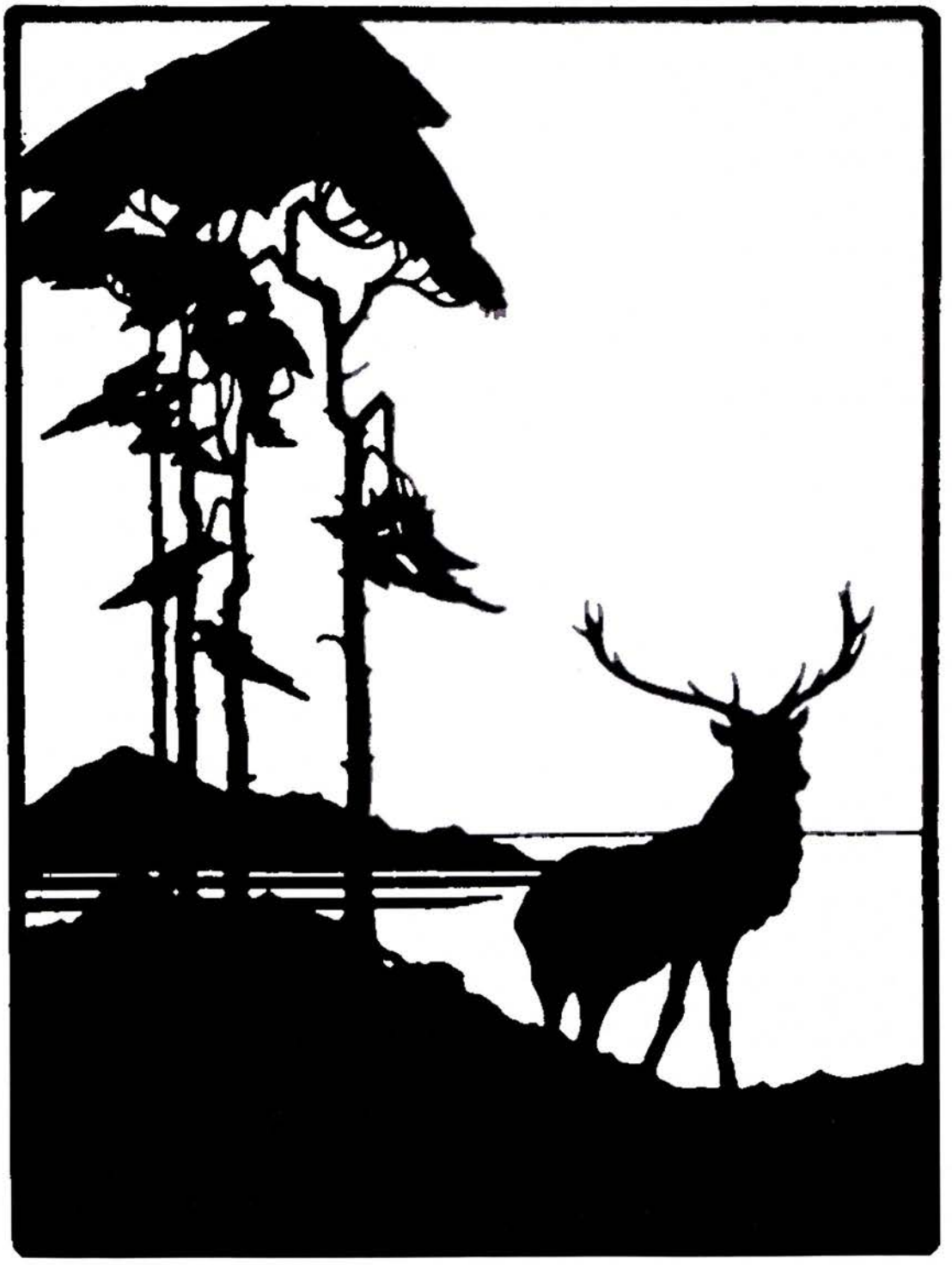
Chasing the Deer: Hunting Iconography, Literature and Tradition of the Scottish Highlands



A thesis presented
by
Andrew E. M. Wiseman
M.A. (Edin., 1992), M.Phil. (Glas., 1997)
to the
Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies
in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Edinburgh
October 2007





Frontispiece. Detail of the hunting scene panel from the Tomb of Alexander Crotach MacLeod in St Clement's Church, Rodel, Isle of Harris (1528). Two mastiffs, with studded collars, are being held on a swivel leash by the middle huntsman, whereas the left huntsman, also holding a hound, wields a crossbow and carries a quiver for the bolt at his waist. The MacLeod chief wears a bascinet, an aventail and hauberk of mail, with two ankle-length undergarments and holds a claymore with a long-handled axe.

Do mo mhàthair
's mo chuid shinnisearan—
geamairean 's stalcairean
anns na mòr-oighreachdan
ann am Bràigh Mhàrr—
Dòmhnallaich Shliochd a' Mhadaidh Allaidh,
Giuthasaich, Granndaich, Griogaraich,
Gruaraich, Marcaich 's Lamanaich—
daoine cruaidh, calma 's fialaidh,
bu ghnàth leothasan—
mar a rinn an Fhèinn—
bho linn gu linn
siubhal nam frìth
faghaid nam fiadh

To my mother
and my kinsfolk—
gamekeepers and stalkers,
in the great estates
of the Braes o' Mar—
Wolf and Fir McDonalds, Grants, McGregors,
Gruers, McIntoshes and Lamonts—
hardy, strong, generous folk,
for generations were—
as the Fianna—
accustomed to
roving the hills
chasing the deer

MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
A-chasing the wild deer and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go!

Robert Burns (1759–1791)

THA MO CHRIDH' AIR AN FHIREACH

Tha mo chridh' air an fhireach,
'S chan eil e 'n tìr chian,
Tha mo chridh' air an fhireach,
A dian ruith nam fiadh!

Alexander 'Gleannach' Macdonald (1860–1928)

SOIRIDH A BHEAN-SHITH AGUS AN SEALGAIR

Soiridh slàn a shealgair dhuinn, soiridh slàn gu bratha leat an taobh a tha ann a shruth nam beann agus an taobh tha thall an abhuinn, an là a chì agus nach fhaic, an là shealgas tu fiadh nam fireach agus an là, a chiall, nach iomair gin.

Alasdair MacGilleMhìcheil (1832–1912)

FAREWELL TO THE FAIRY AND THE HUNTER

Fare thee well, brown hunter of the hill, farewell to thee for ever on this side the mountain stream and the side beyond the river, the day I see thee and the day I see thee not, the day thou huntest the forest deer and the day, beloved one, thou huntest not.

Alexander Carmichael (1832–1912)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank Emeritus Professor Colm Ó Baoill, University of Aberdeen, who supervised this thesis until his retirement and also for still taking an interest thereafter. I would especially like to thank Professor Donald E. Meek, University of Edinburgh, as primary supervisor, for taking over the supervision of the thesis. Not only did they criticise and gave important feedback during key moments of researching this thesis but their humour, erudition and patience, not to mention encouragement, have made it a far better work than it would have been otherwise if it were not for their guidance. Not the least, they both saved me from many solecisms, weak arguments and inept translations. I would also like to thank my secondary supervisor, Dr John Shaw. I would especially like to thank Professor Meek for pre-published copies of hunting poems to appear in his forthcoming (and long anticipated) volume *Heroic Verse in the Book of the Dean of Lismore*. In addition, I would like to extend my grateful thanks to my internal examiner, Professor William Gillies, University of Edinburgh, and my external examiner, Dr Martin MacGregor, University of Glasgow, for their perceptive suggestions for improving this thesis. I am extremely grateful to them all for their feedback, guidance, encouragement and criticism in the research and writing up of this thesis. Without their guidance and forbearance it would not have been possible to complete this thesis in its present form. Nevertheless, it goes without saying that for any sins of either commission and/or omission that remain I alone bear any responsibility.

It would be remiss and unforgivable of me not to mention the staff of the National Library of Scotland, the School of Scottish Studies, the National Archives of Scotland, the Royal Commission of Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow University Libraries who were always professional and extremely helpful in tracking down information and giving advise on searching through their various archives and collections efficiently.

I would like to thank a few people who joined me in the chase: Maureen Williams, curator of the Fr Charles Brewer Celtic Collection at St Francis Xavier University, Nova Scotia, who helped track down seemingly elusive pieces of Gaelic poetry; the archivist, Maureen M. Byers, at Dunvegan Castle, Isle of Skye, for providing a copy of the *Bannatyne MS*; Cathlin Macaulay, the archivist, for her help with regard to the archives in the School of Scottish Studies; Dòmhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart, University of Edinburgh, for his interest and for sharing his opinions about Highland history; the post-graduate students at the University of Aberdeen's Celtic Department who helped with references, namely: David Findlay (for drawing my attention to the Kirk poem), Aonghas MacCoinnich and Nancy McGuire. Thanks also to my good friends Gus Gomes for his advice on graphics and Pàdruig Moireach for always chiding me in retrospect whether I had finished or not. Above all, I would like to acknowledge the financial support of my mum who, for the most part, good-humouredly suffered her son to undertake yet another degree.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my debt to Professor William J. Watson, who held the Chair of Celtic at the University of Edinburgh (1914–1938), for writing such a perspicacious comment in an article 'Aoibhinn an Obair an t-Sealg' in *The Celtic Review*: 'A complete account of what is to be known of these great huntings from Otterburn in 1388 to Braemar in 1715 would make an interesting book, and add a valuable chapter to the history of Scotland.' This comment had no small part in inspiring me to try and do just that and I can only hope that I have not laboured in vain in trying to serve the memory of one of Scotland's greatest Celtic scholars.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by myself, and that it has not been accepted in any previous application for a degree, diploma or similar award. Also I declare that all sources of information have been specifically acknowledged, all transcriptions and translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own, and all quotations are distinguished either marked by quotation marks or indented paragraphs.

Andrew E. M. Wiseman
Edinburgh
31 October 2007

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title page:		i
Frontispiece:		ii
Dedication:		iii
Epigraphs:		iv
Acknowledgements:		v
Declaration:		vi
Table of Contents:		vii
Illustrative Material and Sources:		viii
Abbreviations and Conventions:		xii
Abstract:		xvi
INTRODUCTION:		**17**
CHAPTER ONE:	**ICONOGRAPHY OF THE CHASE: HUNTING MOTIFS ON LATE MEDIEVAL HIGHLAND MONUMENTAL SCULPTURE**	**27**
CHAPTER TWO:	**FENIAN TRADITIONS AND HUNTING LORE**	**58**
CHAPTER THREE:	**HUNTING IN GAELIC PANEGYRIC POETRY**	**100**
CHAPTER FOUR:	**HUNTING IN GAELIC SONG TRADITION**	**154**
CHAPTER FIVE:	**GREAT HUNTS IN THE HIGHLANDS**	**236**
CHAPTER SIX:	**UNLAWFUL HUNTING AND THE ROMANCE OF POACHING**	**281**
CHAPTER SEVEN:	**HUNTING AND THE OTHERWORLD**	**331**
CONCLUSIONS:		**365**
APPENDICES:		373
APPENDIX A:	MAJOR GAELIC HUNTING SONGS	373
APPENDIX B:	LEGAL DOCUMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO HUNTING IN THE HIGHLANDS	417
APPENDIX C:	TRADITIONS REGARDING WOLVES IN THE HIGHLANDS	432
Bibliography:		438

ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL AND SOURCES

For dated sources and other abbreviations, see the Bibliography.
Note: Illustrations are not to scale.

Figure	Caption	Page
	Frontispiece. Hunting scene panel of Alexander Crotach MacLeod's Tomb, Rodel, Isle of Harris (1528). (Steer, K. & Bannerman, J. W. M. (eds.), *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands* (Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 1977), pl. 32(b))	ii
1.1	Sketch entitled 'In the priory at Rowadill, Isle of Harris' by William Daniell, dated July 1818, showing the tomb of Alexander Crotach MacLeod of Dunvegan and Harris, in St Clement's Church, Rodel, Isle of Harris (1528). (NLS, Hutton Collection, Adv.Ms.30.5.23, drawing 49a)	200
1.2	Line drawing detailing the hunting panels in the arched recess of the Tomb of Alexander Crotach MacLeod of Dunvegan and Harris, in St Clement's Church, Rodel, Isle of Harris (1528). (RCAMHS, IND/73/4)	201
1.3	MacMillan Cross, Kilmory, Knapdale. (Steer, K. & Bannerman, J. W. M. (eds.), *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands*, pl. 24(a) & (b))	202
1.4	Grave-slab, Kilchoan, near Inverie, Knoydart. (Blundell, Rev. F. Odo, 'Notes on the Church and Some Sculptured Monuments in the Churchyard of Saint Maelrubha of Arisaig, and on an Artificial Island There; also on Some Sculptured Monuments in the Churchyard of Kilchoan', *PSAS*, vol. 45 (1910–11), 365, fig. 8(2) & (3))	203
1.5	Class III slab, reverse side of cross-slab at Kildonnan, Isle of Eigg. (Richardson, James S., *The Mediaeval Stone Carver in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1964), pl. 9, from cast)	204
1.6	Kildalton, Islay. (Graham, Robert C., *The Carved Stones of Islay* (Glasgow: James MacLehose & Sons, 1895), pl. xxvi)	205
1.7	Reverse view of the cross-shaft stone, Isle of Texa, commemorating Reginaldus (or Ranald) of Islay (*d.* 1380). (Steer, K. & Bannerman, J. W. M. (eds.), *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands*, pl. 24(d))	206
1.8	Grave-slab commemorating Donald MacDuffie, Augustinian Priory, Oronsay. (Loder, John de Vere, *Colonsay and Oronsay in the Isles of Argyll*	207

(Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1935), pl. xxxviii)

1.9 Grave-slab commemorating Murchardus (or Murchadh) MacDuffie, Augustinian Priory, Oronsay. 207
(*Ibid.*, pl. xxiv)

1.10 Grave-slab, Augustinian Priory, Oronsay. 208
(*Ibid.*, pl. xl)

1.11 Grave-slabs, Kilmory, Arisaig. 209
(Rixson, Denis, *Arisaig and Morar: A History* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2002), 47, pls. 6 & 7)

1.12 Map of the distribution of hunting motifs on Late West Highland Medieval and Pictish sculptures. 210
(Based upon a map in Ritchie, Ann, *Picts: An Introduction to the Life of the Picts and the Carved Stones in the Care of the Secretary of State for Scotland* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1989), inside back cover)

1.13 A' Chill, Canna. 211
(Fisher, Ian, *Early Medieval Sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands* (Edinburgh: RCAHMS and the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 2001), 98

1.14 Hilton of Cadboll, Easter Ross. 212
(Stuart, John, *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, 2 vols. (Aberdeen: Spalding Club, 1856; Edinburgh: Spalding Club, 1867), i, 10, pl. xxv)

1.15 Cross-slab, Nigg, Easter Ross. 213
(*Ibid.*, i, 11, pl. xxix)

1.16 Line drawing detailing the hunting scene, Shandwick, Easter Ross. 214
(Cummins, Walter A., *The Picts and Their Symbols* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1999), 106)

1.17 Elgin Cathedral. 215
(Stuart, John, *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, i, 8, pl. xvi(2); Allen, J. Romilly & Anderson, Joseph, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, 2 vols. (Balgavies, Angus: Pinkfoot, 1993), ii, 136, fig. 137(a))

1.18 Cross-slab, Eassie, Angus. 216
(Nicoll, Eric H. (ed.), *A Pictish Panorama: The Story of the Picts and a Pictish Bibliography* (Balgavies, Angus: Pinkfoot Press, 1995), 32, fig. 19; Stuart, John, *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, 2 vols. (Aberdeen: Spalding Club, 1856; Edinburgh: Spalding Club, 1867), i, 29, pl. xci)

1.19 St Vigeans 1, Drosten Stone, Angus. 217
(Gilbert, John M., *Hunting and Hunting Reserves in Medieval Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1979), fig. 2)

1.20 Aberlemno 3, Angus. 218

(Stuart, John, *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, i, 24-5, pl. lxxx)

1.21 Cross-slab, Kirriemuir 2, Angus. 219
(RCAHMS, *Early Medieval Sculpture in Angus Council Museums*, RCAMHS Broadsheet 11 (Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 2003))

1.22 Inchbrayock 1, Angus. 219
(*Ibid.*)

1.23 Class I schist-slab, Cnoc an Fhraoich, Grantown, Strathspey. 220
(Anderson, Joseph, *Scotland in Early Christian Times*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1881), ii, 121-22, fig. 83)

1.24 Drawing of the Burghead Pictish Stone, Moray. 221
(Gilbert, John M., *Hunting and Hunting Reserves in Medieval Scotland*, fig. 4)

1.25 Dacre cross-shaft, Cumbria. 221
(Bailey, Richard N., 'The Meaning of the Viking-age Shaft at Dacre', *Transactions of the Cumberland & Westmorland Antiquities & Archæological Society*, vol. LXXVII (1977), 62, pl. 1)

3.1 Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre's monument, Greyfriar's Church, Edinburgh. 222
(Drummond-Norie, W., 'Famous Highland Bards. No. III.–Duncan Ban Macintyre', *The Celtic Monthly*, vol. III, no. 2 (Nov., 1894), 22)

3.2 Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre's monument at Ceann-chaorach, Dalmally, near the Beacon Hill to the east of Loch Awe. 223
(Anon., *Festival in Honour of the Memory of Duncan Ban Macintyre, the Glenorchy Bard: Celtic and Masonic Gathering at Dalmally, Sept. 2, 1859* (Glasgow: James Frazer, 1860), frontispiece)

4.1 Drawings of Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre's gun, *NicCòiseam*. 224
(Calder, Rev. George (ed.), *Orain Ghaidhealach le Donnchadh Macantsoir: The Gaelic Songs of Duncan Macintyre* (Edinburgh: Grant, 1912), 246-47)

4.2 Death of a Stag by Benjamin West (1738–1820). Alexander III of Scotland rescued from the Fury of a Stag, by the Intrepidity of Colin Fitzgerald (1786). 225
(Original in the National Gallery of Scotland, NG 2448)

5.1 Contemporary portrait of King James IV (1488–1513) by Daniel Mytens the Elder. 226
(Gilbert, John M., *Hunting and Hunting Reserves in Medieval Scotland*, fig. 13)

5.2 Deer-traps used in tinchels, Isle of Rum. 227
(Rixson, Denis, *The Small Isles: Canna, Rum, Eigg and Muck* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2001), fig. 8)

5.3 Map of deer-traps on the Isle of Rum. 227
(*Ibid.*, 111, map 10)

5.4 Contemporary portrait of John Erskine (*c.* 1558–1634), 2nd Earl of Mar, High Treasurer of Scotland, attributed to Adam de Colone, 1626. 228
(Original located at Alloa Tower, Alloa, Clackmannanshire)

5.5 Contemporary portrait (after an etching by W. Forrest) of Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy (1583–1631), known as Donnchadh Dubh a' Churraic, by an unknown artist. Original in the Breadalbane Apartments, Holyrood, Edinburgh. 229
(Innes, Cosmo (ed.), *The Black Book of Taymouth, with Papers from the Breadalbane Charter Room* (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1855), facing vi)

5.6 Contemporary portrait of Sir Mungo Murray (1668–1700) by John Michael Wright *c.* 1683. Lord Mungo, the fifth son of the Marquis of Atholl, is shown dressed for hunting. This painting was formerly known as 'Highland Chieftain.' 230
(Scottish National Portrait Gallery, PG 997)

5.7 Portrait by John Smith (1652–1743) (after Sir Godfrey Kneller) of John Erskine Earl of Mar (1675–1722), known as Bobbin' Jock, who organised the last great Tinchel 'The Hunt of Braemar' and who was the leader of the 'Fifteen. 231
(National Portrait Gallery, NPG D11580)

6.1 King James VI & I 'taking the assaye' of a newly slaughtered stag, from George Turberville's *The Noble Art of Venerie or Hynting* (1611). 232
(Turberville, George, *The Noble Art of Venerie or Hynting* (London: Printed by Thomas Purfoot, 1611), 133)

6.2 Map representing the decline of red deer—Distribution in Prehistoric Times, in the Middle Ages, and at the Present Day. 233
(Ritchie James, *The Influence of Man on Animal Life in Scotland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920), facing 334)

7.1 Contemporary portrait of Captain John MacPherson (1724–1800), known as An t-Othaichear Dubh, by an unknown artist. Original in the Clan MacPherson Museum, Newtonmore, Badenoch. 234
(MacPherson, Alexander *Captain John Macpherson of Ballachroan and the Gaick Catastrophe of the Christmas of 1799 (O.S.): A Counterblast* (Kingussie: George A. Crerar, 1900), frontispiece)

ADC, i	Thomson, Thomas (ed.), *The Acts of the Lords of Council in Civil Causes: Vol. 1, A.D. 1478–1495* (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1839)
ADC, ii	Neilson, George & Paton, Henry (eds.), *Acta Dominorum Concilii: The Acts of the Lords of Council in Civil Causes: Vol. 2, AD 1496–1501* (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1918)
ADC, iii	Calderwood, Alma B. (ed.), *Acts of the Lords of Council Vol. 3, AD 1501–1503* (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1993)
APS	Innes, C. & Thomson, T. (eds.), *The Acts of the Parliament of Scotland*, 12 vols. (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1844–75)
Argyll 1	RCAHMS, *Argyll Volume 1: Kintyre* (Glasgow: HMSO, 1971)
Argyll 2	RCAHMS, *Argyll Volume 2: Lorn* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1975)
Argyll 3	RCAHMS, *Argyll Volume 3: Mull, Tiree, Coll & Northern Argyll (Excluding the Early Medieval & Later Monuments of Iona)* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1980)
Argyll 4	RCAHMS, *Argyll Volume 4: Iona* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1982)
Argyll 5	RCAHMS, *Argyll Volume 5: Islay, Jura, Colonsay & Oronsay* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1984)
Argyll 7	RCAMHS, *Argyll Volume 7: Mid Argyll & Cowal: Medieval & Later Monuments* (Glasgow: HMSO, 1992)
BBT	Innes, Cosmo (ed.), *The Black Book of Taymouth, with Papers from the Breadalbane Charter Room* (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1855)
BDL	Watson, William J. (ed.), *Scottish Verse from the Book of the Dean of Lismore* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1937)
CATF	Stewart-Murray, John J. H. H. [Seventh Duke of Atholl] (ed.), *Chronicles of the Atholl and Tullibardine Families*, 5 vols. (Edinburgh: Ballantyne Press, 1908)
CCHS	Macinnes, Allan I., *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart, 1603–1788* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1996)
CDS	Bain, J, (ed.), *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland, A.D. 1108–[1516]*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1881–1888)
CG	Carmichael, Alexander (coll. & ed.); Watson, James Carmichael & Matheson, Angus (eds.), *Carmina Gadelica [Ortha nan Gàidheal]: Hymns and Cantations,* 6 vols. (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 2nd edn., 1900–1972)
CGS	Thomson, Derick S. (ed.), *The Companion to Gaelic Scotland* (Glasgow: Gairm, 1994)
CMag	*Celtic Magazine, The* (Inverness, 1876–1888)
CMon	*Celtic Monthly, The* (Glasgow, 1892–1917)
CRA	Gregory, Donald & Skene, William F. (eds.), *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis: Consisting of Original Papers and Documents Relating to the History of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Thomas G. Stevenson, 1847)
CSHB	Boece, Hector (auth.); Bellenden, John (transl.), Batho, Edith C., Chambers, R. W. & Husbands, H. Winifred (eds.), *The Chronicles of Scotland complied by Hector Boece*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1938–41)
CSPS	Bain, J., Boyd, W. K. & Cameron, A. I. (eds.), *Calendar of State Papers Relating to Scotland and Mary, Queen of Scots, 1547–1603*, 13 vols. (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1898–1969)
Curle	Curle, Cecil L., 'The Chronology of the Early Christian Monuments of Scotland', *PSAS*, vol. 74 (1939–40), 60-116

DDSSH	Scrope, William, *Days of Deer Stalking in the Scottish Highlands* (London: Hamilton, Adams, 1883)
DF	MacNeill, Eoin & Murphy, Gerard (eds. & transl.), *Duanaire Finn: The Book of the Lays of Fionn*, 3 vols. (London: Irish Texts Society, 1908–53)
DG	MacInnes, John (auth.); Newton, Michael (ed.), *Dùthchas nan Gàidheal: Selected Essays of John MacInnes* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2006)
DS	McLeod, Wilson & Bateman, Meg (eds.), *Duanaire na Sracaire/Songbook of the Pillagers: Anthology of Medieval Gaelic Poetry* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2007)
Dw	Dwelly, Edward, *The Illustrated Gaelic-English Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, new ed., 2001)
DWIS	Martin, Martin (auth); MacLeod, Donald J. (ed.), *A Description of the Western Isles of Scotland circa 1695* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1994)
ECMS	Allen, J. Romilly & Anderson, Joseph, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, 2 vols. (Balgavies, Angus: Pinkfoot, 1993)
EB	Ó Baoill, Colm (ed.), *Eachann Bacach agus Bàird eile de Chloinn Ghill-Eathain/ Eachann Bacach and other MacLean Poets* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1979)
ECPMS	Cruden, Stewart H., *The Early Christian and Pictish Monuments of Scotland* (London: HMSO, 1957)
EMSWHI	Fisher, Ian, *Early Medieval Sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands* (Edinburgh: RCAHMS and the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 2001)
ER	Stuart, John, *et al* (eds.), *Rotuli Scaccarii Regum Scotorum=The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland 1264–1600*, 23 vols. (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1878–1908)
EUL	Edinburgh University Library
FSPTFWB	Campbell, Rev. John G., *The Fians; or, Stories, Poems, & Traditions of Fionn and his Warrior Band*, Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition, Argyllshire Series, vol. IV (London: David Nutt, 1891)
FGPSS	Mack, Alastair, *Field Guide to Pictish Symbol Stones* (Balgavies, Angus: Pinkfoot Press, 1997)
GC	Ó Baoill, Colm (ed.) & Bateman, Meg (transl.), *Gàir nan Clàrsach: The Harps' Cry* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1994)
G	Gillies, Eoin, *Sean Dain agus Orain Ghaidhealach* (Peairt: John Gillies, 1786)
HHAMH	Cummins, John G., *The Hound and the Hawk: The Art of Medieval Hunting* (London: Phoenix Press, 2001)
HHRMS	Gilbert, John M., *Hunting and Hunting Reserves in Medieval Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1979)
HMC	Historic Manuscripts Commission
HP	Almqvist, Bo, Ó Catháin, Séamas & Ó Héalaí, Pádraig (eds.), *The Heroic Process: Form, Function and Fantasy in Folk Epic* (Dun Laoghaire: The Glendale Press, 1987)
HPBDL	Ross, Neil (ed.), *Heroic Poetry from the Book of the Dean of Lismore* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1939)
HSGW	Newton, Michael, *A Handbook of the Scottish Gaelic World* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000)
IMALS	Ritchie James, *The Influence of Man on Animal Life in Scotland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920)
Kintyre	White, Thomas P., *Archaeological Sketches in Scotland: District of Kintyre*

	(Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1873)
Knapdale	White, Thomas P., *Archaeological Sketches in Scotland: Knapdale and Gigha* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1875)
L	Black, Ronald (ed.), *An Lasair: Anthology of 18th Century Scottish Gaelic Verse* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2001)
LDF	Stuart, John Sobieski Stolberg & Stuart, Charles Edward, *Lays of the Deer Forest*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1848)
LF	Campbell, John F. (ed.), *Leabhar na Féinne. Vol. I. Gaelic Texts: Heroic Gaelic Ballads collected in Scotland chiefly from 1512 to 1871* (London: Spottiswoode, 1872)
LMMSWH	Steer, K. & Bannerman, J. W. M. (eds.), *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands* (Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 1977)
LW	Kerr, John, *The Living Wilderness: Atholl Deer Forests* (Perth: Jamieson & Murray, 1996)
NAS	National Archives of Scotland
NLS	National Library of Scotland
NSA	*The New Statistical Account for Scotland*, 15 vols. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1845)
MH	Almond, Richard, *Medieval Hunting* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 2003)
ÒDB	MacLeod, Angus (ed.), *Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin: The Songs of Duncan Ban Macintyre* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1952)
ÒIL	MacKenzie, Anne M. (ed.), *Òrain Iain Luim: Songs of John MacDonald, Bard of Keppoch* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1964)
OLPC	John Beech, Owen Hand, Fiona MacDonald, Mark A. Mulhern & Jeremy Weston (eds.), *Oral Literature and Performance Culture* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2007)
GFMR	Bruford, Alan, *Gaelic Folk-Tales and Mediaeval Romances: A Study of the Early Modern Irish 'Romantic Tales' and their Oral Derivatives* (Dublin: The Folklore of Ireland Society, 1969)
GSMM	Watson, J. Carmichael (ed.), *Òrain agus Luinneagan Gàidhlig le Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh/Gaelic Songs of Mary MacLeod* (London; Glasgow: Blackie & Son, 1934)
GUL	Glasgow University Library
ORD	Mackay, Rob (Donn) (auth.); Mackay, Mackintosh (ed.), *Songs and Poems in the Gaelic Language by Robert Mackay; with a memoir of the author, and observations on his character and poetry: Orain le Rob Donn, Bard Ainmeil Dhuthaich Mhic-Aoidh* (Inverness: R. Douglas, 1829)
OS	Mackechnie, Rev. John (ed.), *The Owl of Strone* (Glasgow: Sgoil Eòlais na h-Alba, 1946)
OSA	Sinclair, (Sir) John (ed.), *The Old Statistical Account of Scotland*, 21 vols. (Edinburgh: William Creech, 1791–99); Sinclair, (Sir) John, Withrington, Donald J. & Grant, Ian R. (eds.), *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, 20 vols. (Wakefield: EP, 1975–1983) [All references refer to the new edition]
PAM	MacDonald, Rev. Angus & MacDonald, Rev. Archibald (eds.), *The Poems of Alexander MacDonald (Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair)* (Inverness: Northern Counties Publishing Co., 1924)
PB	Sinton, Rev. Thomas, *The Poetry of Badenoch* (Inverness: Northern Counties Publishing Co., 1906)
PP	Nicoll, Eric H. (ed.), *A Pictish Panorama: The Story of the Picts and a Pictish Bibliography* (Balgavies, Angus: Pinkfoot Press, 1995)

PSAS	*Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1851–)
PTWH	Campbell, John F. (coll.), *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, 4 vols. (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1890–93)
RC	Cameron, Rev. Alexander (comp.); MacBain, Alexander & Kennedy, John (eds.), *Reliquiae Celticae: Texts, Papers, and Studies in Gaelic Literature and Philology*, vol. 1: *Ossianica*; vol. 2: *Poetry, History and Philology* (Inverness: Northern Chronicle, 1892–94)
RCAHMS	The Royal Commission of the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. See Bibliography for full details of publications.
RMS	Thomson, John M., Paul, James B., Stevenson, John Horne & Dickson, William K. (eds.), *Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum/Register of the Great Seal of Scotland*, 11 vols. (Edinburgh: General Register House, 1882–1914)
RPC, i	Burton, J. H. & Masson, D. (eds.), *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland 1545–1625*, first ser., 14 vols. (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1877–98)
RPC, ii	Brown, P. Hume (ed.), *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland 1625–1660*, second ser., 8 vols. (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1899–1908)
RPC, iii	Brown, P. Hume & Paton, Henry *et al* (eds.), *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland 1661–1691*, third ser., 16 vols. (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1908–1970
RSS	Beveridge, J., Fleming, D. H. & Livingstone, M. (eds.), *Registrum Secreti Sigilli Regum Scotorum*, 8 vols. (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1908–1982)
SECT	Anderson, Joseph, *Scotland in Early Christian Times*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1881)
SGS	*Scottish Gaelic Studies* (Aberdeen, 1926–)
SHR	*Scottish Historical Review* (Glasgow, 1904–)
SHS	Scottish History Society
SMIWH	Drummond, James, *Sculptured Monuments in Iona and the West Highlands* (Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1935)
SPRD	Mackay, Rob (Donn) (auth.); Morrison, Hew (ed.), *Songs and Poems in the Gaelic Language by Rob Donn, The Celebrated Reay Country Bard* (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1899)
SSS	Stuart, John, *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, 2 vols. (Aberdeen: Spalding Club, 1856; Edinburgh: Spalding Club, 1867)
TA	Dickson, T. & Paul, (Sir) James Balfour (eds.), *Compota Thesaurariorum Regum Scotorum/Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*, 11 vols. (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1877–1916)
TGSI	*Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* (Inverness, 1871–)
TGSG	*Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Glasgow* (Glasgow, 1887–1958)
TISSFC	*Transactions of the Inverness Scientific Society and Field Club* (Inverness, 1875–1925)
TOS	*Transactions of the Ossianic Society* (Dublin, 1853–)
Wardlaw	Fraser James (auth.); Mackay William (ed.), *Chronicles of the Frasers: The Wardlaw Manuscript entitled 'Polichronicon seu Policratica Temporum, or, The True Genealogy of the Frasers.' 916–1674* (Edinburgh: T. & A. Constable, 1905)
WRD	Grimble, Ian, *The World of Rob Donn* (Edinburgh: Saltire Society, 1999)

ABSTRACT

Hunting inspired some of the greatest songs and stories of Gaelic literature and tradition—a theme which runs from the earliest Old Irish sources down to the literature of Modern Scottish Gaelic. This thesis examines the cultural history of hunting in the Scottish Highlands stemming from the late-medieval period through to the early modern. The three main areas covered are the iconography, literature and tradition of the chase.

Many hunting topoi appear upon late-medieval west Highland sculptures, remarkably similar to those on earlier Pictish sculpture, which are complimented by the Gaelic literature and lore of hunting contained within Fenian ballads and narrative stories. The apogee of Gaelic hunting motifs are contained within panegyric poetry and verse of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, sustained in the main by a late manifestation of an heroic age. Such imagery reinforced and perpetuated the identity of the chief as the paragon of pre-modern Gaelic society, who was always seen as a hunter-warrior. Hunting themes and motifs are also prevalent within Gaelic folksong tradition. Although this overlaps in terms of content with the bardic imagery of professional poets, the vernacular folksongs offer a more emotive and direct response to moments of crisis or celebration. The scale of these great hunts in the Highlands, borne out by the literary evidence, from the medieval period onwards, reflects a complex matrix of power, patronage, politics and ultimately propaganda. As well as being a surrogate for war the tinchel, in Gaelic terms, was a seasonal mobilising of the *sluagh*, or host, who followed the *fine*, the Gaelic nobility. This enhanced their status while reinforcing clan solidarity in a shared symbol of sporting endeavour, by chasing the noble quarry of the deer. Notable, also, is illegal, or covert hunting which masked a complex deer-culture, and marked the familiar tension of exploiting natural resources by the many against the privileged few who tried to implement their inherited rights to hunt. Inevitably, superstition pervades much of the traditions of the hunt, as it would in any given belief system centred upon age-old customs.

Hunting was an integral part of European culture, and it was a theme reflected in Gaelic literature, song, and tradition more evidently than in many other European cultures of a comparable period. This was because it reinforced strongly and perpetuated the idealised image of a warrior-hunter, the archetypal leader engendered within Gaelic cultural identity.

INTRODUCTION

M' inntinne trom, m' fhonn, air m' fhàgail,
Mun fhiùran fhoghainneach àlainn,
Sealgair sìthn' o fhrìth nan àrdbheann,
'S an ròin lèith o bheul an t-sàile,
An earba bheag a dh' fhalbhas stàtail,
Le crios iallach ullach airgid
Air uachdar a lèine bàine.

My mind is heavy, all desire has left me,
on account of the beautiful strong hero,
hunter of deer from the mountain moorlands,
and of the grey seal at the mouth of the ocean,
of the dainty roe that moves proudly,
with thronged belt with tips of silver
over his shift of white linen.[1]

So an anonymous Gaelic song of the mid-16th century portrayed a hunter-hero chasing the deer in the Scottish Highlands. Deer-hunting was a major activity for Gaels during the late-medieval period through to the modern era.

