Who got a kiss of the King's Hand? The growth of a tradition.

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1 Introduction

The classical repertoire of the Scottish Highland bagpipe, called piobaireachd, consists of extended variation sets in a distinctive and highly regulated style.[1] They were not written down until the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but it is generally accepted that the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were the main period of composition. Much of the music was generated to the order of aristocratic patrons, and pipers were retained for this purpose as part of the professional retinue of a landed chief. In the Western Highlands there were families of pipers and teachers who achieved a status rivalling the learned orders of poets and harpers.[2]

Until recently the data which led to these conclusions could almost all be defined as 'traditions', but now they are underpinned by a considerable body of archival research.[3] The historical backgrounds of individual compositions however are still much less well studied. The names of some pieces refer to known individuals or events, and there are stories relating to occasions of composition, but most of these involve editors' rationalisations as well as authentic oral memories,[4] and what passes as tradition today is an amalgam of components, often difficult to separate.[5]

2 The Wardlaw Manuscript

In apparently complete contrast with this kind of material is an account written by James Fraser, minister of the parish church of Wardlaw, near Inverness, in the 1680s.[6] Although its existence is well known, it will be as well to begin with the text, newly transcribed here from the manuscript:[7]

> Never was Prince .... taken with an Army as our King was, especially with the Scotch highlanders, whom he tearmed the flour of his forces, and still sounded their praise in every society, especially before the generall officers, which bred no small gum and emulation among the Lowlanders, judgeing themselves the farr finer men. There was great competition betuixt the trumpets in the army:

> one Axell, the Earl of Hoomes trumpeter, carried it by the King's own decision! The next was anent the pipers; but the Earle of Sutherlands domestick carried it of all the camp, for none contended with him. All the pipers in the army gave John Macgurmen the van, and acknowledged him for their patron in chiefe. It was pretty in a morning in parad viewing the regiments and bragads. He saw no less than 80 pipers in a crould bareheaded, and John M^{c}kgurmen in the middle covered. He asked What society that was? It was told his Majesty: Sir, yow are our King, and yonder old man in the midle is the Prince of Pipers. He cald him by name, and, comeing to the King, kneeling, his Majesty reacht him his hand to kiss; and instantly played an extemporanian port Fuoris P__ge i spoge i Rh_, I got a kiss of the Kings hand; of which he and they all were vain.

The event is the assembly of Royalist forces at Stirling in May 1651. In August they marched through England with a force, according to Fraser, of 16,000, only to be outnumbered and totally defeated at Worcester on September 3rd. Fraser's story appears as a pleasant if not light-hearted interlude in a well-told drama of promise, success and disaster.

The text was edited and published by William MacKay in 1905, and has been part of the history of piping ever since. Even so, it still needs a little more study than it has had so far. The word 'port' in the last sentence was misread as 'part', but a close comparison of letter forms makes it clear that the second letter is 'o'.[8] [9] In Gaelic *port* is a piece of music, specifically an instrumental piece as distinct from a song. The editor can be forgiven for not recognising the word here because by his time it had lost its currency in English. But it did have such a currency earlier on, just as Gaelic words like 'glen' or 'whisky', are part of English today. Certain Scottish musical compositions for the harp were called 'ports'. They are found mainly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, though some were also printed later, with titles like 'Port Atholl', 'Port Gordon' and 'The horseman's port'.[10] The word went out of fashion along with the music, but it remained in Gaelic, including piobaireachd names like *Port na Strì,* 'The Tune of Strife'.[11] Fraser is the only writer to apply the term, in English, to a bagpipe piece, but then he is the first writer to mention a piece of this type by name, and the only one to do so for another hundred years.

The intrusion of *port* is consistent with the way Fraser deploys Gaelic throughout his writing. He quotes verses and proverbs, and mentions place names, with English interpretations – in a rather biblical manner. Sometimes he introduces a word with an English gloss, but he uses a few words without translation, indeed in a completely unmarked way which seems to show that he expected them to be understood. The commonest of these, not surprisingly, is 'clan'. For him it tends to be a term of disparagement: in the west they have clans, in the east we have families, and armies. Other untranslated terms include 'birlin' or 'birling', i.e. *birlinn,* a war-galley, 'scallag', i.e. *sgalag*, a farm servant; 'spreath', i.e. *spréidh,* cattle; and 'cashmachk', i.e. *caismeachd,* a warning or war-song.[12]

Another word in Fraser's story that has caused trouble is the name of the piper. It appears twice, in slightly different spellings 'Macgurmen' and 'M^{c}kgurmen'. William MacKay read the first of these as given here, but he read the second as 'M^{c}gyurmen'. It is hard to see how he arrived at this, unless he was over-influenced by the first one. In Fraser's hand the letter k does look rather like a modern g, and his g looks rather like his and our y, except for a horizontal stroke across the top. But a comparison with other words with the same combinations of letters establishes the spellings clearly enough.[13]

The 'trouble' of course is that in piping nowadays a strong opinion names the originators of the classical tradition as MacCrimmon, the dynasty of pipers who served the MacLeods of Dunvegan, in Skye. Although there were other famous names, none of them resemble the one given by Fraser. William MacKay boldly inserted 'MacCrimmon' in square brackets after 'Macgurmen'. He was generally rather sparing with glosses of this sort, preferring footnotes with interpretative comments. Here he gave no justification, evidently feeling he was on safe ground.

It would be rash to say that he was wrong. The accepted Gaelic spelling of MacCrimmon is *Mac Cruimein*. The earlier archival references have 'McCrooman' and various spellings are found with with u such as 'McCrummen', and with G rather C,[14] and conclusive evidence of the traditional pronunciation comes from the song by John MacCodrum, to be quoted below, in which the name is made to rhyme with

other words also spelled and undoubtedly pronounced with u – *cuala, urram, Lunnain, uile*.[15] There is also the well-known Gaelic phenomenon of the epenthetic vowel in words like *gorm,* pronounced (and sometimes actually spelled) 'gorum'.[16] In summary, the gap between the manuscript reading 'M(a)c(k)gurmen' and the modern anglicised 'Mac Crimmon' can now be said to have been closed.

Finally, the name of the tune. William MacKay read it as *Fhuaireas pòg o spòg an Rìgh*. The first word is the first person singular past tense, 'I got', in the synthetic form, the modern form being *fhuair mi,* with the pronoun. The synthetic form has largely disappeared from Scottish Gaelic, and although it continues in Irish, especially in southern dialects, in Scottish contexts it has an archaic, high-register or literary flavour,[17] though *fhuaireas* is sometimes heard even today. In the second word of the name the bar over a letter is Fraser's standard mark of a long vowel, and the double letter o was a common convention for the sound which has come down in modern English 'poke' (cf. 'Hoome' in the text, and 'brooch' today). Actually to a non-Gaelic ear *pòg* sounds more like 'pawk', but even so the correspondence is close. As we note below, the word s*pòg* has since become *làmh,* but the assonance of *pòg* and s*pòg* fits the convention of Gaelic poetry.[18] The preposition *o* means 'from' and it is not clear how William MacKay derived it from Fraser's *i,* except that as noted below later traditional versions have *o*, or the equivalent *bho.*

3 Descent of the Manuscript

We are going to consider the possibility that the Wardlaw manuscript has contributed to the oral tradition, and this depends on its having been available for other people to read. The writer died in 1709, and according to William MacKay[19] the succession of owners was (1) his son Alexander, (2) Alexander's son Robert, (3) Robert's brother James, (4) James' son Alexander of Torbreck, (5) Torbreck's daughter Anne, who married a John MacDonald, (6) their daughter, also Anne, who married a John Thomson, of Liverpool. Then in 1870 it was sold to a Fraser of a different family.[20] A letter from the bookseller says that it had descended

> from a Cousin of Lord Lovat 'James Fraser Our Great Grandfather & then to old Torbuck, who was descended from the Porphacies (Frasers)' and thus to Mrs Thomson the previous possessor.[21]

This confirms that Anne Thomson, No 6 in the list, was the last of the family to own the book; and the quotation (underlined in the original as well as being in inverted commas) looks as though it has come from her. So 'James Fraser our great grandfather' is evidently James, No 3, and 'old Torbuck' is Alexander of Torbreck, No 4. In actual fact something has been covered up. The successor and heir of Alexander of Torbreck, who died in 1821, was Robert, not mentioned, and he sold Torbreck on 24 December 1834. [22] [23] A week later, extracts from the Wardlaw manuscript began to appear in *The Inverness Courier*, written by the editor, Robert Carruthers. In due course Carruthers made it clear that the manuscript had surfaced in an auction sale, that it was old, dusty and stained,[24] and that it had indeed come from the Frasers of Torbreck.[25] It seems evident that it was the original, not a transcript. It also seems fairly evident that the rest of the family were at odds with Robert (he was a political radical and had incurred a great deal of expense in the 1831 election), so perhaps the purchase of the manuscript in 1834 was something of a rescue operation.

