

CHAPTER 2

Ch. 2.1 GAELIC SONG AND PIBROCH: FROM ORAL TO WRITTEN.

One has to attempt to understand the attitudes which prevailed towards the end of the nineteenth century, and possibly the greater part of this century, to appreciate how the performance styles were continually being standardised into what they represent today. In this context, it is important to realise that the Gaelic language had been denied the opportunity of a place in the Scottish classroom in the 1872 Education Act. This was a severe blow to a culture which had already suffered a policy of ethnocide in the post-Culloden years. An understanding of the socio-psychological effects of language suppression and its separation from an idiom, with which it is historically inextricably linked, is required before one can explain the distancing of probably most of the Gaelic speaking pipers from their own song and musical tradition this century. One also has to understand the social and organisational influences which lie behind this ongoing complex. ^{These aspects lie} This, however, is outwith the remit of this thesis. The most difficult aspect to appreciate, when surveying the ongoing debates on words and melodies which have been recorded since the late nineteenth century, is that no one compared the song rhythms with pibroch until recently, (Cooke: 1972). Many songs and versions have undoubtedly been lost. For example Alexander Carmichael (EUL Mss no.187) at the end of the last century had this to say:

'The words of many pipe tunes died with an old man at Eirsiridh, Barra. He sang the words of many of the tunes in ordinary singing and port a bial singing and in both ways pleasingly. Like the airs to which they were sung, the words of many of the tunes were old and archaic and difficult to understand. No one took an interest in these old words and these old tunes of this old man except his old neighbours of the congested rocks and bogs around him and these also have died leaving no folklore, no musical successors. This the same throughout the Isles and the same throughout the mainland of Scotland. This all very sad and very regrettable and all being irretrievably lost - gone for ever.'

Despite this great loss, there is more than sufficient evidence extant to demonstrate the main changes which have occurred.

The bard was a musician/ poet who accompanied his songs with the clàrsach. As Ramsay stated in his essay in Patrick MacDonald's collection (1784: 11)

'In the first ages of society, the poet and musician were commonly one and the same'

but that:

'no sooner did arts and letters make considerable progress in any country, than poetry and music became two separate professions.'

This is ^{first} ~~an important~~ point ^{above} which is manifest in the Gaelic language's use of the verb 'seinn' to describe playing the pipes by: 'a seinn air a phìob'⁴³ ^{insert ft.} which is now interpreted as 'sing' in Gaelic.

As has been discussed earlier, the music played by the piper represented a range of rhythmical and melodic characteristics which were to some extent associated with the different uses to which the pipes were put. But one cannot consider one particular tradition in isolation, because there were other influences from the different ^{musical genres} art forms within Gaelic society, such as clarsach and fiddle. ^(other instruments)

What is common to ^{But,} both pibroch and song is that they flourished in an oral-aural tradition. ^{as} As Thomson points out (1953:1) it was not entirely so in music and literature, and this would seem to have been the situation in the pibroch tradition ~~as well~~. For instance, I. MacLennan (1921) states that ^{checks} William Ross the poet had a manuscript belonging to Ross's uncle, Angus MacKay of Gairloch, who gave it to J MacLennan's father. We are not informed, though, whether it was in notated or canntaireachd form. There was possibly a number of canntaireachd manuscripts extant when the different schools of piping were flourishing, which were handed down through the generations. There is evidence of at least one lost canntaireachd source: ^{contradiction.}

'A Donald MacDonald who was piper to one of the MacKenzie's had a manuscript of canntaireachd which was

⁴³ Although this has given way in the present day to 'a cluich air a phìob' but it is still used by some.

destroyed by his own daughter when he died. (C.W. Mss
170)⁴⁴

72nd Scottish
Mackay-Scobie
ref.
cf. Bridget Mackenzie

The oral tradition in song and music represents a complex web of melody and it is of no great concern to a serious musicologist to attempt to find out the original version of a tune because, for the most part, it is a futile exercise and subject to many variables. As Gérold argued (Brailoiu 1984: 8) provenance is of little concern and in this study there is little to be gained by attempting to evaluate which of the two idioms first carried the melody, the pibroch or the song. Davenson (Brailoiu 1984: 8) stated that it is not what the original version was but what it has become which is important. In the reality of a thriving instrumental and song tradition, existing side by side, a melody or its variants, or motifs of the melody, would be found in both and adapted to the characteristics of each particular idiom.

There are problems involved for the researcher in attempting to assess how well the notated scores reflect the Gaelic idiom. A method of assessment which entails the ^{trad musician raised in the idiom} traditionally raised musician qualitatively surveying ^{of music in this idiom} the score, rather than quantitatively measuring the note values, obviously has its complications as it suggests a certain amount of subjectivity. That ^{is} qualitative element ^{in interpretation} entails, ~~in a sense~~, standing back, ^{as it were,} from the written score. ^{Importantly / Crucially} Moreover, the difference between one musician's interpretation of a score and another's is based on a complex of past experience, cultural background and intuition. This study is, in a sense, attempting to address the problems of reconciling the more objective elements of language with the more subjective nature of the music which carries it. The melody in song is the more fluid of the two idioms of language and music. When this music is transferred to an instrument, that fluidity obviously depends on the capabilities and characteristics of the instrument itself. Of the two mediums, voice and pipe, the former is the most melodically and rhythmically adaptable and the pipes are ~~therefore relatively limited~~, to the extent that one cannot produce an exact representation of the song as sung. ^{work it must be stressed,} This ~~thesis~~ is not attempting to create an exact representation. ^{This study, it must be stressed, is not an exact}

⁴⁴ The date is not given but it was probably in the early part of the nineteenth century.

In one sense, this study is a commentary on the hiatus which exists between the point where the idiomatic features of song end and where those of pibroch begin. Or, stated in another way, it might represent an attempt to measure how far - as one writer summed up the problem - 'the art of the musician has become dissociated from that of the composer of verses'.⁴⁵ In this respect, it is to be assumed that certain changes have occurred in the nature of the song airs when these have been adapted for pipes and it is the nature of these changes which is being addressed here. The disassociation of a particular song ^{from?} with its instrumental version has already been commented on by O'Canainn (1978: 8), who tells us that the transmission of an air between a singer and an instrumentalist will lead to changes in the character of the tune. Some stylistic changes are to be expected in the process of that transfer. Unfortunately, since pibrochs were first notated the hiatus has continually become wider, to the point where the two idioms cease to have anything more than melodic features in common. — and these, often, difficult to identify because of the manner in which pibroch performance style hides the melody

The matter of concern here is the extent to which rhythmical distortions can occur in any culture's musical idiom before the melody itself becomes unrepresentative of the language society from which it sprang. For example, there are numerous examples of melodic motifs which are similar in different countries around the world. But, because these are couched in the language rhythms of their particular region or host country, they are difficult to recognise. (see Brailiou 1940: Ch1.) have I not already made this point.

Brailiou in his... deals with this. ✓ → (p36)

There are numerous examples throughout the case studies which highlight some of these distortions and one only has to consider the commonly occurring introductory figure of E to low A birl which is taken to represent the *hiharin* in the Campbell Canntaireachd. (See also chapter 3. 2) These do not exist either rhythmically or melodically in the same rhythm, in Gaelic song⁴⁶ and have emerged in the pibroch tradition. as idiosyncratic melodic motifs. introductory

⁴⁵ Stewart, (1928: 293.)

⁴⁶ There are some songs which have an E-A motif at the beginning such as 'Sud mar chaidh an càl a dholaigh', a pipe variant which can be found in Malcolm MacInnes's (1939) pipe book called 'This is how the ladies dance'. Also the song Thug mi pòg do làmh an Rìgh (I got a kiss of the King's hand) which starts on the E. This is not an anacrusis because *fhua* stresses on the E. It is possible, although unlikely, that there has been some influence from the pibroch tradition here which led the singers to

For any society's traditional music to be properly appreciated by its people, it is surely an elementary condition that the music contains similar rhythmic features which are present in the language of that society. A parallel exists in the closely related musical tradition in Ireland and where O'Baoill (1976) states

'a proper appreciation of Irish music is impossible without a knowledge of the language'

The performers of pibroch, just as ^{performers of} in Gaelic song, cannot avoid considering the characteristics of language rhythm if the music is to be presented faithfully in its cultural context. ^{or setting} It is no surprise then that when a song air is separated from its language it changes and adapts to the culture ^{the writer is} in which it is communicated, as has happened with pibroch. For instance, when a Gaelic speaker compares the Gaelic words to a song with the music score, there is an immediate empathy with the word rhythm so that the musical score becomes secondary, functioning merely as a melodic guide. Because ^{draw} ~~I am~~ working from within the tradition, I am less likely to literally read the score, than a person outside Gaelic tradition, might be. The ^{empathy with word rhythm exists} same conditions apply even after a song has been adapted to the requirements of instrumental music ^{here} in the form of pibroch, even though there is a greater hiatus here between language and musical rhythm. It is the subtle rhythmical relationships between these which are misunderstood today ^{and} which are important to this study.

Because of this, there may be a contradiction implicit in this study in that I might be more prepared than a person without a Gaelic language background to accept, with less criticism, the attempts at notation being frequently at odds with what I identify as the most natural rhythm of the tune. Once one is aware of what the idiom is, - and this concerns a feeling for what the rhythmic parameters of language in melody are, - the exactness of the notation is of lesser concern to the person brought up in the Gaelic ^{writing} (language) tradition. ^{may appear to be} These parameters are, to some extent, subjective, but they concern a range of different choices of interpretation which a piper playing a pibroch or Gaelic song melody can make which nevertheless retain the rhythmic characteristics of the tradition. For instance, if one considers one of the common conventional figures of pibroch, what pipers today call the 'double echo' (see section 3.4.1) it is

start on the equivalent of E. See also Ishbel MacDonald (1995) for another, melodically different, song version.

possible to suggest the rhythm of language through a range of alternative styles. For example, in contrast with the standardised style of modern performance, one could play

Ex.3.



or



or



or



which are ~~only~~ some of the rhythmic possibilities of this three note figure, each of which could be represented in Gaelic song⁴⁷. The choice of one particular rhythmic figure rather than another is of no great importance in the pibroch tradition providing it fits into the rhythmic scheme of the whole tune, without distortion, and is not unfamiliar to the broader rhythmic scheme of the song and musical tradition. What is more important in performance, is how the melodic and rhythmic figures interrelate in the context of the phrase as a whole.

