Scotland - Eglinton, Montgomerie, Hamilton, Boswell, Dunlop, Campbell, Maxwell, Wallace, Fullarton, Reid, Anderson, Crichton – and the gentry and mercantile classes of the main burghs such as Ayr, Irvine, Ardrossan, Saltcoats, Kilmarnock and Glasgow. But the names are also geographically spread rather than concentrated in Edinburgh and Glasgow. There are no names here familiar in the annals of piping and it can be assumed that the subscribers were looking for music for the piano and violin. This is perhaps emphasized by the extraordinary number of unmarried women as subscribers in their own right, for example fourteen unmarried female subscribers in Glasgow alone.

34 Glen 1895, vii; Gore 1994, viii.
Makers and players.
The Union bagpipe was the precursor of the *Uilleann* pipe but was a shared tradition; many examples survive to demonstrate this progression. Few are clearly enough marked to allow conclusive dating but a set of pipes, bellows-blown, made by Hugh Robertson of Edinburgh, with two regulators, may be an early example of its type and date to the 1780s.\footnote{NMS K.2003.705.} Hallmarked sets by Robertson survive from 1793-1794 and 1808-1809. Names unknown to the written history of bagpipe-making in Scotland emerged from the stock of J and R Glen’s former shop premises in the Lawnmarket, Edinburgh, in 1983 and makers’ names such as Dunn, Bannon, Massie, Scott and Weldon survive on part-sets and chanters for the Union Pipe. More comprehensive eighteenth-century evidence survives in one or two rare instances. A set of drones in a common stock with bass drone in four sections returning into the stock to reduce overall length is marked ‘NICHOLAS KERR/ EDINBURGH’. Made of yew, stained, and brass mounted, it is an unusually early survival, particularly since its sheepskin bag also survives and demonstrates the style of ‘mounting’ the instrument with a long ‘neck’ to the bag to carry the chanter and stock. Generally much of this material is of high quality workmanship and yet bears no maker’s mark. A prime example is a set of drones in a common stock, made entirely of ivory, with a bass drone with return section, tenor and treble drones. This Union (or ‘Pastoral’) pipe set is inscribed on a silver drone stock ferrule: ‘PRESENTED BY JAMES MITCHELL ESQR. TO HIS FRIEND MR. NEIL MACVICAR ANNO 1804’. This gives at least a *terminus ante quem* for when this fine presentation piece would have been made and the missing chanter may well have carried a maker’s name. The style of finish of the drones, their proportions and arrangement suggest the work of Hugh Robertson of Edinburgh, although no other ivory set can presently be identified unless the two sets in Ireland referred to above and a set in the Pitt Rivers Museum may turn out to be his work. The common stock is a relatively massive open cylinder, to accommodate reeds and also a bass drone reed seat extending into the stock to add sounding length. Particularly noticeable are the bass and tenor drone tops modelled in an everted-rim wine or ale-glass style, known particularly from the third-quarter of the eighteenth century and no doubt typical commodities in Hugh Roberson’s convivial Edinburgh. By the early-nineteenth century, most of the surviving sets of Union pipes are marked
Union Pipes

and the picture becomes clearer; with Hugh Robertson (in business until about 1821) and Donald MacDonald in Edinburgh, Malcolm MacGregor in Glasgow and London, Robert Scott in London and James Reid in North Shields.36

Malcolm MacGregor was one of the most versatile, accomplished and inventive pipe makers of the early nineteenth century. It has been assumed that he was a descendant of the Clann an Sgeulaiche dynasty of the MacGregors of Glen Lyon; he moved from Glasgow to London and set up business as ‘Musical Instrument Maker’ in Carey Street behind the Law Courts and the Strand. He had won third, second and first prizes in the Highland Society Competitions in 1802, 1803 and 1804 when he was described as being from Glasgow.37 He made a variety of bagpipes and flutes, usually working in ebony of flawless quality and finishing his sets of pipes in ivory and silver. He is well represented in museum collections in the United Kingdom and several significant items are in the collections of the National Museums of Scotland. A set of Pastoral Pipes by Malcolm MacGregor with three drones, bass, tenor and treble, and five-keyed regulator was acquired by Dr Duncan Fraser. It is unusual for its long, straight bass drone with three joints, as compared with the more usual ‘folded’ bass. In 1907 Dr Fraser noted buying this set in Glasgow from Peter Henderson (who had died in 1902), and he describes finding an unstamped receipt inside the cover, recording their changing hands in Glasgow in May 1843: ‘a Pair Union Pipes Silver Mounted at £3 0 0 sterling’.38 Malcolm MacGregor was evidently interested in the acoustic potential of bagpipes and submitted an improved chanter to the Highland Society of London in 1810 for which he was awarded a premium of £5. Their Committee reported ‘that although the chanter formerly in use in the great bagpipe appears sufficiently to answer for playing the ancient piobrachds’, MacGregor’s improved chanter was better adapted for playing a greater range of airs such as the popular ‘Roy’s Wife of Aldivalloch’ and ‘other Scottish airs of that kind’. These are described by the Committee as ‘tunes played on the bagpipe’ and the inference may be that these wider range tunes were part of the Union Pipe repertoire and can be seen in the ‘Scottish’ tunes in O’Farrell’s ‘Collection’, which includes ‘Roy’s Wife’. Discounting overblowing, the ‘improvement’ reported by the Highland Society must

36 Cheape 1983, 5-16; NMS K.2003.706; Pitt Rivers Museum 1938.34.112.
37 Mackay 1838, 11; Langwill 1980, 147.
Union Pipes

have included keywork and an example of MacGregor’s work preserved in the national collection could be such a chanter.\(^{39}\) It is a Union Pipe chanter in ebony, 14\(\frac{3}{4}\)ins long, with two closed keys and the top finger hole drilled obliquely to accommodate the stretch of the fingers. These keys would for example make it possible to play ‘Roy’s Wife’. The Highland Society’s proceedings continue to suggest that the improved chanter was sabotaged.\(^{40}\) In 1812 it was reported that:

> ‘The Committee voted a handsome premium to Malcolm MacGregor, Piper and musical instrument maker to the Highland Society of London, for essential improvements made by him on the Great Highland Pipe, and the Union and Northumberland Pipes, on which last instruments he played several tunes in an excellent style, and was highly applauded.’\(^{41}\)

Another set of Malcolm MacGregor’s Union Pipes demonstrates his finesse and pursuit of innovation and perfection. Two drones and two regulators are set in a compact common stock. The bass drone, with two joints only, is drilled with three chambers in the bottom joint, two of which are masked off but the overall dimensions of the drone body entirely hide the return section, built in to extend the sounding length of the bass. The tenor drone, unusually, incorporates three joints. His most sophisticated development of the Union Pipe survives in at least three examples currently known, in Edinburgh, Cork and San Antonio, Texas. This was a type of ‘shuttle pipe’ in which drones and regulators were contained within a relatively compact ‘barrel’ body; this was bored longitudinally and had a ‘layette’ to control the tuning of the drone. The example held by the Department of Music, University of Cork, has a double chanter.\(^{42}\)

Malcolm MacGregor also played Highland pipes for the Highland Society as did his cousin, John MacGregor, one in the direct line of the *Clann an Sgeulaiche* MacGregors of Glen Lyon and a transmitter of the musical traditions of his family. His death in London was reported in the *Edinburgh Magazine* in March 1822, following an accident after playing at a New Year party. His career was a prestigious

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\(^{39}\) NMS K.2003.720.
\(^{40}\) Dalyell 1849, 8.
\(^{41}\) Mackay 1838, 12.
one in contemporary terms, as Piper to the Highland Society of London from 1805 and also to the Duke of Sussex, a younger son of George III and erstwhile President of the Society. The report recalled his skill on the Union Pipe and something of the character of solo concerts in early-nineteenth century Scotland:

‘In passing through Perth last season, on his return from the Highlands, for London, he was prevailed on to give a concert, under patronage of the Perth Gaelic Society in the Salutation Hall. Although the entertainment had scarcely been twenty-four hours advertised, Mr Macgregor had a pretty good house, and all who heard him were delighted at his superior execution upon the great Highland bagpipe, Union pipe, flageolet and German flute’.43

The evidence of (now published) tradition suggests that the Union Pipes continued to be played in the nineteenth century in the North of England, at least by a number of individuals whose character had imprinted itself on the community memory. The most frequently quoted name is James Allan (1734-1810), the famous or notorious Northumbrian piper whose ‘Organ Pipes’ are preserved. Another Union Piper was Billy Purvis (1784-1853) whose life and career attracted biographies. First and foremost a musician and piper, it is evident that Billy Purvis, born at Auchendinny, moved about the south of Scotland and north of England as a travelling showman, making whatever living he could from clowning and piping. It is perhaps conceivable that the seated street-musician and piper depicted in Walter Geikie’s etchings in the Edinburgh area may have been Billy Purvis.44 The material evidence demonstrates that the Union Pipes continued to be made in the North of England although, in the process of attrition and revival in the twentieth century, the English Union Pipe has dropped out of the picture. But those celebrated as innovators and makers of Small Pipes would probably have regarded themselves, not necessarily as Small Pipe makers, but as Pipe Makers in a more general sense. John Dunn of Newcastle was a maker of Small Pipes and is regarded as first to have added keywork to the Small Pipe chanter about 1800, but he was also a maker of Pastoral and Union Pipes and probably made these instruments with keys. His son, Michael Dunn, was the maker of a set of Union Pipes in the Morpeth Chantry Bagpipe Museum, from the W A Cocks

43 Fionn 1912, 208; Buisman 2001, xxxi.
44 Cocks 1935, 214-215; Robson 1854; Arthur 1875; Dick Lauder c.1842, Plate 17.
Union Pipes

Collection (No. 72), with a boxwood, ivory and brass-mounted chanter of length 374mm or 14¾ins, and three drones and a regulator. Michael Dunn marked his instruments with a masonic square and compass, as is seen on a set of drones for a Union Pipe in the National Museums of Scotland, with three drones and a regulator marked also ‘M DUNN’. 45

Other celebrated bagpipe makers offer the same picture. The Reids of North Shields, father and son, have been described in terms exclusively of the Small Pipes. Robert Reid (1784-1837) was the maker of a superb presentation set of Union Pipes in ebony, silver and ivory, the gift of a patron in Deeside to Robert Millar of Montrose in 1830 (now in the National Museums). The chanter, in D, has eight keys and tiny boxwood studs to guide the fingers. There are six drones with changeover switches for D and G chords. Both bass drones have thrice-bored standing sections to reduce overall length and to keep the instrument as compact as possible. Another set of Union Pipes by Robert Reid, also probably about 1830, has been recorded (Sothebys 4 December 1991) with four drones and two regulators and with a double chanter. James Reid (1813-1874) also made Union Pipes and a set of four drones and two regulators in mixed woods has survived. Interest in the Union Pipes in the North of England must have extended beyond these North Shields workshops; a careful measured drawing was found at Cobbler’s Hall, Hexham, of a ‘Plan of the Union Pipes’, done by a member of the Hedley family who were cabinetmakers in Hexham about 1820. 46