Accounts of hunting in the historical record go as far back as the classical world, and, in terms of art history, go even further back with regard to pictorial images of the chase on cave art. One of the most famous classical works on hunting was written by Xenophon, and another, though less well-known, was written by Flavius Arrianus, or Arrian,[2] where both authors make reference to the fact that hunting was an ancient sport even in their own day. Xenophon introduces *Cynegeticus* (which defends hunting) by emphasising its divine origin as 'hunting and hounds were first an invention of the gods of Apollo and Artemis.'[3] That the Greeks and Romans, along with other ancient civilisations such as the Egyptians, Persians and Sumerians, were keen and expert huntsmen is beyond doubt as this is reflected in their material culture, literature and art. The Continental Celts (Κελτοί) were also not inexpert in this field sport as Arrian, writing around AD 150, states that 'The Celts hunt without purse nets, such of them as do not hunt for food, but for the pleasure of sport.'[4] Further on he gives a terse but revealing description of how they coursed hares: 'Wealthy and luxurious Celts hunt in the following way: at dawn they send men out to

---

[1] *DS*, 412-13, ll. 9-15.
[2] Xenophon & Arrian (auths.); Phillips, A. A. & Willcock, M. M. (eds.), *Xenophon and Arrian: On Hunting (ΚΙΝΗΓΕΤΙΚΟΣ)* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1999)
[3] *Ibid.*, § 1.1, 32-33; see also, 1-27, where the editors give an overview of classical techniques of hunting and where comparisons are also made to the modern hunt.
[4] *Ibid.*, § 3, 93.

the places where they suspect the creatures are to look where a hare is taking her rest, and he is the one who brings news if she has been seen, or how many there are. Then they come and, after starting the hare release their hounds, and themselves on horseback.'[5] Or, indeed, on the votive cauldron recovered from a peat bog in Denmark, contemporary with Arrian's account, the antler-headed Cernunnos (as lord of the animals) is shown sitting cross-legged, holding a torque in his right hand and a serpent in his left, flanked by various animals including a majestic stag. Vestigial memories of a Celtic stag-god seem to be preserved in both Welsh and Irish mythology, and, indeed, in stories of Herne the Hunter of Windsor Forest as popularised by Shakespeare.[6] So it seems the distant ancestors of the Scots Highlanders were all too familiar with the hunt.[7]

From time immemorial man has hunted. So-called primitive man has relied upon hunting as one of the prime sources of subsistence, often in an unrelenting world of savagery and harshness. Perhaps more intense than any other activity was the gathering of meat which was a time-consuming necessity for early man. The capture of beasts of all kinds enhanced their staple diet and in order to escape death they not only had to hunt, but also had to avoid becoming the hunted. It was an activity that was integral to survival, so much so that the hunt resonated beyond the chase to play a far more significant role: 'But then, as now, hunting went beyond mere physical survival: early humans seem to have expressed themselves spiritually, aesthetically and emotionally through the animals they hunted and through the hunt itself.'[8] Thus hunting has continued through to modern times—a continuity that can be traced back to the very dawn of civilisation.

Early settlers arrived in Scotland sometime around 10000 BC from North-western Europe and came across the land bridge that connected Britain to mainland Europe during this period. Such settlers, as far is known, lived in social groups centred around a lifestyle of hunter-gatherer. Evidence of these peoples can be gleaned from archaeological remains, and, as can be expected, some of their material survivals relate to tools they used on a daily basis. Many of these implements were

---

[5] *Ibid.*, § 19, 113.

[6] Berry, Edward I., *Shakespeare and the Hunt: A Cultural and Social Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

[7] For an account of the Celts and their hunting techniques along with their belief systems, see Green, Miranda J., *Animals in Celtic Life and Myth* (London: Routledge, 1992), 44-66.

used not only as hunting weapons but also for the preparation of skins, cutting implements, and so forth. The earliest settlement so far discovered by archaeologists in Scotland is to be found on the Isle of Rum, dating from some 9500 years ago. The people who occupied the Isle of Rum, during the Mesolithic period, lived in a hunting-gatherer type of society. As is always the case in hunter-gatherer societies, population densities would have been low—with small groups of folk migrating seasonally from one locality to another in order to maximise the opportunity of searching for fish, shellfish, berries, nuts, and other naturally occurring foodstuffs.[9]

Hunter-gathering cultures persisted in the Highlands and Islands for some 4000 years. However, by 3000 BC, such a culture gave way to those more associated with agriculture and thus a less nomadic type of society evolved. By this time, society had (by now) evolved more towards a crop-growing animal-rearing style of living. During this Neolithic period, society, it would seem, grew more complex and began to develop in more sophisticated ways which can be readily identified with the organisation of more advanced social groups. Technological advances came and soon tools and implements previously made from wood and stone gave way to more durable and resistant materials. No longer did man have to depend upon the hunt in order to stock the larder, though, as now, it was often a welcome supplement to a rather mundane diet.[10] And, thus, freed from its obligatory nature, hunting was elevated to the rank of a sport.[11]

Despite its centrality to life and subsistence as described in Scottish Gaelic literature and tradition, hunting has not attracted a great deal of attention, apart from a few scholarly articles over the years. Usually hunting is mentioned in connection with praise poetry or with regard to legendary traditions. Despite the fact that hunting in the Highlands is fairly well documented in terms of art historical, literary, oral and historical sources, it has been lamentably under-researched. This thesis is an attempt

---

[8] Isaacson, Rupert, *The Wild Host: The History and Meaning of the Hunt* (London: Cassell & Co., 2001), 20.

[9] Tipping, Richard, 'Living in the Past: Woods and People in Prehistory to 1000 BC', in T. C. Smout (ed.), *Peoples and Woods in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 27-28.

[10] See also Duncan, Archibald A. M., *Scotland: The Making of the Kingdom* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1975), 1-16, esp. 2-5.

[11] This is not to say that hunting ceased to be a necessity. At all times and periods hunting was (and is) necessary to provide protein in a healthy diet. One example out of many is that when various expeditions went to explore the Artic region in search of the north-west passage and over-wintered there, their only recourse for a supply of fresh meat was to hunting (mainly seals) and fowling. Indeed,

to bridge this gap, to review the many aspects of hunting literature and lore belonging to the Scottish Highlands in order to give a fuller account of its cultural history, its social importance and its historical context, which has been admirably summarised in these terms:

> Hunting provided sustenance, drama, excitement, fear, awe and reverence. By its very nature, hunting an animal requires an intense interaction between humans and their environment. It sometimes[...]meant the difference between the life and death of the hunter, or even the whole clan. It made the hunter alive to the beauty of the hunted creatures and the land they inhabited, and, in order to hunt them effectively, he had not only to learn their habits, but also to think[...]as one of them. He learned to see the world outside himself, to put himself into perspective within Creation and through that to feel the Divine. In addition, the rigours and dangers of the hunt provided humans with their first model for the Hero, in the hunter that preserved against the odds of weather, terrain, predators and perhaps other, competing hunters.[12]

What, then, is hunting, or, how should it be defined? It is necessary to give a broad definition to accommodate the great wealth and variety of techniques used from early times through to the medieval period, some of which continued into the early modern era—*Hunting is the pursuit and taking of wild quarry, whether animal or bird, using any method or technique.*[13] Such a definition has been recognised during the medieval period, for Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor (*r.* 1212–1250) and famous scholar and falconer, divided the chase into three basic types: hunting with weapons, hunting with animal partners, and hunting that combines both.[14] Further, a distinct definition of hunting is offered by Wihelm Schlag in his commentary on one of the most famous of medieval hunting manuals, *The Hunting Book of Gaston Phébus*, probably better known in its French original *Livre de la chasse* (1389):

> Hunting in this context[...]denotes all methods of taking game employed at the time, i.e. by shooting with bow and crossbows, trapping, etc., and not merely chasing it on horseback with a pack of hounds.[15]

---

during severe winters when the ice pack failed to melt to release their vessels it was only through hunting, and near-starvation rationing, that these intrepid explorers survived at all.

[12] Isaacson, Rupert, *The Wild Host: The History and Meaning of the Hunt*, 21.

[13] *MH*, 3.

[14] Frederick II of Hohenstaufen (auth); Wood, Casey A. & Fyfe, Marjorie F. (trans.), *The Art of Falconry, Being the De Arte Venandi cum Avibus* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1961), 5.

[15] Gaston III Pheobus [Count of Foix] (auth.); Thomas, Marchel, François, Avril (eds.) & Schlag, Wilhem (comm.), *The Hunting Book of Gaston Phébus: Manuscrit Français 616, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale* (London: Harvey Miller, 1998), 18.

The definition given here is wider than the general historical notion of medieval hunting. It does, nevertheless, cover many of the techniques popular not only in the Highlands but elsewhere. The above definition can be broadened even further to include all species, as advanced by the philosopher José Ortega y Gasset: 'Hunting is[...]a relationship between two animals of different zoological levels, a relationship in which two systems of instincts confront one another: the aggressive instincts of the hunter and the defensive instincts of game. All means of pursuit and capture which the hunter employs correspond to countermeasures of evasion that the prey employs.'[16] The last point should be borne in mind as this is essential in order to understand how the necessity of 'sport' comes into play when speaking of hunting proper in contrast to trapping. Although there are clear similarities between hunting and angling, or fishing (the quest, the fight, and the death), it is not included within the above definition as angling has been historically treated as a separate sport from earlier times. The subject of angling could easily fill a volume all by itself and therefore lies outwith the scope of this present study.

This thesis makes use of a great swathe of Gaelic literature, in its multifarious forms such as poetry, ballads, songs as well as tradition, imbued within any society, such as oral narrative, folklore, customs and legends.

So what, then, was game for the Gaels? Animals that were hunted included red deer (including hinds and fawns), seal, roe deer, wolf, otter, fox, badger, swan, wild duck, blackcock, goose and grouse. They were hunted not only for their meat, but also for the hides, pelts, feathers, skins, oil, horns and so forth. Every part of the kill would have been utilised in some way or another. The great object of the chase was the red deer (*cervus elaphus*)—or, as romantics like to call him, monarch of the glen—the title of the Victorian artist Landseer's world-famous painting.

And what of the hunter? Again, in the words of José Ortega y Gasset, hunting is defined by the very essence of man:

> The venatory occupation was[...]the center and root of existence[...]it ruled, oriented, and organized human life completely—its acts and its ideas, its technology and sociality. Hunting was, then, the first *form of life* that man adopted, and this means[...]that *man's being consisted first in being a hunter.*[17]

---

[16] Gassett, José Ortega y (auth.); Wescott, Howard B. (transl.), *Meditations on Hunting* (Belgrade, Montana: Wilderness Adventures Press, 1995), 85.
[17] *Ibid.*, 85. Italics made by author.

In many respects the hunt provides one of the best examples of the interactive relationship that man has with his environment. This interaction ranges from the physical to the psychological and, indeed, this atavistic urge to hunt is described well by John Cummins, where he writes that hunting is the:

> ...fulfilment of an enduring compulsion to retain a link with nature in a period barely emerging from the primitive, when immersing oneself in the forests of Europe could still create the illusion of being amid a limitless wilderness with infinitely renewable sources of game...[18]

Such descriptions of the hunt also provoke thoughts of ecological consciousness, and, perhaps this is, at times, aimed at (if not actualised) in Gaelic song. One is mindful here of Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre's splendid *Moladh Beinn Dòbhrain*—a paean to nature scarcely surpassed (if at all) in European literature. One of the earliest mentions of hunting with regard to the Scottish Highlands stems from a brief notice on Gough's map dating from the mid-14th century where it is remarked of a place called Colgarth, where the hunting was evidently exceptional: *Hic maxima venacio.*[19] The Highlands then, as now, was a habitat ripe for hunting and a glimpse of the mountains, and woodlands which existed at one time, are recorded by John of Fordun (*d. c.* 1384) in *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, written in the 1370s, where he observes that 'Scotia is[...]a country strong by nature and toilsome of access. In some parts, it towers into mountains; in others, it sinks down into plains. For lofty mountains stretch through the midst of it, from end to end[...]and these mountains formerly separated the Scots from the Picts, and their kingdoms from each other[...]Along the foot of these mountains are vast woods, full of stags, roe-deer, and other wild animals and beasts of various kinds...'[20]

Such was the cultural impact of hunting that another Scots chronicler, John Mair, or Major (*c.* 1457–1550), in *Historia majoris Britanniae* (1521) felt compelled to make mention of the hunt when he offered an unflattering description (following the mode of many other contemporary Lowland chroniclers) in which he marked out the 'wild Scots' i.e. Highlanders, who differed greatly in their way of life:

---

[18] *HHAMH*, 2.

[19] Barrow, G. W. S., *The Kingdom of the Scots: Government, Church and Society from the Eleventh to the Fourteenth Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), 369-70.

[20] John of Fordun (auth.); Skene, William F. (ed.), Skene, Felix J. H. (transl.), *John of Fordun's Chronicle of the Scottish Nation*, The Historians of Scotland, vol. IV (Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas, 1872), 36.

> Alia pars venationi dedita ocium diligit, & eorum Principes viros malos in ocio sequi, appetunt, vitam sine labore ab aliis capiunt, suo ferino capiti & inutile citius ad male agendum quam ad bene operandum parent, factiones inter se magnas habent, & crebrius bellum quam pacem.
>
> The other part, devoted to the hunt, loves idleness, and they are eager to follow their own leaders—bad men—in idleness, take away their livelihood from others without doing any work themselves, and obey their own savage and useless chief more willingly in bad than in good activities; they have great factions amongst themselves, and war more often than peace.[21]

The primary research question examined in this thesis is: what role and significance was accorded to the hunt in Scottish Gaelic culture. In order to give a coherent structure and thus a systematic analysis of the subject-matter at hand, the thesis has been organised into seven thematic chapters: Chapter One deals with the iconography of the chase by analysing hunting topoi on late-medieval west Highland monumental sculpture while comparing these with earlier representations of the chase left by the Picts. Chapter Two tackles Fenian ballad tradition and narrative prose stories where their related hunting lore are examined. Chapter Three deals with hunting motifs present within the Gaelic panegyric verse and song by analysing the significance of the role of hunting within this genre. Complementing the previous chapter, chapter Four examines hunting themes within Gaelic song tradition. Chapter Five analyses the great hunts, or tinchels, that took place in the Highlands from the late-medieval period which lasted through to the early modern era (specifically 1715). Chapter Six deals with illegal aspects of hunting and the romance of poaching. Finally, chapter Seven deals with the hunt and the Otherworld which pervades some of the other themes already alluded to in the previous chapters.

In recent years hunting has not only become a controversial subject (indeed, it has always been so), but has also attracted legislation in order to ban certain aspects of it (most notably fox-hunting and hunting with hounds). It is not the purpose of this thesis either to morally justify or denigrate the modern hunt,[22] though it does attempt to shed light upon the cultural history of hunting practices in the Scottish Highlands. It is hoped that this study will help to inform contemporary views surrounding the

---

[21] Morét, Ulrike, *Gaelic History and Culture in Medieval and Sixteenth-Century Lowland Scottish Historiography* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1993), 40.

[22] Although an ethical examination of hunting lies outwith the scope of this thesis, the following publications give a balanced view of hunting: Gassett, José Ortega y (auth.); Wescott, Howard B. (transl.), *Meditations on Hunting*, originally published in 1942; Cartmill, Matt, *A View to a Death in*

subject. Indeed, the publicity engendered by political debate (passionately argued both for and against), has led to a general revival of interest in hunting and, of late, has led to academics researching the Scottish Highlands to re-examine the very subject of the hunt though this has been more or less limited to the 19th century onwards.[23] Despite such a gratifying movement, it is, nonetheless, the hope of this thesis that it will help to form a necessary cultural and historic background to these studies, and, perhaps, lead to further investigation of topics which lie both within and without its scope. It will open the field to such basic questions as: Who hunted in Gaelic society? Where did the Gaels hunt? How frequently did the Gaels hunt? How and what did the Gaels hunt? Where there different methods of hunting used by the Gaels? And by examining how hunting was reported in Gaelic verse, poetry and tradition, it is hoped too that an answer will be given to the central question: Why did the Gaels hunt?

The intention of the thesis is to deal with the subject area of hunting from the late-medieval period up until around 1800 and, as such, to continue in the vein of the pioneering work first laid out by William J. Watson. There are three reasons for this: 1800 marks a watershed in Highland chronology, being the year of Call Ghàdhaig; Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre died in the year 1812, which, in a way, not only marked an end to an old era but also heralded a new one for Gaelic literature; and finally, 1800 is a marker of post-Culloden Highland society where only the vestiges of the clan 'system' remained, and the Gaels underwent a rehabilitation which made them ripe for exploitation by the romantics whose distorted and skewed images of the Highlands—anticipated in some respects by Scottish medieval chroniclers—have had a pervasive

---

the Morning: Hunting and Nature through History (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993); Scruton, Roger, *On Hunting* (London: Yellow Jersey, 1998).

[23] The main studies which I have noticed are the following: Hart-Davis, Duff, *Monarchs of the Glen: A History of Deer-stalking in the Scottish Highlands* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1978); Orr, Willie, *Deer Forests, Landlords and Crofters: The Western Highlands in Victorian and Edwardian Times* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1982); Kerr, John, *The Living Wilderness: Atholl Deer Forests* (Perth: Jamieson & Murray, 1996); Durie, Alasdair, '"Unconscious Benefactors": Grouse-shooting in Scotland, 1780–1914', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 15 (1998), 57-73; Lorimer, Hayden, 'Guns, Game and the Grandee: The Cultural Politics of Deer-stalking in the Scottish Highlands', *Ecumene*, vol. 7, no. 4 (2000), 431-59; Jarvie, Grant, 'Royal Games, Sport and the Politics of the Environment', in Grant Jarvie & Graham Walker (eds.), *Scottish Sport in the Making of the Nation: Ninety Minute Patriots?* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1994), 154-72; Jarvie, Grant & Jackson, Anna, 'Deer Forests, Sporting Estates and the Aristocracy', *Sports Historian*, vol. 18, no. 1 (May, 1998), 24-54; Wightman, Andy, Higgins, Peter, Jarvie, Grant & Nicol, R., 'The Cultural Politics of Hunting: Sporting Estates and Recreational Land Use in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland', *Culture, Sport, Society*, vol. 5, no. 1 (Spring, 2002), 53-7; and Wightman, Andy, 'Hunting and Hegemony in the Highlands of Scotland: A Study in the Ideology of Landscapes and Landownership', *Noragric Working Paper*, no. 36 (Ås: Agricultural University of Norway (Noragric), 2004), 1-26.

and debilitating influence on the understanding of Gaelic cultural history and Highland historiography ever since. It is only in our own day that academic historians are beginning to rectify this position, and far more balanced and realistic views of Highland history are now being advanced. It is further hoped, at the very least, that this thesis will give grounds for understanding the hunt within its historical milieu, a milieu which resonates to this day, and is apt to be forgotten in the emotive political polemics and rhetoric of modern times.

Chapter One

Iconography of the Chase: Hunting Motifs on Late Medieval Highland Monumental Sculpture

As illustrative materials of unwritten history, they are as valuable as the seals and the monumental effigies of later times. They illustrate the most ancient life in Scotland of which we have many illustrations.

CHAPTER ONE

ICONOGRAPHY OF THE CHASE: HUNTING MOTIFS ON LATE MEDIEVAL HIGHLAND MONUMENTAL SCULPTURE

Apart from the archaeological record, an early source for hunting in Scotland are the images of the chase depicted upon late-medieval Highland monumental sculpture and those that date from an earlier period depicted upon Pictish stones. The era of the Lord of the Isles (*Dominus Insularam*, or *rí Innse Gall*) during the later medieval period, the so-called *Linn an Àigh*, saw a flourishing of various cultural pursuits regarding native arts within Gaeldom. One of the main reasons for such a sustained artistic movement was the political stability engendered by the strong leadership of Clan Donald (Clann Dòmhnaill), the head of that once mighty confederation of clans, until the forfeiture of the Lordship to the Scottish crown *c.* 1493. For centuries, the Lordship dominated the Hebrides and the mainland Highland's western seaboard; not only did it have political suzerainty within its borders, but also had political influence throughout the rest of the Highlands, and also within the Scottish polity. It has been aptly described as a semi-independent state within a state.[1]

The purpose of this chapter is to examine images of the chase upon late-medieval Highland monumental sculpture. Around 620 richly carved crosses, grave-slabs, effigies and tomb chests are extant. Those which can be dated range from the mid-14th century to *c.* 1560. All of these surviving sculptures, with a few exceptions, lie within the area dominated by the influence of the Lordship of the Isles. In many cases, these various carvings provide the only representations that remain of the period with regard to costumes, weaponry, tools that were in daily use, as well as inscriptions of notable persons (some of whom are recorded in other documentary sources). Representations of hunting motifs on early Pictish sculpture are stylistically similar to those that are found on late-medieval Highland sculpture. It may be suggested that some of the sculptures made in the west Highlands and Islands have been influenced by Pictish models but this would seem unlikely, especially given the

[1] For brief historical and political overviews of the Lordship of the Isles, see *LMMSWH*, 201-13; Grant, Alexander, 'Scotland's "Celtic Fringe" in the Late Middle Ages: The MacDonald Lords of the Isles', in R. R. Davies (ed.), *The British Isles, 1100–1500* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1988), 118-41 and

length of time between the different periods in which such artefacts were produced. It will be instructive, nevertheless, to compare these earlier models because they share the common theme of the chase and will permit some light to be thrown on the different hunting methods adopted and used by both the Gaels and the Picts. This mute but significant heritage left by the Picts[2] on their sometimes ambiguous sculptures allows a glimpse into the lives of the nobles who commissioned them. That hunting played a significant role, particularly beholden to their nobility, within both Pictish and Gaelic societies, can hardly be open to question.

Hunting Motifs on Late Medieval Highland Monumental Sculpture

One of the most outstanding hunting scenes depicted is at St Clement's Church, Rodel, Isle of Harris (frontispiece, fig. 1.1 and fig. 1.2), on a tomb in a recessed arch on the south wall of the choir. A Latin inscription identifies the person to whom the sepulchre is dedicated:

> ✠ *hic · loculus · co(m)posuit / p(er) d(omi)n(u)m · allexa(n)der · filius · vil(el)mi / mac · clod · d(omi)no · de du(n)began / anno · d(omi)ni · m° · ccccc° · xxviii°*
>
> 'This tomb was prepared by Lord Alexander, son of Willelmus MacLeod, lord of Dunvegan, in the year of Our Lord 1528.'[3]

William MacLeod of Harris and Dunvegan witnessed charters for John MacDonald, Lord of the Isles, in 1469[4] and later in 1478.[5] He is said to have supported John in the Battle of Bloody Bay (1481/85) where, according to tradition, he was either killed or later died at Dunvegan due to his wounds sustained in that encounter. According to the *Bannatyne Manuscript*, he was the last of the MacLeod chiefs to be buried at Iona.[6] Lord Alexander (not mentioned in any sources until 1498) is perhaps better known as Alasdair Crotach (*c.* 1450–1547), or 'hunchbacked', which may have been

---

Bannerman, John, 'The Lordship of the Isles', in Jennifer M. Brown (ed.), *Scottish Society in the Fifteenth Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), 209-40.

[2] Their name probably derives from the Latin *Picti*, 'Painted Ones', first mentioned in the historical record in AD 297.

[3] *LMMSWH*, 97.

[4] *RMS*, ii, (1424–1513), no. 2286.

[5] *RMS*, ii, (1424–1513), no. 1419.

[6] *LMMSWH*, 98.

caused by a battle-wound.[7] Steer and Bannerman, in their definitive study, describe the detail of the hunting panel on the Rodel tomb (fig 1.2):

> ...the back of the arched recess shows MacLeod on foot attended by two gillies, each with a brace of dogs, while the quarry, three startled deer, are portrayed on an adjacent panel. This delightful carving is full of interest[...]MacLeod's costume—a bascinet, an aventail and hauberk of mail, and two long undergarments, the lower of which reaches to the ankles—is more suited for warfare than for hunting, and was presumably adopted in this context merely to emphasise his superior status. In one hand he holds a claymore, and in the other a long-handled axe. The gillies are both wearing flat caps, hip-length jackets and buckled shoes, but whereas the legs of the first man are concealed by the skirt of a long undergarment, those of the second are either bare or covered by hose. The latter figure carries a cross-bow and quiver[...]while his companion holds a short staff in his right hand, and his left the dog-leads which are connected to a strap on his wrist by a swivel-link.[8]

An oral account describing MacLeod hunting in the forest of Harris can be dated, if the protagonist's name can be relied upon (an uncertainty in oral tradition), to around a century earlier than the tomb of Alexander MacLeod of Dunvegan. According to the *Bannatyne Manuscript*:

> ...Iain[...]Keir[...]went to hunt in Harris accompanied[...]by the chief men of the clan. The deer forest of Harris had once belonged to the MacGhittichs who still occupied a part of it as tributaries of MacLeod. MacGhittich's son accompanied MacLeod[...]When the deer were collected in a valley within view of MacLeod, he missed a favourite white stag and declared that he would be revenged upon whoever had killed it, and offered a reward to anyone who would name him. Someone who was at enmity with MacGhittich, pointed to his son, and by MacLeod's orders the youth was seized and killed by forcing a deer's antlers into his bowels. The sport continued, and at the end of the day, MacLeod[...]went down to the waiting galleys to sail back to Dunvegan. As he was stepping on board he was wounded by an arrow, and the war-cry of the MacGhittichs was heard. The MacLeods were taken by surprise but they rallied round their wounded chief and eventually drove back the MacGhittichs though with heavy loss...[9]

A strong indication is given that the drive was the preferred method of hunting at this time, and that it was exclusive to the Gaelic élite. Although the detail of the Rodel hunting scene is unique to late west Highland medieval sculpture and, therefore, a very important source for such practices, it cannot be ascertained with total certainty

---

[7] *LMMSWH*, 98.

[8] *LMMSWH*, 187, pl. 32(a), (b); Ross, Alexander, 'Notice of St Clement's Church at Rowdill, Harris', *PSAS*, vol. XIX (1884–85), 118-32; *Outer Hebrides, Skye and the Small Isles* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1928), 32-37; Fojut, Noel, Pringle, Denys & Walker, Bruce, *The Ancient Monuments of the Western Isles: A Visitors' Guide to the Principal Historic Sites and Monuments* (Edinburgh: HMSO, rev. ed., 2003), 48-54.

that the drive was the *only* method used during the late-medieval period. Nevertheless, literary sources, and other evidence besides, show clearly that it was the favoured technique among the Gaelic nobility, especially in terms of large-scale hunting. The huntsmen are depicted more as if they are setting out for war rather than to hunt, as the MacLeod chief is wearing a bascinet, an aventail and hauberk of mail, while underneath he is wearing two long undergarments; he carries a claymore and a long-handled axe, and his whole appearance is that of a warrior. One of the two gillies carries a crossbow with a quiver, while the other holds a brace of hounds by a swivel leash. This not only reflects the status and nobility, in the eyes of their contemporaries, of those portrayed but also emphasises the close association of hunting and warfare.[10]

Martin Martin (*c.* 1668–1718), in *A Description of the Western Isles of Scotland* (*c.* 1695), notes that the forest was still being used as a hunting ground in his own day. 'There are abundance of deer in the hills and mountains here, commonly called forest; which is 18 miles in length from east and west: the number of deer computed to be in this place is at least 2000; and there is none permitted to hunt there without a licence from the steward of the forester. There is a particular mountain, and above a mile of ground surrounding it, to which no man hath access to hunt, this place being reserved for Macleod himself, who when he is disposed to hunt, is sure to find game enough there.'[11] There are numerous references to hunting in contemporary Gaelic literature, most notably in an early extant collection of (mainly Gaelic) poetry called the *Book of the Dean of Lismore* (henceforth referred to as *BDL*) compiled in the early 16th century. A remarkable piece of Ossianic poetry that appears in this collection versifies a pictorial image so descriptively close to that of the Rodel panel that it can be strongly argued that the sculptor(s) who created the hunting scene must have been familiar with this or other similar verses from Fenian poetry. A dialogue between St Pádraig and Oiséan (or Oísin) is partly inspired by the chase:

> Pádraig:
> Innis domh roimhe gach sgéal,

---

[9] Grant, I. F., *The MacLeods: The History of a Clan* (Edinburgh: Holmes McDougall, 1981), 65.
[10] Hunting, as part of the Carolingian royal ritual, for example, has been discussed at length by Nelson, Janet L., 'The Lord's Anointed and the Peoples' Choice: Carolingian Royal Ritual', in David Cannadine & Simon Price (eds.), *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 166-72.
[11] *DWIS*, 113.

beannacht ar do bhéal gun ghó;
an mbíodh éideadh nó airm
ag dul libh do sheilg gach ló?

Oiséan:
Do bhíodh éideadh agus airm
ag dul linn do sheilg mar soin;
ní bhíodh féinnidh dhíobh im dhóigh
gan léinidh shróill is *dá choin.*

Gan chotún síthe séimh,
gan lúirigh sparrtha ghéir ghloin,
gan cheinnbheirt *chlochórdha* chorr,
's a dhá shleigh i ndorn gach fir.

Patrick:
Tell me in order all the tidings, and a blessing on thine unlying mouth; used you to take war-raiment or arms with you each day when you went hunting?

Oiséan:
We carried war-raiment and arms whenever we so went hunting. I believe there was no warrior amongst them without a satin shirt and two hounds;

Without a soft smooth wadded tunic and a clinched corselet sharp and bright, a rounded jewelled and gilded helmet, and his two spears in each man's hand.[12]

Sculptors formed part of hereditary families, such as bards, pipers, physicians, smiths and judges, who were patronised by the Gaelic élite of this period, usually receiving land rent free or at a reduced rent in return for their services. Bannerman observes that 'with one exception the only West Highland stone masons[...]who can be identified are associated directly with Iona or with monuments of the Iona school.'[13] The surnames of these masons were Ó Brolcháin and Ó Cuinn, and they practised their art on a hereditary basis as normal in a kin-based society during this time.[14] They not only had the advantage of artistic patronage, but they also gained more than a rudimentary education (especially given a strong ecclesiastical environment) and could then proceed to specialise in sculpture. In short, such artisans were typically well educated and probably far more literate than many Gaels at this time. Such knowledge would have been supplemented by familiarity with a strong Gaelic oral tradition that tended to be maintained through inter-generational transmission.

[12] *HPBDL*, 12-13, st. 4-6.
[13] *CGS*, 264.
[14] *LMMSWH*, 27, 36, 39, 63, 66, 105-07, 119-20, 135, 145.

The key question, however, to be asked concerning the 'word-picture' evoked by the quatrains above is: did these sculptors find inspiration in such verses, and did they then reproduce visual images as a fitting memorial for Alasdair Crotach as a leading huntsman? Considering that Fenian heroes were likely to be perceived as archetypal warrior-hunters by Gaels during these times, it can be argued that such poetry may have been sought out in order to provide inspiration for a visual context, albeit from words or sounds, in order to create sculptural images. It is not outwith the bounds of possibility that such sculptors would have participated in the hunt, or were, at least, familiar with it through association, and, therefore, would have been knowledgeable about hunting accoutrements, methods, and so forth.

Given that the Rodel hunting scene portrays the clan chief and his gillies wearing heavy armour, it appears that they are depicted as an idealistic image more akin to warfare than to the actual hunt. The practicalities of the hunt would demand that lighter clothing, such as leather, would have been far more common for huntsmen to wear, as it allowed greater manoeuvrability, as well as some protection. The use of crossbows, as depicted in the hunting scene, suggests that deer would have been shot by bolts fired by the chief's retainers after the game had been driven by the tinchel beaters into a narrow defile. This type of technique reduced much of the danger involved in the drive, as it allowed a safe distance to be kept between the deer and the archers. Direct engagement with the quarry, therefore, would have been avoided. It may well be the case, however, that clan chiefs, and other noblemen, entered 'ar beirn ghaisgidh'[15] or 'valour's gap', fully armoured and wielding either a two-handed sword or Lochaber axe in order to kill the deer head-on as a very public display of their machismo. Not only was this extremely dangerous—almost certainly fatalities would have occurred—but it may have been expected of a Gaelic lord to take part in such a foolhardy exercise to mark him out as an archetypal warrior-hunter and a risk-taker as a leader of men. It may have been one of the ultimate tests of mettle. Realistically, these noblemen may have worn their armour in order to protect themselves as they applied the *coup de grâce* to any injured deer after the main drive had passed by. Less dangerous and less dignified it may have been but it still shows, nevertheless, that there must have been a willingness on the noblemen's part to place themselves in life-threatening situations, even if the risk was much less reduced.

[15] *BDL*, 30-31, l. 339.

A song narrative concerning *Laoidh Oscair* suggests that not only was the hunt better in Ireland but also that without the correct equipment the hunt could then not even take place. St Patrick is said to have asked Oiséan:

> "Am biodh an cuid arm orr' uile nuair a rachadh iad a shealgaireachd?"
> Thuirt Oisean ris,
>
> "Gun ar n-eideadh, 's gun ar n-airm,
> Cha rachamaid a shealg mar siud;
> Bhiodh airm, agus ceannabheart chorr,
> 'S da shleagh mhor an dorn gach fir."
>
> "Would their set of arms be on them when they went to hunt?"
> Oisean said to him—
>
> "Without our armour and our arms;
> We should not go to hunt like that.
> There would be arms, and stout headgear,
> And in each man's grasp were two great spears."[16]

In addition to the Rodel tomb, there are many other west Highland sculptures which depict the chase. At Kilmore, in Knapdale, there is MacMillan's Cross, probably dating from the mid-15th century,[17] commemorating Alexander MacMillan who is believed to have been the head of the family and keeper of Castle Sween:

> This shows a stag attacked by two massive hounds with collars, and a third hound, of lighter build, above. In the lower part of the shaft is[...]a bearded huntsman, his head turned upwards to observe the hunt. He wears a knee-length garment with pleated skirt and shoulder-length cape with a hood having a long liripipe, and wields a battle-axe. Slung at his waist is a large hunting-horn, attached at the mouthpiece by a double cord and at the open end by a single cord fixed to a vandycked mounting-strip. He stands on a panel bearing a four-line Lombardic inscription whose words are separated by prominent stops.
>
> ✠ HEC EST / CRVX ALE/XANDRI MACMVLE/N
> 'This is the cross of Alexander MacMillan'[18]

---

[16] *PTWH*, iii, 320-21.

[17] *Argyll 7*, 170-71; Lhyud, Edward (auth.); Campbell, John L. & Thomson, Derick S. (eds.), *Edward Lhuyd in the Scottish Highlands 1699–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), pl. vii(a), (b); Wilson, Wilson D., *Description of An Ancient Cross at Kilmory in Argyleshire* (Edinburgh: Privately printed, 1839), reprinted in *Edinburgh Topographical, Traditional and Antiquarian Magazine*, vol. I (Sep., 1848), 1-5; and *Archaeologica Scotica: or Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. IV, pt. III (1857), 377-81, pls. xxvii, xxviii; *SSS*, ii, 23, pl. xxxiii; *Knapdale*, pl. xvi(1), (2); *HHRMS*, fig. 5(a), (b), (c) & (d); *SMIWH*, pl. 62(3); *LMMSWH*, 151-52, inscription no. 85, figs. 14, 20, pl. 24(a), (b); Campbell, M. & Sandeman, M., 'Mid Argyll: An Archaeological Survey', *PSAS*, vol. 95 (1961–62), 80, no. 496.

[18] *LMMSWH*, 57.

This appears to be the only surviving cross of the Loch Sween school[19] and is considered a fine example of its type (fig. 1.3). The dog depicted is either a wolfhound or a mastiff, used by nobles for hunting and companionship.[20] The dog was itself a symbol of nobility, and at this period it was illegal for the common man to own certain types of dogs.[21] In élite terms, fine hunting hounds were an essential possession of both warrior and huntsman, and were a symbol of social status and wealth. The axe depicted was probably used to kill the deer once it had been caught. A vignette drawn from contemporary classical Gaelic poetry reinforces the accurate portrayal of pictorial representations of warriors. In this instance, the poet praises Tomaltach MacDiarmada (*d.* 1458), Lord of Magh Luirg:

> Sgian chaisdearg ar an chios chumhdaigh,
> cathlúireach má chléibh na gcuach;
> clogas ós cionn sgabaill sgiamhdha
> mán mhionn abaigh niamhdha nuadh.
>
> A red-hafted dagger hangs from his fair-wrought
> Girdle; a battle mailcoat protects the warrior of
> Clustering locks; a helmet above a beauteous
> Shoulder-cape encircles the ripe gleaming royal head.[22]

Such was the close relationship between a master and his hound that they are engraved on grave-slabs, such as one preserved in Iona, on which a loyal hound can be seen sleeping at the feet of an unnamed warrior.[23] Hounds and the love of their masters for them is sometimes, though not frequently, mentioned in Gaelic poetry. Take, for example, a poem addressed to Archibald, Earl of Argyll, who was killed at Flodden (1513):

> Cuimhnigh Cailéin th' athair féin,
> cuimhnigh Gill-easbuig ainnséin,
> cuimhnigh Donnchadh 'na ndeaghaidh,
> an fear conchar cairdeamhail.
>
> Remember Colin thine own father,
> remember again Archibald,
> remember Duncan who came after them,
> the friendly man who loved hounds.[24]

---

[19] *Argyll 7*, 14.
[20] Such is the lack of zoomorphic detail given on the vast majority of these sculptures that they cannot be relied upon to give an exact species identification, though, clearly, these dogs were bred for hunting.
[21] *MH*, 58-59.
[22] *BDL*, 40-41, ll. 429-432.
[23] *HSGW*, pl. 10.
[24] *BDL*, 162-63, ll. 1547-1550.