The writer's lesser concern with the ^{minute} exact details of notation that might seem ~~inexact~~ to the ethnomusicologist, may go some way to explaining why, as Cooke (1972) pointed out, the earlier notators of pipe music were less apologetic about the limitations of their notation than later ones. They were notating at a time when pibroch was being transmitted through the medium of Gaelic in a predominantly Gaelic speaking society. This was when pibroch depended on aural and oral transmission and most

⁴⁷ See also General Thomason's introduction in 'Ceol Mor' (1895) for a range of different ways of playing the echoes.

pipers could not read music⁴⁸. For those who could read the notation, it could only ever have been considered as an *aide memoire*. This has been pointed out by Kilberry 1948. Present day pipers' reinterpretation of the cadence runs of the Donald MacDonald collection and earlier notators, *however*, does not mean that these early notators were attempting merely to notate in an approximate manner. These early manuscript and published sources of pibroch are, I consider, fairly well notated given the limitations of measured time. [^] Why should the early notators [^] write a three demisemiquaver ornament when they really mean to represent a full crotchet on the melody line, as some present day pipers argue? *is a ludicrous concept,* (The actual performance of these E's, *however*, is closer to a minim.) [^] Despite the shortcomings of the notated scores, they *appear to be* ~~were probably~~ sufficiently informative ~~for them and compensated for by the situation that pipers~~ *in the knowledge that* were relating to music from within the same cultural idiom, which had clearly recognisable rhythmic schemes. What is problematic for the present day pibroch player when faced with these scores is that they are unable, for the most part, to reconcile the early styles of notation with the modern style of playing. The major concern therefore lies with the problems of interpreting pibroch in the context in which it was notated and not with the technical details of pibroch conventions. This may go some way to explain why the earlier notators and pipers were less likely to complain about the shortcomings of the scores than the piper of the twentieth century who has been raised in a very different cultural and linguistic environment.

One has to remember also that the changes which occurred [^] spanned a few generations and did not represent a sudden dramatic change of style⁴⁹. It is clear that, from at least the late eighteenth century onwards, Gaelic culture was being increasingly patronised (see MacInnes 1989) and its social and economic structure disrupted. Little wonder therefore, that

⁴⁸ From unpublished research undertaken by Geoff Hore, Auckland, New Zealand. He has pointed out that from the evidence of the list of subscribers to Angus MacKay's 1838 edition, the greatest majority were not pipers and that the price of the book was well beyond the means of most of the pipers of the time. Only 19 out of 245 named on the list could be identified as pipers.

⁴⁹ The nature of the reactions to the recommended performance styles in this study may be a good gauge of the complaints which would have ensued if the old pipers of Joseph MacDonald's time and before had suddenly heard the same tunes performed in twentieth century style.

there were so few complaints about changes which were occurring in their musical idioms.

A survey of the changes which took place in the titles of many of the tunes in the 'ceòl beag' repertoire, where ~~pipers~~ ^{were renamed after} renamed tunes which had interesting Gaelic titles ^{to the names of} prominent people in Scottish society, gives some idea of the extent to which pipers had become subservient to outside patronage and influences⁵⁰. Their greater dependence on non-Gaelic society would have left them more likely to accept the changes in their musical culture without much public opposition.

A parallel of this is that which occurred in the Gaelic singing tradition at the end of the nineteenth century with the establishment of An Comunn Gàidhealach and the creation of the National Mòd and its associated competition system. There does not seem to have been any public outcry on the alien styles which were being created by them, although they were referred to by at least one musicologist, Amy Murray (see Ch.2.3).

The influences on singing style were such that by the mid 1900's the traditional style was considered to be alien. A traditional singer, Kitty MacLeod was possibly the first person to sing in front of an urban audience in the traditional manner, in unmeasured time and without the characteristics of the professionally trained voice. One reaction to it was a letter to the press, from a Gaelic speaker, complaining about her style of singing Oran Mór MhicLeòid.⁵¹ (See also Exs. 4 and 5). What was evident about this reaction was that the Gael's traditional style, with its closer ^{normal speech} relationship with language rhythm, was now considered inferior to the style which was being adopted by the National Mòd from outside Gaelic culture.

The question arises whether or not it is necessary for the pibroch player to speak the Gaelic language in order to effectively transfer the song rhythms onto pipes, either in the form of a version of the song air itself in the

⁵⁰ For example: Gun dh'ith na coin na ceannaichiean called Sir J.M. MacKenzie's Reel; [Angus MacKay's Piper's Assistant p.15] The Ale wife and her barrel called Lord Lovat in MacLachlan's 1854 coll.p.21. (Also called The Kames Lasses in Wm. Ross's coll.1869.) (Ross was in the habit of renaming old traditional tunes to those of titled people. But give example - there's none here,

⁵¹ Information from conversation with Kitty MacLeod.

genre of what pipers would call *ceòl beag*, or as a pibroch *ùrlar*. The most important element is to have a familiarity with the rhythms and how these are expressed, which can be gained without speaking the language itself. Just as the pibroch learner has to follow the accepted style and conventions of modern pibroch performance, so the person who wishes to perform in a style which places it back in the context of its vehicle of expression should be able to identify the particular features. The manner in which the rhythms of song can be used in instrumental music should not only concern the pibroch player but pipers who play *ceòl beag*. This is because there is no appreciable distinction in performance style between the two genres of, in the first place Gaelic song played as it might be sung traditionally and pibroch played in the style of its song version. The Irish musical tradition would seem to be much more adept at preserving the ornamental and rhythmical characteristics of the more traditional performers in song and instrumentation. Pibroch however is not a tradition which can be compared because it has not been free to develop since it was notated and the music is therefore artificial. The irony is that the system which destroyed the people who played pibroch in the first place rekindled pibroch in its new restrictive competitive environment. (See Donaldson)

It is important to understand the distinctions which exist between the fairly unmeasured time of the song with the more measured song air played as a slow march. The idiom of song on pipes would seem to be misunderstood by a number of people and for the pibroch idiom to be placed in its musical context once again, the general features which set Gaelic songs apart from their instrumental versions, have to be understood. Such Gaelic songs as have been adapted for the pipes have, historically, been played as slow marches, ie. in regular time. The main influence for this has ^{probably} been a military one. ^{other influences such as daily radio programmes} a tendency to be...

When certain features of the tradition are adapted and changed to different social contexts while retaining the 'traditional' label, as happened to the piping in the army, one may be excused for becoming a strong adherent to the latter style, especially since the musical style might be more identifiable with the language and culture of its new 'tradition'. } explain clearly.
→ English language = 'new' tradition.

However, as Thomson (1953) states,

'The danger of any tradition is that it may become rigid instead of dynamic, and that its upholders may become bigoted.'

The writer was criticised in the following manner by one who seems not to have understood the distinction:

'Behind all that frantic fingerwork was a tune struggling to get out, and it took some time before we were able to recognise it as MacLeod's Oran Mor'. (1989: 19)

What the critic was hearing approximated:

Ex. 4. Example 4



rather than what he recommended as:

Ex. 5.



Therefore, similar examples of misleading notation, which implies regular time, exist in *ceòl beag*. This measured time should only be a guide and is not the manner in which a piper would play the song air as it might be sung and appreciated in a genuine Gaelic musical tradition. ^{musician should} ^{careful!} *which gives credence to words in music, pausing, phrasing.*

The same critic commented in his review of a commercial pipe music album that the performance style of a Gaelic air was too close to the style of the Gaelic song.⁵² This contrasts well with O'Riada's (1982: 45) comment on the Irish musical tradition that:

'The tradition of playing slow airs is unfortunately in decline at present. One reason is that many pipers neither speak nor understand Irish, so that they are unacquainted with the *sean-nós* style of singing which should, of course, be the basis of the chanter style in slow airs.'

Henebry (1928: 54) who, as he stated himself

⁵² See PT. July 1983: p. 25. The record concerned is called 'Controversy of Pipers' (Temple Records) and the full quote is as follows: 'The record is interesting because it shows a trend in piping away from piping. The rendering of the Fair Maid of Barra is very close to what the traditional singers do, but this takes it outside of the bagpipe idiom'.

'was reared amidst the last broken shreds of vocal and instrumental Irish musical tradition, (and) found the opinion on all hands that the office of the instrument was to imitate vocal music, its success in that article being the only measure of its excellence. That was an unbroken Keltic human tradition which subsists in some little degree even yet, and, without doubt, reaches downward from untold ages past.'

addressed
The close association of song and instrumental music appears to have been publicised more frequently in Ireland than in Scotland but was ~~probably~~ no less a consideration amongst instrumentalists in Gaelic Scotland. The different social history of the two countries has to be considered. In Scotland, the piping tradition for the most part, was wrenched into an alien, social environment of quasi-sophisticated urbanised society and the military, and the values which remain to a greater extent in the Irish musical tradition of today were not publicly aired by Gaelic speaking instrumentalists.

It would seem that one sector of the piping tradition in Scotland has formed the opinion that the more this music is divorced from its original song source by the adoption of a standard piping convention and rhythm, the more musically acceptable the style should be to the present day piper. The assumption must be that the song airs have to be changed and performed in fairly regularly stressed metre, before they can be understood and appreciated on the pipes. This opinion is at odds with a comment the same writer made, which suggested that the more inexact the musical score is in pibroch, the more effective it might be in preserving the oral tradition of pibroch which, presumably, would continue to be passed on by those who would consider themselves to be representatives of an oral tradition. (MacNeill 1968:31) The implication of this is that the notation of pibroch may best be left to the least competent. The first criticism, ie. of Oran Mór MhicLeòid is effectively dismissive of the oral/aural traditional style which embodies the very principles of unmeasured time, which, from MacNeill's second comment, is presumably the main feature of pibroch which he wishes^d to preserve. The general problem is that these rhythms are now misunderstood outside the obvious context of Gaelic song. The musical scores have become more and more deceptive as the ability to interpret them, according to their musical idiom, has diminished.

The presence of Gaelic language rhythms in song airs is not the only other area where language rhythms can be perceived. Although the song airs are the most obvious, more so because of the slower tempo, the subtleties of linguistic expression in music are to be found throughout the piping tradition in strathspeys and reels. One only has to compare the modern styles of *ceòl beag* with some of the early sources such as Angus MacKay's Piper's Assistant (1843) to realise that similar, fairly dramatic, changes in performance style have occurred in the piping strathspey and reel especially. Just as 'Irish traditional instrumental music is closely related to Irish vocal music, *sean-nós* singing' (O'Riada 1982:67; O'Baoill 1976: 19) much of Scottish traditional music found its provenance in the rhythms of Gaelic song. This feature has also been partly addressed by Shaw (1992-93)⁵³ on the fiddle tradition in Cape Breton, and requires much more research.

A preserved in Cape Breton partly on account of the survival of the dance which went with it / accompanied it / protected it / gave it mutual support. Indeed the genre of reel + strathspey arose with this Gaelic speaking culture

⁵³ See Scottish Language. Number 11/12

CHAPTER 2.2

GAELIC SONG AND PIBROCH NOTATION: COMMON PROBLEMS

Attempts to notate Gaelic song have been fraught with similar difficulties to as those which notators of pibroch have found, the overriding one being the incompatibility of strict measured time with the song vernacular. Because the two idioms of Gaelic song and pibroch share the same linguistic language base, the special features which characterise one idiom ought to be evident in the other.

One of the features characterising Gaelic song is the interdependence of melody and verbal text as J.L. Campbell observes:⁵⁴,

'It is certain that in Scottish Gaelic tradition poetry and music are inextricably fused.'