Union Pipes by Massie of Aberdeen and Sharp of Aberdeen dating to the first half of the nineteenth century indicate the persistence of a lively and varied musical tradition in North-East Scotland. This is confirmed in other contexts such as the collecting of balladry and song in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. 47 Another Aberdeen maker whose work is well-represented in the material record is John Naughtan. A number of fine boxwood sets of his Pastoral Pipes have survived from the first half of the nineteenth century. They are stamped uniformly and boldly ‘ABD/NAUGHTAN’ on the drone stock. John Naughtan is recorded as ‘Turner’ in the first Aberdeen Directory for 1824-1825, and in the following five Directories he is described as

45 Fenwick 1931, 3-4; Moore 1999, 14.1; Langwill 1980, 43; NMS K.2003.712.
47 Roberts 1983, 4-5; Duncan 1990, 21-24.
Union Pipes

‘Turner and Pipemaker. Over the subsequent ten years or so until the Directory of 1841-1842 and, with his final appearance, he is ‘Turner and Musical Instrument Maker’. During these years he moved in succession from 28 St Andrew’s Street, to 90 George Street, and to 122 George Street. A set of his pipes is in the Wilton Lodge Museum, Hawick, with chanter and foot joint and three drones, bass, baritone and tenor, tuning to d, a and D, and there are also sets in the Fife Folk Museum, Ceres, with chanter and foot joint and three drones, and in the Highland Folk Museum, Kingussie, with three drones, regulator with four keys.48

Rates of production of instruments and markets are still only vague concepts since bagpipe makers left few records and we are left with individual names of players such as Neil MacVicar, John Sutherland, William Mackie, Billy Purvis and Robert Millar. Repertoire can be inferred from the few surviving manuscript collections such as William Mackie’s and Robert Millar’s in the National Museums’ collections and John Sutherland’s in the Mitchell Library. The latter, dating probably to the 1780s, includes fiddle music as well as music for the Union Pipe and demonstrates the obvious overlap in the traditions; equally, something of Union Pipe repertoire may be inferred from the wealth of published fiddle music collections. The status of players differs and it is evident that Robert Millar and Billy Purvis were, with varying degrees of success, earning their living from music, and Neil MacVicar and William Mackie were perhaps ‘gentlemen amateurs’. The purchasers of Union Pipes were in many instances probably pursuing a hobby and the survival of information in these instances tends to be incidental; the provenance of a set of pipes which were said to have belonged to Prince Charles Edward Stewart recorded the name of Mr Richard Lees of Galashiels, ‘an amateur of the Irish bagpipes’, in 1830, a date consistent with more or less the last generation of Union Pipe players. Beside the player, the instrument may supply some information in cases where it has been adapted, for example with the addition or removal of keywork or modification of the chanter by enlarging the reed seat or ‘moving’ the fingerholes. Other details may in due course provide diagnostic information, for example, the use of the tuning rush; a piece of rush attached to a wire loop with thread was used to flatten all the notes of the chanter or regulators. In turn, removal of the pith from the rush would sharpen the notes and this could be done

48 Askew 1934, 42; Cheape (forthcoming).
progressively down the chanter. The rush dulls the tone of the chanter, or mellows the tone, but will not improve the sound of the instrument. Some original examples still survive in situ.49

A manuscript book of ‘Music/ for the/ Union Bag-pipes &c/ 1830’ belonged to and was compiled by Robert Millar (1789-1865) who inscribed his name as ‘Musician, Montrose’ and ‘Piper to the Aberdeen Highland Society’ within the book. This is an extraordinary collection of music, exquisitely written out on small sheets (200x155mm) with ten lines of printed stave. It includes 383 tunes, 311 in the main section of 80 pages, with seven pages of index, and a supplementary section of 23 pages with 72 tunes that appears to have been added into the book after 1830. This is a wide-ranging and eclectic collection, with reels, jigs, hornpipes, quicksteps, song airs, minuets, waltzes, and quadrilles, and could be characterised as reflecting the taste in popular music in Scotland in the early-nineteenth century; in this respect however it is important to emphasize that it is not exclusively Scottish but draws on a wide selection of British, Irish and European popular light classical music of the post-Napoleonic era, reflecting also the spread of Continental dance forms in the early-nineteenth century. In a further respect, Robert Millar’s book belongs firmly in North-East Scotland with music from the regional fiddle tradition, music commemorating and deriving from local landed families from Angus in the south to Banffshire in the north, with an emphasis on Deeside and Braemar and one or two annotations recording performances in the district such as at Mar Lodge in 1839 and 1843. The compilation of this musical vade mecum seems to have been a celebration of the acquisition of his new set of Union Pipes in 1830, the gift of a patron and Deeside laird, Innes of Ballogie. The first fifteen tunes in the manuscript have been scripted with score for Regulators as well as Chanter, probably one of the earliest detailed sources for the use of regulators and depicting a particularly vigorous style of playing. In the later section of the manuscript Millar has included his own ‘Set of Quadrills [sic] for the Union Pipes’ in alternating 2/4 and 6/8 time.50

49 Cheape 2003, 7; for the Mackie manuscript, see NMS H.1995.795.3; Sutherland c.1780; NMS K.2003.728 and K.2003.710 are examples of surviving tuning rushes.
50 NMS H.I.T 116.2; Cannon 1993, 30-36.
Concluding remarks.
A belief or conviction in autochthonous origins and separate traditions for piping, nursed independently in both Ireland and Scotland, has dispensed with any sense of a need for further analysis and may have contributed to the evident neglect of the material culture and a potential organology for the bagpipe. Such a belief, with all its literary, musical and historical apparatus, has not emerged ex nihilo or sui generis but has been fostered in an ideological atmosphere prevalent from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Enlightenment concept of the progress of mankind from rudeness to refinement threw the cultures of Gaelic Scotland and Ireland into sharp focus but Ireland seemed to come out of this process better than Scotland. A Gaelic identity was supported by a historiography influenced by the notion of the ‘isle of saints and scholars’ and the case for an historical Gaelic civilisation assembled by native scholars such as Geoffrey Keating (c. 1570-1644). Within this paradigm, music and traditional culture could be identified with nationhood and an arguably self-evident national civility. Scotland’s experience and treatment was more ambivalent with the long-lived Lowland critique of Highland life and manners inducing antipathy and the ready accusation of barbarism. The Ossian phenomenon, if anything, reinforced notions of a primitive society with all its by then emotional appeal and eased the process of reducing Gaelic civilisation to military achievement and the cult of tartanry; such characteristics were easily and firmly attuned to Empire and ethnic identity remoulded to serve distant purposes.