This Duncan was known as Donnchadh an Ádha (*d.* 1453), who was a Campbell chief.[25] Also in Iona there can be seen, on a fragment of a 13th century sculpture, two sword-carrying, helmeted warriors superimposed upon a rather defoliated tree. Behind the foremost and central warrior can be seen a smooth-coated and long-eared hound, and, immediately to their right, an antlered stag with a truncated crucifix protruding from its head.[26]

Many further representations of the hunt can be seen on other carvings especially on the western seaboard of the Highlands. Though these are not as significant (in terms of scale and, perhaps, artistic execution) as either the Rodel panels or the MacMillan Cross, they do, nonetheless, show that such motifs were commonly used to decorate the various monuments of high-ranking men. These carvings were commissioned either by the deceased or by his surviving family, as a lasting memorial. The people commemorated on these monuments are those who commissioned them, the heads of kindreds and their immediate families, and also members of professions and crafts.[27] A nobleman's life was celebrated by what he held dear, and the fact that hunting is depicted so often meant that, among other attributes, it was a crucial part of not only that person's identity but also of his political and social status. In like manner poetry was also a mark (and arguably a more potent one) of the nobleman, as shown from an extract composed by Donnchadh MacCaibe in praise of Duncan MacDougall of Dunollie:

> Deimhnin gurab tú a rís
> fear gabhála na ngairbhchíos;
> mar tharbh troda agus tachar,
> 's dearbh do thogra angadhach.
>
> Is tú taistealach Cruchán
> i seilg sliabh *is* fionnbhruachán;
> do chlú, a onchoin, 'ga h-innse,
> is tú Donnchadh Diuirinnse.
>
> True it is that thou art again the exactor of stern
> tributes; thou art like a bull of strife and battles, of
> fixed and deadly purpose.
>
> Thou rangest Cruachan in hunt through mountains

[25] *BDL*, 290.
[26] Stuart, John Sobieski Stolberg & Stuart, Charles Edward, *The Costume of the Clans* (Edinburgh: John Menzies, 1845), pl. † fig. 2.
[27] *CGS*, 265.

and bright banks; thy fame, thou fierce warrior, is
recounted, thou art Duncan of Diuirinis.[28]

An excerpt from *Gabh Rém Chomraigh, a Mheic Ghriogóir*, by Fionnlagh Ruadh an Bard, in praise of Eòin Dubh MacGriogair of Glenstrae, who died in 1519, strongly emphasises this chief's generosity as well as his noble status as a huntsman:

Baránta na h-aosa dána
Mac Griogóir a bhronnas ba;
Urra dhámh is fear na sealga
A lámh gheal a dheargas ga.

A guarantee for the men of learning
Is MacGregor who rewards with cows;
Patron of poet-bands and a fine huntsman
O white hand that reddens spears.[29]

Many representations of hunting topoi are to be found on late-medieval west Highland sculptures. A medieval grave-slab, in Kilchoan burial ground near Inverie, Knoydart, dates to after 1500, for it depicts a claymore or two-handed sword that came into fashion around that time. Two common motifs are depicted at the foot of the slab, a hunting scene and a birlinn; however, the most interesting aspect of this stone is the appearance of an archer (fig. 1.4).[30] This pictorial evidence strongly suggests that bows were the weapon of choice during this period for warfare and hunting. From *BDL*, a poem extolling the use of the bow appears, composed by Fionnlagh Ruadh an Bard, who, when opening the piece, complains that he has lacked one for some time:

Fada atáim gan bhogha,
    fhaghbháil domh is mithigh;
thánaig tíom a thabhaigh
    as an fhiodhraidh dhlighthigh.

Is é conair théighinn
    d'iarraidh slaite iubhair,
go flath tréan na nGaoidheal,
    fear nár éar lucht siubhail.

Long I lack a bow; time it is I got one; the time is
come to levy it from the proper wood.

The way that I would go to seek a rod of yew is to the

[28] *BDL*, 180-81, ll. 1779-1786.
[29] *DS*, 126-27, ll. 49-52.
[30] Rixson, Denis, *Knoydart* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1999), 57-58; *EMSWHI*, 87; Blundell, Rev. F. Odo, 'Notes on the Church and Some Sculptured Monuments in the Churchyard of Saint Maelrubha of Arisaig…', *PSAS*, vol. 45 (1910–11), 365, fig. 8(2).

mighty prince of the Gael, who to travellers has
never made refusal.[31]

At Kildonnan, in Eigg, a slab dating from the early medieval period depicts a bearded man seated on a rearing horse, in front of which there are two hounds. One of the hounds pursues a figure which may be that of a bull, while the other faces an eagle and also the curly-tailed rump of an animal which may be that of a boar. Although the man's hand is outstretched behind him, as if he is ready to throw a spear, no weapon, of any description, can be seen on this particular sculpture (fig. 1.5).[32]

At Kirkaboll, in Tiree, on the reverse of a cross, a hunting scene is depicted with an (out-of-scale) antlered stag surrounded by five hounds in various poses.[33] At Kildalton, in Islay, a fragment on a tapered slab shows a hunting scene (fig. 1.6),[34] with a huntsman carrying a horn slung round his waist in the act of stabbing an animal (probably a deer) which at the same time is beset by three hounds. Although the huntsman depicted is broken in two, the lower half bears a remarkable resemblance to the huntsman depicted on the MacMillan Cross;[35] and also to the one depicted on the grave-slab at Kilchoan. This would suggest either that they may have been influenced stylistically by one another, or that hunting accoutrements were typically very similar. A further Islay cross-shaft stone from Texa, commemorating Reginaldus or Ranald of Islay, the son of John, first Lord of the Isles (*d.* 1380), and Amie Macrurie, shows a stag beset by two hounds, one at its throat while the other lies prone (fig. 1.7).[36] A similar hunting scene is shown at Nereabolls, Islay.[37] Similarly, a stone commemorating Donald MacDuffie (*fl.* 1463), in the Augustinian Priory in Oronsay,

---

[31] *BDL*, 144-47, ll. 1357-1368; 287.

[32] *EMSWHI*, 23, 93-94. fig c(6). Richardson, James S., *The Mediaeval Stone Carver in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1964), pl. 9(b); Wade Martins, Susanna, *Eigg—An Island Landscape: The Story of Eigg and its People* (Dorking: Countryside Publishing, 1987), 16(a); MacLean, Douglas G., 'Maelrubai, Applecross and the Late Pictish Contribution West of Druimalbain', in David Henry (ed.), *The Worm, the Germ and the Thorn: Pictish and Related Studes presented to Isabel Henderson* (Balgavies: Pinkfoot Press, 1997) 181; Dressler, Camille, *Eigg: The Story of an Island* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1998), pl. 1(b), 2(a).

[33] *SSS*, ii, 29, pl. lii.; Mann, L. M., 'Ancient Sculpturings in Tiree', *PSAS*, vol. 56, (1921–22), 123-24; *Argyll 3*, 155-56, no. 310.

[34] *Argyll 5*, 214, pl. B(14); Graham, Robert C., *The Carved Stones of Islay* (Glasgow: James MacLehose & Sons, 1895), pl. xxvi. Loch Sween school. Probably mid-15th century.

[35] *Kintyre*, pl. xli(2).

[36] *Argyll 5,* 261, no. 391; Graham, Robert C., *The Carved Stones of Islay*, pl. xxx, no. 105; Lamont, W. D., *Ancient and Medieval Stones of Islay* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1968), 45-47; *LMMSWH*, no. 49 and pl. 24(d).

[37] Lamont, W. D., *Ancient and Medieval Stones of Islay*, 35, pl. xix(a); Graham, Robert C., *The Carved Stones of Islay*, pl. xxi, no. 71; *Argyll 5,* 228-30, no. 384. Kintyre school, 15th century.

shows an antlered stag and two does being coursed by a brace of hounds (fig. 1.8).[38] A fine example of the Oronsay school commemorates Murchardus or Murchadh MacDuffie of Colonsay (*d.* 1539), showing two hounds besetting an antlered stag, one biting at the throat while the other is shown at the animal's haunch. Behind the antlered stag are two hinds below which appears two hounds either wounded or inactive (fig. 1.9).[39] On another stone, where the decoration is exceptionally ornate, there appear three stags separated by foliage from which emerges a huntsman holding a brace of hounds. Although the huntsman's stance is slightly different from the hunting panel from Rodel, there is still an apparent and remarkably close resemblance (fig. 1.10).[40]

The Kintyre school produced a number of hunting scenes on funerary monuments: at Kilkivan, Kintyre, a tapered slab commemorates Sir Gilbride [?]MacCowan, where a stag is pursued by a brace of hounds;[41] another commemorates Gille-Coimded, son of Finlay,[42] and a tapered slab in memory of Finlay MacMolmore has a hunting scene.[43] At Killean, Kintyre, there is a tapered slab commemorating John, son of Ewan, depicting a stag-hunt.[44] Another tapered slab also portrays a deer-hunt.[45]

The Cistercian Abbey of Saddell is no exception where tapered slabs show hunting scenes; one depicts a warrior holding a leash of dogs pursuing a stag with its

---

[38] Loder, John de Vere, *Colonsay and Oronsay in the Isles of Argyll* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1935), pl. xxxviii; *Argyll 5*, 247; Pennant, Thomas, *A Tour in Scotland, and Voyage to the Hebrides, 1772*, 2 vols. (Chester: John Monk, 1774; London: Benjamin White, 1776), i, 238, pl. xx; Pennant, Thomas (auth.); Simmons, Andrew (ed.), *A Tour in Scotland and a Voyage to the Hebrides 1772* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1998), 227, pl. xx. Loch Sween school, 15th century.

[39] Loder, John de Vere, *Colonsay and Oronsay in the Isles of Argyll*, 61-62, pl. xxiv; Greives, Symington, *Book of Colonsay and Oronsay*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1923), i, 294; Murray, Frances, *Summer in the Hebrides: Sketches in Colonsay and Oronsay* (Glasgow: James MacLehose & Sons, 1887), 163; *Argyll 5*, 248; *LMMSWH*, inscription no. 35; Pennant, Thomas, *A Tour in Scotland, and Voyage to the Hebrides, 1772*, i, 235-36; Pennant, Thomas (auth.); Simmons, Andrew (ed.), *A Tour in Scotland and a Voyage to the Hebrides 1772*, 224.

[40] *Argyll 5*, 247, pl. D(15); Loder, John de Vere, *Colonsay and Oronsay in the Isles of Argyll*, pl. xl. Oronsay school, *c.* 1500–1560.

[41] *Argyll 1*, 128; *Kintyre*, pl. xvii(1), (2).

[42] *Argyll 1*, 128; *Kintyre*, pl. xvii, (1), (2).

[43] *Argyll 1*, 129; Lhyud, Edward (auth.); Campbell, John L. & Thomson, Derick S. (eds.), *Edward Lhuyd in the Scottish Highlands*, pl. iv (a); *Kintyre*, xvii(2); *SMIWH*, pl. lxxxiv(2). Kintyre school, 15th century.

[44] *Argyll 1*, 137; *Kintyre*, pl. xxviii(1).

[45] *Argyll 1*, 137; *Kintyre*, pl. xxix(1); *SMIWH*, pl. lxxvi(2). Kintyre school, 15th century.

antlers carried into a leafy scroll.[46] Likewise, at St Columba's Church, Southend, Kintyre, there are several depictions of the chase.[47] In Gigha, a similar scene is also depicted on an earlier tapered slab.[48] On a tapered slab at Kilberry, South Knapdale, appears a stag chased by a solitary hound,[49] as does one at Kilbrannan Chapel, Skipness;[50] whereas on another tapered slab, produced by the Loch Awe school, a similar scene is also depicted.[51]

A deer-hunt scene is carved on a tapered slab at Kilchenzie,[52] and also at Kilchousland, on the shaft of a late-medieval cross.[53] At the Church of Dysart, Dalmally, a panel upon a tapered slab depicts a stag being chased by a hound,[54] as does another at Kilchrenan.[55] At Keills, Knapdale, a grave-slab in remembrance of Torkellus, son of Malcolmus, son of Nigellus, lies inside the ruined church where two hounds are seen vigorously besetting an antlered stag, one seizing the deer's throat while the other is at the deer's haunch.[56]

In Arisaig, at Kilmory church, there is a locally made 16th century slate grave-slab depicting an archer holding a longbow with a hound on a leash chasing an antlered stag. Similarly, another slate grave-slab fragment, has a hound with a hind, and on a separate piece there also appears an archer (fig. 1.11).[57]

It is not the intention of this thesis to produce a definitive list of all the hunting topoi to be found on these sculptures. The examples given above, nevertheless, should be more than sufficient to give a representational sample. Time and again, these

---

[46] *Argyll 1*, 144; *Kintyre*, pl. xliii(3); *SMIWH*, pl. lxxxv(4). White, Thomas P., 'Notice of Saddell Abbey, in Kintyre, Argyllshire; with its Sculptured Slabs', *PSAS*, vol. 8 (1868–70), 131, pl. x(2). Kintyre school, 15th century.

[47] *Argyll 1*, 148-49; *Kintyre*, pl. iii(1), iv(1).

[48] *Argyll 1*, 112.

[49] *Argyll 7*, 96; *Knapdale*, pl. xvi(1), (2); Kintyre school , 14th to early 16th century.

[50] *Argyll 1*, 116; *Kintyre*, pl. lii(2); *PTWH*, iv, 331.

[51] *Argyll 1*, 120; *Kintyre*, pl. liii(2). Loch Awe school, *c.* 1500.

[52] *Argyll 1*, 122; *Kintyre*, pl. xxiv(2). Kintyre school, 15th century.

[53] *Argyll1*, 123; *Kintyre*, pl. xv; *SSS*, ii, 30, pl. lvi.

[54] *Argyll 2*, 134; Brydall, R., 'Notice of a Group of Carved Grave-slabs at Dalmally, Argyleshire', *PSAS*, vol. 31 (1896–97), 81-85.

[55] *Argyll 2*, 149.

[56] *Argyll 7*, 91; *LMMSWH*, 146-8, inscription no. 79; *Knapdale*, pl. xvi(1), (2); pl. xxxvii; Lhyud, Edward (auth.); Campbell, John L. & Thomson, Derick S. (eds.), *Edward Lhuyd in the Scottish Highlands*, pl. ix(b); *SSS*, ii, 30, pl. lvii (2); *SMIWH*, pl. 56(1), (2). Loch Sween school, early 16th century.

[57] Blundell, Rev. F. Odo, 'Notes on the Church and Some Sculptured Monuments in the Churchyard of Saint Maelrubha of Arisaig…', 358, fig. 4(2); 359, fig. 5(6); Lumsden, H. W., 'Notice of Some Fragments of Sculptured Monumental Slabs in the Churchyard of Arisaig, Inverness-shire', *PSAS*, vol. 18 (1883–84), 211-12; Rixson, Denis, *Arisaig and Morar: A History* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2002), 47,

hunting motifs appear on the medieval funerary monuments of the west Highlands and such scenes obviously played an important, if not crucial, role in the society which created them:

> The prominent part played by deer-hunting in Highland life in the Middle Ages is reflected in the frequency with which hunting-scenes are depicted on the monuments. They are found both before and after 1500 on crosses, effigies and grave-slabs, and on the products of all the principal schools of carving.[58]

From the evidence adduced, the hart and the hound motif, usually showing two or three deerhounds in the act of besetting or killing a deer, is frequently presented on late west Highland medieval sculpture. This can be interpreted as the successful hunt, portraying an effigy of a skilled huntsman with his loyal hounds. Some of the scenes show at least two or three active hounds going in for the kill and, at times, a hound prone or inactive. Such imagery suggests that some of these hounds were inevitably either injured, or killed, by a maimed or terrified stag, a perennial danger in such an enterprise. The frequency of these images also reinforces the fact that deer-hunting was *the* common past-time of the Gaelic nobility during and after the late-medieval period.

The tinchel, or drive, was the main method used by the Gaelic nobility during and after the medieval period, but due its great size meant that it could hardly be represented iconographically on a realistic scale. It would appear, however, that the panel to the right of Alasdair Crotach MacLeod and his two ghillies in the Rodel hunting scene, portraying three startled stags, points towards the tinchel. The large scale of such hunting enterprises meant that the tinchel was impossible to portray in any other way, and the culmination of the hunt was then used to represent the whole activity involved in chasing the deer. In other words, the moment of the kill, the culmination of a triumphant hunt, was the crucial image to be portrayed and to act as a status symbol for the patrons who were sculpted in these very images.

Hunting Motifs on Pictish Monumental Sculpture

Much of what has been noted regarding hunting motifs on west Highland monumental sculpture is also applicable to hunting motifs found on Pictish stones. Fortunately,

---

pls. 6 & 7; Stuart, John Sobieski Stolberg & Stuart, Charles Edward, *The Costume of the Clans*, pl. I, fig. 14.

[58] *LMMSWH*, 187.

there are far more sources available in order to contextualise late-medieval west Highland sculptures. It should be borne in mind, nevertheless, that 'It cannot be emphasised too strongly that late medieval West Highland art is Celtic only in the sense that it was produced by Celtic craftsmen and displays certain inherited qualities, such as a fondness for interlacing and the elaborate use of ornament to produce a rich spread of decoration.'[59]

Steer and Bannerman also go on to say that Celtic stonework should not be analysed in complete isolation from other sculpture as it was influenced by art styles as varied as Pictish, Anglo-Saxon, Viking and Gothic. Like most types of art, it is one of replication and innovation. Early pictorial images of the hunt are fairly common throughout the eastern side of Scotland (see fig. 1.12 for a map of this distribution and also for late-medieval west Highland sculptures). Although there are only eight extant Pictish symbol stones in the west Highlands, they do not depict hunting scenes.[60] There is a freestanding sandstone cross, however, at A' Chill,[61] in Canna (fig. 1.13), where there is depicted a recumbent hound with a long neck curving around to bite its tail with an antlered stag above.[62] The decorations and figures depicted on this particular stone closely resemble those on Pictish slabs. It has been suggested that 'Pictish stone-carvers may have contributed to the development of the craft in Iona, but under the supervision of Irish designers skilled in metalwork and manuscripts.'[63] This may also help to explain the distinctive style of sculpture produced in the Highlands compared to that of Ireland. This, however, is difficult to prove either way, apart from noticing the stylistic similarity noted on the Canna Cross and a cross-slab situated in Applecross.[64] Be this as it may, it does not rule out the possibility that the Picts who once inhabited the western Highlands and Islands of Scotland hunted; it merely suggests that it was not depicted to such an extent as on sculpture on the eastern side of Druimalban.

Many of these hunting scenes are the legacy of the Picts, one of the most creative people ever to have wrought their art on stone. Unfortunately, at least from an historical point of view, there is very little direct evidence with regard to the Picts

---

[59] *LMMSWH*, 4.
[60] *EMSWHI*, 12.
[61] *EMSWHI*, 51, fig b(12), 98
[62] *EMSWHI*, 98.
[63] *EMSWHI*, 23.
[64] *EMSWHI*, 23.

apart from classical accounts and later chronicles based upon the sporadic testimony of their near neighbours: the Irish and the Angles.[65] It is fortunate, however, they left an artistic inheritance unparalleled for this time in Europe with regard to their sculptured stones and other material culture. Joseph Anderson (1832–1916) observed when writing of this legacy and its resultant historical importance:

> ...as illustrative materials of unwritten history, they are as valuable as the seals and the monumental effigies of later times. They illustrate the most ancient life in Scotland of which we have many illustrations.[66]

The use of symbols is one of the main characteristics of Pictish stone sculpture which adds a certain mysterious dimension to them. This is not uncommon as the Celts, Romans and early Christians all utilised symbolic art to a large extent in order to decorate and enhance their material culture aesthetically. Animal imagery (both real and imaginary) are utilised, such as deer, boars, geese, bulls, hounds, eagles and so on, as well as mythic creatures such as centaurs, and, of course, the Pictish beast. What, perhaps, makes the sculptured art of the Picts unique is the extent to which they used symbols, and, added to the fact that it is a mute heritage, while enhancing their mythic quality, only increases the challenge to modern scholarship in attempting to interpret them.[67] It is not the purpose of this chapter, however, to define the various types of Pictish symbolic art, but merely to look at their depiction of hunting scenes, which have survived mainly in eastern Scotland, ranging from Angus to Easter Ross.

A brief background to the emergence of the Picts as a political entity, particularly through the influence of the Christian faith, will be instructive in gaining a context for their art work. 'The cultural influence of the church was considerable for it brought Pictland into the mainstream of European art and civilisation. The emergence of the kingdom of the Picts mirrored the social developments taking place

---

[65] For a traditional view, see Wainwright, F. T., 'The Picts and The Problem', in F. T. Wainwright (ed.), *The Problem of the Picts* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1955), 1-53, esp. 19-20; and for an alternative view, stemming from a social anthropological analysis, see Jackson, Anthony, *The Symbol Stones of Scotland: A Social Anthropological Resolution of the Problem of the Picts* (Stromness: The Orkney Press, 1984), 210-13.

[66] *SECT*, ii, 122-23.

[67] Numerous attempts have been made to analyse Pictish symbol stones. However, more heat than light has been shed upon this perplexing problem—a problem that in all probability is doomed to insolubility. Although it may seem invidious to mention one theory out of many, the following analyses Pictish symbol stones as a source for understanding the medieval state formation of Pictish social and political institutions, Driscoll, Stephen T., 'Power and Authority in Early Historic Scotland: Pictish Symbol Stones and other Documents', in John Gledhill, Barbara Bender & Mogens T. Larsen (eds.),

elsewhere in Britain but without the political instability created by the arrival of the land-hungry Angles and Saxons from North Germany. The internal stability provided ideal conditions for the development of Pictish art and stone carving.'[68] Examples of hunting scenes from various Pictish sculptures (mainly Class II—dressed rectangular slabs featuring crosses and symbols carved in relief),[69] dating from roughly the 9th and 10th centuries, are important for the information which can be gleaned from them regarding the social and political standing of the upper echelons of Pictish society.

At Hilton of Cadboll[70] (fig. 1.14), the central panel displays a characteristic hunting scene, which is all but typical except for a female rider and the trumpeters who accompany her. Behind her a hound is seen, while another hound stands behind a pair of plaid-clad musicians blowing long horns. There are also two warriors who ride along with her on horseback carrying spears. Pictured alongside them is an energetic scene of two hounds going in for the kill, one at the deer's rump and the other biting at the deer's neck. This depiction is strongly reminiscent of the hunting scene on the Aberlemno stone, and it may well have been copied from this earlier sculpture.

On another great cross-slab at Nigg[71] (fig. 1.15), Ross-shire, the hunting scene has been worked upon by a sculptor who apparently used Hilton of Cadboll as a model. This suggests that depictions such as these, like many other art forms, could be

---

State and Society: The Emergence ad Development of Social Hierarchy and Political Centralization (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 215-36.

[68] Ritchie, Anna, *Picts: An Introduction to the Life of the Picts and the Carved Stones in the Care of the Secretary of State for Scotland* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1989), 6-7.

[69] *SECT*, ii, 127, where this chronological classification of the Pictish stones was first mooted, and by convention, has been subsequently adopted: Class I. Monuments with incised symbols only; Class II. Monuments with symbols and Celtic ornaments carved in relief; Class III. Monuments with Celtic ornament in relief, but without the symbols of the other two classes.

[70] *SSS*, i, 10, pl. xxv; *EMSC* iii, 61-63; Petley, Charles C., 'A Short Account of some Carved Stones in Ross-shire, accompanied with a Series of Outline Engravings', *Archaeologia Scotica or Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 347-50, pl. XX; *HHRMS*, fig. 1; Stevenson, Robert B. K., 'The Inchyra Stone and Some Other Unpublished Early Christian Monuments', *PSAS*, vol. 92 (1959), 41-2; Henderson, Isabel, *The Picts* (London: Thames & Hutchison, 1967), 137, 155, fig 38(e), pl. 60; RCAHMS, *Easter Ross, Ross and Cromarty District, Highland Region* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1979), no. 224, 36; Close-Brooks, Joanna & Stevenson, Robert B. K., *Dark Age Sculpture: A Selection from the Collections of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1982), 32; *PP*, 114; *FGPSS*, 34; *ECPMS*, pl. 19; *Curle*, pl. xliii.

[71] *SSS*, i, 11, pl. xxix; *ECMS* ii, 75-83, fig. 72(a); *SECT*, ii, plates between 106-07; Petley, Charles C., 'A Short Account of some Carved Stones in Ross-shire, accompanied with a Series of Outline Engravings', pl. XXIV; RCAHMS, *The Archaeological Sites and Monuments of Easter Ross, Ross and Cromarty, Highland Region*, The Archaeological Sites and Monuments of Scotland Series no. 6 (Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 1979), 27, no. 231; *FGPSS*, 117; Alcock, E. A., 'Pictish Stones Class I: Where and How?', *Glasgow Archaeological Journal*, vol. 15 (1988–89), 19; Close-Brooks, Joanna, *The Highlands* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1995), 23, 123, 128-29; *Curle*, 100-01; Henderson, Isabel, 'The 'David Cycle' in Pictish Art', in J. Higgit (ed.), *Early Medieval Sculpture in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1986), 88, 92, 102-04, 110-11.

copied and modified. As can be seen on the lower half of the Nigg cross, there is a hound pursuing a deer, and above is a mounted Pict with a solitary figure behind who is perhaps clashing a pair of cymbals that has been construed as one of the earliest depictions of a game-beater.

At Shandwick, a cross-slab depicts a hunting scene,[72] where an archer can be seen (fig. 1.16). On the Elgin Cathedral stone (fig. 1.17), there is an interlace filled cross on a granite slab face, together with a rather worn hunting scene on the other face, with stags and hounds (one can be seen biting at the stag's haunch) and four horsemen; the most prominent one has a hawk on his outstretched arm.[73] This is the earliest extant depiction of falconry in an Insular context, and it demonstrates that the social importance of falconry was recognised in northern Britain by at least the 8th century.[74] Although the origins of falconry are obscure, there is evidence that it may have developed from a near eastern provenance, for, by the early 5th century, the sport was practised in north-western Europe.[75] The consensus is that falconry diffused from West Asia through the Balkans and was brought to Western Europe by the Celts or Goths. It may be added that in medieval Welsh society, the chief falconer occupied an important position in the court of a late Welsh king, as he was entitled to sit at the king's table next to the heir apparent.[76] It has been argued that such duties, recorded in a high medieval context, were based on pre-Anglian customs; that is to say, on those of the early medieval Britons or Welsh, especially those of the north.

---

[72] *SSS*, i, 10, pl. xxvi; *ECMS*, ii, 68-73, fig. 69; RCAHMS, *Easter Ross, Ross and Cromarty District, Highland Region*, 28, no. 236; Petley, Charles C., 'A Short Account of some Carved Stones in Ross-shire, accompanied with a Series of Outline Engravings', 346-47, pl. XXIX; Burt, J. R. F., *In and Around Easter Ross Pictish Arts Society Field Guide 2* (Edinburgh: Pictish Arts Society, 1994), 21; Close-Brooks, Joanna, *The Highlands* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1995), 127-28; *PP*, 168; *FGPSS*, 119; Ritchie, Anna, *Picts*, 31; Jackson, Anthony, *The Symbols Stones of Scotland: A Social Anthropological Resolution of the Problem of the Picts*, 116; Hicks, Carola, *Animals in Medieval Art* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), 153, fig. 3.21.

[73] *SSS*, i, 8, pl. xvi(2); *ECMS*, ii, 134-36, fig. 137(a); Henderson, Isabel, 'Sculpture North of the Forth after the Take-over by the Scots', in James T. Lang (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon and Viking Age Sculpture and its Context* (Oxford: Oxford British Archaeological Reports, 1978), 54-55; *PP*, 133; *FGPSS*, 99; Hicks, Carola, *Animals in Medieval Art*, 155, fig. 3.22; Fawcett, Richard, *Elgin Cathedral* (Edinburgh: HMSO, *c.* 1991), 10; Mackintosh, Herbert B., *Elgin Cathedral: The Cathedral Kirk of Moray* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1980), 19, pl. 11.

[74] Alcock, Leslie, 'Image and Icon in Pictish Sculpture', in R. Michael Spearman & John Higgit (eds.), *The Age of Migrating Ideas: Early Medieval Art in Northern Britain and Ireland* (Edinburgh; Stroud: National Museums of Scotland & Alan Sutton, 1993), 232.

[75] Epstein, Hans J., 'The Origins and Earliest History of Falconry', *Isis*, vol. XXIV, no. 98 (Autumn, 1943), 497-509.

[76] Alcock, Leslie, 'Image and Icon in Pictish Sculpture', 232.

Consequently, such customs may also have adhered to others such as the Picts.[77] Such an argument is without doubt speculative but in the absence of any other evidence it may assist in understanding the social make-up of early Pictish nobility. Many of the hunting sculptures survive chiefly in the county of Angus, once a strong political centre of the Pictish domains.

Also at Eassie, in Angus, there is a sandstone cross-slab situated at the churchyard, between Meigle and Glamis where there is a naturalistic depiction of an antlered stag with its fine muscular scrolling in direct contrast to the striding warrior who is portrayed as a demonised stick-man carrying a short spear and rectangular shield (fig. 1.18).[78] There are also depictions of a beast and a hound.

On the following cross-slabs, namely, Meigle 1[79] and Meigle 2 (also known as Queen Venora's Stone),[80] hunting scenes are portrayed.[81] Meigle 1 has a hunting scene pictured above symbols and Meigle 4 depicts a hunting scene with two single mounted horsemen with three others riding abreast together with a pair of hounds and an angel.[82] On Meigle 10[83] there was a figure of a kneeling crossbowman (subsequently destroyed), similar to the one depicted on the Drosten Stone.

On St Vigeans 1,[84] there are depictions of naturalistic animals represented in various scales. None of these animal motifs appears to have any connection with any of the others, thus making this montage a type of unconnected mosaic. It almost looks as if they have been lifted wholesale from a model copyist's book. Figures of note are the doe suckling its young, two hounds chasing a stag and also a hooded archer using

---

[77] Rees, William, 'Survivals of Ancient Celtic Custom in Medieval England', in Henry Lewis (ed.), *Angles and Britons* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1963), 148-68.

[78] *SSS*, i, 29, pl. xci; *ECMS*, ii, 218-9, fig. 321(a); Henderson, Isabel, *The Picts*, 42; RCAHMS, *Central Angus 1 (Prehistoric), Angus District, Tayside Region* (Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 1983), 19, no. 143; *PP*, 132; Walker, Bruce & Ritchie, Graham, *Fife, Perthshire and Angus* (Edinburgh: The Mercat Press, 1996), 142; *FGPSS*, 64.

[79] *SSS*, i, 22, pl. lxxii; *ECMS*, ii, 296-7, fig. 310(a), (b); Angus-Butterworth, L. M., 'Ancient Pictish Monuments in Angus and Perthshire', *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society,* vol. 14 (1967), 51-54, pl. 4.

[80] *SSS*, i, 22, pl. lxxiii; *ECMS*, ii, 297-8; fig 311(a), (b); Chalmers, Patrick, *Ancient Sculptured Monuments of the County of Angus* (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1848), pl. viii.

[81] For a descriptive catalogue of the Meigle stones see *ECPMS*, 16-20.

[82] *SSS*, i, 22, pl. lxxiv(1).

[83] *ECMS*, ii, 331, fig. 344.

[84] *ECMS*, ii, 234-39, fig. 250(b); *SSS*, i, 21, pl. lxix(1); ii, pl. cxxvii; Duke, Rev. William, 'Notice of the Fabric of St Vigeans Church, Forfarshire; With Notice and Photographs of Early Sculpted Stones Recently Discovered There, &c.', *PSAS*, vol. 9 (1870–72), 481-98; Henderson, Isabel, *The Picts*, pl. 52; *HHRMS*, fig. 2; *PP*, 171-2; *FGPSS*, 69-70; *Curle*, pl. xxxiv; *SECT*, ii, 193, fig. 124.

an early form of a crossbow facing a boar (fig. 1.19).[85] Archer figures such as these appear on other Class II stones (such as the one in Shandwick). This is probably the earliest depiction of stalking as a hunting technique, whereby the hunter hides crouching with his crossbow ready to kill game.[86] It has been suggested that the garment worn by the figure was 'an animal skin for disguise' and later 'a hooded deerskin disguise.'[87] If this interpretation is correct, it might well be the earliest depiction of camouflage utilised in a hunting context. Additionally, other fragments present a hound energetically pursuing an antlered stag and also a well observed carving which may depict a deer being startled from rest.[88] Hunting imagery is also portrayed on St Vigeans 8.[89]

On Aberlemno 3 (fig. 1.20),[90] the stone's reverse shows four mounted Picts, hunting deer with hounds, two on foot and blowing long horns, whilst in the lower panels a centaur bears an axe and a tree, and where David is seen rending the lion's jaw. A similar scene on Hilton of Cadboll may have been copied from this very slab.

At Kirriemuir (fig. 1.21), a cross-slab (Kirriemuir 2) shows on the reverse two mounted Pictish warriors in a lively and well-depicted hunting scene, where a hound bites savagely at a stag's rump.[91] Similarly, on Menmuir 3, near Edzell, there is a rather crudely depicted scene of a hound latched on to a deer's rump.[92] Again, there are small cross-slabs showing a hunting scene with horsemen and hounds pursuing a stag, at Scoonie,[93] in Fife, and also at Inchbrayock,[94] Southesk. On the former, on the

---

[85] Gilbert, John M., 'Crossbows on Pictish Stones', *PSAS*, vol. 107 (1975–76), 316-17; *HHRMS*, 63; Macgregor, A., 'Two Antler Cross-bow Nuts and Some Notes on the Early Development of the Crossbow', *PSAS*, vol. 107 (1975–76), 317-21; MacAulay, James S., 'A Review of the Pictish Crossbow', *PSAJ*, vol. 10 (Winter, 1996), 4-5, fig 2.

[86] *HHRMS*, 56; MacAulay, James S., 'A Review of the Pictish Crossbow', *PSAJ*, vol. 10 (Winter, 1996), 2-3, fig 1.

[87] Gilbert, John M., 'Crossbows on Pictish Stones', 316.

[88] Duke, Rev. William, 'Notice of the Fabric of St Vigeans Church, Forfarshire; With Notice and Photographs of Early Sculpted Stones Recently Discovered There, &c.', 496-97, pls. xxxiii(11), (5).

[89] *ECMS*, ii, 269, fig. 279.

[90] *ECMS*, ii, 214-15, fig. 228(b); Chalmers, Patrick, *Ancient Sculptured Monuments of the County of Angus*, 8; *SSS*, i, 24-5, pl. lxxx; RCAHMS 1983, no. 137 (i-iii), 18-19; Hicks, Carola, *Animals in Medieval Art*, 147, fig. 3.18; *PP*, 103-4; Walker, Bruce & Ritchie, Graham, *Fife, Perthshire and Angus*, 140-41; *FGPSS*, 60-61; *Curle*, pl. xxxiii.

[91] *SSS*, i, 14, pl. xlvi; *ECMS*, ii, 227-28, fig. 240(b); Henderson, Isabel, 'Sculpture North of the Forth after the Take-over by the Scots', 56-57; RCAHMS, *Central Angus 1 (Prehistoric), Angus District, Tayside Region*, 21, no. 151; *PP*, 147; *FGPSS*, 67; *Curle*, pl. xlvi.

[92] Stevenson, Robert B. K., 'The Inchyra Stone and Some Other Unpublished Early Christian Monuments', 43, pl. v(4).

[93] *ECMS*, ii, 347, fig. 360; RCAHMS, *Inventory of Monuments of Fife, Kinross and Clackmannan* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1933), 268, no. 495; *SECT*, ii, 201-02; *SSS*, ii, 6, pl. xii.

symbol stone's reverse, a stag chase has been rendered spiritedly. The wounded animal, head thrown back, with a spear sticking in its side, is pursued by two hounds and three mounted horsemen. It is unusual in that it has been executed in a rather grotesque fashion.

On the upper part of the cross-slab (Inchbrayock 1), a horseman and hound in pursuit of a deer are depicted on a panel. Unusually, the deer is seen to look directly back at the hound, which may indicate that it is either ready to kick out or merely prone (fig. 1.22). On another stone (Inchbrayock 3), a more typical hunting scene is portrayed, with an antlered stag being chased by a hound together with a mounted huntsman carrying a spear.[95]

At Grantown,[96] on a Class I schist-slab there is a simple depiction of a stag in the usual Pictish fashion (fig. 1.23), executed with elegant precision and is notable for being the only known stag symbol. The usual scrolling is used to advantage to give a naturalistic representation of an antlered stag. Another Pictish rendition of an antlered stag is depicted, among other animal figures, on the front of the cross-slab at Dunfallandy, Perthshire.[97]

At Rossie Priory, in Perthshire,[98] below various symbols, are worn figures—five are human, of different sizes and all on horseback. They ride upwards in a procession to the left in two columns. Although there are odd figures between and behind them, it would appear that the riders are hunting, and, though no deer can actually be seen, a hound appears behind the largest mounted figure.

At Burghead, one hound is seen biting at the deer's throat, while the other is seen savaging the deer's back. This scene of the end chase is made visually intense by the vice-like grip of the two hounds (fig. 1.24).[99]

The end chase, depicted on the side panels which flank the main sculptured panel on the 9th century St Andrews Sarcophagus, has been described as 'one of the

---

[94] *ECMS*, ii, 223-24, fig. 235(b); 254-55, fig. 265; *SSS*, i, 20, pl. lxviii(1); *Curle*, pl. xxxvi(a); Angus-Butterworth, L. M., 'Ancient Pictish Monuments in Angus and Perthshire', 45-47, pl. 1; *FGPSS*, 144; *ECPMS*, pl. 18; Richardson, James S., *The Mediaeval Stone Carver in Scotland*, pl. 10.