In considering whether the Wardlaw manuscript fed into the oral tradition, we need not be concerned with anything later than 1838. That was the year of publication of Angus MacKay's book of piobaireachd, with its appended historical notes, and we shall see that from then until 1905 no writer who dealt with the incident at Stirling mentioned anything which could not have been derived from MacKay or from general historical knowledge.

The first evidence of anyone other than the owner using the manuscript comes in 1749, when a history of the Frasers was compiled with a view to publication.[26] It mentions the Reverend James, cites the manuscript, and follows it closely in many places. It covers the review at Torwood but omits any mention of the piper, merely noting the rivalry between the different corps. A genealogy of the Lovat family published in 1795 includes material which evidently originated with the Wardlaw MS, but it is not clear that the author used the manuscript himself. In one place[27] he refers to one of James Fraser's other works, i.e. his *Triennial Travels,* but he also has

frequent references to 'Memoirs of the House of Lovat, MSS.' or words to that effect, and James Fraser's name is rather noticeably absent. There is no reference to piping. In his much more substantial history of the Frasers, published in 1825, John Anderson refers to what he calls an 'authenticated transcript of a MS regarding the Bissets and Frasers of Lovat, written by Mr James Fraser, minister of Wardlaw, under the title of the "Wardlaw MS".'[28] Nothing else seems to be known of this transcript, but if the reference is to be read literally it implies that the name 'Wardlaw Manuscript' may have been written on it, and may be the source of the well known title. On the other hand, William MacKay said in 1905 that the manuscript that we still have had itself been known as the Wardlaw Manuscript 'for the last hundred years'. The antiquary Henry Hutton also noted some extracts in the 1820s, but they are brief and do not refer to military or musical matters.[29]

The first person we know of who used the manuscript for anything other than private family interest is Robert Carruthers, who publicised it in his Inverness newspaper in from 1835. Surprisingly perhaps, he did not mention the piping, but we cannot overlook the possibility that he would have mentioned it privately to anyone interested. The sale of Torbreck would also have been well noted locally, even if the *Courier* had glossed over it.

Others who borrowed the manuscript later may be mentioned briefly. In their *Costume of the Clans*, 1845, the Sobieski Stewart brothers mention, but do not quote 'The Wardlaw MS, an account of the Clan Fraser, in the possession of A. Fraser, Esqr., of Abertarf.'[30] In his *Memorials of Montrose and his Times,* volume 2, 1850, M. Napier used the manuscript, which he borrowed from John Thomson, of Liverpool. He had not been aware of it when writing volume 1 of his work, published in 1848.[31] Finally, there were extracts made by Lewis MacKenzie of Findon but as yet these have not been traced. [32]

4 The Words of the Song

When a piobaireachd name takes the form of a complete sentence it is safe to assume that it comes from a song, and in the present case this is confirmed. Words amounting to a complete verse have been printed several eight times, and there are also some

variant readings of the title. It will be convenient to review these in the order in which they occur.

1 Highland Society Records from 1813

Beginning in 1781, the Highland Society of London sponsored competitions for piobaireachd playing, which were held annually in Edinburgh. Each piper submitted a list of tunes and the judges selected the one he was to play. Lists of competitors and tunes survive for a few early years, and then almost continuously from 1813.[33] The present tune was submitted twice in 1813, and a total of at least 24 times down to 1829, by at least 10 different pipers. It was evidently a favoured choice of strong players, for five of them won prizes at various times. The music itself was noted in a manuscript compiled by Peter Reid, about 1826, with the title in both Gaelic and English, 'Fhuair mi pog o' laimh an' Righ. / I got a Kiss of The King's Hand.'[34] The titles in the competition lists agree with these, word for word, apart from small variants in the Gaelic which may be transcription errors. In all of them we see the change from *spòg* to *làmh*, which was to prove permanent; but the coincidence of the English with that of the Wardlaw MS is remarkable. Reid (born in 1801)[35] was a good amateur piper and his manuscript shows that he had excellent contacts with the professional players of his day. It seems likely that he got the music from one of the pipers who had played recently in the competition, but his source for the name is not so obvious.

2 Angus MacKay, 1838

> Thuair mi Pòg s' Pòg s' Pòg ga'n d'thuair mi Pòg o' Laimh an Righ.
> Thuair mi Pòg s' Pòg s' Pòg Thuair mi Pòg o' Laimh an Righ.
> Thuair mi Pòg s' Pòg s' Pòg Thuair mi Pòg o' Laimh an Righ.
> Thuair mi Pòg s' Pòg s' Pòg O'thuair mi Pòg o' Laimh an Righ.
> Cha d'chur seid an Croicion Caorach a thuair an t-urram a thuair mi.[36]

'I have had a kiss, a kiss, a kiss, I have had a kiss of the King's hand... No one who blew in a sheep's skin has received such honour as I have.' This is from Angus MacKay's published collection of piobaireachd. The English translation is quoted

here from the 'historical and traditional notes' appended to the collection[37] but the Gaelic words appear on the same page as the music, and although it is not possible to be certain that Angus himself is the source of them, there is one clue that suggests that at least he had some input. The spelling 'Thuair' instead of 'Fhuair' is non-standard. The letters fh are usually silent but as already mentioned, in this word they sound as 'h'. Angus's spelling conveys the sound, and it is characteristic of him to invent his way out of a perceived difficulty.

3 Norman MacLeod, 1840

> Thug mi pòg a's pòg a's pòg, / Gu'n d' thug mi pòg do làmh an rìgh;
> 'S cha d' chuir gaoth an craicionn caorach, / Fear a fhuair an fhaoilt ach mi.[38]

This comes from the pioneer writer of Gaelic prose, the Rev. Norman MacLeod, in an essay which will be quoted further below. The change from *fhuair* to *thug* sounds like editorial rationalisation, making 'I got' into 'I gave'. It was accepted by some later editors and is still sometimes defended as common sense, but there can be no doubt that *fhuair* and 'I got' were idiomatic for James Fraser in 1680, and evidently they were still good enough for Angus MacKay in 1838. One small difference from the preceding text is no doubt editorial, *a's* for *'s* being simply an alternative contraction of *agus,* 'and'; but other differences can be seen as creative improvements: *gaoth* and *faoilt[e]* rhyme with *caorach* and so fit in better than *seid* and *urram.* The verse was reprinted in collected editions of MacLeod's writings, and so became widely known.[39] It was also reprinted by the historian Alexander MacKenzie in 1889.[40]

4 Alexander Stewart, 1878

In 1878 Dr Alexander Stewart happened to attend a piping competition in Glasgow. He heard the present tune played and later (1883) quoted the title as *Fhuair mi pòg 's laimh mo righ*.[41] It would not be safe to assume that he was reproducing it from having heard it announced at the competition, and it would certainly be wise to assume that he had access to Angus MacKay's book, but one significant change here is *mo righ*, 'my King', which recurs later as well.

5 Some Derivatives

Alexander MacDonald, pen-name ‘Gleannach’, (1860-1928), contributed a version to the Oban Times. The full text has not been located but a partial copy exists, incorporated into Angus MacKay’s version, with some alternative wordings.[42] It starts with *Fhuair,* like all other versions, and has *gaoth* for *seid,* like Norman Mac Leod, but also *aoidh* for *urram,* which has not been seen elsewhere. Henry Whyte (‘Fionn’), in 1903, followed Norman MacLeod but with *mo* for *an* in agreement with Stewart. [43] David Glen also adopted *mo* when publishing the tune in 1896;[44] later Henry Whyte contributed historical notes to Glen’s complete collection of piobaireachd, but by that time the Wardlaw manuscript had been published and Whyte adopted the tune name and anecdote accordingly.