In the Union Pipe, we see the bagpipe too following the road from rudeness to refinement, principally from its adoption for performance in the European Neo-baroque. Here it evoked, as contemporaries described it, the ‘ancient and pastoral’. In the eighteenth century, it was a catalyst for uniting elite and popular culture and enhancing the appeal of traditional music for performance on keyboard and strings. In spite of the popular theatrical role of the Union Pipe, changing fashions in Scotland replaced it with the Great Highland Bagpipe, then arguably a new invention, and in Ireland it gave way to the fiddle and was virtually annihilated in the cultural devastation of the Famine and emigration. Evidence now points at least to a shared and coterminous origin for the Union Pipe and a development between the eighteenth-century urban centres of Edinburgh, Dublin, London and Newcastle. Let the history of
the Union Pipe now go more readily where its sources of instruments and music will take it.

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The work of Donald MacDonald, Edinburgh pipe maker

Hugh Cheape

The acquisition of a set of Highland pipes in an auction in Bonhams in Edinburgh in August 2003 is our starting point for this essay. This set was a Great Highland Bagpipe by Donald MacDonald of Edinburgh and it was bought for the collections of the National Museums of Scotland (NMS K.2003.939). In the first place I would like to acknowledge the considerable support that I have had in securing and identifying this set of pipes; Rory Sinclair encouraged us in this enterprise with his own knowledge of the unique importance of the instrument and Dugald MacNeill supported our purchase on behalf of the National Museums. The research then and since owes its substance to Keith Sanger, Roderick Cannon and Allan MacDonald.

This bagpipe represents another significant step in the emergence of Donald MacDonald (1767-1840) from a relative obscurity. We now know much more about his life and career, and the work he was doing in collecting and publishing music and in making bagpipes. His piobaireachd collection of 23 tunes written on the stave has remained in the public eye, especially since the EP Publishing Limited reprint of 1974. His bagpipe making had tended to fade from view as his products were overtaken by the work of other makers in Scotland in the nineteenth century. This set in question was made possibly as early as 1805 and bore a tradition from its former owners in Canada of having been played at the Battle of Waterloo. The set of pipes [displayed for the conference audience] is in as near perfect condition as might be expected for a bagpipe of this vintage. An instrument, even a chanter, by this bagpipe maker is now a comparatively rare ‘discovery’ and, in this case in a complete and obviously little played state, it would seem an almost extraordinary survival. The set is in ‘cocus wood’, probably a Caribbean ebony which was a usual material for Edinburgh bagpipe makers of this period, ivory and horn mounted, and finished with full beading and combing decoration on all joints. The pipe chanter of this Donald MacDonald set is marked twice on the front ‘M'DONALD/EDIN’, at the neck and between the Low G and A finger holes, and there is a possible trace of a further placing of the name-stamp which may have been worn
away. With regard to bagpipes made in Scotland, Donald MacDonald and Hugh Robertson were among the first to mark their products, and we move spontaneously from a dearth of marks of identification in the eighteenth century and before to a feast of multiple marking by these Edinburgh makers.

The acquisition of this set and its inclusion in a ‘national collection of the national instrument’ has been a triumph for the process of forming a comprehensive collection of pipes and piping for Scotland within the National Museums of Scotland. The process was instigated in 1978 following a small exhibition, ‘Pipes, Harps and Fiddles’, mounted for the Edinburgh Festival in 1976. The gathering of evidence has been slow with as much information deriving more often from fragments as from complete instruments. Many fragments such as discarded drone sections and chanters came from the former shop premises of J & R Glen in the Lawnmarket, Edinburgh, and from material such as this from other sources. The material evidence thus gathered in began to change the picture which we have of pipe-making in Scotland, in the first place on a number of bagpipe makers who have otherwise dropped out of the record, names such as Maclean, Gunn, Bannon, Scott, Kerr, Vallence, Duke, Weldon, Massie, Mark, Brown, Macfarlane, MacPhail or Dunn, and secondly on the variety of their products such as Small Pipes, Union Pipes, Lowland Pipes as well as the more familiar Highland Pipes.

It would be fair now to claim that Donald MacDonald is one of the better known and clearly more prominent early Scottish Highland Bagpipe makers, with a business in the Old Town of Edinburgh from about 1806 (or possibly 1802) until his death in 1840. In the Post Office Annual Directory for 1807-1808, for example, he is listed as ‘Donald McDonald, pipe-maker, Advocate’s close’. He himself was a professional player and tradition bearer, we assume receiving his tuition from the leading Skye family of MacArthurs, having been brought up in their vicinity in the north end of the island. He competed in the Highland Society competitions, appearing in the prize lists in 1801 when he was in the Rothesay and Caithness Fencibles, and winning a first prize and the Prize Pipe in 1817. In 1806 he was recorded as ‘Pipe Maker’ in the Lawnmarket when he was awarded a Highland Society medal for producing the greatest number of pipe tunes set to music by himself. This work subsequently bore fruit in published form in the remarkable Collection of the Ancient Martial Music of Caledonia, the first printed collection of ‘pibroch’ music for the Highland Bagpipe. This publication prefigures a
significant pattern whereby the most important published music collections were produced by
the bagpipe makers themselves. The volume was well produced in a large folio format with
sumptuous title-page and appropriate dedication to the Highland Society of London. The title
and music pages were printed from engraved plates from a business in the High Street and
survived to be thrown out of J and R Glen's premises about 1983. The book represented a
huge investment of time and money for its author, a dreadful truth re-iterated by him in the
years following publication. In order to realise some of his investment, Donald MacDonald
who was used to teaching in the gentry community (as we infer from his advertisements),
designed and offered the work for playing on piano and violin to broaden its market since it
was probably beyond the reach of the piper community, few of whom probably required
printed texts or scores. Not that the pipers of the day were penniless and illiterate but
necessities of life for them rarely included printed books beyond the spiritual nourishment of
the Scriptures.