[95] Angus-Butterworth, L. M., 'Ancient Pictish Monuments in Angus and Perthshire', 47-51, pl. 3.

[96] *SSS*, i, 67; *ECMS*, ii, 126-27, fig 131; Close-Brooks, Joanna & Stevenson, Robert B. K., *Dark Age Sculpture*, 25; *PP*, 140; *FGPSS*, 33; *SECT*, ii, fig. 83, 121-22.

[97] *ECMS*, ii, 288, fig. 305(a); *SECT*, ii, facing 66.

[98] *SSS*, i, 22, 30, ii, pl. xcviii; *ECMS*, ii, 306-08, fig 322(b); RCAHMS, *South-East Perth: An Archaeological Landscape* (Edinburgh: HMSO), 88-102; *PP*, 151-52; *FGPSS*, 51; *ECPMS*, pl. 13; Hicks, Carola, *Animals in Medieval Art*, 150, fig. 3.20; *Curle*, pl. xxxii.

[99] *ECMS*, ii, 137-8, fig. 138; *HHRMS*, fig. 4.

most fascinating and beautiful monuments of pre-Romanesque art in Europe.'[100] These are stylistically akin to the Nigg Stone in their quality of relief and the subtlety of their contrasting textures, presenting a fairly complex hunting scene. The cruciform end-panels reveal the close connection with cross-slabs: the central panel combines a majestic classicism in its main (out-of-scale) figure of David (rending the lion's jaw), with a romantic lyrical mood evoked by the figures and animals invading the zone of tangled foliage on the left. The hunting scene depicted here is interesting not only as it represents a standard feature of Pictish sculpture but also a lion as quarry. A figure similar in appearance to the frontal David also carries a falcon on his left wrist.[101]

Hunting Methods

What type of information is provided by these sculptured images of the chase with regard to hunting in general, and more specifically about hunting techniques, during this period? For instance, there is no explicit mention of *par force* hunting in the literature: the chase of a solitary animal in medieval Scotland involved the finding of game, pursuing it with scenting hounds, and then using greyhounds to run the quarry down. When the quarry was finally brought to bay, a huntsman would dismount, rush in, and then slay the animal with a sword or other weapon.[102] This means, as John Gilbert argues, that 'consequently coursing and stalking must have been more frequently practised than *par force* hunting, but the most important of all types of hunting was the drive, which is referred to more frequently and described more fully than any other types of hunting. This raises an important problem, for elsewhere in medieval Europe *par force* hunting was the important method of hunting[...]The reason why *par force* hunting never became so popular in Scotland is, therefore, of the greatest importance. The history of hunting methods in Scotland before 1124 and the popularity of the drive point to the influence of Gaelic custom in hunting methods

---

[100] Henderson, George, *Early Medieval* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), 126-27.

[101] *SSS*, i, 18-9, pl. lxi, *ECMS*, ii, 351-53; Foster, Sally (ed.), *The St Andrews Sarcophagus: A Pictish Masterpiece and its International Connections* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), 22, figs. 2, 3; 38, figs. 7(a-d); 52, fig. 10; pls. 2-11; RCAHMS, *Inventory of Monuments of Fife, Kinross and Clackmannan*, 237-39, no. 456; Henderson, Isabel, *The Picts*, 86-88, 149-57, pl. 62; *ECPMS*, pls. 20-21; Richardson, James S., *The Mediaeval Stone Carver in Scotland*, pl. 16.

[102] Probably the most famous description of this hunting technique, and the only text in English medieval literature to provide a complete picture of the stag hunt, stems from Rosenberg, James (trans.), *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1967), 39-67. See also *MH*, 73-80 for a fuller description of the *par force* hunting technique.

as the reason for this phenomenon.'[103] This issue will be dealt with in greater detail in chapter five.

As previously stated, this type of technique is suggested from the oral account given about the MacLeod chief in Harris and also in Fenian verse such as *Sliabh na mBan bhFhionn*. Pictish sculpture, nevertheless, suggests coursing, since the hounds (usually greyhounds) in these portrayals are unleashed and biting at the stag and the hunter usually follows on horseback holding a spear, or suchlike weapon, in order to kill the quarry. The sculptured stones from the west Highlands are very similar to those on the Pictish stones, where there can be seen one, two, or even three hounds attacking a deer or stag. The clear difference is the complete absence of mounted huntsmen due to the fact that the drive was the preferred method of hunting in the Highlands. Horses or ponies, however, were probably used to transport carcasses back to suitable accommodation where they could be butchered and stored properly until they were needed.

In his Scots translation of Hector Boece's (*c.* 1465–1536) original Latin work *Scotorum historiae a prima gentis origine* (1527), John Bellenden (*fl.* 1533–1587) refers to the different methods of hunting techniques used by the Picts in comparison to the Scots, i.e. the Gaels:

> Ane schort tyme eftir ane certane cunpany of ȳoung & nobill men of the Pichtis come to hunt with the King[...]The Pichtis, in thair hu*n*ting, stentit strang nettis on[...]medowis, and draif the harttis apoun the nettis with thair houndis, and quhen the beistis eschapit, clothit thai*m* with branchis and levis of treis, lyke stalkaris, syne slew the deir with braid arrowis and dartis[...]The Scottis, na thing contentit of this game, becaus it wes contrair thair lawis, gart remoiff thair nettis, and hount on the Scottis man*er*, takand the prey with swift houndis...[104]

Such hunting techniques recounted by Boece, however, are probably contemporary methods used in his own time that have been projected on to a semi-mythological past. A less noble method of hunting using nets and artificial aids, common in the 14th and 15th centuries, was seen as below the contempt of the Scots. Emphasis is laid upon the noble approach of the Scots to the hunt, and, to a medieval sensibility, this would have been perceived as a more 'sporting' approach. In contrast, the Pictish method would have been perceived as an approach more fitting to fill the larder than to offer any kind of sporting spectacle. The contrast here can best be described as a

[103] *HHRMS*, 60.
[104] *CSHB*, i, 229, bk. 6, c. 5

tension between utility and ritual, or between an easy kill and sport. Such a sentiment has an ancient foundation shared by Arrian in his *Cynegeticus*, where he compared the use of nets and snares as a thievish deprivation, while the use of greyhounds was seen as a battle fought with all one's strength.[105] According to Bellenden, the superior breed of the Scots' hounds led to a jealous rift with the Picts which eventually led to bloodshed. The Picts are said to have killed the 'Maist*er* of the Huntis' who had been in pursuit of one of the best of the Scots' hounds. The Scots took summary revenge upon this sleight and 'in this vnhappy fecht was slayn lx Scottis gentil men, with ane grete novmer of co*m*monis, and of Pichtis mo than ane hundret*h*.'[106]

A useful summary of hunting techniques (other than the drive) used around this period, is provided by John Gilbert:

> The methods of hunting by chasing deer included coursing, stalking and *par force* hunting. Not only did they require fewer people than the drive, but they were all based on hunting a single animal. Coursing and stalking were practised by commoners as well as nobles[...]Coursing[...]usually occurred in open country where the deer had been chased or where it was found. Greyhounds were sent after the game in a straight chase with the huntsman following on horseback. On the Continent this was known as hunting by force of greyhounds as opposed to hunting by force of running or scenting hounds. The greyhounds present at the raising of the game were the only hounds involved in the course...[107]

Thus, in all probability, all these methods were probably used to some extent or another but historical evidence for the drive strongly suggests that this was the method favoured by the Scots nobility.

Interpretation of Hunting Motifs

There are a number of good examples of hunting motifs on medieval sculpture and the chase which pervades both the spiritual and temporal. The similarities with regard to hunting motifs between west Highland monumental sculpture and Pictish stones are striking. Indeed, the image of the hound leaping on the back of a deer, which may be described as 'the hart and hound' motif, is neither specifically Highland nor Pictish, due to the simple fact that there are only so many ways of depicting the chase. The

---

[105] Xenophon & Arrian (auth.); Phillips, A. A. & Willcock, M. M. (eds.), *Xenophon and Arrian: On Hunting (ΚΙΝΗΓΕΤΙΚΟΣ)*, § 24, 117.
[106] *CSHB*, i, 229, bk. 6, c. 5
[107] *HHRMS*, 55-56; and for a general overview of à force hunting technique as used in medieval Europe see Thiébaux, Marcelle, *The Stag of Love: The Chase in Medieval Literature* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1974), 28-40.

distribution of this particular motif in the west Highlands would perhaps suggest that it was influenced by Pictish models. This, however, would appear unlikely given that there was only little direct cultural contact that seems not to have had a lasting impact and, thus, despite obvious similarities, these motifs would have arisen independently of one another.

Such was the striking resemblance and frequency of the 'the hart and hound' motif that Bishop Nicolson, in 1700, observed, when commenting solely upon the west Highland stones he had recently seen on his travels, that 'there is certainly a great similarity of design, especially in the hunting scenes.'[108] Although the reasons that hunting scenes are depicted so regularly remain unclear, it may be safe to assume that they represent important aspects of the culture which shaped them:

> The social importance of hunting is obvious, as a noble sport, involving the cost of breeding, training and upkeep of horses, dogs and falcons, as well as hunt servants. Equally important for warfare was the training in both physical and mental fitness in the pursuit of a potentially dangerous prey.[109]

That hunting was a rehearsal of war was a common theme among writers of the Renaissance who commended it all the more highly because the ancients, such as Xenophon, had pursued it as a pastime and recommended it as fit for both kings and warriors. The close connection between hunting and warfare depicted on the Pictish stones has been noted:

> The subjects depicted in these sculptures generally refer either to battle or the chase. Men with targets and spears as at Dupplin; horsemen, bowmen, spearmen[...]at Forres; two men fighting with targets and swords[...]at Shandwick. Horsemen[...]and hounds fastening on a stag[...]at Hilton of Cadboll, and Aberlemno; bowmen shooting deer, boar[...]at Shandwick, St Vigeans and Meigle...[110]

Even so, folklore stories have at times tried to explain some of the depictions of Pictish sculptural imagery.[111] Boece interpreted the use of these stones as memorials when he wrote that these sculpted stones 'wer engravit ymagerijs of dragonis, wolffis

---

[108] Quoted in Blundell, Rev. F. Odo, 'Notes on the Church and Some Sculptured Monuments in the Churchyard of Saint Maelrubha of Arisaig...', 363.

[109] Alcock, Leslie, 'An Heroic Age: War and Society in Northern Britain, AD 450–850', *PSAS*, vol. 118 (1988), 331.

[110] MacKenzie, (Captain) Colin, 'The Sculptured Stones of Ross and Cromarty IV', *CMag*, vol. VII, no. LXXV (Jan., 1882), 122.

[111] For recent research on the connection between folklore and Pictish sculpture (Hilton of Cadboll), see Jones, Siân, *Early Medieval Sculpture and the Production of Meaning, Value and Place: The Case of Hilton of Cadboll* (Edinburgh: Historic Scotland, 2004), 27-40.

and vther bestis, because na inuencioun of l*ette*rez was in thai dayis, to put the dedis of Nobill men in memory.'[112] Regarding a stone commemorating a certain Martin and his nine beautiful daughters, a tradition is recounted by John Pinkerton (1758–1826):

> ...when this country was a forest, and[...]was the habitation of wolves[...]there lived a man whose name was Martin. He was blessed with a beautiful family of nine daughters, who were employed by their father in bringing water to slake his thirst[...]Martin sent one of his daughters to the well for water, and she failing to return in the ordinary time, he sent another[...]until all the nine were gone; and the unhappy father was then informed that they had been devoured by a dragon (alias, a wolf). Immediately Martin mounted his steed and proceeded to the fatal spot, where he encountered the murderer of his children. The animal fled, and Martin pursued, followed by some of his neighbours, who called out to him, "Strike, Martin:" hence the name of the district and parish *Strik-Martin*. At the distance of about two miles west from the well the victory was completed; and Martin transfixed the animal with his spear. On this spot is erected the stone[...] bearing the representation of the last scene of the conflict; Martin on horseback, piercing a dragon with his spear...[113]

Aside from such fabulous legends, these hunting scenes depict an obvious realism in both the Pictish and west Highland late-medieval monumental sculpture. They are derived from close observation of nature and are given a fine expression through the use of a remarkable economy of line. Although they are slightly different in terms of dress, in types of dogs, in weaponry and so forth, the similarities are there to be seen. So what is to be made of the various symbols which are so prominent on the Pictish stones if these hunting scenes are based upon reality? Do they have any religious context? Do they mean something more than the mere depiction of the chase? Parallels from Celtic lore, mainly ancient Irish tales, can help to inform the symbolism of the chase in Pictish as well as west Highland monumental sculpture. Although cross-cultural studies, or ethnographical analogies, such as these are useful and can obviously be used for comparative analysis, there is an inherent danger that they can be too anachronistic. Such comparisons, in the absence of other evidence, can be made bearing in mind the caveat: that any interpretation of their iconography beyond what can actually be seen is necessarily speculative.

The Dacre cross-shaft (fig. 1.24),[114] in Cumbria, for example, depicts a scene not too dissimilar to the Burghead slab stone (albeit more crudely fashioned). It has

---

[112] *CSHB*, i, 67, bk. 2, c. 6.

[113] Pinkerton, John, *The Literary Correspondence of John Pinkerton, Esq.*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburn & Richard Bentley, 1830), ii, 425-26.

[114] Bailey, Richard N., 'The Meaning of the Viking-age shaft at Dacre', *Transactions of the Cumberland & Westmorland Antiquities & Archæological Society*, vol. LXXVII (1977), 62, pl. 1.

attracted three possible Christian interpretations: (1) the deer represents sinners, and the purpose of the hunt is their conversion; (2) the stag recalls Psalm 42:1 'As the deer longs for springs of water, so my soul longs for thee, O God', so that the deer may represent the Christian soul seeking salvation, while the dogs, harrying the soul, are the hounds of hell, driven on by the hunter-devils; (3) the deer may represent Christ himself as a victim of persecution leading to his crucifixion.[115] It may well be that hunting topoi such as this can be interpreted as having symbolic functions within a Christian context. It has been argued, however, that this may have been the result of medieval 'multi-think', leading to the possibility, at least to modern thought, that these symbols, if interpreted as such, can have mutually exclusive meanings. The inherent weakness of such an argument is that even when such a 'multi-think' theory is propounded, it is simply too all embracing. Even if a Christian interpretation for the hunt is advanced, there is a danger of associating such symbols with the context of the secular elements of the society which made them.[116] Besides, such pro-Christian interpretations were heavily influenced by Joseph Anderson's argument that such pictorial representations were taken from Scripture stories and 'intermingled with the grotesque and fabulous forms of the Divine Bestiaries or the common allegorical subjects, like the chase of the stag which pervaded the literature and art of the early Middle Ages.'[117] Consequently, it is perhaps better to err on the side of common sense and to see these hunting topoi on both the west Highland and Pictish stones as representational images, or in other words, they are simply a reflection of the reality they depict as 'it can be assumed that such scenes are uninhibitedly representational, and have none of the symbolic overtones that can be inferred in the case of stag-hunts portrayed on many Early Christian monuments.'[118]

Although there are many illustrations of medieval cynegetica (especially in illuminated hunting treatises) where their function is symbolic rather than illustrative, such as the allegorical use of the stag-hunt as a moralistic or erotic device, it would simply be too anachronistic to read such interpretations into the hunting motifs that are currently in view. It seems unlikely that a definitive understanding of why hunting

[115] *Ibid.*, 68-69; Alcock, Leslie, 'Image and Icon in Pictish Sculpture', 233.
[116] *HHAMH*, 68-83 where John Cummins rehearses the Christian symbolism used in hunting scenes from the later and high medieval period. However, neither Pictish nor west Highland sculpture is taken into account.
[117] *SECT*, ii, 189.
[118] *LMMSWH*, 187.

scenes appear on Pictish sculpture can ever be reached, as the purpose of these stones remains obscure. And, further, it is only the historical milieu which produced the work that can help to determine what meanings can be fixed with any certainty. Considering that the historical milieu with regard to the Picts is obscure and, in all likelihood, will probably remain so, this, then, debars any kind of definitive interpretation. Perhaps, the most that can be said is that hunting iconography on these sculptures represent scenes from the daily life of the Pictish aristocracy, while it can also be interpreted (especially stag-hunt scenes) as a 'commonly accepted symbol-picture involving some generally understood lesson of Christian doctrine.'[119] This, however, leaves any interpretation open to ambivalence, a concept, it would seem, only too familiar in Pictish studies.

Although the hunting scenes on west Highland medieval monuments occur in a sepulchral context, there is a lack of the stylisation which might be expected if a symbolic function were intended. The MacLeod Tomb and MacMillan Cross seem to be carved for their own sake. Early Gaelic literature, both tales and ballads, are necessary in order to throw light on medieval hunting practices. Here, there is a continuity in tradition, and thus valid comparisons can not only be made but are essential in understanding the cultural context of these west Highland medieval sculptures. For a society that so obviously celebrated the chase in song, especially when eulogising warrior-hunters and the like, would it not be just as fitting to leave permanent portrayals of the hunt on their sepulchral monuments also? Thus warrior-hunters were praised in stone as well as in song.

Conclusion

It would be well to note Donald Bullough's comments concerning Pictish iconography, which are relevant to late west Highland medieval sculpture, that 'In spite of the importance of hunting in the life of Western kings[...]it is a theme almost entirely ignored by artists in the West[...]which makes the Pictish series even more remarkable.'[120] In general, a number of effigies of Highland chiefs appear which serve to break the monotony of the extensive series of foliage-covered slabs, and here and

[119] Alcock, Leslie, 'From Realism to Caricature: Reflections on Insular Depictions of Animals and People', *PSAS*, vol. 128 (1998), 529-31.

there an ecclesiastic, mitred and vested, bearing a crozier, or clasping a chalice, makes an effective contrast to the warrior with his claymore and shield, his bascinet and habergeon. Figures of chiefs with spear in hand appear in niches among the foliage of the slabs, and figures of birlinns, and, of course, hunting scenes where hounds are seen in full cry or killing a stag. Many phases of ancient life and many varieties of old Scottish armour and costume are exhibited, and a full insight is given into the genius of the medieval handicraft of monumental sculpture. The evidence of pictorial images of the chase on both late-medieval west Highland and earlier Pictish sculpture points inevitably to the fact that hunting was an integral part of both societies. Many of the hunting scenes depicted have a freeze-frame quality as if they have captured the energy (and sometimes the brutality) at the moment of the kill. Such was the sculptors' skill in executing these carvings that it allows one's imagination to form an effective impression of the rest these hunting scenes. Clearly these images have a powerful ability to resonate as much today as they would have done for those who originally created and admired them.

Such motifs are found on west Highland sculpture as a representational iconography of the hunt based upon close observation of nature. The artistic achievements of such monumental sculpture were a product of the patronage bestowed upon craftsmen by the upper echelons of society. Hunting images were apparently wrought upon stone, not merely to eulogise particular patrons, but also to emphasis their status within that very society. They express and reinforce the social and political standing of the élite which commissioned them, as they possessed power, land and resources. More importantly, the élite wielded political influence, and they, therefore, could indulge themselves in such aristocratic pleasures. Although falconry in particular, and hunting in general, were expensive, making them exclusive to the upper echelons of society, much of the day-to-day organisation, not to mention costs, would have fallen upon the middle and lower ranks of society. Thus while the nobles enjoyed both hunting and hawking and the subsequent status afforded to them, they would have been recognised by all ranks of society, thus, giving such sporting pursuits a far-reaching universal appeal.

---

[120] Bullough, Donald, ''Imagines Regum' and their Significance in the Early Medieval West', in Giles Robertson & George Henderson (eds.), *Studies in Memory of David Talbot Rice* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1975), 239.

The continuity of what may be described as an archaic preservation of hunting topoi on west Highland medieval monumental sculpture is striking. After this period, however, there is very little visual representation of the hunt in the Highlands, apart from a 16th century wall painting in Kinneil House, Perthshire, where a greyhound is seen hunting a stag.[121] Intriguingly, John MacInnes has suggested that hanging tapestries (no longer extant) portraying scenes of warfare and hunting may have influenced the composition of Gaelic song.[122] In any case, such a decline in artistic representations of the hunt was probably symptomatic of the fall in fortune of the Lordship of the Isles in the latter part of the 15th century, which signalled a sharp fall in the commissioning of monumental sculptures, and thus resulted in the decline of this art form at the outset of the Reformation.[123] Surviving deer-hunting motifs, though by no means peculiar to either late-medieval west Highland sculpture, or Pictish sculpture, have become fixed in their artistic repertoire. Alongside the evidence provided by medieval Gaelic literature, they point towards an uninhibited celebration of the chase.

[121] *HHRMS*, fig. 3.
[122] *OLPC*, 89-90.
[123] *LMMSWH*, 82-83.

Chapter Two

Fenian Traditions and Hunting Lore

Ó Shamhain go Bealltaine
buannacht gach tighe d' fhianaibh;
an t-sealg, fa sógh seabhcaidhe,
aca i n-ionam an fhiadhaigh.

From Samhain to Beltane
Every house offered the Fianna quarters;
The falcons were of good cheer
Outdoors during the hunting season.

CHAPTER TWO

FENIAN TRADITIONS AND HUNTING LORE

During the medieval period in Gaeldom, the phrase *ó Shamhain go Bealltaine*[1] embodied the traditional period of 'storytelling',[2] and, no doubt, Fenian traditions, in both Ireland and the Scottish Highlands due to a shared cultural milieu, would have been a prestigious element in any given storyteller's repertoire. When winter was over, it was then the time to be outdoors during the 'bright half' of the year—a period for hunting and other outdoor activities. Modern Irish uses the term *Fianaigheacht* which means '*fian*-lore', and covers many types of traditions, myths and poetry connected with the *Fianna*. The majority of Ossianic lays were composed by the *file* (professional poets) in syllabic verse during the high medieval period, between the 12th and 15th centuries. In general, the Fenian cycle is a body of narrative traditions about Fionn mac Cumhaill and his followers, the *Fianna* (Irish)—the preferred terminology used here—or *Fèinn* (Scottish Gaelic),[3] anglicised as Fenians or Fingalians (after Fingal in Macpherson's *Ossian*)—a body of warrior-hunters of the pre-Christian Celtic mythological world.

Background to the Fianna

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse hunting lore contained in ballads and stories connected with the *Fianna*. Before discussing this topic, it is important to note that the *Fianna* were part of the shared cultural heritage of both Irish and Scottish Gaels. It is often thought the *Fianna* belong to Irish Gaels alone and, in terms of original locale, this is true; nevertheless, Irish claims are not exclusive because Scottish Gaels made them their own, as they were extremely popular figures in ballads and song, and were also found in epic tales. The strong political, economic, and cultural links between

---

[1] *BDL*, 28, ll. 313-316; Ó Cadhlaigh, Cormac, *An Fhiannuidheacht* (Baile Átha Cliath: Oifig Díolta Foillseacháin Rialtais, 1936), 65; Keating, Geoffrey (auth.); Comyn, David & Dineen, Patrick (eds.), *The History of Ireland/Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, 4 vols. (London: David Nutt, 1902–13), ii, 326-29. A similar time-scale is mentioned by Edward, the second Duke of York, in his *Master of the Game*. 'And if men find game enough from May to Lammas to hawk at, then might they not find hawks to hawk with. But of hunting there is no season at all the year that game may not be in every good country right well found, and eke hounds to enchase it.'

[2] Mac Cana, Proinsias, *The Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1980), 15.

[3] *DG*, 185.

Scottish and Irish Gaels continued and, at times, were consolidated during the medieval period, mainly through the élite, up until around 1700. It can be argued that the *Fianna* survived better in the context of the Scottish Highlands and Islands than in the place where they originated. An example of the Gael's proclivity to hear tales about the *Fianna* is shown by the welcome given to strangers in the central Highlands '*A bheil dad agad air an Fhéinn?*'[4]

The etymology of *An Fhéinn* [*fian*-bands], as termed in Scottish Gaelic, is revealing, as Donald Meek writes that:

> The root of the word *fian* is cognate with[...]*venare*, to hunt, thus denoting a group of young men whose lifestyle revolved around the hunt[...]It would seem that they were a well recognised institution in early Gaelic society, and that participation in a *fian*-band was one of the ways in which the young men of Ireland[...]burnt off their excess energy before taking up a more settled life style within the norms of the *tuath*, the primary political unit of early Gaelic society.[5]

The accepted meaning of the word, therefore, identifies the *Fianna* as inextricably linked with hunting.[6] Modern philology was anticipated in a medieval Irish text, *Cóir Anmann*, where it is recorded that 'Fíanna a uenatione .i. on tseilg dognidís isb*er*thi fianna fr*í*u...' (Fianna from [Latin] vēnātio, that is, they were called fíana because of the hunting which they were wont to do).[7] Literary evidence shows that this was their main pastime, and a great many of the extant tales, ballads and poetry extol these various characters as warrior-heroes as well as expert hunters. Skills for both warfare and hunting go hand in hand. It is not uncommon to find in medieval Gaelic poetry the close proximity of these Fenian attributes. An extract from a poem, composed by Dubhghall Mac an Ghiolla Ghlais, in praise of Eoin mac Phádraig mheic Mhaoil Choluim (*d.* 1519), a chief of Clan Gregor, provides an example:

Ag sin trí freiteacha Finn:

---

[4] *L*, xiii; and see, 485-86, where Black offers a rather amusing anecdote concerning a visit of James 'Ossian' Macpherson (1736–1796) to see John MacCodrum (1693–1779), better known in Gaelic tradition as Iain mac Fhearchair 'ic Iamhair; see also MacKenzie, Henry (ed.), *Report of the Committee of the Highland Society of Scotland, appointed to inquire into the nature and authenticity of the Poems of Ossian* (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable & Co; London: Longman, Hurst, Ress & Orme, 1805), Appendix, 95-96, where, I suspect, the anecdote first made its appearance.

[5] Meek, Donald E., 'Place-names and Literature: Evidence from the Gaelic Ballads', in Simon Taylor (ed.), *The Uses of Place-Names* (Edinburgh: Scottish Cultural Press, 1998), 148.

[6] See also Meyer, Kuno (ed.), *Fianaigecht: Being a Collection of Hitherto Unedited Irish Poems and Tales relating to Finn and his Fiana* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, & Co., 1910), vi.

[7] Stokes, Whitley (ed. & transl.), 'Cóir Anmann: Fitness of Names', in Whitley Stokes & Ernst Windisch (eds.) *Irische Texte: mit Übersetzungen und Wörterbuch* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1897), 378-81, § 222.

Breith a ghill ní facas riamh;
Lámh badh mhath iorghail i ngreis;
Dob iommhain leis fuileach fiadh.

Here are the three matters vowed by Fionn; winning
Of his wager was never seen; a hand good at quarrel
In a fray; he well loved the stag a-bleeding.[8]

That hunting afforded training in combat without the attendant costs of war was a major factor in its popularity since classical times. Further, Donald Meek, when specifically discussing the nature of Scottish Gaelic ballad texts, offers an overall picture of various subject areas dealt with in this particular aspect of Fenian ballads:

> ...we are dealing with a type of verse which shows a great deal of thematic and stylistic variety. Within the Gaelic ballad corpus, we do indeed find a high proportion of narrative poems describing hunts, battles, combats, expeditions[...]and other types of heroic adventure; but we also encounter elegies and eulogies which focus our attention on the qualities of individual heroes, lyrics which describe or evoke the sights and sounds of nature with only a passing reference to warrior deeds, and poems of debate in which a conversation between two individuals, commonly Oisín and St Patrick.[9]

The main types of events which occur generally within Fenian lore are delineated with precision. It seems only natural that Fenian 'lifestyles' should be reflected in the various traditions that have surrounded this warrior aristocracy. These were in the main conceived in oral tradition, before being committed to parchment in the great scriptoriums of medieval Ireland and Scotland.

'Re-emergence' of Fenian Lore

So popular were Fenian traditions that John Carswell (*c.* 1522–1572), Superintendent of Argyll and Bishop of the Isles,[10] expressed strongly unsympathetic views in his dedicatory epistle to *Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh* (1567),[11] addressed to the Earl of Argyll '...mó is mian léo agas gurab mó ghnāthuidheas siad eachtradha dīmhaoineachda buaidheartha brēgacha saoghalta, do cumadh ar Thuathaibh Dé

---

[8] *BDL*, 206-207, ll. 2055-2058.
[9] Meek, Donald E., 'Development and Degeneration in Gaelic Ballad Texts', in *HP*, 132-33.
[10] For further analysis of Carswell's career and influence, see Meek, Donald E. & Kirk, John, 'John Carswell, Superintendent: A Reassement', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, vol. 119 (1977), 1-22; and Stiùbhart, Dòmhnall Uilleam, 'Carswell, John [Séon Carsuel] (*c.* 1522–1572)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 60 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), x, 325-26.
[11] This work was a translation of John Knox's *Book of Common Order*, printed in Edinburgh in 1564; see Meek, Donald E., 'The Reformation and Gaelic Culture: Perspectives on Patronage, Language and Literature in John Carswell's Translation of "The Book of Common Order"', in James Kirk (ed.), *The Church in the Highlands* (Edinburgh: Scottish Church History Society, 1999), 37-62.

Dhanond, agas ar Mhacaibh Mīleadh, agas ar na curadhaibh, agas [ar] Fhind mhac Cumhaill gona Fhianaibh...'/'...they are more desirous, and more accustomed to preserve the vain, extravagant, false, and worldly histories concerning the Tuath de Danaans and Milesians, Fionn, the son of Cumhal, and his heroes the Feinn...'[12]

Given this attack on 'vain, extravagant, false, and worldly histories', it is remarkable that such traditions, with their secular taint, should have survived at all, far less be still remembered, in vernacular forms until very recent times.[13] Such was the continued fascination for Fenian traditions within Scottish Gaeldom, that, a few centuries after Carswell, the Rev. Peter Grant of Strathspey (1783–1867) expressed the same complaint.[14] Although the *Fianna* are part of a shared heritage common to Ireland and Scotland, making a comparative study not only a logical but a worthwhile one, it is not the purpose of this thesis to pursue such comparisons on an exhaustive basis; nevertheless, evidence from traditions belonging to the Scottish Highlands will be given priority, with reference to Irish traditions where appropriate.

Admittedly, the earliest manuscript sources for the literature of the *Fianna* derive from Ireland. Despite this, the impetus for the renewal of interest in the *Fianna* can be placed firmly on the shoulders of a Gael, James 'Ossian' Macpherson (1736–1796). On publication, *Fingal* (1761) took the literary world by storm.[15] The wake of the controversy surrounding Macpherson's publications was felt for more than a century after his death, attracting apologists and detractors in turn, until the appearance of Derick Thomson's seminal work, *The Gaelic Sources of Macpherson's*

---

[12] Thomson, R. L. (ed.), *Foirm na h-Urrnuidheadh: John Carswell's Gaelic Translations of the Book of Common Order* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1970), 11, extracted from ll. 321-333.

[13] *DG*, 184-210; see also Bruford, Alan, 'The Singing of Fenian and Similar Lays in Scotland', in Hugh Shields (ed.), *Ballad Research: The Stranger in Ballad Narrative and other Topics* (Dublin: Folk Music Society of Ireland, 1986), 55-70.

[14] *PTWH*, iv, 207.

[15] The impact on the *literati* can scarcely be imagined today—it was rapidly translated into major European languages and had a lasting impact on the Romantic movement in art as well as influencing major European literary figures ranging from Byron to Goethe. Its impact had a great effect in the country of its 'birth.' See, for example, Gaskill, Howard, 'Ossian in Europe', *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, vol. 21 (Dec., 1994), 643-75; Thomson, Derick S., 'Ossian Macpherson and the Gaelic World of the Eighteenth Century', *AUR*, vol. 40 (1963–64), 7-20; Gaskill, Howard (ed.), *Ossian Revisited* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991); Stafford, Fiona, *The Sublime Savage: A Study of James Macpherson and the Poems of Ossian* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1988); Leneman, Leah, 'Ossian and the Enlightenment', *Scotia*, vol. XI (1987), 13-29; Leneman, Leah, 'The Effects of Ossian in Lowland Scotland', in J. J. Carter & J. H. Pittock (eds.), *Aberdeen and the Enlightenment* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), 357-62; Buchan, James, *Capital of the Mind: How Edinburgh Changed the World* (London: John Murray, 2003), 141-72.

'*Ossian*' (1951),[16] which addressed the principal issues. Elsewhere, Thomson has written of Macpherson's contribution that 'MacPherson was neither as honest as he claimed nor as inventive as his opponents implied.'[17] This meant Macpherson framed his own poetic effusions within genuine Gaelic ballad tradition. In reality Macpherson's duplicity was self-inflicted, for he fraudulently claimed in the books' titles that they were the work of Ossian (a blind mythological poet), Fingal's son. Such claims were further supported by a series of pseudo-scholarly notes which gave the poems a *prima facie* look of genuineness. Questions of literary forgery aside, the influence of Macpherson's publications was phenomenal if not pervasive, although, as Thomson points out, this was not without ambivalence for 'He had a pernicious effect on later Gaelic writing but also indirectly stimulated much Gaelic collection and research.'[18] Thus the impact of Macpherson lingers still. Though he may have tried to hoodwink the *literati* of the day, the Ossianic controversy did have at least one redeeming factor in that it re-awakened an antiquarian interest in the fast-dying Gaelic culture of Macpherson's time. Indeed, it is questionable whether one of the great collectors of Gaelic oral tradition, John Francis Campbell of Islay (1821–1885), would have even bothered with Gaelic ballad tradition if it were not for Macpherson's *Fingal*. Campbell, a critic of Macpherson, after a lot of trouble and expense, went on to publish *Leabhar na Féinne* (1872) although the book, much to his chagrin, fell silent from the press.[19] Regardless of this literary controversy, a pertinent question arises: who were the *Fianna* and how did they manage to excite such censure centuries after they were allegedly chasing the deer whether on the slopes of Slievenamon or Glenshee?

---

[16] Thomson, Derick S., *The Gaelic Sources of Macpherson's 'Ossian'* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1951). Some of Thomson's arguments were anticipated by the 19th century Gaelic scholar Alexander MacBain, especially in his ground-breaking article, 'The Heroic and Ossianic Literature', *TGSI*, vol. XII (1885–86), 180-211; Thomson, Derick S., 'Macpherson's 'Ossian': Ballads to Epics', in *HP*, 243-64.

[17] *CGS*, 190.

[18] *CGS*, 190. For a useful historical survey of Fenian ballads, see Meek, Dòmhnall E., 'Laoidhean na Féinne ann an Dualchas nan Gàidheal', in Gordon W. MacLennan (ed.), *Proceedings of the First North American Congress of Celtic Studies* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 1986), 417-22.

[19] Such was the disappointment in the book's reception that Campbell forestalled producing a planned second volume which was going to include translations as well as further material on narrative traditions. It is a pity this volume never appeared as it would have complimented the material produced in the first volume. Prior to this he dedicated over half of the fourth volume of his famous collection *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* (1860–62) to the Ossianic controversy, and his scholarly analysis is penetrating by the standards of his own day; see *PTWH*, iv, 5-236.

Sources of Hunting in Fenian Lore

The *Fianna* can be defined as a cohesive group of young men who have not yet been accepted into society, and thus have a liminal status:

> The early Irish *fían* catered for the propertyless males of free birth who had left fosterage but had not yet inherited the property needed to settle down as full landowning members of the túath [i.e. the local unit of a territorial self-government in early Ireland].[20]

In order to be accepted into the ranks of the *Fianna* young men underwent various 'rites of passage' that tested their physical and mental ability to the utmost. Such was the extremity of these trials that this added a mythological lustre to the *Fianna*. Hunting was, of course, a prime activity for the *Fianna* and, therefore, prowess in the chase was a prerequisite in order to be admitted into such a league of warrior-hunters:

> There are references to games of the Fianna which appear to be aggressive competitions between young men and the very initiation into the Fianna required passing strenuous tests. There are hints that the initiation of a young male warrior required that he stalk and kill a boar at Samhainn.[21]

One of the earliest accounts of a hunt to take place in Scotland (which presumably refers to Arran on the western seaboard of Scotland) is from an Irish source, *Acallam na Senórach*, one of the earliest manuscript collections (though probably composed towards the end of the 12th century)[22] and described as 'a loosely framed anthology of Fenian stories, poems and trivia.'[23] The Arran hunt is worth quoting in full:

> "Maith ámh, a anam, a Oisín," ol Pādruic, "caidhe an tshealcc is feárr dogheibhdís an Fhían eidir a nÉrinn ┐ a nAlbain ?"
> "Sealg Aronn togha gacha sealcca gusa riochmís," ol Oisin.
> "Cāit a bhfuil an t-oilén sin?" ol Pādraig.
> "Idir Ēirinn ┐ Albain, re hÉirinn anoir ┐ re hAlbain aníar, ┐ trí catha na gnáth-Fhéine thēighmís anonn a laithe mís Troghain dā ngoirthear Lúghnasa, ┐ dogheibhmís ar ndaoithain sealcca ┐ sāir-fhíadhaigh uile isin oilén sin nō co ngoireadh an ccaoi a céadamhuin do bharruibh doss-bhileadh; ┐ as gach ceōl do thrēighfeadh nach re hilcheōlaiph na hénlaithe bhíos isin oilén sin ag ēirghe do mhiodh-uachtar mara ┐ do thulmhongaibh ttonn ttaobh-úaine ttoghaidhe re hairear-phortaibh Aronn, .i. caoga ealta iongantach bhíos ar fúd an oiléin sin co

[20] McCone, Kim, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1990), 205.
[21] Patterson, Nerys, *Cattle Lords and Clansmen* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1994), 124-25.
[22] The most complete copy, however, was written at the beginning of the 13th century.
[23] Nagy, Joseph Falaky, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw: The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in Gaelic Literature* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1985), 4.

n-ēxamhlacht ccrotha eid*ir* bhreac, bhuidhe, ghorm, ghlas, gheal, ⁊ ghlan-chorcra.
Agus ro ráidh Oisīn an laoídh mbicc ag foillsiocc*had*h tuarasgb*hāl*a Aronn don naomh-chlēireach:

Aronn na n-aidheadh n-iomhda
tadhall faircce ar a formna,
oilén gusa mbearor buidhne,
d*r*uim a ndeircct*har* ghaoíth gorma.