6 N. Ross, 1910

In the course of a lengthy article, in Gaelic, dealing with the whole MacCrimmon family and their reputed contributions to piping, the Rev Dr. Neil Ross offered a quite different four-line verse as follows

> Cha do shèid an craicionn caorach,
> Fear a fhuair an fhaoilt ach mi,
> Shìn e mach a làmh ri pògadh,
> ’S thug mi pòg do làimh an Righ.[45]

This can be translated as ‘No man who blew into a sheep’s skin has (such) an honour as me. He stretched out his hand to kiss, and I gave a kiss to the king’s hand.’ Here we see the solution to the perceived problem of got...from versus gave...to taken to its logical conclusion by rewriting the original text. Dr Ross subsequently gave advice to the Piobaireachd Society editors on matters of Gaelic grammar and spelling, and it was presumably in deference to him that the Society also adopted *Thug mi pòg do...* in the title of the tune, while sticking to the traditional ‘I got a kiss of...’ in the English.[46] The latter choice is consistent with the Society’s stated policy of preferring the usages of contemporary pipers where possible, and there can be no doubt that pipers strongly tended to follow the letter of Angus MacKay’s book.

7 William Matheson, 1961

> Fhuair mi pòg is pòg is pòg, / O fhuair mi pòg a làimh a' Rìgh *three times*
> Is cha d'chuir gaoth an craicionn caorach / Neach a fhuair an fhaoilt ach mì.

William Matheson (1910-1995) recorded this as a song in 1961, and it was published in 1981. [47] It is not quite clear whether he had any oral source or not. Matheson reverts to *Fhuair mi* but he introduces a new change, from *neach,* 'person', to *fear,* 'man'. Is this a modernism? Essentially the same version is sung by Margaret Stewart in a published recording which we will come to in the next section.

5 The Tune

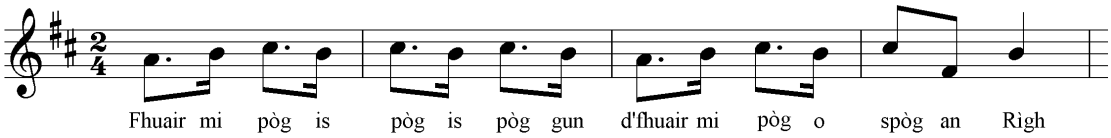
We have two sources for the pipe music, the manuscript of Peter Reid (c. 1826) already cited, and the book published by Angus MacKay in 1838. Reid's setting is shown in Figure 1.[48] The music is unbarred, but bar lines have been added here to mark out the sections of the melody as they would be generally understood. Readers unfamiliar with pipe music need to be aware that most of the notes written with small heads are infinitesimally short and can be ignored by anyone wishing to hum the tune, or play it on any instrument other than the pipes. The exceptions come in the three-note figure at the very beginning of the piece, and elsewhere wherever it recurs. The middle note of the three, E, is played long, like the first E in Figure 2.[49] By modern standards Reid's version seems untidy, and later editors have rejected it.[50] Certainly there is a temptation to delete bar 15 (the first bar of the eighth stave as printed here). Like most piobaireachd tunes, it is in short sections – shown here as one bar each – ending on one or other of two notes, C and B in this case,[51] and following a recognised pattern of repetitions and transpositions. The usual number of sections is eight, not nine as here, but the main idiosyncrasy in Reid's setting is that the sections are not all the same length, so it is not possible to put a conventional time signature at the beginning. Angus MacKay's version, shown in Figure 2,[52] is regular, with eight sections of equal length, each expressed by him as two bars. His notation is also more realistic than Reid's in that he shows the above-mentioned E notes with large heads and makes them fit into his time signature. In general MacKay's version can be seen as a rather drastic tidying up of Reid's, and to a large extent it is probably just that.

MacKay is known to have taken some other material from Reid and may well have had sight of the actual manuscript.[53] [54] But he differs melodically in one way as well, i.e. the second half of bar 4 as printed here, and similarly in other corresponding places.

In MacKay's book the words quoted above are printed under the music, but they do not fit. The five lines are set to staves 1, 2, 4, 7-8, with blanks under the rest. It seems obvious that they have come from a version that was sung to a form of the melody that was shorter than the pipe tunes. 'Pibroch songs' as they are now called[55] often consist of four lines, or of two lines with the first sung three times to make a total of four. A melody which supports four lines was noted some decades after MacKay, and is reproduced here (Figure 3).[56] The source is somewhat problematic. The writer, Angus Fraser, born in 1800, was a son of Captain Simon Fraser (1773-1852), who had published in 1816 a collection which was claimed to represent music from as far back as 1745.[57] It is claimed that Angus's collection incorporates further, unpublished volumes of Simon's. There is much unique material in the Angus Fraser manuscript, including tunes supposedly once played on the harp, but the extent of Angus's own creative involvement is not clear. Only three tunes stand out as pibroch songs, and all three correspond to tunes which had been published by Angus MacKay in 1838, with essentially the same titles.[58] MacKay's book contained 61 pieces, out of a repertoire that ran into hundreds.[59]

The Angus Fraser tune, essentially, was used by William Matheson in his 1961 recording,[60] and it can be heard in a notable recent professional performance, by Margaret Stewart and Allan MacDonald,[61] transcribed here in Figure 4. The melody is a fine one, and fits the words perfectly, and it is no criticism to say that in some respects it seems relatively modern. The opening feature, a descent of one fifth (from E to A as transposed here) has a strong bagpipe flavour, but it reflects perhaps too closely the opening notes of the pipe tune as published. As mentioned above, the opening note E in Angus MacKay's version (Figure 2) is best regarded as an introductory or ornamental note. The pipe melody as such begins on the following long note, low A, and it is A, not E which is carried through into the variations. (Similar remarks apply to almost all extant pibroch melodies containing this figure, which pipers now call the 'cadence-E'). A second possible modernism is the way in

which the song air proceeds smoothly to end on low A, the 'key note' in modern music convention, whereas the pipe tune ends on an open cadence, i.e. on B. Although it goes beyond the evidence, we might reconstruct the first line of the melody as it might have been sung in the Rev. James Fraser's time, as follows:[62]



7 Stories of the Tune

1 Angus MacKay

The first published account is given by Angus MacKay (1838). In the heading to the music itself he assigns the composer, Patrick Mor Mac Crummen, and date, 1651,[63] and his historical anecdote reads

> Norman MacLeod of MacLeod, and Roderick MacLeod of Talisker joined the army of king Charles II, and were knighted before the battle of Worcester, in 1651. Patrick *Mòr* MacCrummen having played his Pipes in presence of the king, his majesty was so much pleased with his performance and appearance, that he graciously condescended to allow him the honour of kissing hands. It was on this occasion that he composed the Piobaireachd, which to those acquainted with the Gaëlic language, and enthusiastic in Pipe music, seems to speak forth the pride and gratitude of the performer...[64]

There is strong reason to think that MacKay's 'Historical and Traditional Notes' were largely the work of other people, especially James Logan, author of *The Scottish Gaël* (1831).[65] Occasionally there are discrepancies between the notes and the music headings. Here they agree, but there is some basis for thinking that, at least where they relate to the MacCrimmons and the MacLeods, the headings have been brought into line with the notes. For the present we have little choice but to take them together. There is an error in the first line, since Norman was not MacLeod of MacLeod, chief of the whole clan, but MacLeod of Bernera. Besides this, on a casual

reading the note could suggest that the incident of the composition took place at Worcester along with the knighting, and it has generally been read that way,[66] but strictly it does not say so. With hindsight now that we have the Wardlaw story, we can take the first and second sentences as unrelated. It is characteristic of the style and bias of the *Historical and Traditional Notes* to stress the honours done to chiefs of clans, especially to MacLeods, and to conflate the story of the masters with that of the piper. And in the reference to the piper the differences between the manuscript and the printed account can also be seen as typical. There was nothing in the manuscript to suggest that the king was 'pleased' with the piper's appearance, still less that he heard him play. Amused condescension is the tone of the narrative, and the tune, albeit extempore and spontaneous, is presented as being made after the event. And of course in the later account the composer has become Patrick, piper to MacLeod, instead of John, piper to the Earl of Sutherland.