The physical characteristics of the Donald MacDonald set of Highland pipes are, on close
examination, reasonably distinctive, particularly in terms of the placing of the finger holes on
the chanter, the 'finish' of the chanter, the styling of the drones (especially the bass drone)
and the respective proportions of the drone joints. The length of the chanter is 362 mm, or
approximately 14 ¼ in., in other words a standard length for the pitch, but it has noticeably
different proportions in a longer tenon and smaller or 'flatter' head. The style of finish at the
mouth is highly distinctive with an internal diameter of 21 mm but the outer surface of the
chanter 'flaring' out to 43 mm. An ivory 'sole' is finished in the form almost of a slim ring on
the circumference of a flaring mouth, compared to the large 'plate' style forming the 'base' of
the chanter that emerged in the nineteenth century; it is altogether a slighter and finer piece
and also narrower in overall diameter than the typical late-nineteenth and twentieth century
chanter sole. It is perhaps more reminiscent of the ferrule on the mouth of a Baroque oboe. By
comparison also with pipe chanters of this later date, the finger holes appear to be placed
slightly lower down the chanter, an impression confirmed by measuring approximately the
respective distances between the top surface of the reed-seat and the top edges of the thumb
hole and top finger hole on the front of the chanter.
The Donald MacDonald chanter has been the subject of more research by Decker Forrest in the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, in particular to learn more about its sound and how it performs, given that this instrument coincides with the beginnings of manuscript recording and published pipe music. Different types of pipe music then predominated, such as reels and jigs with an emphasis on playing for dancing. There were certainly different fingering styles in common use, given the evidence of finger charts in the earliest published collections with, for example, open C and high G played with the F closed. The chanter itself has been meticulously reproduced by McCallum Bagpipes, work that extended over some months in 2005. Listening to the reproduction chanter being played for the first time conveyed immediate and powerful impressions. It had an impressive resonance and volume and a very strong ‘lower hand’ sound. Although it is playing at a slightly lower pitch, it does not give an impression of being ‘flat’ relative to the sound of chanters today. The Donald MacDonald chanter has a strongly individual sound.

The bass drone has an overall length of 706 mm, measured with the joints closed, comparing closely to the overall length of a modern bass drone. The bass drone reed-seat is relatively large at just over 11 mm and must have taken a longer reed to accommodate the lower pitch of the chanter. The bottom-joint of the drone is much shorter (at 277 mm) compared with a similar piece from a more modern bagpipe but has a proportionately longer tuning tenon. Also relative to this, the length of the Donald MacDonald bass drone top-joint is 317 mm as compared to, say, around a more typical 290 mm. The potential sounding-length of the Donald MacDonald bass drone is therefore closely comparable to the modern Great Highland Bagpipe but the proportions of the joints are different with a much shorter bottom-joint and longer top-joint respectively. The overall length of the tenor drones is slightly shorter than modern tenor drones with shorter bottom joints. Another outstanding detail is the conspicuously larger and comparatively massive bass drone top and ‘sounding chamber’ with an overall diameter of 56 mm and an aperture of almost 20 mm diameter.

The size and shape of the bass drone top section, which is so immediately noticeable, may be visually enhanced by the apparent slimness of the joints, the rather slight ‘shoulders’ over the tuning chambers and the small size of the mounts, more characteristic of eighteenth and early-nineteenth century instruments. Within the drone top, an acoustic chamber has been formed in
a deep inverted cone-shape, turned from the solid and undercut below the aperture rather than turned out and ‘closed’ with an inserted ‘bush’ or ring cap.

What significance, if any, can we read into the visible and measurable differences in drone size, particularly of the bass drone? How we judge the sound of the drone in detail tends to be more subjective than measurable in the first instance, and so how we reconstruct it for the late-eighteenth or early-nineteenth centuries would seem to be even more fraught with difficulties. It should be reasonable to expect or detect differences in drone sound but, due to modern standards of museum conservation and ethics of handling, no sound tests have yet been attempted with the Donald MacDonald set; it is hoped that an ethically acceptable method of testing will be available in due course. At the least, the size of the reed seat presupposes a larger bass drone reed producing a greater volume. Tradition and opinion describe the Donald MacDonald bagpipe sound as being strong and carrying but simple measurements show that the chanter compares reasonably closely to modern, nineteenth and twentieth century chanters. An answer may be found in due course in the amplitude of chanter and drone sound taken together and the harmonics produced.

Among a range of potentially measurable elements, higher amplitude drone harmonics at lower frequencies offer pointers to the fundamental importance of the bass drone in the Great Highland Bagpipe and its essential antiquity among the different elements making up the instrument. Without specific testing, it is suggested that the Donald MacDonald bass drone may provide more frequencies or ‘sound pitches’ across the sound spectrum, or a different clustering of frequencies in the sound spectrum, for example in the lower frequencies. The resulting range and quantity of harmonics could no doubt produce a richness of tone which makers such as Donald MacDonald were aiming for, and in particular it is suggested that he placed great emphasis on the quality of bass drone sound and shaped his work in the conviction that this would be highly characteristic and recognisable.