Ard ós a muir a mullach,
caoimh a luibh, tearc a tonnach,
oilén gorm graidheach gleannach,
corr bheannach d*h*arach d*hr*ong*a*ch.

Oighe baotha ina beannuibh,
mōnáin m*h*aotha ina mongaiph,
uiscce fúar ina haibhnibh,
meas ar a dairghibh donnuibh.

Míolchoin ghéara innte is gadhoir,
smēra, áirne, is dubh d*r*oighinn;
dlúith a fraigh rēna feadhuibh,
doimh ar deagh*ail* 'na dairibh.

Dīoghlaim chorc*r*a ar a cairrg*ib*h,
fir gan lochta ar a leargoibh,
ōs a creaccoibh caomh cumhdaigh
surdail laogh mb*r*eacr*aid*h mbécc*aig*h.

Mín a magh, méith a muca,
suairc a guirt, suairc a creite,
cnó for bharruibh a bhfiodh-choll,
seóladh na síth-long seice.

Bric ōs b*hr*uachoibh a habhonn,
aoibhinn dóibh ō thicc soineann,
ticcdís ō bheannoibh Alb*an*
co rannuibh ardoibh Aronn.[24]

Patrick then asked, 'Tell me dear Caílte, what was the best hunt, whether in Ireland or Scotland, that the Fían ever took part in?'
'That would be the hunt on Arran,' said Caílte. 'Where is that place?' asked Patrick. 'It is between Scotland and the land of the Picts,' said Caílte. 'In the month of Trogan, or Lugnasad [1 August] we of the Fían used to go there with three battalions and have our fill of hunting until the cuckoo called from the treetops of Ireland. No music can match the sweet sounds of the bird flocks rising up from the waves, and from the shores of this island. There were one hundred and fifty flocks around it, all of bright colours, deep and clear blues, greens and yellows.' Caílte then recited the following verse:

[24] Ní Shéaghdha, Nessa (ed.), *Agallamh na Seanórach*, 3 vols. (Baile Átha Cliath: Oifig an tSoláthair, 1942–45), i, 29-31; O' Grady, Standish H. (ed.), *Silva Gadelica: A Collection of Tales in Irish with Extracts Illustrating Persons and Places*, 2 vols. (London: Williams & Norgate, 1892), ii, 108-09, 'The Colloquy of the Elders.'

Arran blessed with stags, encircled by the sea,
Island that fed hosts, where black spears turn crimson.

Carefree deer on its peaks, branches of tender berries,
Streams of icy water, dark oaks decked with mast.

Greyhounds here and beagles, blackberries, fruit of sloe,
Trees thick with blackthorns, deer spread about the oaks.

Rocks with purple lichen, meadows rich with grass,
A fine fortress of crags, the leaping of fawns and trout.

Gentle meadows and plump swine, gardens pleasant beyond belief,
Nuts on the boughs of hazel, and longships sailing by.

Lovely in fair weather, trout beneath its banks,
Gulls scream from the cliffs, Arran ever lovely.[25]

In the most recent edition of *Acallam na Senórach*, the editors have commented upon the Arran hunt as a:

> poem of idyllic sensuous pleasure in the innocent bounty of the natural world. It provides an example of the kind of lyric poetry[...]with which *Tales*[...]is liberally sprinkled. The island is a Fenian *locus amoenus*, one of many in the work. To hunt in Arran is to have a pure *fían* experience, to know something of the untrammelled bounty of the 'other' world...[26]

The Arran hunt represents a development in the use of pastoral elements, where nature's beauty and beasts are praised. This contrasts starkly with other heroic poetry, which, in the main, is not burdened with such fancies. The natural world, along with animals, provides a backdrop to the action, and the chase is described purely as a pursuit in which pastoral elements are used to good effect. Such sporadic references, in which nature is praised, may have influenced later the compositions of Dòmhnall mac Fhionnlaigh nan Dàn or Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir, when they came to compose their great songs of the chase.

The Book of the Dean of Lismore

References to the *Fianna* are common in medieval manuscripts especially those of an Irish provenance; and there are two collections where the Fenian hunt is described in verse. The hunting poems in these collections will be analysed in turn. One of two

---

[25] Dooley, Ann & Roe, Harry (eds.), *Tales of the Elders of Ireland (Acallam na Senórach)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 12-13; Balfour, J. A. & MacKenzie, W. M. (eds.), *The Book of Arran*, 2 vols. (Glasgow: Hugh Hopkins, 1914), ii, 4-5; see also *DS*, 304-07.
[26] *Ibid.*, xxiv.

most important collections in which Fenian ballads forms a moderate core is *BDL*[27] described as 'undoubtedly the most precious and significant Gaelic literary manuscript to survive.'[28] The other is an Irish compilation, *Duanaire Finn* (henceforth referred to as *DF*). The Fenian lore contained within these two manuscript collections is fundamental as they contain some of the best extant material concerning the *Fianna*, especially with regard to hunting. The Scottish manuscript (which also contains Irish material) was compiled between 1512 and 1542, probably in eastern Perthshire (at Fortingall), by two MacGregor brothers, James (*c.* 1480–1551), Dean of Lismore[29] (hence the collection's title) and Duncan (Donnchadh mac Dhubhghaill Mhaoil),[30] who probably acted (amongst others) as his brother's scribe. What makes this manuscript almost unique is that the orthography is Scots-based, while the script is written in Middle Scots secretary hand, which, at times, makes interpretation an extremely challenging process.[31]

With regard to its contents, *BDL* consists mainly of Gaelic verse relating to Perthshire, Argyll, and the Western Isles as well as Ireland. They vary in nature from the strict verse of bardic schools to metrically loose compositions influenced strongly by the vernacular. The main categories of subject-matter are: elegies and eulogies, often for MacGregor chiefs, Ossianic and religious verse, notably on outstanding exempla, and courtly love with some sexual satire. In addition to this, there is a good

---

[27] NLS, *Book of the Dean of Lismore*, Adv.Ms.72.1.37.

[28] *CGS*, 59; MacGregor, Martin, 'Creation and Compilation: The Book of the Dean of Lismore and Literary Culture in Late Medieval Gaelic Scotland', in Iain Brown, Thomas O. Clancy, Susan Manning & Murray Pittock (eds.), *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature, Volume One: From Columba to the Union (until 1707)* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 209-18.

[29] *BDL*, xv.

[30] *BDL*, xv.

[31] See Meek, Donald E., 'The Scots-Gaelic Scribes of Late Medieval Perthshire: An Overview of the Orthography and Contents of the Book of the Dean of Lismore', in Derrick J. McClure & R. G. Michael Spiller (eds.) *Bryght Llanternis* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1989), 387-404 [reprinted as 'The Scots-Gaelic Scribes of Late Medieval Perthshire: An Overview of the Orthography and Contents of the Book of the Dean of Lismore', in Janet Hadley Williams (ed.), *Stewart Style: Essays on the Court of James V* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1996), 254-72]; Meek, Donald E., 'Gàidhlig is Gaylick anns an Meadhon Aoisean', in William Gillies (ed.), *Gaelic and Scotland: Alba agus a' Ghàidhlig* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1989), 131-45. Donald T. MacKintosh speculated *BDL* was once owned by Duncan MacRae (*c.* 1640–*c.* 1700) of Inverinate, known as Donnchadh nam Pìos, who, around 1688, compiled the *Fernaig* manuscript which has a similarly based orthography to *BDL* and, hence, it is argued, influenced the orthography of this later manuscript. See MacKintosh, Donald T., 'James Macpherson and the Book of the Dean of Lismore', *SGS*, vol. VI, pt. I (1949), 20. This speculation, though interesting, is idle as no concrete evidence is available of *BDL*'s provenance prior to its rediscovery around 1760.

deal of miscellaneous Gaelic verse, together with stray items in Latin, Scots and Gaelic that gives the work as a whole its appearance of a commonplace book.[32]

In *BDL* there are two poems that specifically deal with hunting, *Sliabh na mBan bhFhionn* (referring, presumably, to Slievenamon, a mountain in Co. Tipperary), ascribed to Oiséan; and *Laoidh Dhiarmaid*, ascribed to Ailéan mac Ruaidhrí. Other poems also mention hunting, but not to such a degree as these two. These poems are significant not only because they represent some of the oldest extant Gaelic literature that describe the hunt, but also because they both deal with some of the most interesting mythological aspects of Fenian traditions.

Sliabh na mBan bhFhionn

Sliabh na mBan bhFhionn opens within a framework typical of many Fenian ballads—a dialogue between the pagan, Oisín, and the Christian, St Patrick[33]—and so the setting, though dramatic and mythological, is based, at least to some extent, on what is known about hunting techniques used during the high medieval period in which the majority of such ballads were created. Although the description of the hunt itself is non-specific, it does advance some literary evidence for coursing with hounds—an ancient technique used in order to drive the deer into a designated spot before they were slaughtered. These quatrains depict the hunt:

> Nuair a shuidheadh Fionn ar gcoin,
> Do b'iomadh soir & siar
> guth gadhair ō chnoc go cnoc
> a' mosgladh thorc & ⟨fiadh⟩.

---

[32] Black, Ronald, *A Catalogue of Classical Gaelic Manuscripts* (Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland, *c.* 1985); MacGregor, Martin, 'The View from Fortingall: The Worlds of the *Book of the Dean of Lismore*', *SGS*, vol. XXI (2006), 38-39; *BDL*, xvii-xviii; The survival of *BDL* owes something to James Macpherson as he was instrumental in awakening an antiquarian interest in Gaelic literature and, thus, the recovery of manuscripts which would have otherwise been lost. Macpherson toured the Highlands and Islands in 1760 scouring likely places for manuscripts but even the results of this were not untouched by controversy (see Gaskill, Howard, 'What Did James Macpherson Really Leave on Display at his Publisher's Shop in 1762?', *SGS*, vol. XVI (1990), 67-89). Regarding *BDL*, Gaskill persuasively argues that Macpherson got the manuscript from Thomas Fraser (1763–1766) of Boleskine. These Frasers had a family connection with the Deans of the Isles thus making them a more likely source for the provenance of *BDL*. The other origin seems, in Gaskill's view, unlikely where Macpherson is said to have obtained *BDL* from his namesake, Alexander MacPherson, a blacksmith in Portree, who, it is said, originally acquired it in Lochcarron, Wester Ross. Interestingly Macpherson was accompanied on some of his travels by Lachlan MacPherson, tacksman of Strathmashie (*c.* 1723–*c.* 1796), a noted Gaelic bard, musician and wit. More than a dozen of his compositions survive, two of which are hunting songs.

[33] This type of dialogue forms a study by Ó Fiannachta, Pádraig, 'The Development of the Debate between Pádraig and Oisín', in *HP*, 183-205.

Do bhíodh Fionn & Bran
'nan suidhe seal air an t-sliabh,
gach fear dhíobh a n-áit[e] shealg
nō gur éirigh cealg ⟨na bhfiadh⟩.

Do lēigeamar trí m[íle] cú
a b'fhearr lúth 's a bh⟨a⟩ go garg;
mharbh ga[ch] cú dhíobh sin dá fhiadh
⟨sul⟩ fán deach⟨aidh⟩ iall 'na ⟨h-aird⟩.

Do thuit vi míl[e] fiadh barr
air a' ghleann do bhí fán t-sliabh,
A h-éagmhais agh & earb;
ní dhearnadh sealg mar sin riamh.

When Fionn would put our hounds in position, the voices of dogs were plentiful east and west as they roused boar and deer from hill to hill.

Fionn and Bran would be a while seated on the mountain; every man in the band would stay in his hunting position until the deer's bristles rose.

We unleashed three thousand hounds which were fierce and of surpassing energy; every one of these killed two deer sometime before the leashes were replaced in their collars.

Six thousand horned deer fell in the valley beneath the mountain, not counting hinds and does; such a great hunt had never been held before.[34]

One can only agree with Donald Meek that 'the most striking feature of the poem is its word-picture of a hunting-party in the Gaelic world of the late Middle Ages.'[35] This comment is provoked by the sheer amount of detail describing the attire and equipment worn by the characters at the poem's opening and, as noted earlier, bears a remarkable similarity to the hunting scene depicted on Alasdair Crotach's Tomb at Rodel (1528) (see frontispiece, figs. 1.1, 1.2).[36] In the poem, the huntsmen wear a *léine shróill* or satin shirt, a *cotún* or arketon, *lúireach* or mail-coat, and a *cinnbheirt*, and a type of bascinet. Each man is said to carry two *sleagha* or spears, a *sgiath* or shield, and a *lann* or sword.[37] Such types of attire are closely associated with warfare rather than the hunt, but, as the hunt can be described as non-combative warfare, the

[34] Meek, Donald E. (ed.), *Heroic Verse in the Book of the Dean of Lismore* (forthcoming). I am indebted to Professor Meek for supplying me with a pre-publication version of this ballad; *HPBDL*, 14-15, ll. 137-152; *LF*, 142-44.
[35] *Ibid.*
[36] *LMMSWH*, 186-7, pl. 32; *HHRMS*, fig. 6.
[37] For a poetic description of armour and weaponry, see 'The Book of Clanranald', in *RC*, ii, 260-63.

use of such equipment may not have been that uncommon, even when taking into account poetic licence. Though this probably can be ascribed to literary artifice, it does, nevertheless, emphasise the high status that hunting was held in by the Gaelic nobility or *fine*. This method of hunting probably had a long pedigree as witnessed by the above quatrains. Apart from the exaggerated numbers involved, it does, nonetheless, relate the type of hunting methods supposedly used by the semi-mythological *Fianna*: they positioned themselves hidden from view until the deer were driven past and were made ready for the deerhounds. It is not made explicit how the deer were actually driven, but it is likely that the *Fianna* commanded enough manpower for a *timcheall* (tinchel), or ring-circuit, for the purpose of driving deer through a predesignated point (usually a v-shaped defile) in order to prosecute the hunt. The hounds and beaters would then rouse the game and drive it past the huntsmen sitting at their butts or *dumha-seilge* (hunting-mounds), whereby the deer were either shot or speared.[38] J. F. Campbell observed in *BDL*'s version of *Sliabh na mBan bhFhionn* that:

> ...Hunting rights were always matters of dispute[...]This hunting song is remembered in the Long Island[...]but the most of it has been reduced to mere narrative.
> [...]the method of hunting described here, corresponds to the description of a similar hunt by Taylor[...]in the reign of James V[...]A great many hunting stories are current in the Highlands[...][39]

J. F. Campbell points out that some of these ballads were 'reduced' to narrative texts, which may have diminished their intrinsic poetical value; nevertheless, narratives are also an important element of Fenian tradition. Such narratives may have been a necessary preamble to any given story's events. A ballad can be described as a versification of a narrative story, albeit expressed in a more solemn and lyrical fashion.[40] James Macpherson knew this ballad as his description of the hunt in Book VI of *Fingal* reveals:

> Call, said Fingal, call my dogs, the long-bounding sons of the chace. Call white-breasted Bran; and the surly strength of Luath—Fillan and Ryno—but he is not here; my son rests on the bed of death. Fillan and Fergus, blow my

[38] O' Grady, Standish H. (ed.), *Silva Gadelica*, i, 258-59; 306.
[39] *LF*, 142-43.
[40] It has been theorised that Fenian ballads or lays were chanted and this may have been the method of how Gaelic syllabic verse was sung since the Middle Ages, see Bruford, Alan, 'The Singing of Fenian and Similar Lays in Scotland', 56.

> horn, that the joy of the chace may arise; that he deer of Cromla may hear and start the lake of roes.
>
> The shrill sound spreads along the wood. The sons of healthy Cromla arise. A thousand dogs fly off at once, gray-bounding through the divided heath. A deer fell by every dog, and three by the white-breasted Bran. He brought them, in their flight, to Fingal, that the joy of the king might be great.[41]

Such was the impact of the chase that Macpherson even composed a long and romantic poem, *The Hunter*, dedicated to this very subject (though he attributed it, unsurprisingly, to Ossian).[42] There is no doubt that the literary hunting scenes which Macpherson knew well (and supplemented, probably, by his own experience) influenced the way in which he went on to describe them.

Duanaire Finn

Compiled at Ostend in Belgium around 1626/27 by Aodh Ó Dochartaigh, at the behest of his patron Sorley MacDonnell, a grandson of Sorley Boy MacDonnell, of Antrim, and an officer of the Spanish army in the Netherlands, *DF* contains some sixty-nine poems of the Fionn cycle. Some of these poems are devoted purely to the hunt.

The following lays, among others, from *DF* concern themselves mostly with the chase: *The Enchanted Stag* (XIV),[43] *The Chase of Sliabh Truim* (XXIV),[44] *The Beagle's Cry* (XXXII),[45] *The Magic Pig* (LIV),[46] *The Chase of Slievenamon* (LVIII)[47] (already met with) and, finally, *The Chase Above Lough Derg* (LX).[48] An extract from *The Chase of Sliabh Truim* represents the flavour of a typical literary hunt-scene:

> Líonmhar coin ag righ ar fíadh nar ttimchioll sa sliabh badhes
> battar na catha ar a lorg día ffethiomh ba borb a ttres
> Ba hiomda guth fiadha is tuirc ar in slíabh dar thuit don tseilg
> ó chosgar láoch 7 con ba hiomdha fuil ar in leirg

---

[41] Thomson, Derick S., *The Gaelic Sources of Macpherson's 'Ossian'*, 40.

[42] Macpherson's composition 'The Hunter: A Poem. In Ten Cantos', attributed to Ossian, is in Macpherson, James (auth.); Laing, Malcolm (ed.), *The Poems of Ossian, &c. Containing the Poetical Works of James Macpherson, Esq in Prose and Rhyme*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable & Co., 1805), ii, 465-523.

[43] *DF*, i, 30-32, 130-32.

[44] *DF*, i, 75-80, 187-93; O' Daly, John, 'Fiadhach Fhianna Eireann ar Shliabh Truim/The Finnian Hunt of Sliabh Truim', *TOS*, vol. VI (1861), 102-26.

[45] *DF*, i, 83, 196-97.

[46] *DF*, ii, 184-93.

[47] *DF*, ii, 216-21; O' Daly, John, 'Seilg Shleibhe na m-Ban/The Chase of Sliabh-na-mBan', *TOS*, vol. VI (1861), 126-31.

[48] *DF*, ii, 234-39; O' Daly, John, 'Seilg na Féinne os cionn Lochu Deirg/The Finnian Hunt of the Borders of Louch Derg', *TOS*, vol. VI (1861), 154-61.

Níor bMáidhbhle lem gáir chatha ger mór gcath a rabh[as] riamh
ar ndol don chonairt fo tháintibh no gáirthi con 7 fiagh
Ní dhechaidh fiadh soir nó siar no torc sa slaibh día raibh beó
diobh sin uile nachar mharbh on conairt mhaith ba garbh gleó
Ro mharbhsam fiche céad fiadh sa slíabh 7 deich gcéad torc
ar cconairt ar mhed a ffearg do fhágbhattar dearg gach gort
Níor háirmheadh eillti no bruic maid miollta díer thuit sa léirg
gin gur háirmheadh íed ag Fionn mor dar liom in chuid dar séilg
Aoin sealg is mó dar marbhadh a gcrich Bhanbha in gach trá
7 is ferr baí rem linn an tsealg do rinne Finn in lá…[49]

Many were the hounds on the track of deer around us on the mountain southward: behind them by reason of the chase the hillsides were full of blood.

There was many a cry of deer and boar on the mountain, of those that fell by the chase: from the spoils of herds and hounds blood abounded on the slope.

I never thought the cries of battle more dreadful, though in many battles I had been ere then, than the cries of hounds and deer when the pack came at the herds.

No deer went east or west, nor boar of all that were alive on the mountain, not one of them all but was killed by the good pack fierce in attack.

We killed twenty hundred deer on the mountain and ten hundred boars: our pack in the greatness of their fury left every field red with blood.

Does and badgers were not counted, nor hares, of all that fell on the slope: though they were not reckoned by Fionn, they were methinks a great part of our game.

The greatest prey ever killed in Banbha's land at any time, the best thing was during my life, was the prey that Fionn took that day…[50]

This excerpt describes graphically the slaughter, and the connection with warfare, implying that it was like an attack upon nature, but only the deer and boar were quarry worthy of mention. Overall, the poem carries a message of triumph, a glorying in victory against a common enemy, and finally a subjugation of fickle nature. The poem opens with the *Fianna* gathering at Sliabh Truim in battle array, and then an episode is recited in which the Fenian hounds are unleashed by their respective masters, each hound being named along with a roll-call of their various attributes. Despite the mythological numbers involved, there is an element of realism in the description of how medieval hunting was conducted during the time in which the ballad was conceived. As can be seen, this matches with the topoi of the hunting poetry contained

[49] *DF*, i, 77.
[50] *DF*, i, 189-90.

in *BDL*, and represents an instance of cultural continuity in this period between Gaelic Ireland and Scotland despite political turbulence in both countries.[51]

Laoidh Dhiarmaid

A ballad, which Scotland can claim as her own, *Laoidh Dhiarmid*, in which hunting plays an integral role, concerns the death of a Fenian warrior, Diarmaid Ua Duibhne, the mythological progenitor of Clan Campbell. This appears in *BDL*, where the first few verses set the scene of the action:

> Gleann Síodh an gleann so rém thaoibh
> a[m] binn faoidh éan ⁊ lon;
> minic rithidís an Fhéin
> air an t-srath so an déidh a gcon.
>
> A[n] gleann so fã Bheinn Ghulbainn ghuirm
> as h-áild[e] tulcha fã ghréin,
> níorbh annamh a shrotha gu dearg
> an déidh shealg ō Fhionn na bhFhéi(n).
>
> This glen beside me is Gleann Síodh, where blackbirds
> and other birds sing sweetly; the Fian often used to
> run this glen behind their hounds.
>
> This glen below green Beann Ghulbainn, whose knolls
> the fairest under sun—not infrequently were its streams
> red after the hunt had been held [there] by Fionn of the Fiana.[52]

The narrative continues by inviting the company to listen awhile as the poet relates Diarmaid's tragic death. The plot of the story was very known though the *BDL* version does not explicitly state that it was through Fionn's jealousy that Diarmaid had to fight the great, venomous boar of Beann Ghulbainn in the hope that his erstwhile friend would be killed in the attempt. The story's background was probably assumed, as it may have been known to an audience. So any preliminaries could be omitted without any fear of this particular version of the ballad being misunderstood. Diarmaid's elopement with Fionn's betrothed, Gráinne, the daughter of Cormac mac Airt, is the crux of the storyline, and was a well-known Irish romantic tale,

---

[51] Of the 96 ballad texts from *BDL* and *DF*, only four full texts are common to both, two, of which, concern hunting: Oisín in Elphin and The Chase of Slievenamon. It may be a coincidence but perhaps not an unimportant one: hunting was, after all, *de rigueur* for the nobility in the medieval Gaelic world.

[52] Meek, Donald E., 'The Death of Diarmaid in Scottish and Irish Tradition', *Celtica*, vol. XXI (1990), 352; *HPBDL*, 70-71, ll. 905-912.

Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne.[53] This tale proved to be extremely popular during the medieval period and beyond in Gaelic Ireland and Scotland.[54] Briefly, according to the *BDL* version, Diarmaid's betrayal seals his fate, and, once the boar has been killed, Fionn asks Diarmaid to measure the boar. He proceeds to do so from snout to tail but without any mishap; and then Fionn instructs him to measure it again, only the other way round, against the grain (or widdershins), whereby a poisonous bristle pierces Diarmaid's sole, thereby inflicting a mortal wound:

> Iompóidhis bu thurus gáidh—
> agus toimhsidh dhaibh an torc;
> guinidh a[n] fraoch nimhe garbh
> bonn an laoich bu gharg an dtrod.
>
> Tuitidh an sin air an raon
> Mac Uí Dhuibhne nār fhaomh feall,
> 'na laigh[e] do thaobh an tuirc—
> ach, sin aidheadh dhuit gu dearbh.
>
> He turned—it was a dangerous action—and he
> Measures the boar for them; its rough poisonous bristle
> Wounds the sole of the warrior who was fierce in battle.
>
> The Son of Ua Dhuibhne who did not consent to treachery
> Then falls upon the field, and lies beside the boar; that,
> Alas, is a truly tragic death for you.[55]

Ultimately, the actual hunt—the action of killing the boar—was not the undoing of Diarmaid but, rather, his death came about through Fionn's wiles as he knew full well that Diarmaid's only weakness was his Achilles heel. This, nonetheless, does not detract from the heroic nature of Diarmaid's death as the ballad closes with a eulogy of the dead hero that uses conventional epithets to good effect (notably being likened to a hawk):

> Seabhac súlghorm Eas[a] Ruaidh,
> fear lē[m] beirthe buaidh ga[ch] áir,
> an déidh a thorchairt lē torc

---

[53] Ní Shéaghdha, Nessa. (ed.), *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne* (Dublin: Irish Text Society, 1967), 2-105.

[54] *LF*, 151-65; *PTWH*, iii, 39-90; for 'Laoidh Dhiarmaid', see 75-90 and also 90-102; for traditional prose narratives, see *FSPTFWB*, 52-65; Campbell, John D. S. (Duke of Argyll), *Adventures in Legend: Being the Last Historic Legends of the Western Highlands* (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co., 1898), 20-25; Anon., 'Diarmaid O' Duibhne', *The Highlander*, vol. 3, no. 137 (27 Nov., 1874), 3; and for a modern version of the tale from South Uist tradition, see MacLennan, Angus (auth.); Campbell, John Lorne (transl.), *Stories from South Uist* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), 29-31.

[55] Meek, Donald E., 'The Death of Diarmaid in Scottish and Irish Tradition', 355, ll. 69-76; *HPBDL*, 74-75, ll. 973-980.

fā thulchān a' chnoic so atá.

Diarmaid, Mac Uí Dhuibhne fhéil,
[a] thuiteam trē éad, mo-nuar!
bu gil[e] a bhráighe nā grian,
bu deirge [a] bhial nā bláth cnu⟨as⟩.

The blue-eyed hawk of Assoroe, the man who won the victory in every slaughter, having fallen by a boar, lies under the summit of this hill.

Alas that Diarmaid, the Son of generous Ua Duibhne, was killed through jealousy! His breast was brighter than the sun; his lips were redder than the blossom of fruit-clusters.[56]

Diarmaid was renowned for his hunting prowess as well as his battle hardiness and so it is ironic that he should meet his death through Fionn's machinations rather than a glorious death of a one-to-one combat with a ferocious boar or, indeed, a renowned foe. A prose narrative version relates, nonetheless, such a death, where Diarmaid is described graphically being gored to death by the mortally-wounded boar.[57] In the end this may have been a more befitting end for such a hero, though it would detract from the neat literary allusion of Fionn's exploitation of Diarmaid's fatal flaw.

Comparing the hunting poems in *BDL* and *DF*, it is clear there are far more within the Irish corpus. The great hunts of the *Fianna*, it would seem, were less of a concern for the scribal compilers of *BDL*, but their inclusion demonstrates that they were important enough to form a part (even if it may be described as an unsubstantial one) of a greater literary whole, ranging from elegies to narrative adventures.[58] Some of the other ballads and poems in both collections also contain hunting vignettes, especially those that praise a patron, in which he is usually compared to an heroic warrior: a man capable of controlling his social as well as his natural environments.

The Hunt and Fenian Narrative Traditions

Many supernatural elements pervade Fenian lore. Indeed, the *Fianna* maintained not only a liminal status in society but also a geographical one. The whole ethos of the *Fianna* may be encapsulated in the phrase 'rites of passage' as all the activities of the *fían*-band are centred upon heroic deeds in hunting and fighting: such, to put it

[56] *Ibid.*, 356, ll. 81-88; see also *DS*, 330-39.
[57] Ní Shéaghdha, Nessa (ed.), *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne*, 86-91.

simply, are the lifeblood of the *Fianna*. This has a classical pedigree, as Joseph Falaky Nagy has amply shown, where 'hunting and warring in the wilderness constitute the designated vocation of the young male on the verge of manhood.'[59] The *Fianna* occupied a 'neither-world' between the human and the supernatural, between this world and the Otherworld. This is consistent with the view that the hunter's terrain is one of violent and supernatural terrors, where otherworldly creatures take an interest in the hunter and his activities.[60] Time and again, supernatural encounters take place in liminal areas—remote glens, deer-forests and so on—beyond the pale of society.[61] The supernatural aspect of hunting will be examined in greater detail in chapter seven. Again, Joseph Falaky Nagy succinctly sums up the relevance of this liminal aspect: 'It is typical of Fenian narrative that Finn and his companions encounter the supernatural while they are engaged in the activity of hunting, emblematic of their identity as fénnidi. Nature, where the fénnidi live, and from which they gain their livelihood, is the quintessential boundary zone in traditional Irish ideology.'[62]

In Fenian lore, a typical framing device operates when Fionn and his companions are led into an adventure while out hunting, and a magic mist descends, causing them to become lost. A good example of such a frame is the tale, *Fionn ann an Tigh a' Bhlàir Bhuidhe gun Chomas Suidhe no Éirigh*,[63] which may be given in summary. Briefly, the story relates how the *Fianna*, after a hard day's hunt, were resting when a hare suddenly appeared in their midst. As they pursued the hare, a magic mist descended suddenly, and, while they wandered aimlessly, they became lost, but, then, after a while, they accidentally found the house of Blàr Buidhe. As

---

[58] For a recent thematic analysis comparing *BDL* and *DF*, see Meek, Donald E., '*Duanaire Finn* and Gaelic Scotland', in John Carey (ed.), *Duanaire Finn: Reassessments* (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 2003), 19-39.

[59] Nagy, Joseph Falaky, 'Fenian Heroes and their Rites of Passage', in *HP*, 163; Ó hÓgáin, Dáithí, *Fionn mac Cumhaill: Images of the Gaelic Hero* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1988), 35; and Cartmill, Matt, *A View to a Death in the Morning: Hunting and Nature through History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993), ch. 3.

[60] *Ibid.*, 164.

[61] *HSGW*, 157.

[62] Nagy, Joseph Falaky, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw*, 39-40.

[63] Campbell, J. F., 'Fionn's Enchantment', *Revue Celtique*, vol. 1 (1870–72), 193-202. This tale was sent to J. F. Campbell from Donald C. MacPherson [Abrach], sometime Librarian of the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, who incidentally collected the story from his own grandmother, Màiri MacIntosh, who also belonged to Bohuntin, a grand-daughter of *Eòghain Ruadh Mac an Tòisich* who saw action at Culloden; *LF*, 86-88; *PTWH*, ii, 181-202, 'Maghach Colgar'; MacDougall, Rev. James (ed.), *Folk and Hero Tales*, Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition, Argyllshire Series, vol. III (London: David Nutt, 1891), 64-72; *FSPTFWB*, 233-39.

they entered the house, Blàr Buidhe, a giant, with the cast of a magic wand, petrified each of Fionn's six companions in turn. However, this magic enchantment did not work on Fionn; so the giant tried to kill Fionn instead by using a golden apple. This attempt ended in failure, and so, after a bout of grappling, the giant finally managed to skewer Fionn with a stake through his hips. Fionn was thus immobilised, and greatly feared for his life, and resorted to a last-ditch attempt to save himself, and blew Còrn na Féinne. Diarmaid, Fionn's close companion, heard the call and responded quickly. He found Fionn crippled and near to death. After he had heard of the day's events, Diarmaid vowed vengeance and set out for the giant's house. The giant treated Diarmaid with the same contempt as he had shown to Fionn's companions. However, Diarmaid proved too worthy an opponent for Blàr Buidhe. The golden apple provided Diarmaid with a weapon to kill all of Blàr Buidhe's companions. Diarmaid and the giant then grappled, whereupon the giant received his just deserts when Diarmaid likewise skewered him with the stake through the hips. The giant pleaded for his life by offering a cup of healing balm to Diarmaid, which he then used to wash Fionn's wounds. These wounds were healed after his injuries had been washed three times and so Diarmaid saved Fionn.

This story is a version of *A' Bhruidhean Chaorthainn*, in which the *Fianna* are enticed into an enchanted *bruidhean* and are stuck to their seats until they are rescued by Diarmaid and his companions. The earliest manuscript of this tale from Scottish Gaelic tradition was written in 1603 at Dunstaffnage (Argyll) by Eoghan MacPhail, who belonged to Muckairn.[64] Although the hunting action at the beginning of the tale is 'peripheral' to the plot as a whole, it is, nonetheless, essential. The hunting activity acts as a frame, because it occupies a liminal area and therefore opens the bounds of possibility. Only from the ordinary can extraordinary phenomena occur.

A similar technique was used to similar effect in English medieval literature (notably in Arthurian romance)[65] as witnessed by Anne Rooney's insight:

> ...forging of the fantastic and real in medieval literature, and in the romances in particular, the hunt can lead to the margins of experience, to adventure and

[64] NLS Adv.MS.72.1.34, ff. 1-24; *LF*, 86-88; *GFMR*, 251; see also Bannerman, John, *The Beatons: A Medical Kindred in the Classical Gaelic Tradition* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986), 112; 150-51.

[65] For Gaelic traditions regarding Arthurian Romance see Gillies, William, 'Arthur in Gaelic tradition. Part I: Folktales and Ballads', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, vol. 2 (Winter, 1981), 47-72; Gillies, William, 'Arthur in Gaelic tradition. Part II: Romances and Learned Lore', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, vol. 3 (Summer, 1982), 41-75.

> sometimes death. It serves as a transitional activity which allows the hero to leave this familiar world to pass from the ordinary to the fantastic.[66]

This literary device was used so often that it became something of a convention in medieval literature.[67] The audience for whom these stories and ballads were composed may have come to expect this type of framing, whereby the hunt's narrative function is used as a means to contrive an adventure. Commonly, as noted, there is an evocation of liminality, which usually presages the introduction of supernatural elements. Another early example, taken from a tale, *Feis Tighe Chonain Chinn-Shléibhe*, found in Irish manuscripts of the 12th and 13th centuries, bears this point out:

> Do sreathadh an t-seilg rin leó fó shliabh úr-aoibhinn Eachtaidhe, gur leathadar ór rin fó shléibhtibh bann-ghlasa, agas fó dhoireadhaibh daingne doi-eólair, agas fó chorracha cloch-gharbhadh ceann-ruadh, agas fó mhaghaibh réigh-fhairsionga na g-críoch fó cóimhneara dóibh; agas ró ionnraidh gach taoiseach Féinne dóibh a ionad urdhalta, agas a láthair léigthe, agas a bheárrna baofhafil, mar a g-cleachtadaoir cosgar gacha seilge do chur roimhe sin; agas do léigeadar seasdan na seilge seachránaidhe rin fó na coillte go coitcheann; gur chuireadar fiadha fior-luatha ar fásadhaibh; agas míotla mong-ruadh tar maoil-eannaibh; agas rionnaicc ar seachrán, agas broic ar bruadh-chlaraibh, agus eoin ar eitiolla, agas laoigh allta ar luaith-réim; agas do léigiodar a g-coin g-craosacha, g-cinn-bheaga, g-cóimh-fheargacha, trom-luatha, a g-coinne agas a g-comhdháil a chéile chum na seilge sar-mhóire sin. Acht céadna, ba láimh-dhearg laoch, agas ba chroidhearg coin, agas ba chosgarthach, có-mbuidheach Fianna Eirionn a h-aithle na seigle saothraidhe seardánaidhe sin.[68]
>
> The chase was extended by them over the green pleasant mountain of Eachtaidhe, and from thence it spread over other green-capped mountains, through dense impassable woods, over marshy, rugged, reddish hills, and across the smooth extensive plains of the adjacent districts. Every Fenian chief chose the place which his taste suggested, his starting point, and the pass of danger, where he had been accustomed to exercise his power in every chase, in which he had been previously engaged; and the shouts which they raised in the turns and doubles of that hunt, re-echoed throughout the woods around; so that they started the nimblest bucks in the forest, caused the smaller red-furred game to clamber up the summit of rocks, sacred foxes astray, aroused badgers from the mountain clefts, drove birds to the wing, and fawns to their utmost speed. They then unleashed their ravenous, small-headed, angry, nimble hounds, and by a simultaneous movement in concert, set them upon the abundant chase. Nevertheless, the hands of the heroes were stained with blood, hounds were mangled and gory, yet the Fenians of Eire met success, and proud they were of their hands on the occasion of that laborious clamorous hunting match.[69]

---

[66] Rooney, Anne, *Hunting in Middle English Literature* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1993), 64.
[67] *GFMR*, 37-38.
[68] O' Kearney, Nicholas (ed.), *Feis Tighe Chonain Chinn-Shleibhe; or, The Festivities of Conan of Ceann-Sleibhe, in the County of Clare* (Dublin: Ossianic Society, 1855), 118-20.
[69] *Ibid.*, 119-21.