2 Norman MacLeod

The story told by the Rev. Norman MacLeod in 1840 is extracted here from an essay on the whole MacCrimmon family:

> Ann an linn Rìgh Tèarlach a' Dhà, bha MacLeòid Dhun-bheagan agus Tànaistear an teaghlaich, fear Thalasgair, ann an Sasunn, far an d'rinneadh Ridirean diubh leis an Rìgh, (Sir Tormoid an Dùin agus Sir Ruairidh,) anns a' bhliadhna 1651. B' e Pàra Mòr Mac-Cruimein a bu phìobaire dhoibh air an àm sin, agus bha e maille riutha. Thugadh an làthair an Rìgh e, far an do chluich e cuairt. Bha 'n Rìgh cho toilichte 's gu-n do cheadaich e do Phàra a làmh phògadh – onoir nach do chuireadh roimhe sin no 'n a dhéigh air piobaire riamh! 'S ann air a chòmhdhail so a chuir e r'a chéile 'm port nuallanach, uaibhreach, binn ris an canar, 'Thug mi pòg do làmh an Rìgh.' Tha focail air an cur ris a' phort so 's a' Ghàelic...[67]
>
> In the time of King Charles II, MacLeod of Dunvegan and his heir-designate, the Laird of Talisker, were in England where the King knighted them (Sir Norman of Dunvegan and Sir Roderick, in the year 1651. Patrick MacCrimmon was their piper at that time, and he was with them. He was

> brought into the King's presence, where he played a set of tunes. The King was so pleased that he offered his hand to Patrick to kiss – an honour never given to a piper before or since! It was on this occasion that he composed the thunderous, proud, melodious tune known as 'I gave a kiss to the King's hand'. There are words which were put to this tune in Gaelic...[68]

Here we need to correct another historical error. In 1651 the clan chief, known as MacLeod of MacLeod, or MacLeod of Dunvegan, was actually Roderick, nicknamed Rory Mir, but he was aged only about 16; it was his two uncles, Norman of Bernera and Roderick of Talisker, who fought at Worcester, as was (not quite correctly) noted in the previous account. They were in fact knighted by Charles II, but not until 1661.[69] We can also note here an obvious echo from Gaelic poetry, in the word *nuallanach*:

> Ri fuaim an taibh / Is uaigneach mo ghean;
> Bha mis' uair nach b'e sud m'àbhaist.
>
> Ach pìob nuallanach mhór / Bheireadh buaidh air gach ceòl,
> An uair a ghluaiste i le meòir Phàdruig.[70]

This is from *Crònan an Taibh,* one of the best known songs[71] of one of the best-loved poets, Mary MacLeod, and to draw the links closer, it was actually dedicated to Sir Norman MacLeod of Bernera.[72]

3 MacKenzie's *History*

Alexander MacKenzie (1889) embedded the piping story into his account of the attempt by Rory Mir to restore the fortunes of the clan:

> After the Restoration of Charles II., in 1660, Roderick [of Dunvegan] proceeded to London to pay his homage to the King, and was very kindly received by His Majesty. He was, however, so much cut up because Charles made no reference to the ruin of his family and the Clan Macleod at the battle

> of Worcester, and its mournful results in Skye, that he at once returned home. He had taken his piper, Patrick Mor MacCrimmon, who had also been at the battle of Worcester, along with him to Court, on which occasion he was allowed 'to kiss hands' as a very special honour. MacCrimmon appears to have thought a great deal more about this incident than of the slaughter of his clansmen at the battle of Worcester, and he commemorated the honour conferred on him, and the other polite attentions paid to him by the King, by composing the famous Piobaireachd...

and then follow the title and text largely as given by Norman MacLeod.[73] MacKenzie quotes no source, and to judge from later research it seems that the story of Rory Mir going to London rested on tradition only until documents were discovered in the Dunvegan archives, and interpreted as receipts for payments in connection with his journey.[74] As regards the piping, it is hard to see anything in the narrative which cannot be regarded as constructive interpretation from the previous accounts. The suggestion that the extant verse is only 'one of the verses' of a song, might be taken seriously, but it need mean no more than that MacKenzie was relying on someone else for the piping material and was not prepared to be more specific on his own account.

7 The King of Pipers

About 1760, John MacCodrum made the poem *Dimoladh Pìoba Dhomhnaill Bhàin,* 'dispraise of Donald Bàn's pipes'. It was a direct response to an earlier poem celebrating the pipes, by one John MacPhail. Poems praising and dispraising pipers and pipe music had become an established convention for a professional poet, and several have been identified, each referring to a previous one and beginning around 1500.[75] MacCodrum's work contains the lines

> An cuala thu có'n urram / An taobh-sa de Lunnuinn?
> Air na pìobairean uile / B'e MacCruimein an rìgh.

'Didst ever hear who was most honoured this side of London? – Of all pipers MacCrimmon was king...' [76]

The context is that in the first verse MacCodrum ridicules MacPhail for praising an obscure piper at the expense of MacCrimmon, 'Condullie' and 'Charles'. He is referring to the three major piping dynasties of the west: MacCrimmon, pipers to MacLeod of MacLeod at Dunvegan, Skye; *Con-Duiligh,* Rankin, pipers to the MacLeans in Mull and elsewhere; Charles, of the family of MacArthur, pipers to the MacDonalds. The poet devotes a verse to each of them before settling to his main business of invective. Rankin is mentioned for past military prowess and present exile due to the 'violence' of the Campbells; MacArthur is praised for the elegance of his pipes and music, admired even by English-speaking folk in Edinburgh; MacCrimmon is simply king and most honoured.[77] Here we have mentions of London, and of a king, but not 'the King'. Do they reflect a story, or are they rather the source of a story? Taken literally *an taobhsa de Lunnuinn* means no more than 'on this side of London' and it need not be any more specific than 'throughout the whole country'. Perhaps we can see a pattern – Rankin is honoured, MacArthur is admired in Edinburgh, but MacCrimmon's reputation reaches further still.

8 Other Traditions

At least one seemingly independent story has been told about this tune. As already mentioned, in 1878 Dr Alexander Stewart heard it at a piping competition in Glasgow. He proceeded to write that it was 'composed at Holyrood in 1745 by Ewen Macdhomhnuil Bhuidhe, a Macmillan from Glendessary and piper to Lochiel, on seeing his chief kiss Charles Edward's hand at a levee held in the palace of his ancestors by that prince a day or two after the victory at Gladsmuir'.[78] The Prince's levee is well enough known in history and legend, but whatever tradition lies behind this story presumably could not have included the second line of the song, in which it is the piper, not the chief, who gets to kiss the King's hand. Another tradition, recorded more recently, is a song from South Uist, which adds a second verse to the narrative. It runs, in full

Thug mi pòg, ’s gun tug mi pòg, / ’S gun tug mi pòg do làmh an rìgh.
Cha d’chuir séid an craiceann caorach / Aon a rinn sin ach mi fhìn.

Chuir ’ad mise chon a’ chogaidh, / Chuir ’ad chon a’ chogaidh mi.
Chuir ’ad mise chon a’ chogaidh, / Dh’iarraidh fois do mhac an rìgh.[79]

The sense of the second verse is ‘they sent me to the war so that the King’s son might have peace’. With a little imagination this could be linked to the Young Pretender in the ’45. But rather than attempt to harmonise these or any other traditions, it seems better to recognise that tradition is a creative process, and that if we had more material we would have even more diverse legends rather than a single coherent one.

9 Discussion

In all this it is easy to see how a tradition has grown even within the period of written records. The stories have become more detailed and colourful and some modern comments have taken on an air of scholarship by attempting to balance them up. The text of the song has been progressively sanitised, rationalised, and modernised, changing *spòg* to *làmh, fhuair* to *thug, an rìgh* to *mo rìgh*, *fear* to *neach.*

Taking a strong reductionist view, the pipe music can be whittled down to Peter Reid’s setting, the tune of the song can be referred back to the Angus Fraser manuscript, and the historical legends current before 1905 can be referred back to Angus MacKay. But this is too strong for the evidence. Angus MacKay’s version of the tune is melodically superior quite apart from any metrical tidying up, and we have not ruled out the possibility that he had it from other sources besides Reid.[80] William Matheson’s tune is close to Angus Fraser’s, but we cannot be sure that it was not being passed round among other singers before he came to it. The reductionist view applies best to the ‘legends’. No writer after Angus MacKay introduced anything that could not have been evolved from MacKay’s book together with other reading. Particular elements to discard are the relocations to Worcester and to London. They would not be impossible, but more economical explanations are that these ideas crept in by association with the poems of Mary MacLeod and John MacCodrum. We are back to Angus MacKay.