Joseph MacDonald comments, about 1760, in his Compleat Theory of the Scots Highland Bagpipe on the bagpipe’s ‘Prodigious Loudness’ and when the bagpipe earlier begins to be described in Gaelic, there is no doubting the robust sound, stridency and acoustic power. Stock metaphors describing the sound of the pipes in late-medieval and early-modern Gaelic
song such as sgàl, gàirich, gleadhraich, glagrams, nuallanach, tormain are all terms inferring volume and carrying quality, and may be said even to point to a quality of bass drone sound, a particular harmonic structure perhaps, as well as to vagaries of personal taste. The Gaelic language of earlier generations, when less tainted by English, possessed a range of terms describing sound which tells us of high and acute levels of appreciation, discrimination, description and definition. In this sphere of traditional music, the bagpipe was increasingly in the hands of a professional class playing within a given system of patronage. The pipers were composing, setting up the instrument and performing for the satisfaction of the listeners and within the set expectations of their audience who would recognize the conventional signals of sound and messages which confirmed and reinforced rather than surprised or shocked. This seems to be recalled in Joseph MacDonald’s Compleat Theory, in the first published version of 1803 in which his elder brother, Rev Patrick MacDonald (1729-1824) added text to the original manuscript:

‘Besides the smaller Drones of the Highland Bagpipe (two in number) there was, and still is, in use, with the Pipers in the North Highlands particularly, a great Drone, double the Length and Thickness of the smaller, and in sound, just an octave below them, which adds vastly to its grandeur, both in sound and show. This Drone may be properly termed the Bass Drone, and, in proportion to the simplicity of the Instrument, has a good deal of the nature of a Bass accompaniment, insomuch that to Persons of true taste, accustomed to it, the want of it makes a most capital Defect in the martial strain of Pipe music.

Writing from his parish in Mid-Argyll and after assembling his own Collection of Highland Vocal Airs published in 1784, Rev Patrick MacDonald writes about the ‘North Country Pipers’ and a superior sound depending on the Bass Drone cultivated by them. Changes in fashion and the decline in the fortunes of the ‘North Country’ piping families may have been resisted by the Gaelic cognoscenti but a shift in the centre of gravity to new patrons, military piping and a southern and eastern Highland sound would have been confirmed by the Highland Society competitions beginning in 1781. The physics and acoustics of this shift would then have been confirmed by the requirements of competition and uniformity, and the production of Prize Pipes by the emerging class of professional bagpipe makers in Edinburgh and London.
Donald MacDonald was brought up in the MacArthur country of Trotternish in Skye and must have been an heir to the ‘North Country’ sound. He must have then begun to conform in his Highland bagpipes to the styles of the city manufacturers and the requirements of a new competitive class, but this was only a proportion of his production as the surviving evidence shows him to have been making Union Pipes and Small Pipes in equal or greater quantity. This surviving set of Highland pipes, dating to the opening years of the nineteenth century, seems to represent something of an end of an era, with the ‘finish’ and decoration reflecting newer styles, particularly those being produced by Hugh Robertson in the Highland Society Prize Pipes, and the dimensions and acoustic properties reflecting older styles, possibly the residue of the ‘North Country’ sound.

The evidence for the ‘North Country’ or an eighteenth-century sound is meagre but two fine sets of Highland pipes are noteworthy, both now in the public domain. In the first place, an eighteenth-century set of Highland pipes has been described and illustrated in *The Piper Press* No. 10 (January 1999), pages 27-31. They have been called ‘MacCorquodale’s Pipes’, recalling a tradition that they were played by a man, MacCorquodale, who was said to have played for recruiting men in Argyll for Campbell of Barbreck’s Company for the American Wars. Made possibly in the 1770’s (or earlier), MacCorquodale’s Pipes were substantially repaired and reconstructed by R G Lawrie of Glasgow in the early 1950’s, but they still supply important evidence for the form and finish of the Great Highland Bagpipe in this era. Secondly, a ‘Prize Pipe’ awarded to Pipe-Major John Buchanan by the Highland Society of London in 1802 has survived and is now in the Regimental Museum of the Black Watch in Perth. A silver shield on the chanter stock reads:

‘Prize given by the Highland Society of London to John Buchanan, Pipe-Major to the 42\textsuperscript{nd} or Royal Highland Regiment. Adjudged to him by the Highland Society of Scotland at Edinburgh, 20\textsuperscript{th} July 1802.’

This instrument came from the personal collection of Dr Alexander Duncan Fraser (1849-1920). The latter had a lifelong interest in the bagpipes of the world, of which he made a very significant collection which was passed by his son, Colonel A N Fraser DSO, to the Royal
Scottish Museum in 1947. His intense interest in his subject led him to write a book, Some Reminiscences and the Bagpipe (Falkirk 1907), a charming and enthusiastic treatise on bagpipe history that was illustrated with instruments from his own collection. The Plate facing page 121 is a photograph of this same Great Highland ‘Prize Pipe’, which Duncan Fraser has captioned: ‘A Relic of Waterloo. The Author looks upon this Pipe as the most valuable in his collection. It was bought for him by Mr W S MacDonald, of Glasgow, and has a very sweet tone.’

Pipe Major John Buchanan’s ‘Prize Pipe’ must have been made around 1802 and its maker was Hugh Robertson, the Edinburgh pipe maker selected by the Highland Society of London in 1781 to be the maker of the first prize bagpipe for their piping competition staged at Falkirk. Although the historical record fixes Hugh Robertson as a maker of Highland bagpipes, for example for the Highland Society of London’s competitions, in entries in the Edinburgh Post-Office Directories and in manuscript sources, as one of the earliest of the Scottish makers to mark his products with a name stamp, ‘chamber pipes’ are now probably better represented than Highland pipes among his surviving instruments.