This is ^{asserted} supported by Nettl (1964: 281) where he states that 'tunes and texts are sometimes inseparable concepts.' Brailoiu (1984: 18) the Rumanian musicologist refers to

'that indissoluble union of music and poetry....two arts that are intertwined as closely as ivy on an old wall.'

When one compares early ^{notation of} pibroch and Gaelic song ^{transcribers} notations, the common problems which beset the ^{ie time period?} earliest ^(18th + 1st 1/2 19th) notators in both genres can be understood. The realisation that each had evident rhythmical features seemed to have been sufficient to convince most of them that measured time notation was the best course.⁵⁵ The method adopted was the standard European style of notation, although most notators and collectors were probably aware that it could only, at best, be an approximation. However, the longer term complication of this is that ^{adopting the European measured time notation} once the ^{traditional idiom} tradition is in demise there is, naturally, a greater dependence on the written score. There would, therefore, seem to be an inherent ^{unnecessary drive?} assumption in this style of notation that only a person who knows the musical tradition can translate the notated score into a performance style. ^{which takes it} There is an inherent assumption regarding the European style ^{notation that...}

⁵⁴ Eigse (1956) viii part ii p. 87. Article in response to James Ross's earlier series of articles 'The subliterate tradition in Gaelic Song' in vols vii (1954) and viii of Eigse.

⁵⁵ Joseph MacDonald's style of notation for some tunes, broadly discussed in Patrick MacDonald's 1784 coll., was probably an exception. Patrick ironically standardised it and brought it into line with the European tradition because he thought that people ^{with the Gaelic musical idiom} would not understand it, (see p. 55 later)

which represents the idiom. If modern pibroch performance style is compared with the early pibroch notation and also with the unaccompanied singing style of a past generation, one is forced to conclude that ^{modern} pibroch and ^{traditional} song belong to two very different societies, speaking different languages. The differences between them are mainly

link it better.

rhythmic in nature. The nature of the disparities which exist between modern pibroch style and its earliest notation in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, suggests that the present style cannot be said to have much historical credibility beyond the ^{beginning of the twentieth century,} latter part of the nineteenth century.

Similarities with modern performance style to Gaelic song. Only the regular

There is no shortage of examples of the hiatus which is evident between the song air and its notated version for other instruments. A number of problems which have ensued in attempting to notate songs for instruments will be considered and compared with the problems of pibroch transmission.

Matheson (1954) discusses some of the shortcomings of the earliest Gaelic song collections and identifies the salient features of Gaelic song which appear to have created the greatest problems for the notators. Because of the close association between Gaelic song and pibroch, the points made by Matheson will be placed in the context of the pibroch tradition and discussed. Many of these points are featured in the case studies which follow and so the reader can refer to these where appropriate.

He pays particular attention to the following collections: Patrick MacDonald (1784); Simon Fraser (1816); Alexander Campbell (1816 and 1818); and Finlay Dun (c1848);

The first publication, Patrick MacDonald's (1784) collection, is the earliest attempt to ^{at notation.} represent the Gaelic musical idiom. This collection would seem to have been gathered from a wide range of performers - both singers and instrumentalists, including pipers. His preface gives a valuable insight into the tradition and the problems he experienced while preparing the book for publication. He states that the music for the first section called 'North Highland Airs' notated by his brother Joseph, has been adhered to. However, with regard to the '*slow, plaintive tunes*' he states:

'These are sung by the natives, in a wild, artless, and irregular manner....they dwell upon the long and pathetic notes, while

they hurry over the inferior and connecting notes, in such a manner as to render it exceedingly difficult for a hearer to trace the measure of them. They, themselves, while singing them, seem to have little or no impression of measure. It would appear, that Joseph, in his notation of these airs, in place of reducing them to regular time, had attempted, as nearly as he could, to copy and express the wild irregular manner, in which they are sung: and, without regarding the equality of the bars, had written the notes, according to the proportions of time, that came nearest to those, that were used in singing. It was judged improper, to lay them before the public, in that form. They could not indeed have been understood, but by those who had an opportunity of hearing them sung or played by the natives'.⁵⁶

The rare opportunity of reading a song score which had been notated by someone who knew the language and who was also, it is presumed, professionally trained to notate accurately, was lost. It was not until the twentieth century, that a method of notating Gaelic songs in unmeasured time was adopted by the School of Scottish Studies. MacDonald (1784) does not state in his preface, whether or not the song words were placed below the notation. It may be that the music alone was notated without the song words as a guide - in which case, there would be some disadvantage in a detailed transcription. The twentieth century reader, however, is not afforded the opportunity to assess what the style of singing was like. It is difficult to assess what was meant in the eighteenth century by the terms 'wild artless and irregular' but one can be fairly sure that it meant that the music did not conform to mainstream European musical theory. The description given ^{may suggest} might not be unlike the style which is heard in the present day *Sean Nós* singing of County Clare in Ireland which, like the Gaelic psalm singing tradition, is highly decorated and unmeasured in time. ^eThis highly ornate Gaelic psalm singing style which survives, for the most part, in the Outer Hebrides may be the remnant of similar influences which have been retained in the *Sean Nós* tradition in Ireland. Apart from the psalm singing tradition, there does not seem to be a style in Gaelic Scotland today which may be what the eighteenth century commentator may have termed 'wild, artless and irregular'. On the contrary, most of it is fairly measured, ^{especially when compared to SN. trad. airs} in comparison with *Sean Nós* singing in Ireland today. The least measured style which exists in the Scottish Gaelic, secular, song tradition today, is probably closer to what the

⁵⁶ A Collection of Highland Vocal Airs. (1784) Preface p.2.

the Irish *Sean Nós* tradition would consider as fairly measured. There is a level of ornamentation in particular singing styles of the Irish *Sean Nós* tradition, similar to the Gaelic psalms where, for the person who is unused to the style, the melodic line of the song is difficult to ascertain.⁵⁷

— try comment on the sean nós technique re. pibroch?

When some of the tunes which were 'standardised' from Joseph's original notation are examined, one is able to ascertain to some extent the manner in which they may have been sung in the aforementioned 'irregular' style. From the melodic scansion and the language rhythm of the title alone it is possible to intuitively ascertain how the rhythm of the song might proceed. Obviously, a knowledge of the words is crucial in assessing the veracity of the transcription. One of the songs which was altered in MacDonald's 1784 collection, is no.10 'Sud air m'aigne fo ghruaim' which is to be found in the present day oral tradition and on comparing it with the notated text, it is, ~~in my consideration~~, a fairly good representation of the song words - despite the limitations of notating in measured time.

As Patrick MacDonald in the preface to this collection states (p.3.)

'In the present state of musical notation, little more, than what may be called the elements or ground-work of an air, can be conveyed by it. '

He then makes important statements which are common to all musical performance, such as that

'A strict observance of measure is incompatible with strong emotion, or passion'

This is especially so in tunes such as MacIntosh's Lament, Children's Lament and others which have probably arisen from the funeral ritual (See CS1) This feature is just as applicable to all pibroch performance, none of which has strictly measured time.

Patrick MacDonald also states that

⁵⁷ The importance of ornamentation in the sean-nós tradition in Ireland is emphasised by O'Riada (1982 ch1) and O Canainn (1978). O Riada witnesses the demise of particular skills in the singing tradition which he refers to as the 'variation principle' He distinguishes between three distinct types of variation or ornamentation: Rhythmic, Intervallic and Melismatic. (Ch.1:31)

'A general outline of measure is observed; but this is carioulsy shaded and filled up, in the different parts. It has now become the practice of the most polished and improved musicians, in excecuting a pathetic air, to use freedom with the measure, for the sake of expression and effect. It is professedly an object of attention and discipline with them, occasionally to disguise the measure.'

These comments, it must be understood, were about the musical idiom which prevailed in the Gaelic speaking Highlands and were probably just as relevant to the North West Highlands as they were to Southern Perthshire. The ^{This study} writer is addressing the pibroch as well as the song tradition but these were not the only traditions which were changing. Similar changes were occurring in the performance style of harp music. The music of the harp, with its 'graces and variations'⁵⁸ had already suffered from standardisation and degeneration and to bring the old harp tunes 'nearer to their original form' would have entailed making them 'more regular, especially in their measure.' (MacDonald 1784:3) In

⁵⁸ A quote of the extract is worth reproducing to suggest that the pibroch form may have been originally developed on the harp. The manner in which the harpers developed their musical pieces may provide a clue to the development of the pibroch variations; what happened thereafter may provide a useful parallel with what has happened to the pibroch tradition. 'In Ireland, the harpers, the original composers, and the chief depositaries of that music, have, until lately, been uniformly cherished and supported by the nobility and gentry. They endeavoured to outdo one another in playing the airs, that were most esteemed, with correctness, and with their proper expression. Such of them, as were men of abilities, attempted to adorn them, with graces and variations, or to produce what were called good sets of them. These were communicated to their successors, and by them transmitted with additions. By this means, the pieces were preserved: and so long as they continued in the hands of the native harpers, we may suppose, that they were gradually improved, as whatever graces and variations they added to them, were consistent with, and tending to heighten and display the genuine spirit and expression of the music. The taste for that style of performance, seems now however to be declining. The native harpers are not much encouraged. A number of their airs have come into the hands of foreign musicians, who have attempted to fashion them according to the model of the modern music: and these new sets are considered in the country as capital improvements. The Lady in the desert (sic), as played by an old harper, and as played according to the sets now in fashion, can hardly be known to be the same tune. It is now abundantly regular in its structure; but its native character and expression, its wildness and melancholy, are gone'. (PMcD 1784 p3)

addition, harp music was probably being transferred to other instruments, such as the pipes, which required different techniques.

Patrick discusses the particular styles of performance which are represented by the notation:

(Remind reader of what instruments he is writing for + what they are.)

'A few appoggiaturas⁵⁹, or grace notes, are occasionally added, in order to give some idea of the style and manner in which the airs are performed'.

This does seem to imply that the choice of whether or not to decorate was of no great importance as far as formal recording of these was concerned.

This stake-

It seems to imply that the performer was the one to choose whether to ornament or not. He states that he has been 'sparing' in his use of these ornamentations because he felt that he did not have the authority to 'alter, or improve the pieces, according to his own ideas.'

very laudable of P. Mac

Once again, there is a parallel here with the appearance of numerous cadence runs in the earliest pibroch sources such as MacArthur and MacDonald which are discussed elsewhere. As will be seen, it unfortunately became customary to regard these cadences as essential features of the pibroch melody, adopted in accordance with a prescriptive notational style. Cadences have therefore been liberally applied to pibroch scores as a matter of convention since MacArthur's time, frequently at the expense of the melodic line of the tune. I believe that there are ~~probably~~ too many cadences in Donald MacDonald's collection, for example, and even if these are performed in the manner shown there, as demisemiquavers, there are still too many which hide the melodic line.

This is discussed in ch 4?

and they swamp the melodic line. Do I deal with why later? if not make a couple of statements here.

There are two seemingly distinct types of graces described in PMcD's preface. One type, common in singing, is where the appoggiaturas are taken from the preceding note. This is logically explained as 'to enable the voice to pass, with more ease and certainty, to that which follows'.