In that case, where did Angus MacKay's story come from? We have seen that it is at least possible that it came in part from the Wardlaw manuscript. Although we have no proof, there was a window of time during which either the manuscript itself, or some sort of copy, or merely a verbal account, could have come to the attention of someone interested in Highland music. The similarity of the names of the tune, both Gaelic and English, between the Wardlaw and Reid manuscripts, 150 years apart, is curious to say the least. We also saw above that the MacKay story can be dissected into two parts, one about the MacLeod chiefs and the honours they were supposed to have got from the King at Worcester, the other about the piper, the kiss and the tune. If we assume that some information also came in from oral tradition, how far can we go in identifying it? The idea that the King actually listened to a performance and rewarded the piper might be dismissed as embroidery of what was found in the manuscript, but the naming of the piper as MacCrimmon is less easy to dismiss. If we assume that the Wardlaw manuscript is the only source of the name we have to infer that the early reader made the same amendment of 'Macgurmen' as later readers did, and took the same decision to contradict the piper's attachment to the Earl of Sutherland.[81] Both are possible, but they suggest a predisposition to read the text in the light of what was already 'known'. That in itself provides some suggestion that there was already a tradition assigning the tune to a MacCrimmon, and perhaps to Patrick. On balance, this can be considered as a point in favour of an oral tradition. The irreducible minimum, it is suggested, is the song itself, coupled with a general belief that both words and music belonged to the MacCrimmons.

It is time to look again at the text of the song. Accepting the oldest form of the name as something like *Fhuaireas pòg o spòg an Rìgh,* we have the word s*pòg,* which as already mentioned changes later to *làmh*. 'I got a kiss of the King's paw' is more down-to-earth than the later version. The second line, with its blowing into a sheep's skin, is also hardly the wording of a romantic trying to build up the respectability of the piping profession. In both the seventeenth- and the nineteenth-century versions we hear the voice of a piper, proud perhaps, but also ironic and bitter. 'I'm a great musician, but only a bagpiper; I met the King, and all I got was to kiss his paw.'

Continuing the process of reduction, there are elements in the song and stories which scarcely call for any specific explanation. Words like 'Prince' and 'King', applied to anyone or anything, need not be more than expressions of excellence.[82] The idea that a particular master might be literally in authority over other musicians, and hold sway over a defined area, existed in theory at least in England in the later middle ages, and titles like 'minstrel-king' were actually used.[83] Stories of instant extempore composition are common in all cultures, and so too, especially in piping, is the idea that the pipe tune actually speaks out the words.[84]

Final questions to ask, though not as yet to answer, are how did James Fraser come to hear the story, and what was its status as a legend by the time he heard it? Fraser was writing about thirty years after the event, but he had been alive at the time,[85] and points in the narrative do suggest that it comes from someone who saw the review at Torwood and still recalled it vividly – 'It was pretty in [the] morning...'. But Fraser makes no claim to have seen it for himself, unlike some other events that come later in his narrative. We need not assume more than that he heard it from a friend who was there.[86] Moreover, even if Fraser had an informant who had been present, it does not follow that the informant saw the incident of the piper and the King. That sounds more like the sort of story that would quickly go the rounds and could be picked up later. In fact, as far as Fraser himself was concerned it need not be more than a song which he had heard and a legend to back it up, just like the stories he tells about old battles and historic meetings, with the only difference, that this one was comparatively new. It remains, legitimately, a key element in the history of piping.

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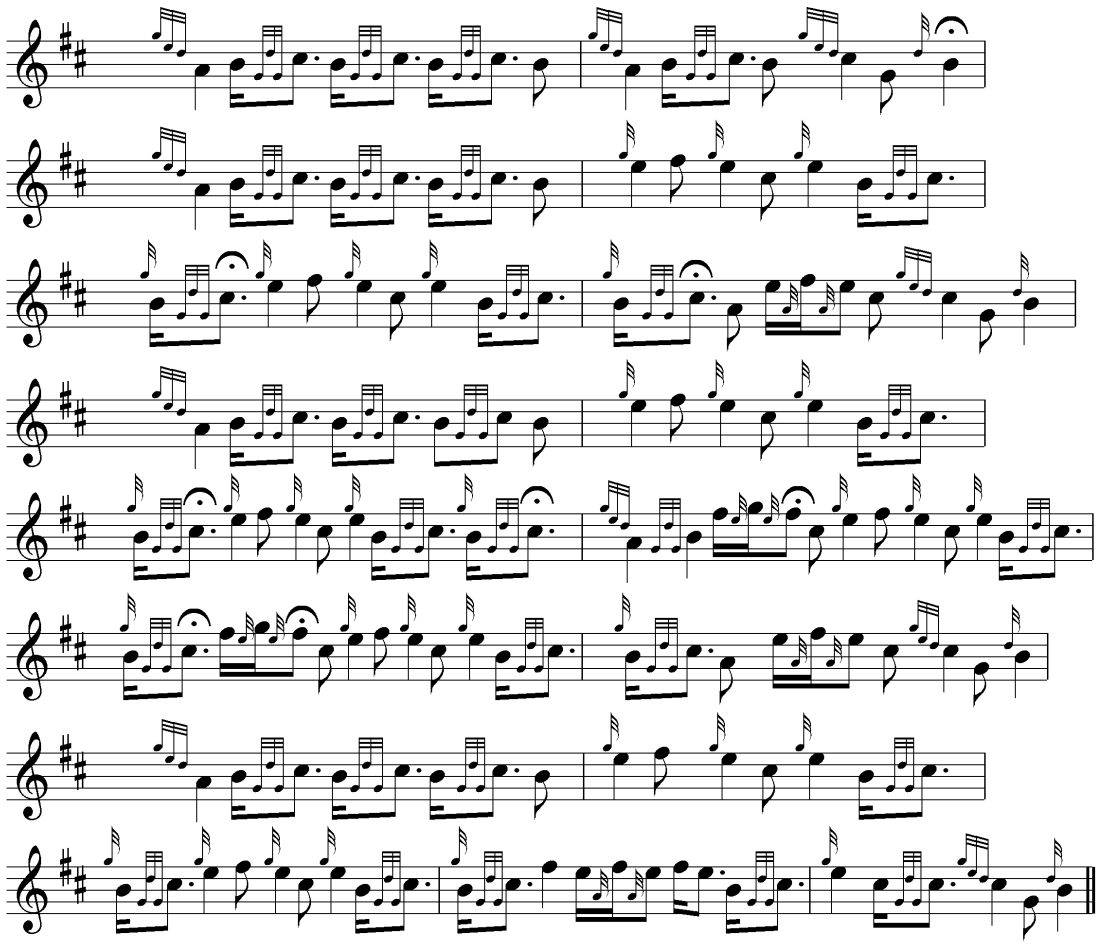
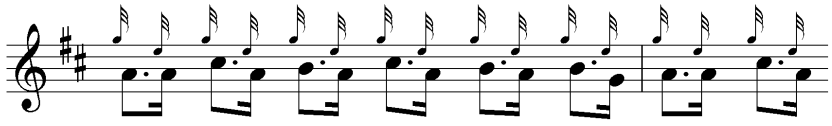
FIGURE 1