It may be noticed that the hunting-frame, though typically used in *fian*-lore, is not exclusive to it. Several stories begin with the appearance of a mysterious stranger while the heroes are in pursuit of an enchanted deer or such-like quarry.[70] The hunting-frame device, which typically enhances the protagonist's nobility, is used in many Irish tales: *Díthreabhach Glinne an Phéice* or *Murchadh Mac Briain agus An Díthreabhach*;[71] *Eachtra an Ghliomaigh Chabodhair* or *Eachta Aodha Duibh*; *Eachtra Luigheach Ghuilchleasach* and *Tóruigheacht na hEilite le Cú Chuilinn agus Oillioll Fionn*;[72] and, in Scottish Gaelic tales such as *Ùruisg Choire-nan-Nuallan*;[73] *Àirigh na h-Aon-Oidhche*;[74] *Sgialachd Fear na h-Eabaid*;[75] *Conachar agus an Torc-Nimhe*,[76] *Sealg Bheinn-Eidir*,[77] a version of *A' Bhruidhean Chaorthainn*; *Gille nan Cochal-Craicinn*;[78] *Mac Mhuirich Mór agus a' Bheist*;[79] the story of Niall Noíghiallach,[80] or, indeed, the Arthurian tale, *Sir Uallabh O' Còrn*.[81] Anne Rooney has summarised admirably the use of this conventional framework within medieval English literature; and the comparison is also applicable to the use of the hunting-frame within Celtic medieval literature:

> This naturally reflects the erratic and unpredictable course of a real hunt: there is no consistent order in which events occur and so no logical sequence in which to present them[...]In the literary texts, this unpredictability emerges in the use of the hunt to initiate an adventure. The hunting figure in the romances is, like the real hunter in the medieval forest, very much at the mercy of fortune. He does not know where the animal will lead him, nor the outcome of the hunt,

---

[70] Ogle, M. B., 'The Stag-Messenger Episode', *American Journal of Philology*, vol. 37 (1916), 387-416, where it is argued convincingly that some aspects of hunting episodes in medieval European literature arose from oriental motifs.
[71] Bruford, Alan, 'Murchadh Mac Briain agus an Díthreabhach', *Éigse: A Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 12 (1967-68), 301-26.
[72] *GFMR*, 14.
[73] MacDougall, Rev. James, 'Ùruisg Choire-nan-Nuallan', *ZCP*, vol. 1 (1897), 328-41.
[74] Robertson, Rev. C. M., 'Folklore from the West of Ross-shire', *TGSI*, vol. XXVI (1904–07), 268-69; MacDougall, Rev. James (auth.); Calder, Rev. George (ed.), *Fairy Tales and Fairy Lore* (Edinburgh: James Grant, 1910), 258-61.
[75] Craig, K. C., *Sgialachdan Dhunnchaidh* (Glasgow: Alasdair Matheson & Co., 1944), 17-29; and also Macdonald, Duncan (auth.); Campbell, John Lorne (rec.), Matheson, Angus & Thomson, Derick (trans. & ed.), *Fear na h-Eabaid/The Man with the Habit: A Folk Tale related by Duncan Macdonald, Peninerine, South Uist, (Donnchadh Mac Dhomhnaill Mhic Dhonnchaidh) and recorded by John Lorne Campbell, Esq., LL.D., of Canna, at Loch Boisdale, 14th February, 1950* (Glasgow[?]: [n.pub.], 1953)
[76] MacAoidh, Uilleam, 'Sgeulachdan Ghlinn-Uruchdainn', *TGSI*, vol. I (1872–73), 48-49.
[77] Glasrach, 'Sealg Bheinn-Eidir', *An Gàidheal*, leabh. IV, air. 39 (Mar., 1875), 81-85.
[78] Macdougall, Rev. James (ed.), *Folk and Hero Tales*, 42-55.
[79] *CG*, v, 314-15.
[80] *DG*, 54.
[81] Campbell, Rev. John G., 'Sgeulachd air Sir Uallabh O' Corn', *TGSI*, vol. XIII (1886–87), 69-83.

> and this introduces innumerable possibilities within a framework which is essentially realistic (although the ensuing adventure frequently is not).[82]

Thus, the prelude to the hunt heralds an adventure in which the protagonist, usually an heroic figure, faces the demands made upon his resilience and prowess, and is usually not only fatigued and disorientated but, in many cases, bereft of the of the accoutrements that mark his status in a socially secure framework—his hounds and huntsmen. In other words, he is entering the unknown.

In Séathrún Céitinn's *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, written *c.* 1638, there is an interesting account of the lifestyle said to have been followed by the *fian*-band:

> Agus is amhlaidh do bhídís an Fhian ag coinnmheadh ar fhearaibh Éireann ó Shamhain go Bealltaine, agus iad ré cosnamh córa agus ré cosc éagcóra do ríoghaibh agus do thighearnaibh Éireann; agus fós ré caomhna agus ré coimhéad chuan na críche ar fhoirneart eachtrann; agus ó Bhealltaine go Samhain ré seilg agus ré fiadhach do dhéanamh, agus ris gach feidhm oile da n-iarradh rí Éireann orra, mar atá cosc gada agus díol cána, ré cosc díbhfeargach agus gach uilc oile da mbíodh san chrích ó shoin amach; agus tuarastail chinnte da chionn soin dóibh, amhail bhíos anois ó gach rígh san Eoruip do na caiptínibh agus do na ceannaibh feadhna bhíos ag déanamh feadhma faoi féin. Fá héigean iomorro don Fhéin ó Bhealltaine go Samhain bheith taoibh ré n-a seilg agus ré n-a bhfiadhach féin mar choinnmheadh agus mar thuarastal ó ríoghaibh Éireann, mar atá an feolmhach do bheith mar bhiadh aca, agus croicne na mbeathadhach n-allta mar thuarastal. Ní hithtí leo trá acht aonphroinn san ló go n-oidhche, agus sin um thráth nóna. Agus is é gnáthughadh do bhíodh aca gach sealg do-níthí leo ar maidin do chur timcheall meadhóin laoi leis an ngiollanraidh go tulaigh d'áirithe mar a mbídís i gcomhgar choille agus riasca, agus teinnte treathanmhóra d'adhnadh ann, agus dá chlais talmhan do dhéanamh san riasc i gcriaidh bhuidhe, agus iomad do chlochaibh eimhir do chur san teinidh, agus cuid don fheolmhach do chur ar bearaibh da bruith ris an dteinidh, agus cuid oile dhi do cheangal i ndlaoithibh seasca lé suagánaibh agus a cur da bearbhadh san chlais fá mó don dá chlais, agus bheith ag biathadh na gcloch do bhíodh san teinidh orra, go mbeantaoi fiucha minic asta go beith bearbhtha dhóibh. Agus do bhíodh do mhéid na dteinnte-se go bhfuilid a láithreacha dubhloiscthe i mórán d'áitibh i n-Éirinn aniú, agus is díobh ghairmid na criadhaireadha Fulacht Fian aniú.[83]
>
> Now the Fian used to be quartered on the men of Ireland from Samhain to Bealltaine; and it was their duty to uphold justice, and to prevent injustice, for the kings and the lords of Ireland; and also to guard and preserve the harbours of the country from the violence of foreigners; and from Bealltaine to Samhainn to be engaged in hunting, and the chase, and in every other duty the king of Ireland might impose upon them, such as putting a stop to robbery, exacting the payment of tribute, putting down malefactors, and so of every other evil in the country. For this they had a certain pay, as every king in Europe gives pay to the

[82] Rooney, Anne, *Hunting in Middle English Literature*, 138.
[83] Keating, Geoffrey (auth); Comyn, David & Dineen, Patrick (eds.), *The History of Ireland/Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 326-28.

> captains and generals who serve under them. However, from Bealltaine until Samhainn, the Fian were obliged to depend solely on the products of their hunting and of the chase as maintenance and wages from the Kings of Ireland; thus, they were to have the flesh of food, and the skins of the wild animals as pay. But they took one meal in the day-and-night, and that was in the afternoon. And it was their custom to send their attendants about noon with whatever they had killed in the morning's hunt to an appointed hill, having wood and moorland in the neighbourhood, and to kindle raging fires thereon, and put them into them a large number of emery stones; and to dig two pits in the yellow clay of the moorland, and put some meat on spits to roast before the fir; and to bind another portion of it with suagans in dry bundles, and set it to boil in the larger two pits, and keep plying them with stones that were in the fire, making them seethe often until they were cooked. And these fires were so large that their sites are to-day in Ireland burnt to blackness, and these are now called Fulacht Fian by the peasantry.[84]

This Fenian tradition does not seem to have been noted in Gaelic tradition in the Highlands apart from a fleeting mention of Fionn and his men cooking venison at *Dal Sealg* in Glenroy, Brae Lochaber.[85] Céitinn then goes on to describe how the *Fianna* 'relaxed' after a hard day's hunt and the manner in which they set up temporary accommodation when they:

> ...chruinnighdís gus an tulaigh ar a mbíodh an teine, do nochtadh gach aon díobh é féin, agus do cheangladh a léine fá chaol a chuim, agus do ghabhdaois timcheall an dara luig do luaidheamar thuas, ag folcadh a bhfolt agus ag nighe a mball agus ag buain allais díobh; agus ann sin ag suathadh a lúthach agus a gcuisleann, go gcuirdís amhlaidh sin a dtuirse dhíobh, agus do hithtí a bproinn leo da éis sin. Agus iar gcaitheamh a bproinne dhóibh do ghabhdaois ag tógbháil a bhfianbhoth agus ag córughadh a leapthach, go gcuirdís inneall suain orra féin amhlaidh sin.[86]

> ...assembled on the hill on which was the fire, each of them stripped off, and tied his shirt round his waist; and they engaged themselves round the second pit we have mentioned above, bathing their hair and washing their limbs, and removing their sweat, and then exercising their joints and muscles, thus ridding themselves of their fatigue; and after this they took a meal; and when they had taken their meal, they proceeded to build their hunting-tents, and so prepare for sleep.[87]

Céitinn here euhemerises the description on the understanding, perhaps, that he is describing an idealised mythological past. What is interesting about the above account is its consistency with other Fenian narratives before and after Céitinn's own time. Also, the building of temporary accommodation is recorded in many hunting accounts

---

[84] *Ibid.*, 327-29.
[85] MacCulloch, John, *The Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland*, 4 vols. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown & Green, 1824), ii, 80.
[86] *Ibid.*, 328.

during the medieval period and later in Scotland.[88] Aside from Gaelic sources of material, Fionn is remembered as a semi-mythological huntsman of gigantic stature for 'it is said that Fyn Mackcoule, the son of Coelus, Scottis man[...]wes ane grete huntar, and ry*ch*t terribill, for hug quantite, to the pepill, of quhom ar mony wlgare fabillis amang ws, no*ch*t vnlyke to their gestis quhilikis ar rehersit of King Arthure.'[89]

There is a close association between Fionn and Ossian. The etymology of the word Ossian (Oisín) is revealing as it may stem from the diminutive of *os*, 'little fawn'. Further, the name of Ossian's son, Oscar, may mean 'deer-love'.[90] A 12th century biographical source for Fionn states that his name was once Demne which, according to Dáithí hÓgáin, might be a corruption of *damne* ['a little stag' < **dam-nijo*].[91] The connection continues with an early reference to Ossian's deer-mother in the 12th century *Book of Leinster*.[92] The assumption is that she assumed a deer-form in order to entice Fionn from his company of huntsmen, and thereby, finding him alone, seduced him by reassuming human form. A version of the song, *Sanas Oisein D'a Mhathair*,[93] was collected by Alexander Carmichael from Glencoe tradition:

Ma 's tu mo mhathair 's gur a fiadh thu,
Bheir mi hoirion ho a hau,
Eirich mun eirich grian ort.
Bheir mi hoirionn ho a hau,
Eho hir ir i-ibhag o,
Na hao hi or a ro hau.

Ma 's tu mo mhathair 's gur a fiadh thu
Siubhail sliabh mu 'n tig an teasach.

Ma 's tu mo mhathair 's gura fiadh thu
Faicill ort romh fhearaibh Fianna.

Ma 's tu mo mhathair 's gura fiadh thu
Faicill ort romh chonaibh Fianna.

---

[87] *Ibid.*, 329; Nagy, Joseph Falaky, 'Fenian Heroes and their Rites of Passage', in *HP*, 173.
[88] Dunbar, John G., *Scottish Royal Palaces: The Architecture of the Royal Residences during the Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Period* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1999), 200.
[89] *CSHB*, i, 300, bk. 7, c. 11.
[90] For an alternative etymological derivation of the name Oscar and for further discussion, see Arbuthnot, Sharon, 'On the Name Oscar and Two Little-Known Episodes Involving the Fíon', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, vol. 51 (2006), 68-81.
[91] Ó hÓgáin, Dáithí, *Fionn mac Cumhaill: Images of the Gaelic Hero*, 77.
[92] Meyer, Kuno (ed.), *Fianaigecht*, xxvi.
[93] *CG*, ii, 23, where Alexander Carmichael gives the following information on the informant with regard to the Glencoe version: One of the versions was obtained from Oirig Nic Iain—Effric or Effie Mac Iain—lineally descended, she said, from Alexander MacIain, chief of the massacred Macdonalds of Glencoe.

Ma theid thu do choiribh dona,
Faicill ort romh ghniamh nan conu,
Conaibh conachar, conaibh confhach,
Is iad air mhire-chatha romhad.
Seachainn Caoilte, seachainn Luath,
Seachainn Bruchag dhubh nam bruach,
Seachainn an saigh earbail dhuibh,
Bran mac Buidheig, namh nam fiadh,
Agus Geolaidh dian nan damh.

Ma theid thu do ghleannaibh iosal,
Faicill ort romh Chlanna Baoisge,
Clann Baoisge 's an cuid con,
Da chiad diag a dh' aireamh fhear,
A lann fein an laimh gach laoich,
A chu fein an deigh gach fir,
Is iad air eil aig Leide mac Liannain,
Is fearan beag ri sgath creaige,
Is da chu dhiag air lomhainn aige,
Is eagal air nach tig thige...[94]

If you're my mother, you're a deer,
Be up before the rising of the sun,

Be up before the rising of the sun,
Travel the slopes before the heat comes.

If you're my mother, you're a deer,
Beware of the men of the Fianna.

If you're my mother, you're a deer,
Beware of the hounds of the Fianna.

If you go to the hurtful corries,
Be wary of the actions of the hounds,
Hounds of uproar and hounds of rage
As they are in battle-fury before thee.
Avoid Caoilte, avoid Luath,
Avoid black Bruchag of the slopes,
Avoid the black-tailed bitch,
And Bran mac Buidheig, foe of deer,
And Geolaidh keen of stags.

If you go down to the lower glens,
Be wary of Clann Baoisgne,
Clann Baoisgne with their hounds,
Twelve hundred men all told,
His own blade in each warrior's hand
His own hound follows each man
Held on a leash by Leide mac Liannain,
And a little manikin in the rock's shade,

[94] *CG*, ii, 22-25; Tolmie, Francis, 'One Hundred and Five Songs of Occupation from the Western Isles of Scotland', *Journal of the Folk-song Society*, vol. IV, no. 16 (Dec., 1911), 249-50; *LF*, 198-200; *FSPTFWB*, 79.

With twelve hounds held by a leash
Fearing the hunt will not come near to him…

A variation from Mull, collected in 1871, states that a certain woman laid *geasan* [magical injunctions] on Fionn so that he had to marry the first female that he met, and that female happened to be a doe.[95]

Moving to other narrative traditions, one of the earliest Fenian tales, *Tochmarc Ailbe*, tells of how Fionn, in his dotage, wooed and won Cormac's youngest daughter Ailbhe, testing her suitability to become his spouse by means of riddles, and enticing her to share his forest abode by describing its birds, animals, fish, and fruit. Love of the chase and of the earth's natural riches are a regular theme in the Fionn cycle at all periods—thus reinforcing the quintessential nature of the *Fianna*. In another piece of early Fenian lore, the hunting frame introduces a prose narrative 'The Chase of Síd na mBan Finn and the Death of Finn', which would be better re-named 'The Slaying of the Pig of Formaóil and the Death of Finn', so that this tale is not confused with the other famous poem 'The Chase of Slievenamon.'[96] This poem was composed in either the 13th or the 14th century and, as the alternative title suggests, describes the hunt for the magic boar, *Formaóil*, where the hunting-frame is used effectively:

> Ocus dochúard gach duine fo l*eth* d'fhían*aib* hĒrenn ina dumha sealga ⁊ ina lāth*air* licthe ⁊ ina berna báeg*ail* mar no gnāthaighdís cosgur gacha sealga do chur roimi sin.
>
> And each man of the *fiana* of Ireland went separately to his mound of chase and his site of throwing and gap of danger, as they were wont to arrange every victorious chase before that.[97]

This terse description (a style maintained throughout the narrative) confirms not only the hunting technique traditionally attributed to the *Fianna*, but also identifies the chase's quarry: wild swine, wolf, badger, deer, hind, roe and fawn.[98] The watching of the chase by the nobility strongly suggests that the hunt was becoming highly ritualised and ceremonial. As the narrative continues, the *Fianna* find the grave of Failbhe Finnmaisech, a former *fian*-chief, who had been slain by the giant (magical) boar of *Formaóil*, along with fifty hounds and fifty warriors, emphasising the close

[95] *LF*, 200.
[96] *DF*, ii, 136.
[97] Meyer, Kuno (ed.), *Fianaigecht*, 52-53.
[98] *Ibid.*, 53.

relationship between hunting dogs and men. With an inspirational speech, Fionn vows vengeance upon the boar of *Formaóil*:

> 'Ocus a fīana Ērenn,' ar Finn, 'dogēnam-na selg na maidne-si amāroch ar in muic úd ó do ceil*ed* selg ocus fianchosgur ele oruinn. Ocus is uimi do ceil*ed* gach sealg ele oruinn; ūair do bī a tairrngeri dūin comracc risin muic-sin ⁊ díghēlum a[r] n-anfolta fuirri.'
>
> 'And ye *fiana* of Ireland,' said Finn, 'since other chase and hunting-trophies have failed us, we will take to-morrow morning's chase upon that swine. And it is for this that every other chase has failed us, because it was prophesied to us to encounter that swine, and we will avenge our wrongs upon it.'[99]

A description of the boar hunt follows, re-echoing the narrative's opening, with some additional detail: the dogs use scent rather than sight as gaze hounds, and, it would seem, that traps were set in the hope of killing the boar without the need to come into direct conflict (which, paradoxically, contravenes the so-called heroic code of dicing with death, but shows, at the same time, the necessity of a practical response in times of extreme danger):

> Et ro suidh gach lāech d'fían*aib* hĒrenn ina láthair lichti ⁊ ina b*eir*n bæg*ail* inn-oirc[h]ill na muici ⁊ do sgáil*ed* da ngadhr*aib* croma céolbinne croibglica fo fedhuib ⁊ fo fothrib ocus fo fásaigib ⁊ fo fánglentaib ⁊ ro chóirgetar a n-ēnaighi sealga ar fairsingib ⁊ ar forréitib na ferand oc*us* ro dhúiscetur in cullach congleca-sin, co facatur cion ⁊ cúanarta ⁊ cur*aid* na féni uili hí.
>
> And every warrior of the *fiana* of Ireland sat down at his shooting-site and his gap of danger making ready for swine. And their hounds, sweet-voiced and nimble-footed, bending their heads to the ground, were unleashed throughout the woods and forests and wildernesses and sloping glens, and they set their traps of the chase on the expanse and level parts of the land. And they roused that combative boar, so that all the hounds and pack of warriors of the *fiana* saw him.[100]

This tale concludes with a fierce combat with the boar, in which three of the best Fenian warriors (Daelgus, Diangus, and Lughaidh) are killed; Oscar kills the boar after a great bout of fighting, and the description of the *coup de grâce* is graphic—'he pulled its entrails and bowels out behind'[101]—and is said to be the traditional Fenian method. The triumph of the hunt is put into verse by Fionn, the warrior-seer:

> Lecht Fir thaichim sunn amne — dorat brón for sochaide,
> ba sgēl adhb*al*, fa gním guirt, — arna marbad don mórmuic.

[99] *Ibid.*, 54-55.
[100] *Ibid.*, 64-65.
[101] *Ibid.*, 67.

In muc ro marb Fer taichim ro marb mórān dar maithib,
nogo torchair lé h-Osgur, fá selg lāeich, fa lúathchosgur.

Ro marb trīar eile dar slúag in torc rúanata rorūad:
Dáelgus, Díangus, Lug*aid* balc, ēirg*id* is claid*id* a l*echt*!

Atrochair le h-Osgur ard in torc rūanata rogharg,
dó *nochur* dam còir ná cert co fuil ōs mōin a tiughlecht.

Here now is the grave of Fer-taichim who dealt sorrow to many,—it was a prodigious story, it was a bitter deed—having been killed by great boar.

The boar that killed Fer-taichim killed many of our nobles until it fell by Oscar,—it was the chase of a hero, it was a speedy triumph. He had killed three others of our host, the might strong boar, Daelgus, Daingus, stout Lughaidh,—arise and dig their graves!

It had fallen by noble Oscar, the mighty fierce boar, he granted it Neither fairplay or right, so that its last resting-place is on the moor.[102]

The hunt could be a narrative frame for heroic adventures as well as the subject-matter of longer stories. A traditional narrative, *Mu Shealg Dheireannach Oisein*,[103] or, as it is sometimes referred to, *Oisean an dèidh na Fèinne*, giving rise to the proverbial meaning of the last survivor of the *Fianna*, centres on Ossian's hunting exploits. Briefly, the story relates that Ossian is invited to his son-in-law's feast and seeing a deer-shank, Patrick asked whether he had ever seen one as large. Ossian, by now blind and infirm, fingered the shank and said he had once seen a blackbird's shank far bigger. On hearing this, Ossian's daughter, throws the book full of Fingalian lore, that Patrick had collected, into the fire. Ossian, in order to show that he was actually telling the truth, invited Patrick to follow him so that he could relate the events. After a few encounters, they rested on a hill for the night, and the next day Ossian raised the hunting hallo after the appearance of a Fenian hound, Biorach mac Buidheig, who pulled down seven full-grown stags. This hound was not sated by the hunt, and so went mad, and thus could not be restrained and was eventually killed by Ossian. Ossian then proceeded to eat his way through the caught venison, but his son-in-law drew away a shank, seeing that Ossian was unlikely to leave any remnant. Even after such a feast, Ossian's hunger was not fully satisfied, and he resented his son-in-law who took away the shank (as the full amount would have restored Ossian

[102] *Ibid.*, 66-67.

to his former self). They set out to return home, whereupon his son-in-law, apparently on his mother's advice, intended to kill Ossian by pushing him over a cliff. Ossian landed on a rock, found his lost fairy ring which restored his sight, after which he returned home triumphantly with the 'lost' shank which proved the truth of his tale. Though this summary does not do any justice to the tale, it reflects the importance of the hunt in narrative storytelling. Despite its mythological tone, it relates Ossian's 'Last Hunt' in order for a feast of venison to restore Ossian to his former strength and powers.[104] It is evident that this story was also known in Argyll. St Patrick castigated Ossian for exaggeration—as the saint used to put Ossian's descriptions of the *Fianna* into writing—when he heard about the bone of a huge deer, in the marrow-hole of which the bone of an ordinary deer could turn, and thus he thought the old warrior's stories were mere invention 'and in his indignation he threw the writings into the fire.'[105] This tale may then represent the creative tension between the Christian belief of truth-telling, in contrast to the alleged Pagan practice of propounding lies using the hunt as a means of conveying this very message. And yet, if this is indeed the case, Ossian, and not St Patrick, triumphed in the end, at least, in this instance.

Hunting Hounds and Fenian Ballad Tradition

Within Fenian lore in general, and Fenian ballads in particular, there is a close relationship between the *Fianna* and their animals, especially the Fenian hounds. This can be clearly seen in a ballad from *DF*, *Bran's Departure from the Fian* (LVI), in which Fionn regrets lashing out at his favourite and loyal hound. This is all the more painful for Fionn as he was responsible for driving away the creature in which he had shown the utmost love and dedication. Such is the emotional rift that Fionn calls it *sgaradh cuirp re hanmain*, 'the parting of the soul and body':[106]

> Rí na gcon do bíodh am laim
> os leicn*ibh* Sleibhe Colláin
> is ni raibhe ar bith go mbáigh
> cú ar a mbeith a túaruscb*áil*.
>
> Da taobh geala do bhi ag Bran
> earboll nua corca gléghlan

---

[103] McKay, John G., 'Mu Shealg Dheireannach Oisein/Concerning Ossian's Last Hunting', *An Deò-Gréine*, leabh. XV, earr. 11 (1920), 181-86.
[104] See also *LF*, 38-39; *PTWH*, ii, 113-20; *FSPTFWB*, 82-105.
[105] *FSPTFWB*, 84.
[106] *DF*, ii, 198-99.

ceatramh*a* corcra go roinn
ótha earboll go hiardruim

Ceithre cosa gorma faoí
re himtea*cht* oidhche & laoí
cruibh úaine nár tea*cht*sat báigh
ingne ettro*cht*a iucháin

Rosc dreagain ina ceann cóir
ris nir fedadh iomarbháidh
aluinn agus caomh a clú
mo is gasta na g*ach* miolchú.[107]

The king of hounds who used to be held by me on
the sides of Sliabh Colláin—there was not on the boastful
earth a hound who could be praised as Bran could be.

Two white sides had Bran and a fresh crimson
shining tail. His crimson haunch was well apportioned
stretching from his tail to the end of this back (?).
He had four blue feet for going by night and day,
green paws that[...]not battle and gleaming pale-red claws.

He had a fierce eye in his shapely head. It was impossible
to contend with him. Beautiful and lovely was his fame.
He was swifter than all the hare-hounds.[108]

Just as Fionn is the superlative warrior-seer, so too, Bran is the ideal hunting hound and companion, which makes Bran's estrangement even harder for Fionn to bear:

Tri hualla g*acha* nona
ag ar gconartoibh cródha
coin na Feine ag iarr*aidh* Bhrain
's an Fhían uile go cíamhair.

Three cries every evening were uttered by
our brave dogs: it was the Fian hounds
seeking Bran, while the Fian were all in
gloom.[109]

Some of these verses are reminiscent of those to be found in *Laoidh a' Choin Duibh*.[110] A common proverbial phrase relates how Fionn chose a hound:

Siud mar thaghadh Fionn a chù:

---

[107] *DF*, ii, 198.
[108] *DF*, ii, 199; *RC*, i, 280-81, 340-42.
[109] *DF*, ii, 202-03.
[110] Stewart, Alexander & Stewart, Donald (eds.), *Cochruinneacha Taoghta de Shaothair nam Bard Gaëleach: A Choice Collection of the Works of the Highland Bards, Collected in the Highlands and Isles*, 2 vols. (Duneidin: Stiuart, 1804), ii, 558-61; and translation in *FSPTFWB*, 200-03; Campbell, (Lord) Archibald (ed.), *Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition*, Argyllshire Series, vol. I (London: David Nutt, 1889), 4-10; *RC*, i, 281-82, 355-57; *LF*, 90-92.

Sùil mar àirneag, cluas mar dhuilleig,
Uchd mar ghearran, speir mar chorran,
'S an t-alt-lùthaidh fad' on cheann.

Thus would Fingal choose his hound:
Eye like sloe, ear like leaf,
Chest like horse, hough like sickle,
And the pith-joint far from head.[111]

Such knowledge was later re-imagined in Gaelic song as can be seen from an extract which probably dates to around the mid-17th century:

An cù 'bhi'aig Raonull-mac-Raonuil-'ic-Iain,
Beireadh e sithionn a beinn:
Ceann leathan, eadar 'dha shuil, ach biorach 's bus dubh air gu shroin.
Uchd gearrain, seang-leasrach; 's bha fhionnadh
Mar fhrioghan tuirc nimheil nan còs,
Donn mar àirneag bha shuil; speir luthannach lùbta,
'S faobhar a chnamh mar ghein.
An cù sud 'bh'aig Raonull-mac-Raonuil-'ic-Iain,
'S tric thug e sithionn a beinn.

Ronald-son of Ronald-son of John's good dog,
He could bring venison from the mountain,
He was broad between the eyes; otherwise sharp and black-muzzled to the tip of his nose.
With a horse-like chest, he was small flanked, and his pile
Was like the bristles of the den frequenting boar.
Brown as a sole was his eye;
Supple-jointed (was he), with houghs bent as a bow;
All his bones felt sharp and hard as the edge of a wedge.
Such was Ranald Mac Ranald vic John's good dog,
That often brought venison from the mountain.[112]

The backdrop of the mythological *Fianna* adds a depth and resonance that lifts the poetic description of the hound to an idealised archetype. This, of course, is extremely good advice, as this criterion holds good for any hunting dog. There is even a curious dialogue between two deer, in which a young deer, confident in his own swiftness and ability to evade a hound in the chase, proclaims:

Sleamhainn 's buidhe mo bhian,
'S cha do chuir e eang air sliabh
Beathach riamh 'bheireadh orm.

---

[111] Nicolson, (Sheriff) Alexander (ed.), *A Collection of Gaelic Proverbs and Familiar Phrases* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1996), 388; *DDSSH*, 264.

[112] Stewart, Rev. Alexander (Nether-Lochaber), *Nether Lochaber: The Natural History, Legends and Folk-Lore of the West Highlands* (Edinburgh: William Paterson, 1883), 197-98. According to Nether-Lochaber, this Ranald Mac Ranald vic John (properly Raghnall mac Raghnaill 'ic Iain) was a celebrated hunter of Glencoe, slain at the battle of Philliphaugh (1645).

Sleek and yellow is my skin,
And no beast ever planted foot
On hillside that could catch me.

The older deer, through the experience of age, offering a corrective to the optimism of the younger deer, is said to have replied:

An cuilean bus-dubh buidhe,
Ceud chù na saighe
Rugadh anns a' Mhàrt
'S a bheathaiche air giarbhean
'S air bainne ghabhair
Cha do chuir e eang air sliabh
Beathach riamh nach beireadh air.

The young dog black-mouthed
And yellow: the first dog
Of the first litter. Born in March,
And fed on quern meal and goat's milk,
There never planted foot on hillside
Beast it could not catch.[113]

The various dialogues between Ossian and St Patrick feature the hunt as a contentious topic between them. In general, St Patrick argues for the future, while Ossian is content to hark back to the past, which seems ever-present to him:

Do b*udh* mían le Fionn na ffleadh
síansán con a ffad ar sliabh
coin allta ag fagbháil a ccúan
mordháil na sl*uagh* dob é a mían.

A thing beloved of feasting Fionn was the music
of hounds far off on a mountain, wolves leaving

[113] Campbell, Rev. John G., (coll.); Wallace, Jessie & Macinnes, Duncan (eds.), *Clan Traditions and Popular Tales of the Western Highlands and Islands*, Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition, Argyllshire Series, vol. V (London: David Nutt, 1895), 123-24; Stewart, Rev. Alexander (Nether-Lochaber), *Nether Lochaber: The Natural History, Legends and Folk-Lore of the West Highlands* (Edinburgh: William Paterson, 1883), 184; and Stewart, Rev. Alexander (Nether-Lochaber), 'Nether-Lochaber', *Inverness Courier*, vol. LIII, no. 2843 (9 May, 1872), 3, where a verse is attributed to supernatural input when advice was sought from a fairy in order to chose a pedigree hunting hound:

Cuilean bas-dubh, buidhe,
Ceud mhac na saidhe,
Air àrach air meog 's air bainne ghabhar,
Cha deach' air sliabh air nach beireadh.

Get a yellow brindled dog,
First-born of the dam's first litter,
With a muzzle as black as jet,
Reared on whey and milk of goats,
No stag in forest can escape him.

their lairs, the pomp of the hosts: it was that he
loved.[114]

Indeed, St Patrick rebukes Ossian thus for his obstinate refusal to contemplate anything else:

...ni mhairionn Fin nó na coin
'ní mairfe tú a Oisín onna cclíar.

A sheanóir do sháobh do chiall
beag in sgel gan a mbeith beó
a raiph do shlúag*aibh* ann sin
ní bhía as ní fhuil a*cht* m*ar* cheó.

...Fionn and the hounds live no more, and you shall cease to live,
Oisín of the clerics...

O ancient man, who have perverted your reason:
you make little account of their being alive no more:
all the hosts of past time shall be, and already are, but mist.[115]

In many ways, the whole ethos of the *Fianna* is discussed by reference to their hounds. As both participants debate the issue there always remains a certain amount of doubt of ever reaching anything that could be called common ground. Kate Chadbourne puts this tension into succinct terms:

> To Patrick and the clerics who simultaneously relish stories of the hunt even as they ultimately condemn the hunting life of the *fiana*, the dogs represent a recalcitrant and un-redeemable past. The significance of hounds and their voices to Oisín[...]have the power to evoke the entire milieu of *fiana*. For all the *fénnidi*[...]the dogs represent the most cherished aspects of themselves and their chosen life: free, wild, impulsive, heroic, quarrelsome, heedless, loyal, and untouched by Christian remorse, guilt, or sin.[116]

As a last resort, St Patrick threatens Ossian with the same fate as godless Fionn, but such admonishment falls on deaf ears. Overall, there appears to be an on-going dialectical process that is resistant to any resolution:

'S a gheall re meadhair na ccon
is re ríar na sgol g*ach* lá
is gan smáoíthiugh ar Dhía
ata Fionn na fFían a làimh.

---

[114] *DF*, ii, 205-07.
[115] *DF*, ii, 206-07, 214-15.
[116] Chadbourne, Kate, 'The Voices of Hounds: Heroic Dogs and Men in the Finn Ballads and Tales', in Joseph Falaky Nagy & Leslie Ellen Jones (eds.), *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: CSANA Yearbook 3-4* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 29.

Fionn of the Fiana is imprisoned on account of the joy of the chase and the attention he devoted to the learned every day without a thought of God.[117]

In a pseudo-Ossianic piece, *Corag Bhrain a's a Choin Duibh*, commonly referred to more simply as *Laoidh a' Choin Duibh*, there is a colourful description of Bran:

Casan buidhe bha air Bran,
Dà thaobh dhubh agus tàrr geal,
Druim uaine mu'n suidhe sealg,
Cluasan corrach, cro dhearg.[118]

Bran had yellow paws,
Two black sides and white underneath,
A green back (on which hunting would rest),
Pointed blood-red ears.

This description concurs with a similar one given in *DF*, but it should not be taken as a literal description of Irish hounds in general; the green back and red ears mark out Bran as a *cú sídhe* or fairy hound:[119]

Ionann a suirghe is a sealg,
    riú is cuibhdhe ceàrd na bhFian:
atá an rath ar sliocht an rú,
    is math a gclú is a gciall.

Eineach is eangnamh is iocht
    do ceangladh ar a sliocht riamh;
fíon agus ciar agus mil,
    a mian sin le sealgaibh fiadh.

Alike their wooing and their hunting; meet for them is the Fian's trade; grace dwells upon the prince's race; good is their fame and good their sense.

Generosity and prowess and mercy have been bound on their lineage ever; wine and honey and waxen candles, these are their desire, together with hunting of the deer.[120]

---

[117] *DF*, ii, 212-13.

[118] Stewart, Alexander & Stewart, Donald (eds.), *Cochruinneacha Taoghta de Shaothair nam Bard Gaëleach*, ii, 560; *RC*, i, 281, 342; *LF*, 148-50; Dunne, John, 'The Fenian Traditions of Sliabh-na-m-Ban', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. I (1849–51), 361; Gray, Affleck, *Legends of the Cairngorms* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1987), 98-102.

[119] Hemming, Jessica, '*Bos Primigenius* in Britain: Or, Why Do Fairy Cattle Have Red Ears', *Folklore*, vol. 113, no. 1 (Apr., 2002), 71-82, where she offers a possible explanation of why red-eared white-bodied animals, usually associated with fairies or supernatural beings, were a widespread phenomenon rooted not in fantasy but in zoology. This may hold in the case of fairy cattle but certainly not for Bran, see *FSPTFWB* 204-07; and Reinhard, John R. & Hull, Verham E., 'Bran and Sceoland', *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies*, vol. XI (1936), 42-58.

[120] *BDL*, 208-09, ll. 2067-2074.