He then details two broadly differing styles!

⁵⁹ Shortly after, he is more specific when he states: 'The notes, which are used as appoggiaturas, are not only the next in degree, above or below the principal note; but are frequently two, three, or more degrees distant from it. These last are, for the most part, below the principal note, and ascend to it; they are often however above it and descend. The former are used in modern music; the latter are perhaps peculiar to this kind of music, and, in some degree, characteristic of it'.

He does have a version of MacIntosh's Lament with the decorations going up to the note - a feature which is now found in other pibroch sources. ~~It was~~ This 'modern feature' is also rare in light music but Fagen & Miller,

The characteristic features of these graces, which have their equivalent in the pibroch cadences are such that: *be more specific*

'when singing, these grace-notes are, for the most part, executed rapidly, so that, though their effect is felt, they are but obscurely perceived. It is difficult to express them well upon an instrument.'

That they were indeed played on an instrument is implied here or the comment would be of little relevance. Interestingly, Joseph uses a similar kind of reservation when he is describing the manner in which to perform the introductions in pibroch, which:

'seem to a Stranger wild and rude, but will appear otherwise, when known, being well applied to the Style.'

It seems from both the comments in PMcD's preface and JMcD's Compleat Theory that the cadence runs were a feature of Highland instrumental music which they both considered quite unique but which they were apologetic about.⁶⁰ *include footnote* ✓ *slightly, almost*

The problem which a transcriber of this kind of music has is further highlighted when he states that:

'in some of the airs, notes are taken into the measure, which, perhaps, might have been more properly written as grace-notes.'

- on which he expands and explains the necessity of using European notation
This ~~is~~ *same feature/issue* discussed more fully in the chapter on cadences and is also a feature which is considered in the case study Alba Bheadarrach.⁶¹ *yes?* It is one which notators of traditional singing have to wrestle with in trying to decide which features of the singing are to be notated above the line - as if they were merely decorative - and which features are to be notated as part of what is considered to be the melodic theme of the song.

The greatest shortcoming of Patrick MacDonald's collection, as far as it represents a collection of airs, is that there are no song texts with which to

⁶⁰ Patrick MacDonald's 'Advertisement' at the beginning of the collection is a fine example of the lack of confidence which prevailed regarding Gaelic culture at the end of the eighteenth century. He seems concerned with what the 'stranger' might think of some of the airs in the collection which he considers more inferior to the rest and accordingly apologises. A study of the list of subscribers reveals that his audience is culturally disparate. ✓

compare. As a result, it is only with some in depth research that one can ascertain the true rhythms of the tunes by ^{linking} means of identifying the words of songs from other sources⁶¹. ^{reuniting them with.} and placing them underneath the notation
 > Patrick has 4 pibrochs notated in his collection (taken in 62)...
 He probably makes the most revealing comments of any transcriber of pibroch after his transcriptions of four pibrochs⁶² which he heard from the playing of 'an eminent performer upon that instrument' in Lochaber. (MacDonald 1784: 7)

He begins by advising his readers on the limitations of the notated scores:

'Whoever has attempted to execute such a task, and has had experience of the difficulty of it, will readily excuse any imperfections that may be found in the notation of those pieces.'

He appeared to be quite confident that the 'imperfections' were of no major concern for the reader and expands on these:

'In performing these upon the bagpipe, it is usual to introduce certain graces and flourishes, which are peculiar to that species of music; and which can hardly be expressed in notes, or executed, at least, with the same effect, upon another instrument. The publisher, however, has made as near an approach, as he could, to the notes, that were expressed by the performer. These pieces are printed merely as specimens of that kind of music.'

The notes he recorded are what he considered to be the most prominent features of the melodic line of the tune. Some of the notes are decorated, but overall they are quite sparse.^{of cadences} These are the cadences he is describing here. In all but A'Ghlas Mheur (The Fingerlock) which has runs of three note cadences, the rest of his notated pibrochs only have ^{the less prominent} two note cadences. ^{fairly} There is no reason not to believe that these are probably quite ^{these} From Patrick's earlier comments above, we can accept that

⁶¹ See Wm. Matheson papers in NLS for identification of a number of these.

⁶² These are: Cumha Mhic a h-Arasaig (MacIntosh's Lament) Coma leam, coma leam cogadh no sith (War or Peace) A Ghlas Mheur (The Fingerlock) and Cha till mi tuille (MacLeod of MacLeod's Lament. One of these, (The Fingerlock) is notated one note up from the pipe version, with scordatura tuning, for fiddle only. Another, (MacIntosh's Lament) has, in addition to the pipe version, a different, fiddle version. These are analysed or discussed in more detail in this the sources and case studies.

exact ^{transcriptions} recordings of the pibroch style of the Lochaber piper, ^{providing of course} in terms of decorations to the melody notes. This is discussed more fully in CS 4.
 we place them in their idiomatic context,

The first attempt at notating Gaelic songs with their melodies and words together, was by Alexander Campbell in his two volumes of Albyn's Anthology (1816, 1818).⁶³ Although he notated in measured time, the values given to the notes which correspond to the words of the song are fairly good. Anyone with a knowledge of Gaelic language rhythm would be able to adapt the small discrepancies which occur.

Matheson (1954:72) however, states that

'Unfortunately, it has not been sufficiently realised that Campbell's versions of the airs often depart substantially from his folk-song originals.'

The changes which had been made by Campbell may have changed the modalities and melodic line but rhythmically, the existence of words under the text makes the note values ^{secondary for} relatively unimportant to the Gaelic reader. Only the notation which has no word text or which has badly positioned words, creates a problem for the Gaelic speaking reader of songs.

* ^{Simon} The Fraser (1816) and Dun (c1848) collections have been described as 'spoiled music' by MacFarlane (1924-25).⁶⁴ This conclusion, ^{especially with regard to the former} regarding the former, is supported by a contemporary musician of Fraser's, John Thomson of Edinburgh who, in a letter to Fraser, described them as:

'too florid for national melodies, and in many cases they are not at all characteristic, ie. they have not the peculiar Highland accent which would stamp them as real national Highland airs.' (CMg.4, 181-3)

* Check Simon Fraser's own preamble. In intro he gets tunes 2 stages removed.

⁶³ He did promise another volume in his second publication but it never appeared. He also has two pibrochs notated which he copied and 'translated' from Gesto's Mss. (taken from Iain Dubh MacCrimmon). These were Pibroch of Donuil Dubh and MacGregor's Gathering. He included a third tune, Cha till mi Tuille, all of which had words written by Walter Scott. As Cannon (1980: 21) points out, the settings are not very revealing for the pibroch player.

⁶⁴ TGSi (XXXII 1924-25 p. 251) by Malcolm MacFarlane. 'Vocal Gaelic Music')

A good example of this is his notation of Mairi nighean Dheòrsa (1816: 2)⁶⁵ which is a variant of the melody for the song Moladh air pìob mhór MhicCruimein with which March for a beginner is compared in this study. [CSG] This floridity is evident at one point where Fraser has a decorative run of eight notes.

As Matheson has already pointed out, the early collectors of Gaelic song, apart from Patrick MacDonald, had similar failings and most of those who followed were 'systemisers and improvers'. (1954: 75)

Given the close association of Gaelic song characteristics with pibroch, the particular salient features which have been identified by Matheson (1954) will be applied to those which exist in the pibroch tradition.

Matheson firstly brings attention to the extensive range of different versions of particular songs, to the extent that each singer could be said to have their own version, equally stylistically and melodically valid, and within the parameters of the tradition.

The continuous creation of variant melodic settings is probably at the heart of the oral song tradition. The techniques of ad-lib variance on each verse of song is obviously a valuable asset to a performer, ^{to hold attention of a listener} especially where numerous verses exist. Although the technique has received little attention in Gaelic Scotland, it was probably ^{equally valued as a creative art form} just as recognised by earlier generations as it is in the Irish song tradition. Sean O'Riada (1982:24) describes its importance:

'Probably the most important aspect of sean-nós singing is what I call the "Variation Principle." It is not permissible for a *sean-nós* singer to sing any two verses of a song in the same way. There must be a variation of the actual notes in each verse, as well as a variation of rhythm. What makes one *sean-nós* singer better than another, more than anything else, is his ability to do this better. The variations must not interfere with the basic structure of the song. They must occur where they would give most point and effect.'

This point is just as relevant to the pibroch tradition of the eighteenth century and before, where there was a much greater range of tune versions played. The number of variant forms which appear in the pibroch texts,

* 65 He has the English title "Grant of Sheuglie's contest betwixt his violin, Pipe and Harp." Insert

albeit with different titles, bears this out. ^{eg. — Tookang / MacFarlane's / King's Taxes / Groat / Cameronian / Kinlochmoordale / 1st pipe} Some examples appear in this ^{study} thesis. However, in the piping tradition these variant settings are sufficient to distinguish the tunes and may have more to do with geographical separation than localised versions. It may be that the variations on one melody, which ^{pipers shared} existed between pipers in one particular locality, may have been ^{perceived} predominant ^{ed} because of the different ways in which the ^{maybe} apparent themal notes were decorated by cadences, ^{could have} although, even if this were the case, different themal notes ⁿ would tend to arise from the different styles of decoration, ^{although the presence of a song version(s) would keep them in check, (However, see next page)} although the presence of a song version(s) would keep them in check. ^{FF66} The existence of the numerous notated variants with different titles eg. The Battle of Sheriffmuir and Carles with the Breeks ^[CS 2+3] is as if a camera shot has been taken of the tunes at the time of transcription and the photos preserved for posterity. The melodic lines for the most part have remained the same, especially since Angus MacKay's 1838 publication. The main problem is that the ability to interpret the score has changed. At the present day, pipers adhere strictly to an accepted style of performance which is recommended by their peers as a traditional interpretation of the music score. The reality is that certain features of the pibroch interpretation of these scores have become ^{exaggerated to the extent} exaggerated to the extent that this writer believes not even Angus MacKay could endorse. ^{what are these? such as the elongated introductory E.} In contrast with the changeability of the oral tradition, this preservation of a fairly standardised melodic line is typical of what happens when the music is notated. Bartók (1951:19) differentiates between what he calls Art music and Folk music accordingly, stating that

'some believe that the essential difference between art music and folk music is the [↑]continuous variability of folk music as against the rigid stability of art music.

Bartók (ibid) agrees with those who held this view, but with the qualification that:

'the difference is not one of contrast, but one of degree- that is, the performance of folk music shows an almost absolute variability, while art music is a far lesser, sometimes in only an infinitesimal degree.' (p20)

This is in accordance with the criticisms the writer made earlier in the introduction, on the attention paid to relatively unimportant details of performance such as particular gracenotes and the extent to which one

might prolong the time value of particular notes. These fixations with minutæ occur at the expense of the identification of the phrasal rhythm and its melodic clarity.

Although it may be considered a truism that performance of art music may vary each time it is performed by the same person, Bartók (1951: 20) shows that the features which are likely to change are those which embellish the melodic line⁶⁶. He defines the crucial difference between art music and folk music where:

'the NOTES of art music - because of their fixation by notation - must never be changed, whereas in folk music even notes are subject to change.'