Fhuair mi pog o laimh an Righ
I got a Kiss of the Kings Hand



First Variation



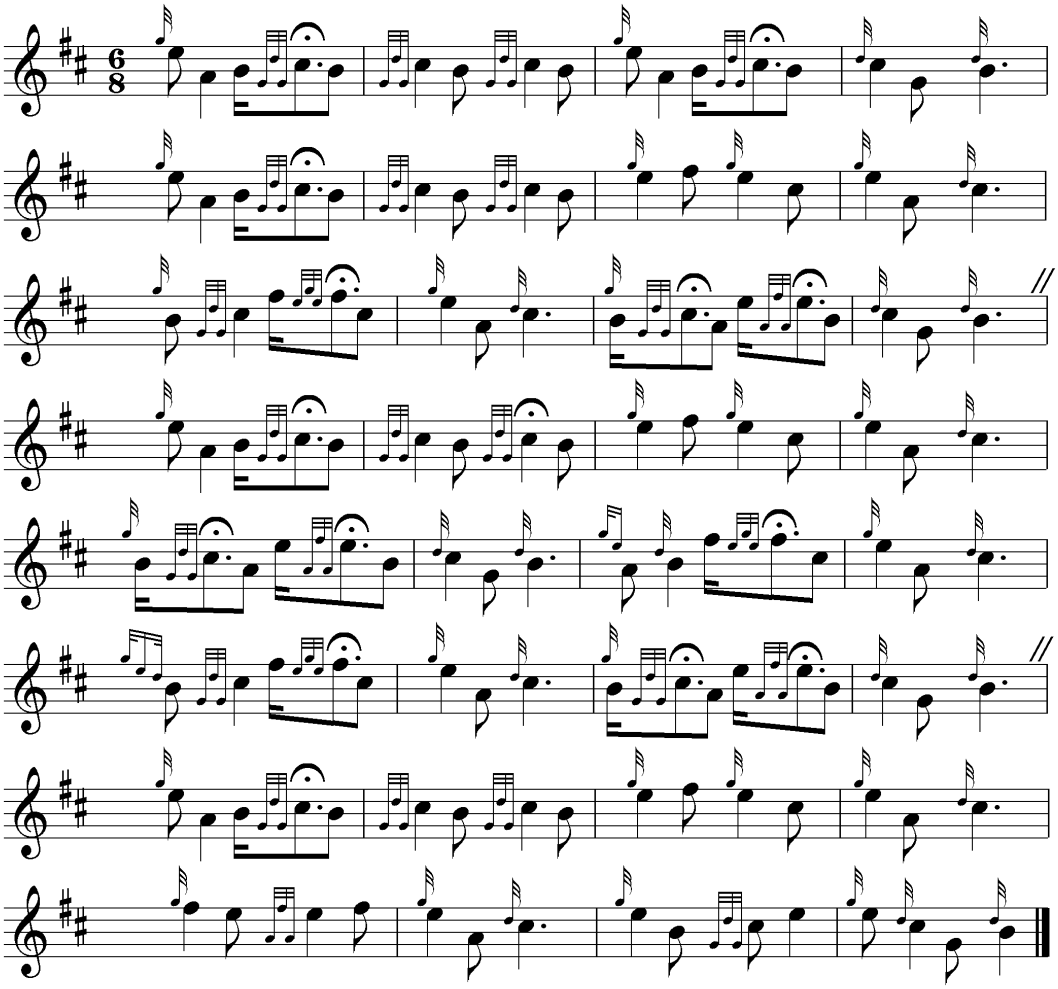
[etc]

Here follows the doubling of 1st Variation, then Tourluidh & Creanluidh - & DC

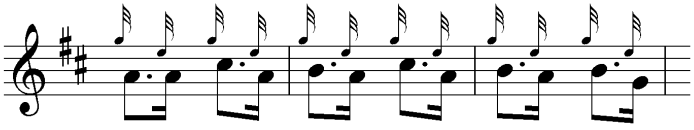
FIGURE 2

THUAIR MI POG O' LAIMH AN RIGH
I got a Kiss of the King's Hand.
Composed by
Patrick Mor Mac Crummen
1651.

Andante



Variation 1.



[etc]

FIGURE 3

Fhuair mi pòg o laimh an righ
I have kissed the king's hand

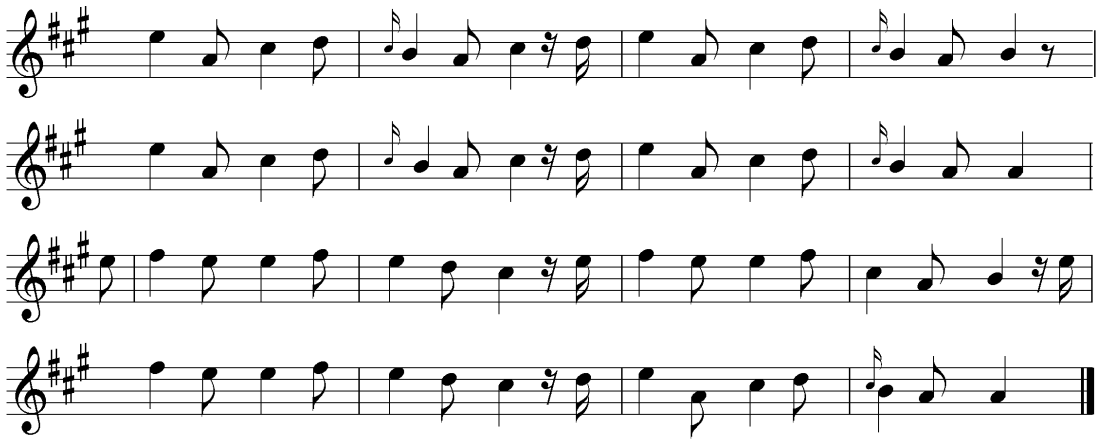
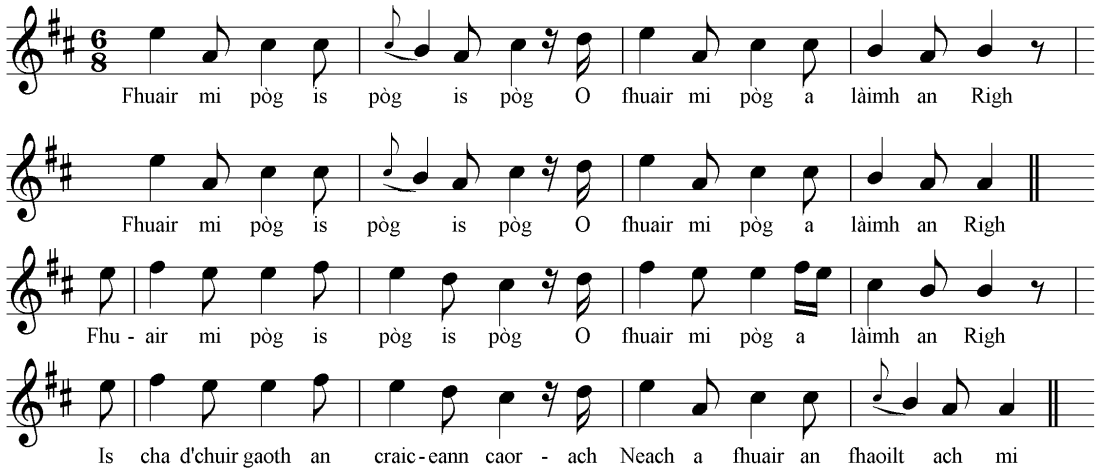


FIGURE 4



[1] For a brief introduction see R. D. Cannon (1988 [2002]). For music see e.g. A. Campbell (1948), Piobaireachd Society Books 1-15 (1925-1990), and R. Ross [1960 -]. A full list of the pieces known from traditional sources is on the website of the Piobaireachd Society, www.piobaireachd.co.uk.

[2] On the old learned orders, see D. S. Thomson (1968); J. Bannerman (1986).

[3] The view that most of the pieces are post-1600, as opposed to earlier romantic concepts, was first put forward by A. Campbell (1948, p 16). For recent scholarly discussions of piping dynasties see the following. MacCrimmon: R. H. MacLeod (1977), K. Sanger (1995), H. Cheape (2003); MacArthur and MacGregor, F. Buisman (2001); Cumming, H. Cheape (1998). The book by A. K. Campsie (1980) contains valuable correctives but its thesis that the entire concept of traditional piping 'colleges' is an invention is overstated.