There are also accounts from oral tradition of how Fionn found his famous hunting companion. These emphasise an otherworldly origin for Bran.[121]

Laoidh a' Choin Duibh[122] tells of a fight between Bran and a Black Hound, belonging to a stranger. The Black Hound manages to kill around a hundred and fifty hounds of the *Fianna* before Fionn lets slip Bran, who then proceeds to kill the Black Hound. The ballad opens with a typical hunt-scene:

> Air bhi dhuinn la sa bheinn seilg,
> B'ainmic leinn bhi gun choin,
> Ag eisdeachd ri gàirich eun,
> Ri buirich Fhiagh, agus Lon.
>
> Rinn sinn àr ann gun cheilg,
> Le ar conaibh, a's le ar'n armaibh nimh,
> Thainig sinn da'r teach tra nòin,
> Gu subhach ceolar le gean.
>
> An oiche sin dhuinn an tigh Fhinn,
> Ochoin! bu ghrinn ann ar cor,
> Ri dhuinn a bhi sgathadh theud,
> Ri caitheamh Eun, Fiagh, a's Lon.[123]
>
> On a day that we were in the hunting-hill
> Seldom were we without dogs,
> Listening to the cries of birds,
> Roaring of deer and elks.
>
> We did slaughter, doubtless,
> With our dogs and death-inflicting weapons;
> And came to our dwelling at noon,
> Joyful, musical, and with right good will.
>
> That day in Fionn's dwelling,
> Dear me! delightful was our condition
> As we struck strings,
> And ate birds, deer, and elk.[124]

Other ballads tell of how Bran met his death in a dog-fight (the very same in which Gráidhne saw Diarmaid's *ball-seirce*) which eulogises the obvious merits of Fionn's favourite hunting hound:[125]

---

[121] *FSPTFWB*, 203-10; Reinhard, John R. & Hull, Verham E., 'Bran and Sceoland', 42-58.
[122] Stewart, Alexander & Stewart, Donald (eds.), *Cochruinneacha Taoghta de Shaothair nam Bard Gaëleach*, ii, 558-61 and translation in *FSPTFWB*, 200-03; Campbell, (Lord) Archibald (ed.), *Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition*, Argyllshire Series, vol. I (London: David Nutt, 1889), 4-10; *RC*, i, 281-82, 355-57; *LF*, 90-92.
[123] *Ibid.*, ii, 558.
[124] *FSPTFWB*, 200-01.
[125] *LF*, 148-50; *RC*, i, 340-42.

Nuair a shuidhich Fionn an t-sealg
'S am a Ghabh Bran fearg r 'a chuid;
Throid an da choin ann san t-sliabh,
Bran gu dian agus cu Ghuill.[126]

When Fionn had set the hunt
At that time Bran was ferocious;
The two hounds fought on the hill
Bran with gusto against Goll's hound.

Pedigree deerhounds were an integral part of any hunting endeavour, and were thus highly prized, as a reference from a specimen of *BDL* court poetry testifies. The poem, composed by Giolla Críost Brúilingeach (who may have been one of a family of Galbraiths from Gigha), praises Tomaltach MacDiarmada (*d.* 1458), lord of Magh Luirg (Moylurg) in Co. Roscommon, and extols the canine virtues of his hounds:

Ar eineach agus ar aithne
    's ar eangnamh i n-iath an fhéidh,
giolla glaccaomh, bile Banbha,
    macaomh tighe Teamhra tréin.
. . . . .

Míolchoin gharga ar iallaibh órdha
    ag Tomaltach *'s ceann ar cách*;
sguir go moch san aonach uallach
    mán loch bhraonach bhuadhach bhláth.

Renowned his generosity and reputation,
    his prowess in the haunts of deer,
hero of the house of might Tara,
    smooth-palmed youth, Ireland's sacred tree.
. . . . .
Fierce deerhounds on gilded leashes
    are owned by Tomaltach, lord of all;
horses in the morning in proud assembly
    round the mild dewy healing loch.[127]

After its elaborate praise of MacDiarmada, together with his household and demesne, the poem goes on to make a request for a harp, and ends with a traditional compliment to the lady of the household.

The Legacy of Fenian Lore in Gaelic Tradition

These many examples from Fenian lore reflect the esteem in which hunting was held, mainly, it would seem, by the *literati* during the high medieval period and beyond.

[126] *LF*, 149, st. 4; *Cf. LF*, 148, st. 4; 149, st. 2.
[127] *DS*, 114-21, ll. 5-8, 41-44; see also *BDL*, 32-37, ll. 365-368, 401-404.

Indeed, such was its influence that hunting themes resonates, and the Fenian dimension in particular, throughout Gaelic literature. An example of such resonance is found in a lament, *An Talla am bu Gnàth le Mac Leòid*, composed by Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh (1569–1674). After feasting, playing chess and listening to harp music, Fenian traditions associated closely with the hunt, were appreciated by the MacLeod chief:

> Gum biodh farum air thàilisg
> Agus fuaim air a' chlàrsaich,
> Mar a bhuineadh do shàr mhac Mhic Leoid.
>
> Gur h-e bu eachraidh 'na dhéidh sin
> Greis air uirsgeil na Féinne,
> Is air chuideachda chéirghil nan cròc.
>
> The chessmen would rattle and the harp would be
> sounding, as was meet for MacLeod's noble son.
>
> Thereafter would be chronicled the epic, for a spell, of
> the Fiann, and of the white-flanked antlered band.[128]

From this, some insight can be gleaned into the function that Fenian tradition had in aristocratic Gaelic society: it must have been held in high esteem, as it would seem that other entertainments were merely a prelude to its performance. The lifestyle which the MacLeod chief (Sir Norman MacLeod in this instance), his household, and retinue enjoyed echoed an earlier age, and, for that reason, these references may have bolstered an ideal image and encouraged a participant to make connections or remembrances to a remoter past. It makes perfect sense, therefore, for such participants to not only enjoy vicariously what the *Fianna* enjoyed, but also to carry on the lifestyle which the aristocracy were accustomed to. Not only were they trying to emulate and follow their direct ancestors but they must have been well aware of their mythological ancestors also. The practice of Gaels identifying themselves with a semi-mythical ancestor is a well-known aspect of Highland genealogy, as it helped to reinforce clan identity through a shared ancestor. At times, such mythologising was a powerful propaganda tool, and has been explored with regard to individual clans.[129]

---

[128] *GSMM*, 24-25, ll. 279-283.

[129] Regarding Campbell genealogy, in-depth studies are: Sellar, W. D. H., 'The Earliest Campbells—Norman, Briton or Gael', *SS*, vol. 17 (1977), 109-25; Gillies, William, 'Some Aspects of Campbell History', *TGSI*, vol. L (1978), 256-95 and also his most recent study 'The 'British' Genealogy of the Campbells', *Celtica*, vol. 23 (1999), 82-95. Gaelic genealogy is the topic of two recent articles: MacGregor, Martin, 'Genealogies of the Clans: Contributions to the Study of MS 1467', *Innes Review*,

Fiona J. Stafford describes well the context in which Fenian lore functioned within a social gathering:

> The exploits of the Celtic heroes handed down orally from generation to generation, had all the legendary appeal of Arthurian myth, while retaining a vivid immediacy for the audience. The stories were primarily entertainment, but since the Highlanders claimed direct descent from[...]Celtic heroes, they also served to inspire the audience.[130]

Clearly, Fenian literature and lore were developed in a Gaelic society that extolled the warrior-hunter aristocracy, and therefore the mores of such a society would have been represented within the oral tradition and literature of the high medieval period and later. Evidence for such sensitivity is not difficult to find, as is witnessed by the testimony of Donald Macpherson, a childhood friend of James 'Ossian' Macpherson. When describing the use of Ossianic poetry in Badenoch as a moral guide, Donald Macpherson said that 'I heard my father tell that my Grandfather John MacPherson of Benchar would different times cause my father to sit down by him to write some of them down from his mouth and strongly recommended their minds to adhere to some passages of them as a good rule in life.'[131]

The same type of sentiment is reflected in another poem attributed to Ossian, *Is fada anocht i nOil Finn*, referring to Fionn's Rock in Elphin, Co. Roscommon, in Ireland, in which the aging bard laments the passing of the *Fianna* and the joys of the hunt which the vigour of youth could pursue, a sentiment powerfully re-echoed in Gaelic song of later centuries:[132]

> Gan aonach gan cheól gan chruit,
> gan bhronnadh cruidh gan gniomh greagh,
> gan díoladh ollamhan dh'ór,
> bheith gan fhidhchill gan ól fleadh.
>
> Gan chion ar suirghe ná ar seilg,—
> an dá cheird ris an raibh m'úidh,—
> gun dul i gcliathaibh ná i gcath,

---

vol. 51 (Autumn, 2000), 131-46; and MacGregor, Martin 'Genealogical Histories of Gaelic Scotland', in Adam Fox & Daniel Woolf (eds.), *The Spoken Word: Oral Culture in Britain, 1500–1850* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), 196-239.

[130] Stafford, Fiona J., *The Sublime Savage: A Study of James Macpherson and The Poems of Ossian*, 15.

[131] *Ibid.*, 14-15; quoted from NLS Adv.Ms.73.2.13, f. 34, Donald Macpherson, dated October, 1797.

[132] For a thorough analysis of this theme, see Gillies, William, 'Gun ann ach an ceò: "Nothing left but their Mist": Farewell and Elegy in Gaelic poetry', in Sally Mapstone (ed.), *Older Scots literature. Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Scottish Language and Literature Medieval and Renaissance* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2005), 370-96

uchán ach is deireadh *dúinn*.

Gan bhreith ar eilid ná ar fiadh,
ní h-amhlaidh sin budh mhian *linn*,
gan luadh ar coinbheirt ná ar coin;
is fada anocht i nOil Finn.

Gan earradh gaisgidh do ghnáth,
gan imirt mar dob ál linn,
gan snámh dhár laochraidh ar loch:
is fada anocht i nOil Finn.[133]

No meetings, music or harps,
no cattle gifts, horesmen's deeds,
no paying the poets with gold,
no chess, no feasting or drink.

No love for courting or hunt—
two ploys to which I was prone—
no battle-array or fight,
alas, a poor way to end.

No catching of hind or deer,
Not how I wanted to be,
No talk of dogs and their feats:
The night in Elphin goes slow.

No war-gear ever again,
Nor playing of games we loved,
Nor heroes swimming the loch:
The night in Elphin is long.[134]

Conclusion

Many later Irish and Scottish manuscripts contain several versions of verse items to be found in the earlier collections such as *BDL* and *DF*. This, again, reinforces the conclusion that Fenian lore remained popular throughout the medieval period and continued to be developed or re-imagined over the centuries well into the modern era. Fenian traditions were not only the preserve of the *literati* as a passage written by Rev. John G. Campbell bears out, in which he states that a few labourers building a boundary dyke would wait until a newcomer came along and 'before they began, some incident in the history of the Fian band' would be related. By the time his story had finished, the sun was well nigh westwards, so that they would agree that another story should be told. This was duly done, and did not finish until sun-set, when 'the parties separated after agreeing to meet next day, as nothing had been done that

[133] *HPBDL*, 8, ll. 73-88; *DF*, ii, 194-97, esp. stanzas 3-5.

day.'[135] Thus, Fenian lore continued to be a potent force. Its mythological characters were mentioned, compared and contrasted, identified with, and possibly 'worshipped' as heroes. Perhaps one of the main reasons for their popularity was that they portrayed idealistic and semi-divine characteristics which could be identified easily and absorbed into a culture which extolled the warrior-hunter. To emulate and to praise the mores and practices of a bygone era, whether mythological or not, is an important, if not an essential, factor in reinforcing and perhaps re-interpreting cultural identity. After all, it would be a rootless and alienated culture that could not identify with its remote mythological past. And, of course, it allowed for continuity and change of the Fenian traditions as they continued to be a popular part of tradition before and after the Ossianic controversy. Through literature and oral tradition, the lore of the *Fianna* was maintained, not only by audiences but also (and perhaps more importantly) by professional bards patronised by the upper echelons of Gaelic society. In a sense, the *Fianna* may have acted as a mythological (and, perhaps, even a pantheistic) background for the Gaels, in a similar manner to the heroes of the classical world.

Inspired by Claude Lévi-Strauss' anthropological studies, Joseph Falaky Nagy advances the view, regarding Fenian liminality, that 'this is the very space occupied in Gaelic tradition by those matters of passage, the Fenian heroes, and thus it is fitting that their rituals of initiation and affirmation are charged with the powerful symbols of the hunt, of cooking, and music.'[136] The heroic function of the *Fianna*, centring on hunting and fighting, served as one of the background models for the poetry and songs conceived during and after the high medieval period. It has been noted already that quite a few Fenian ballads have the hunt at their very core, and, in other Fenian traditions and narratives, hunting occurs on a regular basis, usually acting as a frame. The ballad tradition continued to remain popular (more so, it would seem, in Scottish Gaeldom than in Ireland) and was recited in tandem with many other similar traditions. Thus it seems only reasonable to assume that the esteem in which Fenian lore was held should act as a creative pool into which other Gaelic traditions and

---

[134] Thomson, Derick S., *An Introduction to Gaelic Poetry* (London: Gollanz, 1974), 104.
[135] *FSPTFWB*, xi-xii. I am indebted to Dr John Shaw for this reference.
[136] Nagy, Joseph Falaky, 'Fenian Heroes and their Rites of Passage', in *HP*, 182.

literature could be attracted and nurtured, even if such inspiration could lead to one of the most infamous European literary forgeries of the 18th century.

Chapter Three

Hunting Themes in Gaelic Panegyric Poetry

Aoibhinn an obair an t-sealg,
Aoibhinn a meanmna is a beachd:
Is mòr gum b' annsa leam a fonn
Na long is i dol fo bheairt.

Joy is the work of the hunt
pleasant its spirit and its design,
far dearer to me its mood
Than a ship setting under sail.

CHAPTER THREE

HUNTING IN GAELIC PANEGYRIC POETRY

Gaelic literature, as noted already from Fenian sources, extending over a long period, is replete with hunting motifs, and imagery of the chase. Much Gaelic verse and song of the 16th and 17th centuries, in which clan bards praised their respective chiefs in a formulaic fashion, are especially rich in panegyric motifs. Secular Gaelic poetry was underpinned by the authoritative norms of the Panegyric Code which can be described as a coherent system of rhetoric, containing great resonance and evocative power.[1] Typically, Gaelic eulogistic poetry is structured around layers of common motifs that bards exploited from a common stock. Such verse was composed very much with a public forum in mind because a clan or an individual was placed within social and historical contexts. Such verse, or songs, could reinforce whatever that particular society held dear. By its very nature Gaelic society was strongly conservative, and, at times, retrospective in outlook. Heroic themes were emphasised, in keeping with Gaelic society's heroic values, and were commonly placed in an aristocratic setting, the very stratum of society that patronised the bards, the creators of the poetry. The purpose of this chapter is to examine a variety of hunting motifs present with the framework of the Panegyric Code.

Defining the Panegyric Code

The Panegyric Code, a technical term coined by John MacInnes,[2] can be described as an evaluative system of imagery for traditional Gaelic praise poetry. It is significant that various motifs, contained within this heroic code in general, and hunting motifs in particular, are strikingly conservative, and comparable phrases are recycled to such an extent that many have become clichés, albeit ones not without resonance. Hunting motifs, amongst others, are used to explain, reinforce and, most of all, to praise an individual's status within Gaelic society. Such poetry reflects the ways in which people thought and, in many ways, provides a unique ethnographical insight into Gaelic society of the early modern era. Chiefs, as well as other nobles, in connection

[1] *DG*, 265-319, where MacInnes provides an historical overview, giving examples of as well as delineating the code into nine categories.
[2] *DG*, 435-98.

with hunting motifs, are given idealistic treatment: the target is always hit, guns are unfailing and never misfire, the hunt ends in success and game (usually venison) is procured from the hill or forest—true archetypal warrior-hunters, Gaelic society's aristocratic paragons. Using a musical analogy, William Gillies writes that 'it is the genre that calls the tune',[3] when commenting upon the idealisation of the subject-matter in eulogistic verse and song. An element of propaganda, more resonant, perhaps, in war poetry, surfaces but such is the close association with hunting and warfare, they may be interpreted as qualities of leadership eulogising the resolve of a warrior élite.

It may be argued that the conservative nature of these motifs was due to a symbiotic relationship between poetry makers and their audience. An audience was probably as familiar with the rules and functions of the Panegyric Code as the poets whose creative processes were modeled upon a matrix of an inherited tableau. A dimension of audience expectation may have discouraged any innovation diverging from familiar motifs. In any case, familiarity with the heroic code may have added to the enjoyment of new treatments of motifs and audiences may have enjoyed the recall of, or association with, previously heard realisations of that motif. In the words of John Miles Foley 'the performance and audience members co-create the "work," and that experience is set in motion by the recognition of and response to cues that constitute the "text."'[4] Originality (when, and if, it appears) lies in fresh descriptions, as well as evocative visualisation. The prerequisite of an effective poem did not lie so much in its originality but rather in the message it contained, or, in other words, the content and not so much the form carried the poetic quality:

> Gaelic traditional poetry was in the main one of celebration and participation. The poet produced an artefact which enabled his audience to participate in their culture; to act out culturally reinforcing roles. The poetry was largely oral-based; much of it was meant to be sung. In such circumstances innovation was not at a very high premium. The verse had to make an immediate impact, and skill in versification and verbal wit culminating in the well-wrought memorable phrase was therefore the basic requirement.[5]

---

[3] Gillies, William, 'Gaelic: The Classical Tradition', in R. D. S. Jack (ed.), *The History of Scottish Literature Vol. 1: Origins to 1660* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1989), 253.

[4] Foley, John Miles, *The Singer of Tales in Performance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 46; the author provides an overview of the receptionalist theory, 42-47.

[5] MacAulay, Donald (ed.), *Nua-Bhàrdachd Ghàidhlig* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1976), 46.

The heroic code functioned at an important level within Gaelic culture as it reflected, as well as supported, societal duties and obligations. A poet had the power to commend or condemn (eulogise or satirise), and such potent verbal weapons in a skilled poet's repertoire, acting as a cultural spokesperson, gave him an intrinsic standing within clan society. Gaelic poets aimed at consolidating (and, at times, subverting) society's recognised values and attitudes, with particular attention being paid to the poet's own (or rival) clan, which invariably was the most noble, brave, successful in battle (or the obverse) and so on. In the case of elegy, poetry at times provided a focus for a clan's grief as it fulfilled a cathartic function, relying, at times, on the so-called pathetic fallacy, whereby nature herself reflected the loss felt by all. Moreover 'this system was predicated upon notions of an assertive masculine independence based upon physical prowess and violence, and was heavily influenced by concepts of honour and shame, and above all intended to praise the hunter-warrior chief as defender of the clan.'[6] The imagery employed predominates and pervades the heroic motifs where this code has either an heroic or panegyric dimension. John MacInnes as well as Ronald Black have delineated the commonplace motifs of the Panegyric Code.[7]

Hunting provides concrete imagery as a familiar pastime as well as giving metaphorical structure to poetic images that can be exploited in rhetorical terms. There are elements of the Gaelic Panegyric Code which rely upon hunting imagery and symbolism and these resonate in one of the most important aspects of the code that 'works with this central image: the warrior who is protector and rewarder.'[8]

Hunting motifs use physical roles to emphasise the élite as warrior-hunters who are both ideal fighters and hunters; their personal raiment and retinue are also emphasised. Social motifs are also very important where a chief, or his subordinates, are seen as wise administrators, dispensers of justice and fathers of the clan. Hunting also pervades the political sphere, as hunting trysts reinforced and helped to maintain social functions, kinship ties and bonding. This area will be dealt with in more detail

---

[6] Stiùbhart, Dòmhnall Uilleam, 'Women and Gender in the Early Modern Western Gàidhealtachd', in Elizabeth Ewan & Maureen M. Meikle (eds.), *Women in Scotland, c. 1100–c. 1750* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), 233; *DG*, 281; Amussen, Susan D., '"The Part of a Christian Man": The Cultural Politics of Manhood in Early Modern England', in Susan D. Amussen & Mark A. Kishlansky (eds.), *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England: Essays Presented to David Underdown* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 214-15.

[7] *L*, 525-27.

[8] *DG*, 317.

in chapter five. The household and its entertainment are other areas which are praised: music, dancing, poetry, traditional storytelling, gaming, feasting and drinking are all highlighted.

Nature Poetry, Kennings and the Pathetic Fallacy

The natural world in Gaelic tradition was polarised into dualities of praise and dispraise: for example, for a hawk (a bird of prey) read praise; for the buzzard read dispraise; for the salmon read praise, for the eel read dispraise; for the deer (paragon of the chase) read praise, for a frog read dispraise; for a yew read praise, and for an alder read dispraise.[9] Although a deer is seen as a noble beast, it is very uncommon for it to be used as a personal kenning. There is, however, one early instance from an address to Sémas mac Aonghais, dating from around the mid-16th century:

> A bhláth cumhra Chloinne Domhnaill,
> a dhamh dealbhach Innis Fáil,
> a láogh na hoighi ó íadh Muile,
> a ghrian sgoile Mhuighe Máil.
>
> Fragrant blossom of Clann Domhnaill, comely stag of Inis Fáil, fawn of the doe from the land of Mull, sun of the school of Magh Máil.[10]

In her famous lament, *Alasdair à Gleanna Garadh*, Sìleas na Ceapaich (*c.* 1660–*c.* 1729) addresses Alasdair Dubh MacDonald of Glengarry, giving a list of kennings, comparing the chief to noble trees and animals in order to eulogise his standing, martial power, appearance and generosity:

> Bu tu 'n lasair dhearg 'gan losgadh,
> Bu tu sgoltadh iad gu 'n sàiltibh,
> Bu tu curaidh cur a' chatha,
> Bu tu 'n laoch gun athadh làimhe;
> Bu tu 'm bradan anns an fhìor-uisg,
> Fìreun air an eunlaith 's àirde,
> Bu tu 'n leómhann thar gach beathach,
> Bu tu damh leathann na cràice.
>
> You were a red torch to burn them,
> You would cleave them to the heels,
> You were a hero for waging battle,
> You were a champion whose arm never flinched.
> You were the salmon in fresh water,

[9] *HSGW*, 94; and *DG*, 284-85.
[10] Bergin, Osborn, 'Address to Sémas mac Aonghais', *SGS*, vol. IV, pt. II (1935), 146-47.

The eagle in the highest flock,
You were the lion above all beasts,
You were the stout antlered stag.[11]

The same may be said for the hawk kenning (denoting keenness in battle), though this is far more common than the deer kenning. An example is *seabhag déidgheal na dtri ghleann*, referring to MacGregor as 'the white-toothed hawk of the three glens' (Glen Lyon, Glen Orchy, and Glen Strae).[12]

Many stanzas from a poem composed by a MacEwen bard makes use of the pathetic fallacy through the interweaving of natural observations:

Ré linn leómhuin Locha Fíne
fiodhbhuidh lúbtha ó chnuas na ccrann;
tig do 'n teas ar thí a tadhail
nach bí eas ar abhainn ann.

Táinig d'iomad iasg na n-inbher
gan ùidh duine ar dénamh lín;
lór d'a mholadh, mana reachta,
toradh mara ag teacht a ttír.

Ealbha fhiadh is beich dam buaidhreadh
fó bhun gach beinne, is tuar tnúidh;
learga tuar o tharbha taguidh
fá dhual arbha abaigh úir.

In the time of the Loch Fyne's lion,
trees bend with their branches' fruit;
from the heat, such is the onset
when it comes there'll be no waterfall.

So many fish are in the estuaries
that no man needs to make nets,
sufficient for his praise, omen of righteous rule,
the sea's produce comes on shore.

Herds of deer pestered by bees
at each hill foot, envy's cause;
the slopes, omen of productiveness,
are under coils of ripe new corn.[13]

Derick Thomson elucidates the poet's intentions by stating that 'nature is seen as being in sympathy with the fortunes of the chief in both a negative and positive way, shrivelling and withdrawing on his death, burgeoning in the kindly warmth of a good

[11] Ó Baoill, Colm (ed.), *Bàrdachd Shìlis na Ceapaich c.1660–c. 1779* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1972), 72-73, ll. 831-838.
[12] Watson, William J., 'Classic Gaelic Poetry of Panegyric in Scotland', *TGSI*, vol. XXIX (1914–19), 210.

chief's rule, so that a later poet sees the branches laden with nuts during the reign of Campbell 'lion of Loch Fyne', and the balmy heat drying up the cataracts and burns.'[14]

Another example, *Cumha ceathair do mheasg mé*, written in 1636 in classical Gaelic by Cathal MacMhuirich, who was a rather sophisticated intellectual of the bardic school and an hereditary Clanranald bard, uses the pathetic fallacy:

> Ar naibhne gan iasgach ttróm
> ga*n* fhiadhach um ghabhl*uibh* gl*eann*
> beg tor*adh* ata a*r*g^{c} fon
> do cná an ton go bonuibh ben…[15]

> Our rivers are without abundance of fishing, there is no hunting in the devious glens, there is a little crop in every tithe, the wave has gnawed to the very base of the peaks.[16]

The Book of the Dean of Lismore

A poem in *BDL*, *Buaidh Thighearna ar Thóiseachaibh*, composed by Mac Giolla Fhionntóg, is one of the earliest of the anthology's poems to address a clan chief. The poet praises Maol Coluim MacGregor; and, it seems likely that it was composed shortly after he became chief.[17] Taken as a whole, *BDL* contains some twenty-two poems of a panegyrical type, eight in praise of MacGregor, two of MacDonald, two of MacCailein, two of MacDougall of Dunolly, and one each in praise of MacLeod of Lewis, MacLeod of Harris and Dunvegan, Stewart of Rannoch, and MacSween of Castle Sween,[18] and MacNeil of Gigha. In this poem the close association of the hunt with warfare is emphasised in the person of Eoin Dubh MacGregor (*d.* 1415):

> Eoin Dubh an geal Gaoidhealta
> mac áirmheach Eoin mheic Ghriogóir,
> sealgaire damh ndraoidheachta,
> tús gach cogaidh do fhriothóil.
>
> John the Black, the bright true Gael, was the renowned

---

[13] *Ibid.*, 213, 222.
[14] Thomson, Derick S., *An Introduction to Gaelic Poetry*, 45.
[15] This verse is from an elegy on four chiefs of Clanranald, namely Ronald, Ronald, Iain, and Donald MacDonald, who all died in 1636, *RC*, ii, 238-39.
[16] Jackson, Kenneth H. (ed.), *A Celtic Miscellany: Translations from Celtic Literatures* (London: Routledge & Paul, 1951) 262-63; Black, Ronald, 'The Genius of Cathal MacMhuirich', *TGSI*, vol. L (1976–78), 331.
[17] *BDL*, 262.
[18] Meek, Donald E., '"Norsemen and Noble Stewards": The MacSween Poem in the Book of the Dean of Lismore', *CMCS*, vol. 34 (Winter, 1997), 1-49.

son of John, son of Gregor, a hunter of magical stags,
who attended upon the beginning of war.[19]

The hunting motif pervades the central part of the poem, at times reiterating its close relationship with warfare, while at other times paying tribute to Fenian heroes of a mythological past. It may be taken as an example of re-imagined Fenian virtues within a contemporary context—the poet draws upon a rich store of hereditary verse. The imagery, though conventional, adds a vigour to the hunting metaphors used throughout along with a recognition of aristocratic links, as well as learned allusions to the Fenian warrior-hunters:

Atá tús na h-imearta
do Chlainn Ghriogóir ó Ghallaibh;
'gá bhfuil tréidhe tighearna,
grádh sealga agus buaidh ghaisgidh.

I n-aimsir Chuinn Chéadchathaigh
do-chuala mé a mhac samhla:
Fionn, níor ghabh ó ghéarlannaibh,
mac Cumhaill na gcreach gcalma.

Sealg Éireann 's a thigheadas
ag mac Cumhaill na gcaoilshleagh;
aoibh níor ghuidh ná tighearnas
ar críochaibh clanna Gaoidheal.

D'fhiadh ré linn dá leagfaidhe
ó Chiarraigh go Carn Bhalair,
rogha dhamh na seasraighe
do bhíodh aige 'na aghaidh.

Ó Shamhain go Bealltaine
buannacht gach tighe d'fhianaibh;
an t-sealg, fa sógh seabhcaidhe,
aca i n-ionam an fhiadhaigh.

Iomdha cíos nach áirmhithe
ag Fionn nó ag fear a *thabhaigh*;
fiacha Éireann d'áirithe
ar mhac Cumhaill 'na aghaidh.

A bhfuaradar d'iongantaibh
fá bhruachaibh gacha buinne
ag sin a bhfuil d'iomarcaidh
Mhaoil Choluim ag mac Muirne.

Ní dhearna Fionn fianaidhe

[19] *BDL*, 28-29, ll. 289-292.

sealg gan sireadh a ceada:
sealg Alban gan fhiafraighe
ag Maol Choluim 's a creacha.

Cungbhálach na coimhshealga
Mac Griogóir as garg daoine;
níor mhionca coin chroidhearga
go longphort Clainne Baoisgne.

The foremost place of honour Clan Gregor have won from Saxons; they possess the qualities of lords, even love of hunting and triumph of valour.

In the time of Conn of a Hundred Battles I have heard of one his like, even Fionn (he gave not back from keen blades) son of Cumhall of bold forays.

To Cumhall's son of slender spears belonged Erin's hunting and his housing, he sought no welcome nor lordship over the bounds of the clans of the Gael.

In his time if any stag was laid low from Kerry to Balar's Cairn, the picked ox of the team of six was his in requital.

From Hallowe'en to Beltane the warrior-bands had right of quarters in every house; the hunt (good cheer was there for falcons) they had in the hunting season.

Many a tribute that needs not mention had Fionn or he who exacted it for him; in return for that tribute Fionn had as his special duty Erin's obligations.

All that they found of wonders beneath the banks of each swift stream; that is such of Malcolm's abundance as was held by Muirne's son.

Fionn the warrior who made no hunting without leave asked:
Alba's hunting and her forays are Malcolm's without seeking.

Maintainer of the joint hunt is MacGregor whose men are fierce; not oftener did hounds red with gore enter the encampment of Clann Baoisgne.[20]

The MacGregor chief as a hunter of deer is the central image. The crux of the hunting motif within the Panegyric Code is its societal role—the skilful hunter is the great warrior, protector of the people, showing bravery in chase and kill, provider of venison and game, with the ability to overcome physical and mental hardships in pursuit of a goal. Also, the test of physical endurance, strength, skill, stamina and mental (and even perhaps intellectual) aptitude may hark back to the rites of Fenian

passage. It was axiomatic that a worthy chief was an expert hunter as well as a fearsome warrior—representing dominion over nature and nurture, or animals and man. Indeed, they are inextricably linked by virtue of close and continual association. A chief, after all, who could not prove himself in the chase was hardly promising material to prove his worth on the battle-field. Hunting and martial skills were unquestionably a major component of aristocratic self-image, but it may be asked to what extent was this shared by the populace at large? Feats of derring-do were promulgated through Gaelic folksong, verse and storytelling and so conveyed a chief's skill to posterity, and the measures taken to broadcast such skills to subjects shows a sensitivity to public perception, a strong indication that the élite believed the general populace was interested in their chief's performance at the chase. This is well attested as, for example, Martin Martin remarks upon a Highland chief's and his retinue's lifestyle:

> Every heir or young chieftain of a tribe, was obliged in honour to give a public specimen of his valour before he was owned and declared[...]leader of his people[...]This chieftain was usually attended with a retinue of young men of quality[...]to make a desperate incursion upon some neighbour[...]that they were in feud with; and they were obliged to bring by open force the cattle they found in the lands they attacked...
> After the performance of this achievement, the young chieftain was ever after reputed valiant and worthy of government...[21]

Returning to the poem's theme, it is stated that if a stag was slain between Kerry in the south and Balar's Cairn in the north of Ireland, Fionn was entitled as compensation to the best ox of a team of six. Codification of Old Irish law texts originates in the 7th–8th centuries texts, but survive incompletely and corruptly only in 14th–16th century manuscripts.[22] These early legal texts, from both Ireland and Wales, give a practical insight into hunting's medieval legal status. Unfortunately, there is only fragmentary evidence for an ancient code of law for Scotland, but it may well be that legal systems practised then would have been similar to those enacted in early Irish and Welsh societies. Further discussion of hunting and the law will be reserved for chapter six. Nevertheless, it appears that, even though Fionn's hunting privileges were great, they were less than those of MacGregor! Leaving the historical

---

[20] *BDL*, 26-29, ll. 297-332.
[21] *DWIS*, 165.
[22] Kelly, Fergus, *Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), 106.

veracity of such statements to one side, these poems deserve attention as they represent the hunt in a literal setting and, at times, allude to the legal status of game.

Again, in a poem composed by Fionnlagh Ruadh an Bard to John, chief of Clan Gregor, the poet compares MacGregor's house to that of Aodh MacDiarmada on the Rock (*Carraig*) of Loch Cé in Connacht:

> Neirtghníomhradh a chon 's a shluagh
> *is* meinic le Eoin armruadh:
> a h-aithle na sealg ón teach
> Gach faithche dearg ón fhiadhach.
>
> Mighty deeds by his hounds and his hosts are frequent
> with red-weaponed John; when hunting is made from
> the house, the hunt leaves every greensward red.[23]

An undercurrent of one-upmanship pervades the poem, where the homestead's magnificence is commensurate with its nearby hunting grounds. The basis for this rivalry informs a traditional story: Sir Colin Campbell of Lochawe, or Cailean Iongantach (*d.* 1412/14), reciprocated an invitation to a great Irish Chief O' Neill to visit Scotland in order to go deer-hunting in Cowal. Although the promise of the hunt seemed good, Cailean was so embarrassed that his lodge was not nearly so splendid as his host's home in Ireland, that instructions were duly issued to have his lodge burnt at Garvey in full sight of his Irish visitors. His guests, therefore, could not even pass over his threshold, and were, instead, entertained in five marquee tents, no doubt near the smouldering remains of the burnt-out lodge. The ploy seems to have worked as they were well pleased with their three days' entertainment but disappointed about the postponed hunt. They could only imagine, it is said, what splendours there would have been inside Campbell's dwelling if only it had not been (deliberately) burnt down.[24] This tale's veracity can nevertheless be questioned: why would the burning of Campbell's lodge prevent the visiting host from hunting? It may be, however, that the hunt was meant to be a joyful occasion and, in respect of Campbell's loss, it would not have been politic to have continued with the proposed hunting expedition. What is important about this tale, leaving aside any historical accuracy, is the intense rivalry in competing with the munificence of their respective households.

---

[23] *BDL*, 150-51, ll. 1421-1424; Watson, William J., 'From the Book of the Dean of Lismore', *An Gàidheal*, leabh. XIX, earr. 10 (An t-Iuchar, 1924), 148-50.
[24] Campbell, John D. S. (Duke of Argyll), *Adventures in Legend*, 157-58.

There is also a unique Gaelic poem on the destruction of wolves that survives in *BDL*, composed by Giolla Críost Táilliúr (*c.* 1450–1475?):

Malluigh na sealga is an mhortlaidh
itheas eich, caoirigh is cruidh,
do chuir druim ré fód na faithche:
sgaoiltear cinn an ghasraidh dhuibh.

Atá gasradh mhadadh mhaslach
ar láthair Inse Alt Airt:
lán trudair iad, tréig, a Thríonóid,
curstar iad dod mhíondóid bhailc.

Giodh iomdha craiceann chon allta
againn um chláirsigh 's um chruit,
cha teirce claigeann fuar falamh
againn ón chuain alla uilc.

Curse the hunts and slaughter,
which devour horses and cattle and sheep,
which strewed backs on the sod of the meadow,
let the heads of the black legion be cleft.

An abusive wolk-pack is on location
about the meadow of Arthur's Burn;
O God, abandon them, utter abominations,
let them be cursed by your mighty gentle hand.

Though we have many a wolfskin
covering up harp or lyre,
not fewer the skulls, cold and empty,
we possess from that wild evil pack.[25]

The poet continues by evoking the elements (snow drifts from Lochaber to Renfrew) upon the roaming wolf packs and where he fervently wishes to see ashes from their burnt carcasses. He then praises mac Roibeirt (John Stewart, son of Sir Robert of Rannoch)[26] for successfully hunting this vermin from the north-western borders of Perthshire to the wilds of Rannoch Moor. The poet then proceeds to depict graphically

[25] *DS*, 235-37, ll. 21-32; see also *BDL*, 176-77, ll. 1723-1734; hunting is also mentioned in another of his compostions, see *BDL*, 32-33, ll. 365-368.