This has a parallel in pibroch. Many of the discussions on settings of tunes concern, for example, the matter of whether or not to play cadences at particular points of the tune. One only has to examine the Piobaireachd Society Series notes on tunes to find these finite details.

Each variant of a tune, where that can be perceived, represents a stage in its development where each one represents what Bartók (Essays 1976) calls

'one of the most characteristic, integral peculiarities of folk melodies (p.10)

Brailoui (1984) in his identification of the essential feature of Folk music transmitted entirely by oral means states:

'it does not merely circulate in set form but multiplies, that is, in its travels it undergoes many transformations, the signs of its 'folk' character.'(p3)

These characteristics were observed in the oral musical tradition in Ireland last century. Petrie (1855: xv) the collector of traditional airs states:

'I rarely , if ever, obtained two settings of an *unpublished* air that were strictly the same; though, in some instances, I have gotten as many as fifty notations of the one melody. In many instances, indeed, I have found the differences between one version of an air and another to have been so great, that it was only by a careful analysis of their structure , aided

⁶⁶ Interestingly, J. J. Galbraith in TGSI XXXV p.315 suggests that the gracenotes of Gaelic psalmology 'became themselves a theme and were interpolated into the music.' He suggests that this is the origin of the graces and the variations of Gaelic psalmology. Insert this footnote at p. 63

perhaps by a knowledge of their history and progress of their mutations, that they could be recognised as being essentially the one air.'

This a recurring scenario in the case studies here.

This characteristic is clearly evident in the Gaelic song tradition in Scotland and one only has to refer to Campbell and Collinson's series of Hebridean Folksongs(1-3) to see that each version collected had variant forms even between verses. Gaelic songs are frequently based on pre-existing melodies which were often adapted and changed to make a 'new' composition. There are therefore numerous examples of songs with close variants such as Mo chailin dileas donn and Mo Mhàili bheag òg.

check
the Highland song trad Barbara Allen with its 2150 versions
Brailoiu (1984: 8) observes that Bartók sought in variation the 'key to the great mystery of folk creation' and quotes Bartók as having identified certain conditions which facilitate the creation of new melodies:

'Among those whom identical conditions such as language, occupation, temperament, close daily contact, and more or less complete isolation from the outside world bring together into a compact whole, the instinct for variation operates in an unconcious manner and by a slow process of unification of the musical elements at their disposal, gives birth to groups of homogeneous melodies'

These conditions are evident in the Gaelic song tradition and ~~there are~~ *one* similar reasons *can see* to believe that it occurred in the pibroch tradition before the tunes were *first* notated and patronage in piping competitions began. *comment on fact that I do not believe that there was a composer as such as Busmen would have it - made earlier. check.*
Campbell and Collinson (1980) found that:

'even in the space of fifty years, a subsequent generation sang variant words to the original text recorded. Melodically, different variations of the same tune which were recorded from different persons were found, in some cases to be now incompatible with the words originally taken down.'

Earlier collectors and notators of Gaelic song than those mentioned above, have made similar observations and links between different melodies both within this country and internationally. ⁶⁷

It is no surprise therefore to find, as was found in *a the writer made* the case study on Pàigh na Bodaich Màl ach Ruairi, that the melodies were so different even

(not published here)

⁶⁷ See Tolmie (1911) for comments by herself, Amy Murray and Lucy Broadwood on variant forms.

as well as Duntroon's march
 though they were sung to the same word text; or that Sound of the Waves on the Castle of Duntroon could accommodate the same song text as Young Neil's Salute; or that the song Iseabail NicAoidh can be sung to the melody of its similarly titled pibroch and to a version of The Prince's Salute. many more examples of this could be given.

There is a number of examples of 'groups of homogeneous melodies' in the pibroch tradition. These are often easily identified because they have melodic motifs in common, although they may sometimes be arranged in a different rhythmic fashion. The homogeneity of tunes which can be identified with the song words beginning 'A Chlanna nan con' and 'S fhada mar so' is one particularly obvious example for which the writer has identified several variant tunes with various titles. 68

The reality is that so many obvious relationships between tunes are undetected because in their metamorphosis they often adopt different rhythmical and/or melodic features. These differences may also be related to function. For example the melody for the song version of Iseabail NicAoidh (CS 8) has a similar ^{opening phrases} melodic line to A Cholla mo Rùn (CS 5). It is highly unlikely that the present day art performance style of Iseabail NicAoidh was represented in the eighteenth century genre. The similarity between the two melodies is disguised in present day performances of Isabel MacKay because of the art style adopted. Similarly, both

the song + pibroch versions of Isabel MacKay have taken on the staged art style...

68 This is the tune which is called End of the Little Bridge in CC. Vol. 2 no 85. {edited in the PS series Bk. 8: 239.} A number of its variant forms are to be found in:
 CM. 32 [Thomason, 1900],
 CC Vol. 2 no 78 called Cameron's Gathering. {edited in PSoc. Bk. 15 p503 }
 CC Vol 2 no. 79. 'Blar Vuster.'
 CC Vol 2 no 83 'Cameron's March.' Edited in PS 14 p.495.
 CC Vol 2 no 80 'MacDonald's Gathering'.
 CC Vol 2 no 81 'Sad mar sho tha shinn' {ie. 'S fhada mar so tha sinn.' }
 {This is not the same one edited in PS 7: 210 as "Too Long in this condition." The PS 'Too Long' is CC no. 77, there called MacFarlan's Gathering} The CC 'Sad mar so' has, at the beginning of the tune, the rhythmic motifs like End of the Little Bridge, Cameron's etc. ie. three low A's followed by C or B} and not as in modern settings with Taorludhs. These CC hindaendo 's are interchangeable with taorludhs throughout suggesting that today's taorludhs are a subsequent development.
Clan Ranald's Gathering. found in Donald MacDonald Coll p68.

The concept of variant is a fairly difficult one. There is bound to be a stage where one has to distinguish between a variant and another tune. Bartók (1951: 17) defines variants as:

'melodies in which the pitch relation of the various principal tones to each other show a certain similarity; or, in other words, in which the contour line is entirely or partly similar.'

However, Bartók identifies the problem of dealing with:

'a long chain of melodies, in which each of two neighbouring melodies can be considered beyond any doubt and at first sight as a variant of the other, and the first one in the row is so entirely different from the last one that it should not be called a variant, one has to break up these melodies into two or more separate groups.'

This writer had a similar situation in the case study of MacIntosh's Lament where a number of orally recorded variant song versions existed, all of which differed from each other. But when presented in what the writer saw as a logical order ^{with slight change at each step} the final example Carles with the Breeks ^{melodic / rhythmic} was so different from MacIntosh's Lament as to be acknowledged as a separate tune. The problem lies in deciding at which variant version it ceases to be one tune and becomes another. As Bartók (ibid p.17) states:

'subjective decisions will have to guide us in the solutions of all these questions.'

The beauty of the tradition is that it gives rise to the possibility of an infinite number of melodies. The importance of these characteristics in determining performance style is that when one identifies homogeneous melodies, it is possible to apply the same rhythmic parameters to those which do not have Gaelic song words with which to compare, as to those which do. One case study (CS 3) example is Alba Bheadarrach [Battle of Sheriffmuir] which has title words alone but is clearly a melodic variant of Carles with the Breeks.

Once again, it seems that the parameters which one considers, in order to demonstrate the characteristics of orally transmitted traditional music, are wide, in whichever country's musical tradition one is analysing. Therefore, when one is attempting to find out the nature of a particular melody or song air and, ultimately, its performance style, the forms, where they can be identified, are a valuable source of guidance. These techniques were used by Bartók (1951:10) in his study of Parry's collection of songs,

and he states further with regard to the setting of bars and choice of note values that:

'If there are no such variants for comparison, we may find some guidance through comparison with instrumental variants, or with other instrumental (or vocal) melodies of the same type, or through examination of the structure of the melody itself. In extreme cases, however, the position of the bars and the determination of the structure will remain matters of guesswork.'

Matheson (1954:76) cites tonality and rhythm as the most problematic areas which faced the early transcribers of Gaelic song. The first point is outwith the scope of this study, as far as pibroch performance and notation is concerned, and will not be considered here.⁶⁹ The rhythmical features are, however, all important.

With regard to rhythm, he states:

'The broad general principle is that the rhythm in which a song is sung is determined by the rhythm in which it would be spoken, though we must remember that in fact it was never spoken.'

MacInnes (1986: 140) identifies the special characteristics of Gaelic verse - including song poetry - when he states:

'a feel for complexity of rhythm -for the freedom of speech-rhythm for instance, pitted against the demands for strict form - is one of the most special and sensitive graces of Gaelic verse in general.'

These characteristics are cited by the poet Sorley MacLean, when writing about the anonymous songs of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries:

'Technically they are simple but adequate, their metrical basis being the old syllabic structure modified by speech stress.'(ibid)

⁶⁹ It is, however, one which requires a separate and detailed study and is important with regard to the changes which have occurred in the modal character of Gaelic song melody. It is also relevant to the pibroch repertoire in as much as many of the modal tunes which concentrate on the notes GBD have become unfashionable.

Matheson addressed the rhythmical features of Gaelic song in a lecture called 'The words and music complex in Gaelic song'⁷⁰ and broadly categorised song into three areas, according to their rhythmical characteristics. These are,

Songs in measured time.

Songs in unmeasured time; where there is a variable number of musical accents or beats in each songline.

Songs in free rhythm; where the number of musical accents is difficult to ascertain because "one cannot be sure whether a given note is accented or not."

The songs which were adapted to the pibroch form fall into ^{each of} these three categories.

In the first category Gabhaidh Sinne Rathad Mór (CS 11) could be included. The infrequency of cadences in the score allows the tune to be played almost identically to the song version. In some other examples, such as Carles with the Breeks (CS 2) and The Fingerlock (CS 4), if the performer attempts to adhere to the conventions of the pibroch scores, the presence of cadences means that the tunes cannot be performed in as measured a time as the song versions. The pibrochs are therefore to be played in free rhythm to allow for the inclusion of cadences. This has a parallel in the second category of song rhythms outlined by Matheson above.