[4] Early sources include notes appended to music texts in D. MacDonald [1820], (1826); A. MacKay (1838), and N. MacLeod (1828; see also n.d. [1883]). The compilation which has dominated popular conceptions is in *Account of the Hereditary Pipers*...(1838). See further C. S. Thomason (MSS, *Ceol Mor legends*), 'Fionn' (1904, c.1911). Compilations currently in print include A. J. Haddow (1982); D. B. MacNeill (2003).

[5] These issues were explored for the first time in connection with a pipe tune by V. Blankenhorn (1978).

[6] NLS MS 3658. W MacKay (1905, p xix) concluded that the work was begun in 1666 (the date on the extant title page) and finished in or after 1699, and that certain pages before and after our quotation were composed respectively after 1682 and not before 1691. The extant MS is considered to be a fair copy made by the author.

[7] MS f 127 verso. Cf. W. MacKay (1905), pages 379-380.

[8] In the combination **ar** the letters are regularly ligatured – see e.g. the words 'parties', parted', parts: MS folio and line numbers 128, 2; 129, 23; 130, 21 (1905 edition pp 382, 390, 396 respectively). In the combination **or** the letters are not joined, e.g. 'Bridport', 'fortis', 'transport', but an exception is 'Portsmouth': 130, 32; 129, 10 up; 129 verso, 20; 130, 32 (1900 edition, pp 390, 391, 393, 390 respectively). The

small letter **o** is generally open at the top. On MS f 129 (1905 edition p 390) the expression '...from the North parts, and raised a report...' shows all these features.

[9] The idea that 'part' should be read 'port' has been suggested before; here the proposal is not an emendation of the text, but a revised reading.

[10] K. Sanger and A. Kinnaird (1992), p 174.

[11] For other examples see R. D. Cannon (2006).

[12] W. MacKay (1905), pp 239 and 499; 84 and 239; 132; 206.

[13] The letter y is certainly not present – contrast the forms of **gy** and **yu** in 'Clergy', 'gyle', 'Argyle', Tryumphs' on MS ff and lines 39, 13 up; 67, 10 up; 148 verso, 4 up; 123 verso, 25 up (1905 edition pp 71, 128, 291, 241 respectively). Compare the forms of **gu** in 'league', 'Hague', 'plague' on MS ff and lines 124, 22; 125 verso, 2; 151, 44 (1905 edition pp 358, 365, 444 respectively). Personal names beginning **M^{c}k** occur frequently, and another with **M^{c}kg** is seen in 'M^{c}kgrewers' (MS f 83 verso, line 11; cf 1905 edition, p 242).

[14] R. H. Macleod (1977); K. Sanger (1995); K. Sanger, private communications based on current research.

[15] W. Matheson, (1976-78), p. 74.

[16] E.g. 'Tulloch Gorum' in D. MacDonald [1820], p 6. This point was made by R. Black (1967).

[17] W. J. Watson (1932, p. 388) points out several instances in poems dated to the seventeenth century.

[18] However the possibility of confusion, *spòg* from *is pòg*, should not be overlooked.

[19] W. MacKay (1905), p xix

[20] The purchaser was Sir William Augustus Fraser, Bart. On his death in 1898 the MS passed to Sir Keith Alexander Fraser, who made it available to William MacKay for publication – see W. MacKay (1905), p xx. In 1946 the manuscript was presented to the National Library of Scotland by Sir Keith Fraser, Bart., 'through the good offices of William MacKay, son of the editor.' Information from Kenneth Dunn, National Library of Scotland.

[21] Letter, Francis Harvey to Sir W. A. Fraser Bart, 22 January 1870, now pasted into NLS MS 3658.

[22] D. Warrand (1934), page 136, citing 'P. R. S. Inv., 26 Oct 1821'.

[23] A. MacKenzie (1896), p 734; *Inverness Courier,* 31 December 1834, quoted in J. Barron (1903-13), p. 158.

[24] R. Carruthers (1843), p. 88.

[25] *Inverness Courier,* 22 January 1845.

[26] National Library of Scotland, Adv. MS. 34.6.13. On the title page is a note, 'Intended for Publication in London 1749'.

[27] 'Mr James Fraser of Phopachy, in his travels, says,...'. See Archibald Fraser (1795), p. 9. The manuscript of the *Travels* is still extant, in Aberdeen University Library and is notable for its eye-witness accounts of affairs in England during the Cromwellian period. See J. Raymond (2.....)

[28] J. Anderson (1825), p. vi. His citations of the 'Wardlaw MSS' are not to be confused with more frequent citations of 'MS. Hist. of Frasers in Ad[vocates] Lib[rary]' which refer to Adv. MS. 34.6.13, even though they often contain material which the latter had taken from the Wardlaw MS.

[29] British Library Add MS 8144, cited by E. C. Batten (1877). The relevant pages are watermarked 1819 and the MS was acquired by the British Museum in 1830. The extracts deal only with the history of the Priory of Beauly. It is also not clear whether Hutton was using the original manuscript or an intermediate copy, as some of his quotations are reworded or paraphrased.

[30] J. H. Allan (1845) p. iv. The owner can presumably be identified as Archibald Thomas Frederick Fraser, who acquired Abertarff in 1815, and lived until 1884. See A. MacKenzie (1896), pp 503-508. [30]

[31] M. Napier (1850), p 446.

[32] MacKenzie, a noted antiquary who died in 1856, was born probably not before 1820. The extracts are cited by Batten, but only in connection with the history of Beauly Priory. William MacKay stated in 1905 that 'Findon's transcript is now in the British Museum', but he was merely quoting from Batten, and as it appears, misquoting, since he fails to mention Hutton.

[33] For a summary table with references to sources, see I. I. MacInnes (1985) pp 327-331. To this can now added a newly discovered collection of original records which includes data for some years not previously available. See D. McDiarmid (2005).

[34] National Library of Scotland, MS 22118, p 41. The manuscript is signed, and dated 'Glasgow 1826'. The apostrophe after o' is redundant.

[35] K. Sanger, letter in *Piping Times,* vol 34, No 8, pp 43-44 (May 1982).

[36] Caorach was originally printed Coarach – amended in the [1899] edition.In line 5, further amendments made here – Cha for cha, Cha d'chuir for cha'd chur; an (first occurrence) for a n; an t-urram for an turram.

[37] *Historical and Traditional Notes,* p 4.

[38] N. MacLeod (1840-1), pp. 134-137. In line 2 the mark over *pòg* was printed as circumflex.

[39] A. Clerk (1867), pp 378-32, who amends *làmh* to *làimh* and *a's* to *'us*.

[40] A. MacKenzie (1889), p. 103. Apart from omitting length-marks and capitalising *Righ*, MacKenzie also has *'us* .

[41] A. Stewart (1883), p. 389.

[42] Noted in C. S. Thomason et al., *Ceol Mor Legends*, 'from MacKay's collection / also article by Gleannach in the *Oban Times.*' The bulk of the MS is typed, but this item is handwritten and a note by Archibald Campbell, Kilberry, indicates that it would have been contributed by Miss Ysobel Campbell of Inverneill.

[43] 'Fionn', *Celtic Monthly,* vol 11, p. 146*,* (1903), reprinted in 'Fionn', (1904), pp 123-124.

[44] D. Glen (1880-c. 1907), part 3 [1896], p. 72.

[45] N. Ross (1910), p. 28.

[46] Piobaireachd Society Book 7 (1936), pp 216, 218.

[47] School of Scottish Studies recording, SA 1961/74 A1. Transcription in *Tocher*, No 35, p 324 (1981). 'Recorded by Agnes MacDonald and Gillian Johnstone. Heard from various pipers, including the late John MacLean, headmaster of Oban High School'. The extent to which Matheson drew on John MacLean and others is not clear.

[48] Key signature and bar lines are editorial. In bar 7 the sixth and seventh notes should evidently be cut and dotted like the preceding notes. The variation is given in full, but curtailed here.

[49] Reid's notational conventions are essentially the same as those of Donald MacDonald [1820]. The case for playing the small E in bar 1 etc as a long note is set out in the forthcoming edition of MacDonald's book – see R. D. Cannon (2006).

[50] In Piobaireachd Society Book 7 (pp 216-217) the editor says that Reid's version is 'irregular, and, on the whole, uninteresting.'

[51] For an introductary discussion of piobaireachd metre see R. D. Cannon (1988 [2002]), pp 62-67. For more recent work see F. Buisman (1995), R. D. Cannon (1995, 1998, 2002).