The succession of the honorary commission of ‘Pipe Maker to the Highland Society of London’ passed in 1812 from Hugh Robertson to Malcolm MacGregor of London, though only briefly, before passing back to Hugh Robertson in 1816. MacGregor having charged £10 – 10s (or ten guineas) for the Prize set, Robertson’s price of £8 – 8s was accepted by the Society in preference. The commission then passed to Donald MacDonald in 1822. Malcolm MacGregor’s Prize pipe from 1813, won by Finlay MacLeod of the 79th Regiment (Cameron Highlanders), has recently been advertised for sale.

After 1784, the Piobaireachd competitions held by the Highland Society were moved permanently from Falkirk to Edinburgh and staged in the Theatre Royal in Edinburgh’s New Town. The event was characterised by a more formal structure and increasing theatricality in order to attract more audience and revenue. The Edinburgh Evening Courant for 5 July 1786 advertised the ‘premiums’ offered by the Highland Society of London but added: ‘All candidates must appear in the Highland dress, otherways they will not be allowed to compete.’ A dense programme of entertainment evolved including piping, singing, recitations
and dancing, what for better or worse was considered a ‘national display’. More and more emphasis was put on outward appearances, the splendour and glamour of Highland dress, then developing dramatic new fashionable formats, and with an increasingly military emphasis emerging during and after the Napoleonic Wars. Bagpipe music would be customarily characterised as ‘martial strains’ and the piper becoming a stereotype, conforming, especially by the 1820s, to public expectations of what a Highlander should look like. Appearance as well as sound might also have dictated the prohibition of two-drone pipes in the Highland Society competitions after 1821. The sense of a spectacle is well conveyed by a report on the Piobaireachd Competition printed in the Edinburgh Advertiser on 2 August 1822:

‘On Tuesday last, the Annual competition for the Prizes given by the Highland Society of London to the Five best performers on the Great Highland Bagpipe, was held in the Theatre Royal here. … The performance began by a tune on the prize pipe, precisely at 12 o’ clock, so as to interfere as little as possible with the race, which the Stewards had obligingly postponed an hour later than usual. The house was crowded in every part. In the boxes particularly there was a most brilliant assembly of our fair countrywomen; many of whom wore tartan scarfs or other ornaments appropriate to the occasion. Some indeed were remarked in the full Highland costume of tartan robes and bonnets. When the curtain was raised the whole competitors, Pipers and Dancers, were seen arranged round the stage, and the various cheques of the lively tartans worn by above sixty fine Highlanders, in their full native dress, had a very pleasing effect.’

Sir John Sinclair, as President of the Highland Society of Scotland, before giving the prizes gave his opinion to the audience on the value of piping: ‘It tends to preserve that martial spirit for which the Scottish nation has so long been celebrated; for there is no real Scotsman who would not march to battle with more alacrity to the animating sound of the bagpipe, than to that of any other warlike instrument.’ Sir John Sinclair’s words reflect fairly public opinion that soldiering had for long been a Scottish occupation and that the Gael and his bagpipe was emerging as the embodiment of Scotland. There was an extraordinary irony in this in so far as political opinion and events had convincingly rejected the Highlander as traitor Jacobite and national miscreant only to reinstate him with honour a generation later. The catalyst moving public opinion must have been the high levels of recruitment in the Highlands for Fencible
Corps from the Seven Years War and for regular service in the American and Napoleonic Wars, although the reputation of Highland soldiers in the late-eighteenth century was out of all proportion to the numbers then involved in Britain’s wars of empire. A mystique was enhanced by the heroic epic of Ossian which itself was endorsed by literary Europe. The rhythmic prose of the Ossian epic was also one way for Europeans to understand pipe music and piobaireachd which, for most, was mysterious and for some cacophonous.

Historians have long recognised the significance of the two-week Royal Visit of August 1822 when George IV landed in Leith, and Edinburgh’s enthusiasm for royalty suddenly knew no bounds. The ceremonies and aspirations devised by Sir Walter Scott effectively put a seal on national and cultural identity. Contemporary imagination, largely moulded by Scott and his literary and historical imagination, began to construct a past with clan chieftains and their retinues, in uniform, creating an image that became embedded in Scottish cultural life. The Highlander was being re-admitted into the mainstream of Scottish life and coming to be identified with the rest of Scotland. More extraordinary was the kilt coming to be recognised as Scotland’s ‘national dress’. It is significant that dress and accoutrements, unless ancestral relics survived, could be ordered up from Edinburgh shops and merchants. Implicit in this by this time was the sense of the heroic and the martial, corroborated by uniformity, in dress, accoutrements, movements and, no doubt, influencing what a Great Highland Bagpipe looked like, as much as what it sounded like. Scott’s own ‘Notes for the Royal Visit’ are very telling:

‘The Highlanders are what he will like most to see. Each clan chief to bring half-a-dozen, no, half-a-score of clansmen to Edinburgh. Mind, Highlandmen of decided respectability, dress and accoutrements to be in order. Make sure the Plaids and Tartans are sorted out, and allocated appropriately with some semblance to historical significance.’