More specifically, in consideration of the variable number of stresses, the number of beats per phrase in pibroch is generally constant once the rhythm has been identified in the first phrase of the tune. In a number of pibrochs, like for example, Lament for Captain MacDougall, although it has not been identified with a Gaelic song, the final phrase of the *ùrlar* has an extra stress which has often bewildered publishers. The problem has arisen because of what appears to be the existence of extra notes in the penultimate bar of the tune. An 'extra' note appears to have been created because of the method of notation, where the E of the *hiharin* is included on the melodic line. In addition, because analysis has been based on the number of bars in the *ùrlar* and the number of beats per bar, rather than the identification of melodic and rhythmic phrases, the performance of

⁷⁰ SA/1975/1

this has given rise to spurious debate. (See PS Series Book 6:164) When analysed in terms of the number of stresses per phrase the style of performance becomes clearer and the number of stresses per phrase are ^{is} found to be no different from the rest of the ùrlar⁷¹. (include 71)

The writer considers that almost all pibrochs, whether or not they are found to have words associated with them, ^{tend towards one of Matheson's} ~~fall into~~ Matheson's ^{second} ~~category~~ ^{ies} of song rhythms, which ~~mean that they are performed in~~ ^{as, martial pieces gathering tunes} ~~unmeasured time~~. The designation ~~of measured time in pibroch,~~ ^{is Gallachan - even the most measured pieces have pauses at phrase ends and some element of rubato.} However, it may be too simplistic to place MacIntosh's Lament into one particular category because of how it may have been adapted for different social functions. The reality is that a range of different rhythmical characteristics may co-exist in the one song. This is manifest, for example, in waulking songs, where the function dictates the rhythm (see Campbell and Collinson 1-3) and yet different time signatures sometimes have to be employed within the same song to faithfully represent the subtle complexities of rhythm. (See C+C)

In the comparisons given in the case studies, the nature of the song stresses is fairly straightforward. However, when a particular song's rhythms are superimposed, as it were, on its pibroch version, the corresponding musical accents in the pibroch frequently remain difficult to identify and may be ambiguous. This is because there are, often, more notes in the pibroch version in addition to the cadences. The Gaelic language, being stress based ^{crucial/obvious} ~~language~~, is important as a guide for stressing, and a note can usually be found in the pibroch version which corresponds to the stress position of the song. The points of stress in pibrochs for which word texts only have been found, or even where no word text exists, can ~~also~~ be identified in an informed and intuitive way. One of those which has been considered in this manner is Brother's Lament (See Case Study 12) with which a text has been compared. Nevertheless, there are tunes where the stress positions may be ambiguous (especially when there is no text with which to compare) and identification of stress position will always remain a moot point. The Brother's Lament represents one of a number of examples where the style of singing probably represents shared characteristics of (a) the more chant-like style of singing with fairly isorhythmic syllabic stressing and (b)

⁷¹ That is, the *hiharin*, without the introductory E, is treated as one stressed figure and, for the sake of notational convention, the bar can be moved back to include a two quaver motif to give two bars of four stresses each.

a more measured style with clear points of stress, most frequently on words containing accented vowels. The first category (a) is associated with songs in unmeasured time such as the *dàn /laoidh* which encompass the heroic ballads, the basic technique of which, as Matheson (1975) stated, is that the durations given to the words governs the musical accent in the song. The second class (b) represents the *amhran* class of songs (commonly called *òran* in today's vernacular) This style dominates modern Gaelic singing. They are also the most common examples in this study. The *amhran* normally consists of a four-line-stanza form usually having four poetic and melodic stresses per line. (Watson 1959 ed. p.liv) In some songs however, (eg. Oran Mór Mhic Leòid) there may be five poetic and melodic stresses in a line or six poetic stresses and only four melodic stresses such as in William Ross's, Oran an t-Samhraidh. } *debate*

The idiom of traditional singing, remnants of which survive today, would seem to have been very adept at preserving language rhythm even with the superimposition of a fairly measured melodic line as in the waulking song tradition. In this genre, speech stress and melodic stress have been differentiated by shifting the stress points in the language so that the melodic accent ^{often} falls on a normally unaccented syllable in a word. The Gaelic traditional singers of past generations did not necessarily recognise the distinctions between melody and words, apart from these subtle adaptations or 'wrenched accents' in waulking song, because the rhythms of language were paramount and the music was carried along on it. As the poet MacLean stated (1985: 114) with regard to the old Gaelic songs; they represented 'the supreme hermaphrodite of words and music.' } *often / sometimes*

Although one recognises that speech stress and melodic stress are two different things, which always need to be reconciled in performance, the distinctions do not arise until the concept of measured time is introduced. Only then does the reconciliation between the two become important. The 'Art song' style of James Campbell of Kintail with MacIntosh's Lament, (See Case study 1) concentrates on the melodic features ^{and} where the language rhythm is secondary. There is, however, a great need to reconcile the two if one wants to sing the song in its traditional idiom. The good traditional singer is able to integrate the melody and the words such that no tension exists between them and the differentiation between melodic stress and speech stress becomes invalid. (See MacIntosh 1986:140 p.68)

When the rhythm^s of the song versions are overlaid on the pibroch form, in some of the case studies considered, for example, Coir an Easa and Brother's Lament (CS 7 and 12) the areas of musical accentuation and stress are more difficult to identify within the phrases. In these circumstances, pausing at phrase ends becomes the most effective means of relating the tunes to the idiom of Gaelic song, where each phrase of pibroch is equivalent to one poetic line of song. Although the *dàn* is irregularly stressed, that is, where the positions of stresses vary throughout a song, it tends to be more isorhythmic in nature. The *dàn* frequently has more equal note value lengths than one might find in the Art song. For instance, one might have a series of quavers followed by a dotted crotchet in the *dàn* but a series of quavers followed by a dotted minim in the Art song. The frequent relatively long pauses which one finds in modern pibroch performance is similar to the Art song style. The more evenly distributed rhythm such as one finds in the Gaelic *dàn* song type and which is probably best describes the rhythmic style of Coir an Easa and Brother's Lament is more difficult to appreciate on an instrument such as the pipes. The writer's own experience in attempting to perform such pieces where stress points are ambiguous is that, because of present day Gaelic society's relative unfamiliarity with the song tradition on which much of pibroch would have been based, there is a tendency to attempt to identify and sometimes create particular positions on the melodic line which can be used as rhythmic anchors, as it were. These stress positions identify a more familiar rhythmic structure which is influenced by the more measured twentieth century styles of Gaelic singing rather than the less measured, irregularly stressed singing styles which are very likely to have been more common when pibroch was at its zenith.

The desire for a rhythmic framework when words were no longer present as a guideline may go some way to explaining why many pibrochs have extra notes and cadences inserted as 'anchors' so that the rhythms can be made more identifiable, familiar and predictable. These points frequently appear following the bar ~~so that the suggestion is that~~^{implying} they carry the musical stress. The demise or absence of the older singing styles in modern Gaelic society and the influences of the more measured modern song rhythm is probably the main reason why the writer found he was looking for more obvious musical accentuation within the phrases. It may partly explain why the songs in *amhran* metre with their regular

what are they?

stress positions, coincident for the most part with the position of the accented vowels, became so popular with instrumentalists and are now so popular today. ^{Indeed,} It has been suggested by Matheson (1975) that instrumentalists were greatly responsible for the spread of the *amhran* or song type throughout Europe. ^{Troubadours?}

There are numerous notated pibrochs without an identifiable related song. But, just as in Gaelic song where:

'good phrasing depends on determining the relative importance and weight of the words which make up the phrase; particularly with regard to free rhythm' (Matheson 1975) [^{'not'}]

so in pibroch, the appropriate phrasing strikes a balance between its constituent elements in rubato form. And just as in songs sung in free rhythm, where:

'there are so many degrees of accentuation to the extent that the two classes of accented and unaccented don't have a clear dividing line'. (ibid)

pibroch phrasing should represent a much greater degree of freedom to decide on the range of relative stresses of its constituent notes than modern pibroch performance style represents. The most important point is that the rhythmic characteristics of pibroch phrases should be similar to the ones which are set by the words in Gaelic song.

Spoken language rhythm is never consistently in measured time. This truism which is just as relevant to language in song is, however, a characteristic which is increasingly being ignored by present day Gaelic singers and pibroch players alike⁷². In the study of Breadalbane's Lament (CS 10), the characteristic language rhythm of the song is especially

⁷² The writer listened to a Gold Medal piping competition in Inverness in 1993 and found that all but one pibroch player performed in a regularly timed manner, with little identification of phrasal characteristics. It is understandable how these features should be prominent in the exceedingly slow tempo which one generally finds in modern pibroch performance, given that most of what one hears in the music of modern society is in measured time. This regularity in Gaelic singing can, to a great extent, be attributed to the same influences and also to the influence of instrumentalists who find that accompanying songs and playing music in measured time is easier than in unmeasured time. ^{Include in text}

marked, but is not verified by the musical notation from the Killin coll.(1884). However, the shortcomings of the measured time notation become unimportant when the words are correspondingly placed underneath the notation. Then, the rhythm of the melody in relation to the song words is clear. Although the melody of the pibroch version of Breadalbane's Lament appears to be a ^{very interesting} variant ^{of the song version}, there is no difficulty in ascertaining the rhythm at which it was performed, by overlaying the words on the pibroch notation - already having resolved the styles in which the conventional music characters of pibroch are played. Even where, as is so often the case in the earlier song/music publications, the words are not placed in the context of the music: (see CS10)

'This conflict between words and music could often be eliminated by intelligent editing of the airs'. (Matheson 1954: 78)

Matheson here identifies the assignation of wrong time values to notes as a particular problem in the earlier as well as the later Gaelic song collections. The Killin (1884) and Gesto (1895) colls. are examples of these later ones. He expands on this subject in greater detail at a later period (1975)⁷³, where he points out that some of the reasons for the time values being wrongly placed relate to the occurrence of irregular stressing; a particular feature of some Gaelic songs where a normally unstressed word in the song may be stressed.

Characteristically, it has also been observed by ^{Amy} Murray (1936: 103) who identifies the potential pitfalls when assigning note values to words by commenting that:

'You cannot make Gaelic go with the stick without doing violence to the quantities of Gaelic speech, and these are fixed. Long must be long, whether it be sung or spoken; short must be short.'

What she ~~seems to be~~^{is} implying here is that the conversational rhythm is to be preserved, as far as possible, in the song performance. Although vowel length in language and musical length or accent can be regarded as independent features they can

⁷³ For a detailed discourse on note values in relation to syllabic stress and musical accent in relation to speech stress refer to the School of Scottish Studies Archives for a recording of Rev. W. Matheson's lecture 'The words and music complex in Gaelic Song.' (1975)

also be indistinguishable depending on the manner in which language and music interrelate. The two features become more independent when the melodic rhythm tends towards regular stressing. It is at this stage that a tension is set up between the rhythm of the melodic line and the rhythm of the song words which have to adapt to the melodic regularity. In contrast, where the words dictate the (the) rhythm, the melodic accent can be indistinguishable from the verbal one.