[52] A. MacKay (1838), pp 14-16. Key signature here is editorial. The variations are shown in full, but curtailed here.

[53] In Reid's MS. this tune is preceded by one called 'Tullochard / The MacKenzies March'. In MacKay's book also, 'I got a kiss...' is preceded by 'Tulloch Ard'. The latter is a different tune with the same name, but 'Tulloch-ard (Mr Reids)' is included in Angus MacKay's later manuscript collection – see National Library of Scotland MS 3753, Gaelic index, f iii verso.

[54] A point of textual correspondence is that in the variations, in both versions, one motif is shorter than the others, giving 31 bars as printed by MacKay instead of the more usual 32. Later editors, D. Glen (Part 3, [1896]) and C. S. Thomason (1900), pp 156-7, made up the perceived deficiency, and Thomason's amendment is now generally followed – see Piobaireachd Society Book 7, pp 216 and 218.

[55] The term seems to have been coined by J. Ross (1957) as part of a wide-ranging survey and classification of Gaelic song types.

[56] The Angus Fraser MS, Edinburgh University Library, MS GEN.614/2. Entitled *A collection of the vocal airs of the Highlands of Scotland communicated as sung by the people, and formerly played on the harp. Arranged for the pianoforte by Angus Fraser.* Here transposed down from C to A. the G sharp in the resulting key signature is actually redundant. The air is printed by C. and M. Martin, (1996), p. 19, but with the grace notes notated differently.

[57] See S. Fraser (1816), p vi, and R. H. S. Gill (1997). For a study of Simon Fraser, see M. A. Allburger (2001).

[58] *Craobh nan teud, Tha oighr' òg aig fear Dhungallan* and *Fhuair mi pòg o laimh an rìgh,* C. & M. Martin (1996), pp 7, 7, 19; an air entitled *Gàdhaig dhubh na'm feadain fiar* is the same as MacIntosh's Lament.

[59] The Piobaireachd Society catalogue, on www.piobaireachd.co.uk, contains 323 items of which all but four are extant in full.

[60] The fate of the Angus Fraser MS prior to arrival in Edinburgh University Library is not documented. According to Francis Collinson (1966, pp 225, 266) the papers were discovered in a second-hand bookshop 'about 1950', 'in 1950 or thereabouts' or 'in the 1950s', by Professor S. T. M. Newman, and presented by him to the library. They contain pencil annotations, including extensive indexes written by J. Murdoch Henderson, signed and dated 1959. The Library has no record of the accession but it has been inferred from the catalogue number that the MS would have been received c. 1961 (letter from Dr Murray Simpson, 18/3/1997, cited by R. H. S. Gill (1997), p 11). Rachel Gill considered the date of accession to be a conundrum 'probably insoluble', but she seems to have been assuming that Henderson was the owner when he annotated the papers, whereas she knew that his large personal collection was left to other libraries when he died in 1972. The conundrum disappears if we assume that Prof Newnham owned the papers throughout the 1950s, loaned them to J. M. Henderson to work on, received them back and then presented them to the university. This does of course mean that it was then only a short time before William Matheson made his recording. A photocopy of the MSS, owned and worked on by Matheson, is in the school of Scottish Studies Library, but it has not been dated.

[61] On the CD *Fhuair mi pòg,* Greentrax Recordings Limited, CDTRAX 132 (recorded Summer 1997 and published not long afterwards). Margaret explains that she heard the song from Morag MacLeod, who in turn heard it from the late William Matheson. Here transposed to conventional bagpipe pitch.

[62] The second note of bar 4 has been amended to F sharp. This is below the range of the pipe chanter, but it corresponds to what pipers usually sing when going through the melody in *canntaireachd.*

[63] A. MacKay (1838), p. 14, but amending Macleod to MacLeod on second occurrence.

[64] *Historical and traditional notes,* p 4.

[65] The diaeresis on 'Gaël' is typical of Logan but the main argument is that Logan himself claimed the authorship of the notes, writing his name in a copy which is now in the British Library. See R. D. Cannon (1980), pp 28, 62 (note 56) and 130.

[66] E.g. R. Ross (1960-), book 2, p 34; D. B. MacNeill (editing R. Ross, 2003, p. 94); A. J. Haddow (1982, p. 85).

[67] N. MacLeod, 'Clann-'ic-Cruimein, pìobairean Dhuin-Bheagain' *Cuairtear nan Gleann,* vol (1840-1), pp 134-137; but reproduced here from A. Clerk (ed), (1867 [1899]), pp 378-382**.** The text continues with the Gaelic verse as quoted above.

[68] The present writer's translation, checked against that of John MacInnes, in A. Campsie (1980), p. 69. MacInnes changes the order of the adjectives – 'proud, sonorous, melodious' which reads better in English. J. E. Scott (1967) has 'sweet, roaring, proud'.

[69] I. F. Grant (1959), p. 295.

[70] J. C. Watson (1934), p 44.

[71] It was included in the widely-read *Beauties of Gaelic Poetry*, J. MacKenzie (1841), p 25; and was recorded in Skye in 1861: see F. Tolmie (1911) p 262, and NLS MS 14903, p 68.

[72] J. C. Watson (1934), pp. 118-121.

[73] Or rather, the later edition, N. Macleod (1867) which includes an error, *do làimh* for *do làmh.*

[74] I. F. Grant (1959), p. 307.

[75] D. S. Thomson (1977), pp 20-21; C. Ó Baoill (1979), p 221.

[76] W. Matheson (1938), pp 62-63.

[77] Or rather MacCrimmon *was* king, and we note also that MacCrimmon is referred to by clan while the others are named individually. In 1760, two MacCrimmon pipers were still in residence at Boreraig, but by the 1770s they had given up teaching (see R. MacLeod, 1977) and the hint from MacCodrum is that in his time they were in decline though their reputation as past masters was still intact.

[78] A. Stewart (1883), p. 389. The text of the book consists largely of pieces that had appeared previously in *The Inverness Courier.* The date of the competition is fixed by a reference a few pages earlier, the trip to Glasgow being in January 1878.

[79] I. T. NicDhòmhnaill and F. I. MacIllFhinnein (1995), p. 12. As noted on page 48, the original singer was Iain MacLeóid (Iain Ruadh) from An t-Iochdar, but the date, and location of the recording are not given. The tune is not the one considered here.

[80] A. K. Campsie (1980, p 103) alleged that MacKay plagiarised from the tune *Beinn a' Ghriain* which is in the MacArthur-MacGregor MS. He certainly knew the

latter tune, and copied it into his own MS, but the overlap in melody does not extend beyond the first bar. See F. Buisman *et al* (2001), pp 70-71.

[81] William MacKay (1905, p xxiv) seems to infer that the Earl of Sutherland's piper who beat the other pipers, or rather was acclaimed with no contest, and the grey haired man in the middle of the crowd who was called out by the King, were different pipers. R. H. Black (1967) apparently followed this, making the argument is that the man who won did so by default, precisely because the others would not compete, in the presence of the grey haired man who was actually the master of all of them. This allows one to be John and the other Patrick. But it does not disturb the equation of MacGurmen with MacCrimmon. Black was arguing, generally successfully, against J. E. Scott (1967). Scott contended for the pipers to be the same but the name not to be MacCrimmon – as he had argued before (1954).

[82] Compare *Rìgh nam Port*, 'The king of tunes', once widely applied to the *Reel of Tulloch* according to Donald MacDonald [1820], p 6.

[83] G. R. Rastell (1968).

[84] For a recent exploration of this idea see J. Dickson (2006), pp 18-24.

[85] He was seventeen years old at the time (born 1 January 1634) and it was the year he started on a four-year course at Aberdeen University (W. MacKay, 1905, pp vii-viii). He was abroad from June 1657, returning to London in December 1659 and to Inverness in 1660.

[86] Possible candidates might include his brother Alexander, who was Quartermaster of the Fraser contingent, when they assembled at Inverness to march to Stirling, and Robert Gordon of Cluny, son of Sir Robert Gordon of Gordonstoun, whom Fraser calls 'my cammerad', and who gave him his account of the death of Montrose in 1650. See W. MacKay (1905), pp 378 and 359.