Ossian greets Rob Roy to the heroic strains of the ‘great pipe’ at the ‘birth’ of an image of Scottish identity. However much we might question or doubt the authenticity of this image, there is no doubting the effectiveness of it or its universal and lasting appeal. There is a sinister side however to the birth of the image in that the Highlanders summoned to Edinburgh in 1822 were seen by some as a balm to quieten the cholic of contemporary radicalism. The reign of George III was coloured by a growing challenge to the monarchy,
parliament and the law as constituted, a phase of British politics brought to a close by the Reform Act of 1832. The political control of Scotland was in the hands of Henry Dundas and his faction, a status quo shaken by the American Revolution (1776-1783) and the reformers or ‘Whigs’ pushing for change. Robert Burns’ verse and song, such as ‘a Man’s a Man for a’ that’, appealed to egalitarian values and scoffed at contemporary corruption, and the Society of Friends of the People provided a focus and rallying point for popular ideology. The French Revolution of 1789 had galvanised opinion but the cause of democratic principles and radical reform were then stifled by the outbreak of the Revolutionary War in 1793. A siege economy during the Napoleonic Wars, post-war depression of soaring prices and falling wages led to political tensions, largely patriotic Toryism versus Whig reform fired by a growing radical press, but the cause of political reform was further challenged by the ‘State Trials’ of 1817, the ‘Peterloo Massacre’ and the ‘Radical War’ of 1820. These were hard times for the majority of Scots. Sir Walter Scott was one of those who saw radicals and conspirators round every corner and wrote wildly about controlling the ‘labouring classes’ with troops. Scott, the historian, recalled the ‘Highland Host’ of 1678 when the government brought a force of the Highland clans south to overawe and control the radical covenanted districts of South-West Scotland. He commended the Highland chiefs who were ready to furnish another ‘Highland Host’. Were his tartans and bagpipes of 1822 not a reactionary measure as much as a new mythology and Highland histrionics? Even Scott’s own son-in-law and biographer, John Gibson Lockhart, dared to voice disapproval of the new craze of bagpipes and tartan, and Whig reformers such as Henry Cockburn commented wryly: ‘Edinburgh was as quiet as the grave, or even as Peebles …’

For better or worse, benign or sinister, the image of the kilted Highlander depends aesthetically on an impression of uniform and of uniformity, an aesthetic supplied by the wars of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries when the kilted warrior became the archetype Scot. Marching in step with the emergence of national stereotype was the Great Highland Bagpipe, remodelled in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and more or less uniformly adopted as archetype in the first quarter of the nineteenth. All pipe makers then conformed to type in producing the Highland pipe, and differences or distinctions in the products of nineteenth and twentieth century makers are difficult to define and recognise;
these are subtleties of finish and discreet ‘signatures’. Whence then came this Great Highland Bagpipe and was there a sole begetter?

The styling and finish of the Great Highland Bagpipe of circa 1800 could be described in a phrase such as ‘from Rococo to Neo-classical’. In the first place, the level of detail in the contemporary bagpipe owed much to the raw materials available and their potential. Dense, tight-grained, tough tropical hardwoods such as Caribbean ebony or ‘cocus wood’ could be lathe-turned in ways that native woods could not and a greater degree of detail added to the instrument with less risk of splitting or chipping. This alone would explain the appearance of full beading and combing on drones and stocks although the evolution of this is difficult to date with any accuracy. The achievement of a new symmetry and decorative finesse was realised by many urban craftsmen for whom imports of tropical hardwoods were available. Silversmiths in Edinburgh and Glasgow in the mid-eighteenth century for example were using variegated cocus woods, turned for toddy ladles and coffee pot handles, exactly the same timbers used by the pipe makers. Again it is difficult to be precise about timbers and sources without further scientific analysis since even contemporary references to ‘cocus’ or ‘coco’ wood must be understood as generics used, for example, for any imported wood displaying the contrasting colours of heart and sapwoods.

The first references to the Pipe Maker, Hugh Robertson, Edinburgh, survive from 1766-67, coinciding with the publication of James Craig’s Plan for the New Town and the beginnings of Edinburgh’s expansion to the north. The world of the first documented Highland bagpipe makers therefore was the world of the Enlightenment and the Georgian city. The development of the New Town itself, approximately from 1767 to 1820, neatly coincide with Hugh Robertson’s long career in the business of making bagpipes. Hugh Robertson and Donald MacDonald lived in and through a period of intense building and development that offered ideas and exemplars of style and design. These years also saw Edinburgh develop its self-image of the ‘Athens of the North’, an illusion taken very seriously, with Calton Hill as the Acropolis and a self-conscious cultural legacy of Greece and Rome. Architecuted columns, capitals, bases and mouldings can all be seen in the changing design of the Great Highland Bagpipe in this period. The ‘head’ of the chanter now carries an ovolo moulding and beading such as the pipe makers would have seen time and again as they attended the Highland
Society competitions in the Theatre Royal at the north end of the North Bridge and nearly opposite the Register House; its principal entrance was fronted with a pedimented portico with entablature supported on Roman Doric columns. It is suggested therefore that the chanter and drone profiles of the Great Highland Bagpipe were taken approximately from contemporary architectural detailing at a time when the instrument was emerging in a new form. This source of inspiration and design offered a degree of urbanity, sophistication and uniformity which pipe makers such as Hugh Robertson and Donald MacDonald sought.

An inherited conventional wisdom, the perpetuation of which we of the twentieth century are largely responsible, suggested that the Highland pipe was hand-made in the Highlands before, say, the early-nineteenth century, and that locally available materials such as holly, laburnum, bone and horn were employed. The material evidence and historical context indicate that the Great Highland Bagpipe was being made by professional turners in the Lowland cities to professional wind-instrument standards and in a standardised form, with three drones, bass and two tenors, and finished with elaborate turned decoration. The same makers, men of skill and versatility, were also customarily makers of other woodwind instruments such as Union Pipes and therefore working more within a Neo-Baroque tradition than a Highland ‘folk’ tradition. The sense of contrast and paradox is more highly marked in the case of Donald MacDonald whose Hebridean background of extremely modest circumstances represents a more challenging starting-point for a career of such significance for Scottish culture.
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