Murray (1836) appreciates, as Matheson, Campbell and Collinson do, that the preservation of the accentual metre of Gaelic speech in song is not a hard and fast rule in *Orain Luadhaidh* or *Port a Beul*. She states:

'The liberties of English balladry are sometimes taken; but even in these, or in crooning a child, the natural stress of the words does not always fall in with the thump on the board or the floor, or with the swinging of the mother's body - does not keep step, as it were, though both go along at the same gait, though on the ear they fall combined'.(p103)

There are no specific examples in the case studies of normally unstressed syllables being stressed. But what the existence of these musically accented unstressed syllables implies is that when reinterpreting pibroch performance in the absence of song words, the sequence of musical stressing can be so variable that there are a great number of ways in which one can distribute different note values within a phrase without losing the idiomatic features of Gaelic language rhythms. Obviously, when one is performing a pibroch without the song rhythms to refer to, then the scope for different interpretation would appear to be wider and potentially more controversial, than where words do exist. *can be compared*

However, this should still not detract from the underlying characteristic of instrumental music which has been developed from the song idiom where "speech stress governs musical accent" and, therefore, both "speech stress and musical accent are never confused." (Matheson 1975) The melody lines of the songs which have been adapted for instrumental performance alone should therefore retain similar stress patterns if one is to regard the instrumental style as an honest representation of its community's idiom. This is not a simple matter, however, because of the complexities of the language rhythm which carries the melody as it were. The instrumentalist piper has therefore adapted the rhythm and melody

to suit the instrument and in the process created a new genre based on the song tradition.

The rhythmic guidelines were so well recognised in the Gaelic song tradition - even in the vocables alone - just as they would have been in the canntaireachd tradition before it was recorded without accentuation on the vowels. ^(There are no grave or acute accents in the LG) For as Campbell remarks, (HF vol.3: 318) referring to his colleague Collinson's statements (HF vol 1.1969 pp227-37) :

'If the refrain syllables of a waulking song are correctly set down in writing or print with the long vowels correctly indicated by the customary accents used in writing Gaelic, it is often possible to read more or less correctly the rhythm of a waulking song from the refrain syllables alone without the need of musical notation'.

Matheson (1954) looks for a characteristic rhythmic ratio and questions the commonly used dotted crotchet and quaver motif in a number of song collections. For example the Killin coll.(1884) has this ratio throughout many of its song transcriptions including Breadalbane's Lament (CS 10) Matheson (ibid) finds that a crotchet and quaver relationship is nearer to what is sung. This is borne out by Collinson (1969:226) who showed that much of Gaelic song has a rhythm which sits between the crotchet and quaver motif of regular 6/8 time, [$\text{v} \text{v} \text{v} \text{v}$] and the common time motif, [$\text{v} \text{v} \text{v} \text{v}$], frequently sitting between or alternating between the two values. These features are also evident in some of the case studies.

These rhythmic complexities of Gaelic song, which place the music outwith the European scheme of notation, must also have created problems for the early pibroch notators. This is evident in a number of the case study examples, eg. Carles with the Breeks (CS 2) As has already been observed by Cannon (1988:88): and Brujard () ^{what is the European scheme?}

'A very general tendency seems to have been for tunes in 6/8 rhythm to be changed to common time.'

(Brujard also)

There are other reasons, though, for the widespread alteration from 6/8 to common time, found in both the Gaelic song and pibroch traditions. As Matheson pointed out, one of the consequences of notating Gaelic songs with instrumentation in mind was that

'they made a practice of introducing passing-notes and other embellishments such as would have no place in a vocal

version.'⁷⁴ 'The result is that when the words of an air are found, the number of notes is often greatly in excess of the number of syllables. This raises the question, after the true tempo and time -signature have been restored, of what notes to delete. A musician with the requisite historical and technical knowledge could no doubt solve this problem with fair confidence.'

This to a great extent sums up what has occurred in the development of the pibroch tradition from Gaelic song. Numerous examples of an overabundance of stressed notes to song words exist throughout the pibroch tradition and one only has to consider Angus MacKay's inclusion of the cadence Es in the melodic line as an obvious example of this. It also makes the identification of song airs in pibroch more difficult for the researcher. There are, however, two particularly good examples in the case studies, of tunes which have been treated in this way: Coire an Easa (CS 7) for which the words and melodic line have been identified beyond any doubt, and Brother's Lament (CS 12), for which a set of words has been identified but the melodic line of which has not been corroborated by an alternative melodic source. In this case, acting on the evidence which exists for other tunes, the writer has used his own intuition to 'contextualise'⁷⁵ the melody of the song on which the pibroch may have been based. The result of this is an *ùrlar* in a rhythmic style which is not unlike that found in the heroic ballad style, where irregular stress positioning coexists with the more predictable stresses on accented vowels to give a complex and ever changing rhythmic scansion.

⁷⁴ He points out also that 'the same treatment is to be found in Lowland Scots collections of the eighteenth century such as Thomson's *Orpheus Caledonius*.'

⁷⁵ In his 'Musicology' (1985: 200) Kerman applauds Richard Taruskin's use of the term 're-creation' rather than reconstruction in Taruskin's 'The Musicologist and the Performer' (1980) from 'Musicology in the 1980's', ed. D. Kern Holoman and Claude V. Palisca., (1982: 145-60). Kerman's reasoning is that 'a historical performance style cannot be an objectively antiquarian construct. It is a unique, difficult blend of old and new, a play of the contemporary creative sensibility upon the past.' He echoes Taruskin's claim that 'intuition is essential for the re-creation of a historical performance style.' On the same issue, Kerman prefers the use of the word 'contextual' when referring to the re-construction of music which is preferred here.

Keep as
just note

CHAPTER 2.3

LATER SONG COLLECTORS.

In an article in TGSi (1924: 251) Malcolm MacFarlane, identifies the pioneer collectors of Gaelic song according to whether they notated the airs on the stave or in sol-fa. The latter method, although the most appropriate for the fluent Gaelic speaker when presented in conjunction with the words, is not being considered here.⁷⁶ Following the period of those collectors which have been cited, it would seem that there were none with sufficient insight or understanding to notate traditional singing until Frances Tolmie and Amy Murray notated some songs at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth.

Frances Tolmie (1840-1927) contributed 105 songs which she had learned in her community in Skye to the Journal of the Folk Song Society 1911⁷⁷ and was the first Gael who attempted to faithfully record the songs which were being sung in her own community on the Island of Skye, during the second half of the nineteenth century. Thomson (1954) described it as 'the first fully significant collection of Gaelic song.' She represents an important stage in the recording of Gaelic song in that, for the first time, the words and the music appear together without having been edited or 'improved' as earlier and subsequent collectors were so prepared to do. Not only did she transcribe the songs - where her note values ^{create settings} are closer to the natural language rhythms than any previous notator - but she sang them as well. In this respect, they represent an honest and accurate representation of the songs' melodic line. (see Bassin 1977)

⁷⁶ See [↑]Celic Monthly Vol 10 (1901- 02) to see how some of Finlay Dun's tunes have been transformed by MacFarlane.

Sol-fa collectors:

1. John and Henry Whyte.
- 2 John MacIntyre
- 3 Archie Ferguson
- 4 John MacCallum
- 5 Neil Orr
- 6 Alexander MacDonald
- 7 Roderick MacLeod.
- 8 Malcolm Macfarlane
- 9 Angus Morrison (Orain nam Beann)

⁷⁷ Journal of the Folk-song Society no. 16. (Representing the third part of vol. 4.)

It still has ^{obvious} shortcomings because of its notation in measured time. However, this is relatively unimportant because each note of music corresponds with each word syllable ^{for the most part} where possible. This method, which has been adopted by the most descriptive notators such as Collinson and subsequent analysts has also been used in this thesis.

As Bassin points out (1977: 127), Keith Norman MacDonald who published the Gesto Collection (1895) and Puirt a Beul (1901) and Marjory Kennedy Fraser who became famous through her 'improved' publications of Hebridean songs ⁷⁸ were all indebted to Frances Tolmie for source material. As an example of how folk songs were altered, Bassin (1977: 135) demonstrates how Marjory Kennedy Fraser 'gave rather free rein to her fantasy' in her transformation of the song Ailean Duinn in which Kennedy-Fraser ^{with her co-worker K. MacLeod} introduced a seagull into the text, renaming the song 'The Seagull of the Land-under-Waves.' Bassin (1977: 136) also shows how Kennedy-Fraser

'by slowing down the value of the notes, while retaining the intervals, has lost the original vital rhythm of the tune. The song, with its fine pentatonic-scale intervals, has become a vehicle for vocal display.'

This is similar to what happened in pibroch and to the songs which imitated the pibroch style such as MacIntosh's Lament, as sung, eg. by James Campbell. ^{It is also the style which was being patronised by the Comann Gàidhealach fòrmed in 1892?}

Marjory Kennedy-Fraser (1929) clearly had problems when trying to collect Gaelic songs from the communities in which they were sung and she quotes the Dean of Lismore (p125) as stating that the 'tyranny of rhythm' helps the 'folksongs of a race to preserve its language.' She found that the rhythms of Gaelic,

'indulge in strange combinations such as may be found in a milking song, which is in seven- beat time, and in a waulking song which balances fives with threes.'

⁷⁸ These publications are as follows: Songs of the Hebrides Vols 1, 2 and 3 1909, 1917 and 1921 respectively. Sea Tangle. Some more Songs of the Hebrides 1913. From the Hebrides. Further Gleanings of Tale and Song 1925. More Songs of the Hebrides V post 1927.

Although she had patient assistance from some of the people from the areas she collected from, it was not until Kennedy-Fraser collaborated with Kenneth MacLeod from 1908 onwards (Bassin:1977: 132) that she was able to begin to address the problems of notating from Gaelic. Her own daughter, Patuffa, who was being formally trained in music tried notating some of the songs and stated:

'...I tried my hand at taking down, and my word it was difficult, as the time and scale are both so different from modern music.' (Kennedy-Fraser 1929: 127)

Kennedy-Fraser made her task easier by creating a composite song version, taken from a number of variant forms of one song. This methodology is similar to the one adopted by editors of the twentieth century Piobaireachd Society publications. Under these circumstances, what is notated by her was not sung by anyone, just as much of what was recommended by the transcriptions of the Piobaireachd Society was not played by anyone until ~~subsequent to the publications~~ ^{alter and/or chosen as one of set tunes for competition.} Kennedy-Fraser makes no apologies for her methodology and uses the idiosyncracies of the tradition to legitimise it:

'Needless to say, there are many variants of airs, of the favourite ancient airs, and one has to use one's judgement in selecting or collating from these a final version for publication. Father Allan did not approve of the graceless versions of many tunes as they appear in print. The old traditional singer, if an artist at all, was ever at liberty (indeed was expected) to use ornament to any extent and to improvise on the ancient theme much as the Hindus' authenticated singer is expected to do with the ancient Hindu 'rags'.'

She also states:

'That the folk are only free, alike in the treatment of the melodic outline, the form, and the ornament of their songs, but that they are rhythmically strong enough to use freedom with the metrical accents, is evidenced by their happy use of syncopation.' (p129-30)

In a similar way, the editors of the Piobaireachd Society second series intended that the settings given with footnote information would allow 'pipers of higher intelligence to choose for themselves the settings which they consider correct.' (PS 1: 1925) The differences between the printed

version and the alternative choices of settings ^{are often differentiated by} relate, ~~for the most part, to a~~ small number of alternative notes or gracings which have a minor bearing on the overall performance style of the tune. ^{which is considered a major departure!} Others have been severely edited for metrical reasons.

The graceless singing styles implied by the methods of song notation adopted clearly did not appeal to the folklorist and collector, Fr. Allan MacDonald, and demonstrated once again how, as in the pibroch tradition, the ornamented style was being replaced by a more conservative style of performance. The extent and the immediacy with which the song notation affected the singing style is not easy to ascertain but it would seem that, ultimately, as in pibroch, its effects would be felt. This changing style was also witnessed by another song collector and musicologist, Amy Murray who, like Marjory Kennedy-Fraser, collected from the same Island of Eriskay shortly before her. (Murray, 1936) The difference between the two collectors was that Murray was more discerning and faithful to the styles of performance in her notation. She makes similar observations to Kennedy-Fraser on performance style and supports them with notated examples.

In Example 1, following, is her notated version of 'Mo run geal dileas' (1936: 91) as sung in Eriskay, below which is an example of how one would have expected to hear it sung at the National Gaelic Mòd and how it was soon accepted as a genuine style. (see below)

Ex.1.

Mo run geal dil - eas - dil - eas, dil - eas

but thus:

Mo run geal dil - eas - dil - eas, dil - eas

← make a clearer separation

The above example has dileas occurring three times. In each instance,

As can be seen from the example, the Mòd version has 'ironed out' the ornamentation on ^{the} each -eas of dileas; in the first ^{instance of bar 2} place by having two equal quavers; and in the second and third ^{instances} by leaving out the subtle decorations altogether. This is similar to what occurred when the ornamentations of Donald MacDonald and earlier notators were dispensed with in Angus MacKay's (1838) collection. This would eventually be considered as an 'improved' style, witnessed by its subsequent acceptance as a standard text by the competition system and

publishers. Angus MacArthur's Lament for Donald Duaghal MacKay is a good example of one where a series of two note cadences give a similar effect to the song example above.

The reasons Murray gives for this version having become so popular with the local people was because of the influences of girls from other parts of Gaeldom - some of whom were *Mòd* singers.⁷⁹ She observes that "At the *Mòd* each must sing like the other, and all by the book," and uses the following examples to show how the *Mòd* style has affected the traditional singing idiom.⁸⁰

Murray's reference to ~~the~~ some of the girls having been *Mòd* singers is important to her as she sees the *Mòd* and its associated choirs as the source of much of the 'smoothing out' of the melodic lines of the songs at the expense of ornamentation. She refers to the beginning of the Gaelic choirs in Lowland Scotland, which,

'use collections noted both on the staff and in Tonic Sol-Fa, with of course the twists and turns cut out.' (1936: 90)

This is reminiscent of the attitude of some pipers to the emulation of the natural song rhythms described earlier and also of the cadence decorations of Joseph MacDonald. (?)

Another song, Hi o ro na ho ro eile⁸¹ (1936: 92) is given as an example to demonstrate how the changes not only dispensed with much of the ornamentation⁸² but also changed the modality. In pibroch, a similar situation occurs when echo beats are played with long low Gs, (Nether Lorn: *hihorodo*) as in modern performance, even when no low G occurs in the tune. (See also Buisman on a modality)

⁷⁹ They met at the annual fish curing in Shetland (Murray 1936:92).

⁸⁰ Crescendo and decrescendo signs which appear in her examples have been dispensed with here.

⁸¹ This is the same tune to which Burns wrote the words 'Ae fond kiss.'

⁸² On Murray enquiring on whether or not a hymn she heard had its provenance in Gregorian chant Fr. Allan said 'But they have spoiled it - do you hear how *plain* it is?' He then expanded on this by stating that "there isn't a woman on the island, so far as I know, who has the old way." (p89)

How this occurred in the catholic communities of the Southern Isles and remained in the Presbyterian Northern Communities by way of Gaelic psalms is a subject worth examining.

The problem of rhythmic identification and of where to place bar lines when notating songs was also commented on by Murray.(1936:102) She makes the following observations:

'One comes in time to make a good shot at the pitch and intervals- bearing always in mind that the tone is rather that of speech than of song. The puzzle is - where to be putting in your bars.

Bartók (1951:7) addresses the criticisms which some scholars have made regarding the use of bars in *parlando-rubato* melodies. This term is an appropriate one to describe the poetic and melodic relationship which exists in Gaelic songs sung in unmeasured time, where precedence is given to the language rhythm in the song melody. That is, where the melody is made subject to the word rhythm rather than vice-versa. Bartók summarises scholars' reservations:

'No regularity of rhythm can be observed and (that) therefore the periods must not be divided into measures, since measures refer to certain regularities of rhythm'.

However, he considers the original meaning of the bar as 'an articulating accent on the value following the bar' and finds it useful for that purpose as well as giving a clear articulation of the melody according to the metrical structure of the text line in songs. It is this common point of articulation between text line of song and pibroch which is so important for the pibroch player.

In Murray's discussion of rhythm 1936: 104) she has the following remarks:

'To return to our rhythms: the Islesman has been singing ragtime all his life, as the *Bourgeois Gentil-homme* was speaking prose, not knowing he was "doing it *that* way." In noting it, then, why not leave the bars all out, as the 16th Century madrigalists did?'

She then gives a notated example of the problem (p.105) - notating a fragment as best she could in one way:

Ex. 7



and then in another more standardised form, all in 4/4 time which gives a false impression of its performance style:

Ex. 8



She obviously recognised the problem of using measured time to notate the songs she was hearing although she did continue to use the accepted style. *she does this in all cases.*
? Be clearer

The differences between the notated style of the first example and the second has a parallel in the differences in rhythm between the performance style which is being recommended by this study and the mainstream pibroch performance of the present day. The first is also closer to normal speech rhythm than the second. *careful!*

A similar trend towards rhythmic simplicity has occurred ^vin the pibroch tradition over the two hundred years since Joseph MacDonald's early attempts to notate pibroch in 1760. The trend towards a standard timing in 4/4 or common time, has occurred in pibroch notation as has already been pointed out. [←] Although the advice given by the pibroch notators may be that the notation only represents an approximate notation or pipers' jargon (Kilberry 1948: 17), the longer term effects on playing style, through succeeding generations of pipers divorced from the tradition and culture from which it emerged, are obvious. *(Paj, p?)*

Amy Murray's style of transcription is very easy for a Gaelic speaker to understand and probably fairly straightforward for a person with little acquaintance of Gaelic. In the same way, Tolmie's style is very informative, not least because she has included the words with the music. It is clear that the most communicative transcriptions of Gaelic song are those which have the words underneath the notation. Had this method of notation been adopted by the earliest pibroch notators, those tunes

which have a song source or have words associated with them would have been better understood rhythmically. As is shown in this study, (See CS2) the insertion of words underneath some of the tunes in Angus MacKay's (1838) collection does not relate to the rhythms implied by the notation and is therefore of little use to the ^{musician - whether or not he understands} ~~person who is unfamiliar with~~ the language and its implications in a musical context. ^{the rhythms implied by the Gaelic text.}

The method of notation which is best suited to Gaelic song is obviously one which imparts the most information in the simplest manner. There are diminishing returns on the facility to perform the music when notated over a particular level of detailed musical notation. That certain amount is not exactly definable, ^{Be clearer} ⁸³ However, the language itself, which should always be laid out underneath the music, should act as the main rhythmic guideline and because of the small inherent rhythmic changes in diction which occur from verse to verse, details of notation will alter from stanza to stanza.

The use of conventional European notation is clearly inappropriate because it cannot represent the subtle rhythms of Gaelic prosody in song. The changes in traditional singing style which have been witnessed over the last fifty years, for instance, cannot be accounted for to any great extent on the existence of notated texts of Gaelic song as the traditional singers have generally only referred to word texts as source material. What is undeniable however, is that the emphasis has moved from a performance style where the words carried the melody along, as it were, to one where the melody carried the words. ^{that} As Ross (1954)⁸⁴ observed, although

'vestiges of the bardic form can be seen in many of the Scottish Gaelic stressed metres of the modern period'

the features of which he identifies as:

'consciousness of language, a preoccupation with, one might say 'word music', and the development of the subject by means of a detailed analysis'.

⁸³ Bartok (1951:5) proposes that the limit at which the human mind can perceive differences of rhythm is about the value of 1/64th at 120 beats per minute.

⁸⁴ James Ross. 'Sub-literary tradition in Scottish Gaelic Song -Poetry', Part1 Eigse vol vii part iv p. 217-239.

this is too much of a jump not directly relevant

his statement does not refer to the style of performance of these particular metres. I suggest that this perception of 'word music' is what sets the traditional singer apart from the more pedestrian performers who have subjugated the rhythms of language in music - what Ross (ibid) calls 'the ironing out of the discrepancy of musical and poetic stress' to a measured melodic metre.

position
better

Ross (ibid: 239) attributes some of these developments to musicians as well as to literary influences where they

'have tended towards the reduction of the complexity of song rhythms by the introduction of less subtle poetic rhythms'.

} Is this clear enough?

The parallels with the pibroch tradition are apparent; where pipers have become more dependent on the edited scores, the rhythmic subtleties are lost in the more measured style of modern performance.

Ross (1954: 239) continues:

'There is a dictation to the air implicit in the very use of a stressed metre. Beginning over three centuries ago, the poetic stress has continually increased this dictation to the air and for nearly two centuries, the composers, and undoubtedly most of the singers of popular Gaelic song, have lost any notion of that distinction. The result has been a great deterioration in melodic complexity and quality, and we are witnessing the extinction of traditional Gaelic song'.

The situation at present is that almost all that one hears in traditional singing is fairly measured in style and the extinction of 'traditional Gaelic song', although gravely misunderstood, has not yet occurred. The ability to sing in stressed metre without being forced into the measured rhythm of its air, as shown in instrumental notation, would seem to be the most misunderstood feature of traditional singing today. The development of regular stress in measured time in the singing tradition is strongly influenced by the prevalence of instrumentally backed recordings this century. The same influences of measured time could also have affected the pibroch tradition over and above its encouragement by notation in the same style.

The overall problem of musical transcription has been summed up in an article published by List (1963: 193) who remarks:

'No method of transcription yet devised, whether accomplished by means of the human ear or by electronic analysis, mirrors the musical event with exactitude. The value of a transcription lies not in its complete reproduction of all aspects of a musical event but in the fact that it facilitates the comparison of a number of individual and separable elements or aspects of the musical event.....'

The shortcomings of notation are also conceded at an earlier period by Bartók (1951: 3)

'An absolutely true notation of music (as well as of spoken words) is impossible because of the lack of adequate signs in our current systems of notation. This applies even more to the notation of folk music⁸⁵. The only really true notations are the sound -tracks on the record itself'.

Therefore, when the pibroch tradition is examined in light of this, the problems are no different. Problems of transcription have already been addressed by Cooke (1972) who states that 'all who have tried readily admit the difficulty of the task'.

⁸⁵ The use of the term 'folk-music' here is one which has been the subject of some debate but see Brailoiu (1984 ed.Ch.1) for a further discussion of this. The term may be appropriate here because the *ùrlars* of the pibroch tradition could be regarded as a representation of what Bartók saw as the key to folk music as '*par excellence*, an art of variation'. (Brailoiu p.8)