[26] *BDL*, 294, where Willam J. Watson offers a tentative identification and suggests that the John Stewart here is the same as the John Stewart, son of Sir Robert, 'from the bounds of Rannoch', addressed in *Cóir feitheamh ar uaislibh Alban* (*BDL*, 184). Watson proceeds by stating that he may have been John Stewart of Garth and Fortingall, recorded in a charter of Fortingall in 1455, and died at Garth in 1475; see also Campbell, Duncan, *The Book of Garth and Fortingall: Historical Sketches relating to the District of Garth, Fortingall, Athole, and Breadalbane* (Inverness: Northern Counties Publishing Co., 1888), 142-57, where the poem is interpreted as a political allegory of the capture of King James I's murderers by Robert Reoch (Riabhach) Duncanson (mac Dhonnchaidh) of Struan and John Gorm Stewart, the former of whom received a grant of the Barony of Struan in 1451, while the latter received a money payment.

a massacre that he would like to see John Stewart execute (presumably with extreme prejudice):

Go gcluininn 's mé i nInbhir Nise
míolchoin *ag* sgaoileadh na sgonn;
mairg mán iadh baladh na mbuicneach:
go n-iadh galar tuitmeach trom.

Sgamhach conach aillse is acais
ar lucht marbhtha na ngreagh nglas;
Mac Dé le croidhe nau [ ]
snoidheadh an chuain ainmheach as.

Loisg gach saobhaidh tha i Sídh Chailleann,
a Eóin Stiúbhairt na stéad mbras,
más fíor uaim gur sreathach srannmhor
an chuain ghreannach ghreannmhor ghlas.

Ar ghardha Eóin stéidghil Stiúbhairt
cha léir dhomh cabar gan cheann,
is iad ar chollaibh cas corrach,
an chonairt ghlas mhongach bheann.

Deerhounds tearing the brutes asunder,
would that I'd hear it in Inverness;
woe to him wrapped in the stink of goatskins,
soon he'll be wrapped in epileptic fits.

May murrain, rabies, cancer, poison
strike the slaughterers of the grey herds;
may God's son with new purpose
lop away that misshapen brood.

Burn out every lair that is in Schiehallion,
O Eòin Stiùbhart of the swift steeds;
so that snarling ugly grey brood, If I'm truthful,
will lie snoring in serried rows.

On Eòin-of-bright-steeds Stiùbhart's ramparts
I see no stake without head;
the grey hairy pack from the mountains
on sharp-pointed hazel staves.[27]

A similar sentiment in *The Dunkeld Litany* includes these pre-Reformation Latin lines: 'A cateranis et latronibus[...]Libera nos Domine / A lupis et omni mala bestia[...]Libera nos Domine'[28]—'From caterans and robbers[...]Lord deliver us / from wolves and all wild beasts[...]Lord deliver us.'

---

[27] *DS*, 238-39, ll. 45-60; see also *BDL*, 178-79, ll. 1747-1762.
[28] Forbes, Alexander P. (Bishop of Brechin), *Kalendars of Scottish Saints: With Personal Notices of Alba, Laudona, & Strathclyde* (Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas, 1872), lxii.

This Gaelic poem and Latin litany must be taken into the context of an Act of the Scots Parliament, passed in 1427/8, in the reign of King James I (*r.* 1406–1437):

> ...it is statute and ordanit be the king[...]that ilk barone within his barnry in gaynande tym of the yere gar serss and seik the quhelppis of the wolfis and ger sla thaim[...]thee baron sal gif to the man at slais thaim in his baronry and bringis the baron the hede ii ss. Ande quhen the baron ordanis to hunt and chase the wolfis the tenandry sal riss with the barone under the payn of ane weddir to ilk man[...]Ande at thee baronis hunt in thare baronryis and chase the wolfis four tymis in the ȝere ande also oft as ony wolfe beis sene within the barony. Ande at na man sek the wolfis with schote bot allanerly in the tymis of hunting of thaim.[29]

During King James II's reign (*r.* 1437–1460), another act was passed in 1457/8, probably due to the dilatoriness of the barons in obeying the previous edict, ordaining that, in those districts where wolves were known to be, the sheriff or the bailies should gather the populace three times in the cub season, between St Mark's day and Lammas (from 25 April to 1 August), upon pain of a wedder for each non-appearance. The reward to the killer of each wolf was six shillings and sixpence, from the baron or sheriff to whom the head was presented, and one penny from each householder of the parish where the wolf was killed.[30] In 1497/8, during the reign of King James IV (*r.* 1488–1513), the Lords of Council at Inverness enacted that if anyone brought a wolf's head to the sheriff, the sheriff or bailie was to see that the person received 1d from every fifth household of the parish:

> ...be proclaymt that quhat ever he be that bring [is a theif] or a sornare or a man at the Kingis horne to the schiref of the [?]schyre or slais ane ald wolf and bringis his hede to the schiref, he sal haf of ilk fywe house of the parischin that the theif, sornare or man at the Kingis horne is takin in or that the ald wolf is slane, as sade is, a penny; and that the schiref or bailze of that parischin sall ger this dewite be payit to the doare.[31]

It was further enacted that when a wolf was located, the hue and cry was to be raised and penalties—to be collected by the lord or bailie—for not joining the chase were heavier on the second and third offences than for all other such offences in the above Acts of Parliament. If the lord or bailie failed in this he could be fined £20 by the justice ayre.[32] The necessity of raising a general hue and cry after marauding wolves

---

[29] *APS*, ii (1424–1567), 15-16, c. 5.
[30] *APS*, ii (1424–1567), 51-52, c. 35. It is interesting to note that these Scottish Acts 'for the distructione of wolfes' were only repealed in 1906.
[31] *ADC*, ii (1496–1501), 101.
[32] *ADC*, ii (1496–1501), 102.

led to the general establishment of kennels of wolfhounds and even to the definition in leases of the duties of tenants on that very score. So the monks of Coupar-Angus Abbey in a lease of part of the lands of Innerarity, dated 14 April 1483, bound the occupier to 'obey the officers rising in the defences of the country to wolf, thief, and sorners,' and many leases enforced the maintenance of 'ane leash of good hounds, with ane couple of rachis for tod and wolf.'[33] That wolves were meted out the same treatment as thieves and common outlaws illustrates the danger which wolves posed in 15th century Scotland, especially in the Highlands where they predominated.[34]

Even in rather inconspicuous places, a mention of hunting is made in *Glacadh Morair Hunndaidh*, when Iain Lom MacDonald (*c.* 1624–*c.* 1707) praises Huntly's generosity, thereby reinforcing social ties of patronage, as well as praising his homestead:

> Morair Hunndaidh 's am Marcus
> O thùr nan clach shnaidhte,
> Far 'm bu lìonmhor laogh breac ri cois féidh.
>
> Huntly, Lord and Marquis, from the tower of hewn
> stones, where numerous were the speckled calves
> following the deer.[35]

This allusion was to the presumably numerous amount of quarry to be had near Huntly's castle in Strathbogie, Aberdeenshire.

The deer's nobility is even transferred to its meat in a satiric song by Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh, *Mairearad nan Cuireid*, so-called, presumably, as she pretended to be pregnant, perhaps as a ruse to get married under false pretences. Had she not spread rumours about the poetess in the first place, she would have saved herself from a satiric broadside:

> Cha b'ionnan do ar tighean
> An ám laighe do 'n ghréin:
>
> Gum faighte an tigh m' athar-s'
> Sitheann 's cnàimhnean an fhéidh:
>
> Is gheibhte an tigh t' athar-s'
> Sùgh is cnàimhnean an éisg.

---

[33] *IMALS*, 118; Miller, David, *Arbroath and its Abbey, or, The Early History of the Town and Abbey of Aberbrothock* (Edinburgh: Thomas G. Stevenson, 1860), 65.
[34] See Appendix C for further historical sources and discussion of wolves in Highland tradition.
[35] *ÒIL*, 46-47, ll. 516-518.

Not alike were our dwellings at sunset:
In my father's house were found venison and bones of deer;

In thy father's house bree and bones of the fish were your fare.[36]

The poetess distances herself from society's lower ranks by emphasising differences in fare. The disparity of their respective abodes is contrasted by metaphorically using the image of venison against fish which, in coded language, can be deciphered as noble and decent versus low and lying. There are many examples of oblique references to hunting as part of wider themes. Time and again, hunting is referred to, particularly in praise poetry, where, among a stream of conventional epithets, there is a narrow treatment of this commonplace theme. The significance of the hunting theme is not based purely upon its frequent appearances, but rather, in many cases, the high standard of poetic versification.

Òran na Comhachaig

A central role is given to the hunt in one of Gaelic's greatest vernacular (or semi-bardic) songs, *Òran na Comhachaig*, allegedly a creation (and indeed the sole surviving work) of Dòmhnall mac Fhionnlaigh nan Dàn, the hunter-bard. It has been described as 'one of the most remarkable poems in the Gaelic or any other language'[37] and as 'by far the most powerful of all our poems about hunting.'[38] There is no general agreement concerning Dòmhnall mac Fhionnlaigh nan Dàn or, indeed, the manner in which *Òran na Comhachaig* was composed. Donald C. MacPherson (1842–1880) claims that Dòmhnall mac Fhionnlaigh nan Dàn's wife was a Keppoch MacDonell who died at a young age, after which he is said to have been looked after by his daughter. Others say he married a young woman who often despaired of her choice and commenced to maltreat the hunter-bard and his dog. She found an injured owl and thought this a suitable companion for him.[39] Robert Rankin writes that John MacDonald preferred the other tradition as related by Diarmaid (Donald C. MacPherson):[40]

---

[36] *GSMM*, 12-13, ll. 135-138.
[37] Rankin, Robert, 'Òran na Comhachaig: Text and Tradition', *TGSG*, vol. 5 (1958), 137.
[38] *OLPC*, 92.
[39] Cameron, Charles (Roybridge, Brae Lochaber), *Dòmhnall MacFhionnlaigh nan Dàn*, SA1969/175/A4-A5; and MacDonald, John (Highbridge, Brae Lochaber), *Dòmhnall MacFhionnlaigh nan Dàn*, CIM I.I.3, TSB III, 43-46.
[40] Rankin, Robert A., 'Òran na Comhachaig: Text and Tradition', 130.

> ...there was a small loch called the Eadarloch[...]separated from the north end of Loch Tréig by a small channel[...]An Déabhadh[...]The crannog was formerly used as a place of refuge, and the MacDonells of Keppoch also used it for holding councils and feasts. It had several names, the one used in the poem being Tigh nam Fleadh[...]This crannog was repaired by Raonull Og[...]from whom the Keppoch MacDonells derive their patronymic title. Raonull Gòrach had prepared a feast on the island to which the poet was not invited[...]Hearing of the feast, Donald made his way to the island, but arrived too late, finding the company dispersed. On his return he heard an owl hooting[...]and this was the occasion of his composing the poem.[41]

Duncan MacDonald, John MacDonald of Highbridge's brother, recited *Òran na Comhachaig* to Robert Rankin when he was in Brae Lochaber collecting oral tradition during the 1950s:[42] a remarkable survival of over four centuries, and an example of folk memory's tenacity. The hunter-bard flourished *c.* 1585, judging by references made to the Keppoch chiefs that form but one of the poem's many themes; the others are the dialogue between the bard and the owl, the praise of hunting, topographical aspects, and musings upon old age.[43] The bard begins by greeting the owl thus:

> A Chomhachag bhochd na Sròine
> A nochd is brònach do leaba:
> Ma bha thu ann ri linn Donnghail
> Chan iongnadh ge trom leat t' aigne.[44]
>
> O forlorn owl of Strone,
> tonight your bed is mournful,
> if you were alive in the time of Donnghal,
> no wonder you feel your spirit heavy.

And she then answers:

> Gur comhaois mise don daraig
> Bha na faillean anns a' mhòintich:
> Is iomadh linn a chuir mi romham
> Is mi comhachag bhochd na Sròine.[45]
>
> I am ages with the oak-tree
> since its sapling was small in the moss;
> many a brood have I begotten,
> yet I am the forlorn owl of Strone.

After more dialogue, she remembers the noble and heroic Keppoch chiefs as hunters of note which she then proceeds to describe:

---

[41] *Ibid.*, 129.
[42] *Ibid.*, Appendix D, 156-65.
[43] *CGS*, 64.
[44] *OS*, 2.
[45] *OS*, 2.

Chunnaic mi Alasdair Carrach,
An duine b'allaile bha an Albainn;
Is minig a bha mi ga èisdeachd,
Is e a' rèiteach nan tom sealga.

Creag mo chridhe-sa Creag Guanach,
Creag an d' fhuair mi greis de m' àrach,
Creag nan aighean is nan damh siubhlach
A' chreag ùrail, aighearach, fheurach.

A' chreag mun iathadh an fhaghaid,
Leam-sa bu mhiann bhith ga thadhal,
An uair bu bhinn guth gallain gadhair
A' cur greigh gu gabhail chumhaing.[46]

I saw Alasdair Carrach,
the most eminent man in Scotland,
often I spent a while listening
as he arranged the hunting hills.

Crag of my very heart is Creag Guanach
the crag of part of my childhood,
crag of the hinds and stags roaming,
fresh, joyful, grassy crag.

The crag the hunt would wheel around,
to join in would be delightful,
sweet was the sturdy hound's baying
driving a herd to a narrow defile.

All the different strands of the themes, the praise of men, mountains, deer and hounds, and so forth, add to the sheer vitality not to mention the complexity of the poem:

Is truagh an-diugh nach beò an fheadhainn,
Gun ann ach an ceò den bhuidhinn
Leis am bu mhiannach glòir nan gadhar,
Gun mheadhair, gun òl, gun bhruidhinn.

Chì mi bràigh Bhidein nan Dos
An taobh so bhos de Sgùrra Lìth,
Sgurr a' Chòinnich nan damh seang:
Is ionmhainn leam an-diugh na chì.

Cha mhi fhèin a sgaoil an comann
A bha eadar mi is Creag Guanach,
Ach an aois gar toirt o chèile
Gur goirid an fhèill fhuaras.[47]

It's sad today that the people are not alive,
with only a mist of the company left,

[46] *OS*, 4.
[47] *OS*, 10, 14, 8.

who loved the music of the hounds,
no merriment, no drinking, no fighting.

I see the brae of Bidean nan Dos,
on this side of Sgurra Lith,
Sgurr Choinnich of the slender stags;
fond I am of all I see today.

It was not I who broke the fellowship
between myself and Creag Guanach,
but age took us from one another,
it was only for a while that I had cheer.

An emotive response from the bard is provoked by lamenting the fact that old age has left him so enfeebled that he cannot now follow the hunting joys of his youth:

Cead as truaighe ghabhas riamh;
Don fhiadhach bu mhòr mo thoil:
Chan fhalbh mi le bogha fo m' sgèith
Is gu là bhràth cha leig mi coin.

Mise is tusa, ghadhair bhàin,
Is tùirseach ar turas don eilean:
Chaill sinn an tabhann is an dàn,
Ged bha sinn grathann ri ceanal.

Thug a' choille dhiot-sa an earb
Thug an t-ard dhìom-sa na fèidh;
Chan eil nàire dhuinn, a laoich,
On laigh an aois oirnn le chèil'.[48]

The saddest farewell I have ever made
was to hunting for which I greatly loved,
I will not set off with bow under my wing,
nor till Doomsday let slip the hounds.

You and I, O white hound,
sad our journey to the island,
we have lost the hunting and poetry,
yet for a while we were happy.

The wood has robbed you of the roe
the heights have robbed me of the deer;
for neither of us is it a disgrace, o little hero,
since age lies on us both.

It is a bitter-sweet farewell to a past, though fondly remembered, which the poet now feels difficult to reconcile with his present predicament. All happiness remains in those memories which are the only way in which he is now able to rekindle anything

[48] *Ibid.*, 16, 18.

of a vanquished, yet tantalising, past. An autumnal feel pervades the whole, giving full vent to the passing of an ideal era when the world seemed a younger and (from the hunter's perspective) a far better place. Further, the mutual respect shown between the hunter and the hunted is displayed by affection and warmth:

> Fad a bhithinn beò no maireann,
> Deò den anail ann am chorp,
> Dh' fhanainn am fochair an fhèidh—
> Sin an sprèidh an robh mo thoirt.[49]
>
> As long as I will live or last,
> while a breath remains in my body,
> I shall stay in the company of deer,
> that is the herd that held my esteem.

The bard then gives full expression to his love of the chase, and also a mention is made of a ship about to go under sail which would appear to be a reference to a ship and its crew, a well-known commonplace, acting as a microcosm of society:[50]

> Aoibhinn an obair an t-sealg,
> Aoibhinn a meanmna is a bheachd:
> Is mòr gum b' annsa leam am fonn[51]
> Na long is i dol fo bheairt.[52]
>
> Joyful is the work of the hunt,
> pleasant its spirit and its design,
> far dearer to me its mood
> than a ship setting under sail.

The song is grounded in the very heart of Lochaber, identified by a roll-call of place-names noted for their hunting grounds; and these may well have been traditional hunting boundaries. A strong sense of *dùthchas*—a unity of land, people and culture—is apparent, and thus a proprietory sense that hunting belongs to these places percolates through, intensifying the relationship between the hunter and the hunted.[53]

Aside from its obvious aesthetic beauty, what then does the actual song relate about the hunting techniques used in the late-medieval period? There is evidence to

---

[49] *Ibid.*, 10. See Appendix A for the full poem with translation.
[50] *DG*, 303.
[51] *Fonn* can be interpreted as a cheerful frame of mind or, more unusually, as land. Given the bard's linguistic skill, it may have been a deliberate play on this word.
[52] *OS*, 8.
[53] Rankin, Robert A., 'Place-names in the *Comhachag* and Other Similar Poems', *SGS*, vol. XVIII (1998), 111-30.

suggest that two methods of the chase were practised: one for solitary hunting[54] and the other for an organised hunt using the drive.[55] Stalking was the preferred method for hunting deer when only a few hunters, or even a solitary hunter, were involved. Scenting hounds (as opposed to gaze hounds using sight) would find the trail of a deer after which, once the quarry was in sight, it was chased by greyhounds (or deerhounds) which were 'laid' at passes, and then despatched with bows or, at later date, firearms.[56] The earliest depiction of stalking, as referred to in chapter one, appear on a Pictish stone, portraying a crouching, camouflaged man, waiting to kill game with a weapon resembling a crossbow rather than a short bow. Many centuries earlier than *Òran na Comhachaig*, stalking was described in an early treatise, *De Arte Bersandi* (*c.* 1250), a brief but factual account of deer-hunting, attributed to a German knight, Guicennas, listing the best attributes necessary for a successful hunter:

> He must know how to shoot well with the bow[...]to train his scenting-hounds to follow a trail of blood; to stand properly by a tree; to remember the placements of the archers, which is the most important thing of all in this form of hunting; to observe the wind, by which he may know of the direction the beasts will take and where he should place his archers; to cut arrow-shafts; to be handy with the crossbow; to make a bow-string if necessary; to skin and cut up a hart; to direct his scenting-hound well, which needs much experience; to sound a horn in all the ways a hunter needs.[57]

The other method was the drive, arranged by the Keppoch chiefs, and mentioned only in the passing, by referring to 'driving a herd to a narrow defile.'[58] This indigenous method of hunting will be examined in greater detail in the chapter five which examines the great hunts that took place over many centuries in the Highlands.

Images of the Warrior-Hunter

Before the advent of firearms, the main weapon of choice for hunting was the bow. This weapon's advantage, apart from its deadly use in skilled hands, is its silence. Thus, if an arrow misses an intended target, another can be strung and shot without the quarry necessarily being startled—an advantage that cannot apply to firearms. Such was the obvious advantage of the bow that its use may have been prolonged in

---

[54] *OS*, 10-11, st. 33.
[55] *OS*, 4-5, st. 14.
[56] *LDF*, ii, 56-57.
[57] Guicennas (auth.); Tilander, Gunnar (ed.), *De Arte Bersandi: Le Plus Ancien Traité de Chasse de l'Occident*, Cynegetica III (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1956), 19-21. Translation appears in *HHAMH*, 47.

the Highlands (and probably elsewhere) for hunting.[59] According to tradition, the last hunter to use a bow, as late as the beginning of the 18th century, was a noted deerstalker of his day, Ewen MacEwen of Brae Rannoch.[60] It seems likely, however, that the use of the bow for hunting was in decline by at least the mid-17th century,[61] well after the introduction of firearms to the Highlands, though King Charles I wrote to Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy in 1627 for the levying of bowmen for the French wars.[62] Slightly more than a decade later, in 1639, as part of a planned military invasion of Argyll from Antrim during the civil war, Antrim ordered '500 long bows, each with four bowstrings and twenty-four arrow…But though bows were 'a Weapon much Use with the Scots', they were regarded as obsolete in Ireland.'[63] The Scottish Gaels expertise and adherence to the bow seems remarkable despite the fact that, in a description of the Western Isles *c.* 1583, an estimated 6000 men could be raised in times of war. Of these warriors many of them were bowmen that had already taken up 'harquebussiers.'[64] Even so, there is a passing, and it would seem unique, reference, at least in Gaelic song, in Iain Lom's *Cumha Mhorair Hunndaidh*, to archery practice, described as a pastime enjoyed by the Gaelic nobility:

Chuir iad cuspairean fàil duit
  Cho stàiteil 's bu nòs leat,
Air an imirt' na crùintean—
  Nì as mù, na ros-nòbail;
Is an tàrrdhearga dhaithte,
  Chùil dhreachail ghil bhòidhich,
Chuireadh siubhal fo'n chleitnich,

---

[58] *OS*, 4.

[59] Gregory, Donald, 'Notices regarding Scottish Archery, particularly that of the Highlanders; together with some Original Documents relating to a levy of Highland Bowmen to serve in the war against France, in the year 1627', *Archaeologia Scotica: or Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. III (1831), 251, where it is stated that the last time archers were used was in the Battle of Mulroy in 1688.

[60] Stewart, Rev. Alexander[?], 'The Eagles of Loch Tréig', *The Scottish Church: A Monthly Magazine*, vol. II (Dec.–May, 1885–86), 141.

[61] *BBT*, 399-402, where a list of men and their arms is given in muster rolls for 1638 and, along with weapons such as swords, Lochaber axes, hagbuts, it is also described that many men were armed with bows and arrows.

[62] *Ibid.*, 437; Gregory, Donald, 'Notices regarding Scottish Archery, particularly that of the Highlanders; together with some Original Documents relating to a levy of Highland Bowmen to serve in the war against France, in the year 1627', 248-54, esp., 252-54; Brook, J. S., 'An Account of the Archery Medals Belonging to the University of St Andrews and the Grammar School of Aberdeen', *PSAS*, vol. XXVIII (1893–95), 441-44.

[63] Stevenson, David, *Highland Warrior: Alasdair MacColla and the Civil Wars* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1980), 68.

[64] *CSPS*, vol. XI (1593–95), 254.

Eàrr bhreicnich an eòin orr'.[65]

They put out targets of turf for you,
As stately as was your want,
On which crowns would be played for,
A thing even better than ros-nobles:
Their red-coloured bow-bellies,
—With comely, shining, beautiful back—
Would send the speckled tail-feathered fletches speeding.

The *Wardlaw Manuscript* relates that Lord Hugh of Lovat (1489–1544), who fell at Blàr nan Lèine (1544), was 'a great hunter and man of the field, lovd sport, and tooke pleasur to train his men exactly at sword and bow...'[66] And, further, his grandson was noted for his skill in 'arching, either at buts, bowmarks, or roaving.'[67] And though archery was 'wearing away by degrees, and the gun takeing its place[...]by the Lord Lovats example al the country turnd expert in arching, and the very shepherds could not want their bow, it being the onely arms in vogg, and he obliged every parish to have their bowmarks, and set dayes for game and himselfe went in circuit to see it put in practice...'[68]

Nevertheless, there are only a few specific references in Gaelic literature to the use of the bow in the context of hunting. Perhaps it may have been such a commonplace that it would be taken as a given and, therefore, there was no need to mention it, unless, of course, a poet wished to emphasise any particular aspect of a bow's use. Commonly, bows are mentioned more frequently in the context of warfare. Eachann Bacach (*fl.* 1650), a MacLean poet, has two poems which detail the hunt. In a song, *A' Chnò Shamhna*, dedicated to Sir Lachlann MacLean (*d.* 1648), Lord of Duart, the poet describes the chief hunting with a bow:

Nàile chunnaic mi aimsir,
'S tu ri siubhal na sealga,
Nach bu chubhaidh ort an garbhlach;
Pìc de'n iubhar cha d' fhàs i
Chuireach pudhar na spàirn ort;
Cha bhiodh fuidheall a tàirne
Nam biodh lughadh 'na crannghail,
Chuireadh siubhal fo eàrr-ite 'n eòin.

Glac chòmhnard an càradh
Am bian ròineach na h-earba,

[65] *ÒIL*, 50-51, ll. 563-570.
[66] *Wardlaw*, 416-17.
[67] *Ibid.*, 150.
[68] *Ibid.*, 150.

Cinn stòrach o'n cheàrdaich—
Cha bhiodh òirleach gun bhàthadh
Eadar smeòirn agus gàinne;
Le neart còrcaich á Flànras
Cha bhiodh feòlach an tearmad
Air an seòladh tu 'n crann sin ded' dheòin.[69]

Truly, I have seen the day,
when you joined the hunt,
the rough slope did not stop you;
no yew-bow was fashioned
that'd cause you strain or effort:
you could draw to the limit
while the bowshaft stayed supple
and sent the tail-feathers at speed.

A neat skinful arranged
in the roe-deer's hairy hided quiver,
barbed heads from the smithy,
not an inch but was buried
from the notch to the tip,
powered by Flanders hemp-string;
no hide was safe
when you aimed that shaft at will.

In similar terms, John MacInnes describes a chief as 'an arms-bearing warrior-hunter[...]accompanied by his hounds, attended by his retinue, and carries the weapons that are equally the weapons of battle[...]again the descriptions are juxtaposed or delineate him as warrior and hunter in the same highly formalised vignette. Even in a poem such as Iain Lom's 'Tùirneal a' Chnatain'[...]the hunter's role is felt to be relevant to the statement.'[70] Elsewhere, in another eulogy, probably to the same Sir Lachlann MacLean, the poet, using graphic imagery, extols the skill of the hunter in the use of the bow:

B'e siod an gasan leis 'm bu taitneach
Pìcein dathte lùbadh,
An t-iubhar nuadh ga lughadh gu chluais:
Am beithe uat bu shiùbhlach;
Céir is ròsaid dlùth fo t' ordàig,
Ite 'n eòin an fhéidh mun geàrr e leum
Bhiodh fhuil 'na lèine brùite.

This was a youth who loved to bend the bright-
coloured bow, the fresh yew bent back to his ear:
the birch left you at great speed; wax and resin
close beneath your thumb, fresh bright bird's feather:

[69] *EB*, 20-21, ll. 217-232.
[70] *DG*, 281.

before the deer could leap away his blood had burst
out to form a shirt on the small of his back.[71]

There are other, less graphic, descriptions of the bow's use in the corpus of Gaelic literature:

Is iomadh òganach gleusda / Iubhar rèidh is glac throm…

There is many an active young warrior / with smooth yew bow and heavy quiver…[72]

…Bhiodh an t-iubhar 'ga lùbadh
Aig do fhleasgaichean ùra,
Dol a shiubhal nan stùcbheann
Anns an uidhe gun chùram,
Leis a' bhuidhinn roimh 'n rùisgte na gill.

…Your vigorous young men used to bend the yew as
They traversed the rocky mountains on the care-free
Expedition, along with the company in front of whom
The prizes of hunting would be displayed.[73]

Bha iuthair Loch Tréig aig na fiùrain nach gèilleadh…[74]

The warriors who would not yield had the yew-bows of Loch Treig…

One is here reminded of a proverbial Gaelic rhyme which details the best type of bow and arrow:

Bogha dh' iubhair Easragain,
Is ite firein Locha Trèig;
Cèir bhuidhe Bhaile na Gailbhinn,
Smeòirn on chèard Mhic Pheidearain.

Bow of the yew of Easragan,
Feather of the eagle of Loch Treig,
The yellow wax of Galway,
Arrowhead from the craftsman MacFederan.[75]

---

[71] *EB*, 28-29, ll. 308-315.
[72] *ÒIL*, 90-91, ll. 1142-1143.
[73] *ÒIL*, 146-47, ll. 1809-1813.
[74] MacPherson, Donald C., 'The Clan Donald of Keppoch', *CMag*, vol. 4 (1878), 370. For other examples of sustained mentions of archery in Gaelic poetry, see *BDL*, 144-47, ll. 1357-1464, 1393-1396; Sinclair, Rev. Alexander MacLean, *Na Baird Leathanaich/The MacLean Bards*, 2 vols. (Charlottetown: Haszard & Moore, 1898–1900), i, 185; *ÒIL*, 168-69, ll. 2109-211; *GSMM*, 40-41, ll. 465-482; *EB,* 8-9, ll. 76-90; *ÒIL*, 40-31, ll. 459-467; *ÒIL*, 106-07, ll. 1368-1376.
[75] *CG*, ii, 359; Stewart, Rev. Alexander[?], 'The Eagles of Loch Tréig', 141, where a slightly longer version is given:

He [*sic*] fireoin Loch-a-Tréig;
Jubhar [*sic*] Leitir Easragain;
Sioda loinntean Bhailecliar;

An excerpt, which may have been written by the Rev. Alexander Stewart (*d.* 1901), who wrote many columns (under the pen-name Nether Lochaber) for the *Inverness Courier*, provides additional information:

> ...this last of the toxophilites was careful to provide himself[...]a faultless weapon wherewith to do execution amongst the stags of Ben Vreck and Loch Tréig. The feather was[...]for fletching the arrow, and, preferably from the wing of the eagle of Loch Tréig, because these were[...]accounted the largest, strongest, fiercest eagles[...]the wing feathers of these birds were selected for fletching arrows because of the closeness of their texture and their imperviousness to wet or damp[...]Feathers from the wing of an eagle of Loch Tréig immersed in water for a week[...]so that even after its protracted bath such a feather was fit and proper for the archer's use[...]The wood for the bow was from Letter Easragan in Appin, famous for its yew-trees, while the arrow was of the willow[...]a tough elastic wood which grew to greatest perfection on the slopes of Ben Airgid[...]The arrow-head or barb was to be made by MacFederan, a famous armourer who lived at[...]the foot of Ben Cruachan[...]It will be observed that of the rhyme requisites, two[...]had to come from Ireland—wax, for waxing the bowstring, from Galway; and silk for the bowstring itself from Dublin.[76]

The description of the bow is realistic, for to draw the arrow back to the ear—to the anchor point—is the proper method used for accurate aiming. The yew enjoyed the rank of *the* most noble wood in Gaelic tradition,[77] and also, on a more practical level, was extremely strong as well as supremely supple. It was the best wood for manufacturing a bow, as the energy exchange, from being taut and flexed for releasing the arrow, was very great. Such was the close association between the two that *iubhar* (yew) became a kenning for a bow. Another wood used for making arrows in the Highlands was white or silver birch.[78] Further, Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair (*c.* 1698–*c.* 1770), uses a deliberate archaism in *Bìrlinn Chlann Raghnaill*:

> Ar boghachan foinealach iubhair,
> Gabhadh luthadh ri uchd tuasaid;

> Ceir bhuidhe Bhaile-na, Gailbhin;
> Saighead do sheileach Beinn Airgiod,
> 'S ceann 'on chèard MacPheadairean.
>
> Feather from the wing of an eagle of Loch Tréig;
> Yew from Letter Easragan;
> Silk from the meadows of Dublin;
> Yellow wax from Galway;
> An arrow of the willows of Airgid,
> And a head from the armourer MacFederan.

[76] Stewart, Rev. Alexander[?], 'The Eagles of Loch Tréig', 141-42.
[77] *BDL*, 144-47, ll. 1361-1364; 287.
[78] *EB*, 192; *ÒIL*, 411, l. 95; Ferguson, Charles, 'The Gaelic Names of Trees, Shrubs, and Plants', *TGSI*, vol. VII (1877–78), 150-51; MacTaggart, Kenneth D., 'The MacPhedrans of Loch Awe and Loch Fyne: Legends of an Argyll clan since the 13th century', *TGSI*, vol. LXII (2000–02), 32-37.

'S na saighdean beithe, nach spealgadh,
Ann am balgan a' bhruic ghruamaich.[79]

Our glittering bows of yew
Would flex in the face of battle,
And the birch arrows that would not splinter,
In the quiver of the surly badger.

Within four lines Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, using aphoristic phrasing, has summed up what is characteristic of archery: the flexed yew bow, the well-made birch arrows and badger-hide quiver.

A song, *Òran do Dhòmhnaill Gorm Òg*, composed by Iain Lom for the Sleat chieftain who died in 1643, draws upon images from the Panegyric Code and clearly shows the episodes covered by such a praise song. Opening with the usual personal epithets, the poem then moves on to weapons and hunting, a political skew of alliance and clanship, a sea-faring episode, entertainment and then hospitality. The hunting episode is consistent with the Panegyric Code:

Is an gunna nach diùlt:
An tràth chaogadh tu an t-sùil
Gum bitheadh a shùgradh searbh.

Is bogha an t-sàr chùil
Donn-mheallanaich ùir,
Caoin fallain den fhiùran dearg.

Is taifeid nan dual
Air a tarraing fo d' chluais:
'S mairg neach air am buailte a meall.

Is ite an eòin lèith
Air a sparradh le cèir:
Bhiodh briogadh an dèidh a h-càrr.

Bho's imeachd don Fhèinn
Is cinn fhine sibh pèin
Air fineachan fhèil gu dearbh.

And the gun that does not fail:
when you took aim with your eye
its merry-making was sure to be sour.

And a bow with fine back,
brown-embossed and new,
of smooth, well-seasoned red wood.

And the bow's twined string,

[79] *PAM*, 372.

drawn back below your ear,
woe to the one who would be hit with its force.

And a feather of the goose,
set in place with wax:
a prick after its tail passed through.

Since the Fian are gone
you are the leaders yourselves
of generous clans indeed.[80]

The allusion to Fenian warrior-hunters, coming after the bow's description, is also worthy of note.

A metaphorical interchange between warfare and hunting is used to good effect in a poem praising Campbell of Argyll which begins by listing MacDonald allies:

Cóir ar tús ag cur san chaithréim
clann Domhnuill chuige ón tír thuaith;
na fearchoin as dàna an doghruinn…[81]

It is proper to place first in the battle-roll
Clan Donald of the north;
the boldest man-hounds in the strife…

This may be compared with similar allusions to be found in a lay praising Goll, son of Morna, leader of the Connacht Fianna, and Fionn's arch rival, said to have been composed by Fergus File:

…colg conbhfach air,
onchú ar ghoil.

Forghla na gcon,
roghrágh na mban,
laoich, dámh gan on,
do ghnàth 'na ghar.

…he bears a destructive blade, he is a war-hound for valour.

He is the pick of hounds, the choice love of women;
Warriors are ever nigh him, a band without blame.[82]

Both vignettes supply examples of the close similarity between warfare and the hunt. Arguably, both 'pusuits' involve danger, killing, skill, and weaponry, and therefore,

[80] *GC*, 100-03.
[81] Watson, William J., 'Classic Gaelic Poetry of Panegyric in Scotland', 219.
[82] *HPBDL*, 64-67, ll. 851-856.

could be metaphorically interchanged to provide each other with an apposite setting when placed in a piece of poetry or song.

Cumha Choire an Easain

Another bard, Iain Dall MacAoidh (1656–1754), Am Pìobaire Dall, chose to praise nature when he composed *Cumha Choire an Easain*, in 1696, to commemorate the death of first cousin and patron, Colonel Robert Mackay. Some of the composition features a dialogue between the piper and the corrie itself:

'S mi aig bràighe an Alltain Riabhaich,
'G iarraidh gu Bealach na Fèitheadh,
Far am bi damh dearg na cròic,
Mu Fhèill an Ròid re dol san dàmhair.

'G iarraidh gu bealach an easa,
Far an tric a sgapadh fùdar,
Far am bidh mìolchoin gan tairbirt,
Cur mac na h-eilde gu dhùlan.

Coire gun easbhaidh gun iomrall,
'S tric bha Raibeart ma do chomraibh,
Gach aon uair a nì mi t' iomradh,
Tuitidh mo chridhe fo thromchradh.

I am on the bank of Alltan Riabhach,
wanting across to Bealach na Fèitheadh,
where the russet stag of the antlers
around Rood-day makes for her rutting.

Wanting across to the waterfall gully,
where lead-shot was often scattered,
were greyhounds are incited,
the son of the hind held by their baying.

A corrie without defect or blemish,
often was Raibeart at your waters-meeting;
every time your name I utter
my heart falls into sadness.[83]

There are elements of mutability, and, ultimately, forlornness within *Cumha Choire an Easain*, as would be expected in such a lament. The conscious awareness of such themes, however, is not profound, but is revealed as a matter-of-fact 'philosophy', or, simply the way things were. In other songs, or parts of some longer songs, the elements of conviviality and joy are also brought to the fore. The theme of the hunt

[83] *GC*, 208-09.

occupied and resonated at different levels and, thus, was malleable enough to be utilised beyond its 'normal' sphere.

What marks out *Cumha Choire an Easain* is the dialogue framework in which the poem is developed. The sense of place is ultimately one which connects the bard to the corrie, and after the preliminary verse is over, there follows the introduction of hunting motifs conveying the esteem in which it was held. The Blind Piper emphasises the fecundity and generosity of Coirenessan, with its rich storehouse of venison, which, it would seem, alludes to his patron as well. Just as the corrie used to be the scene of hunting expeditions, so too, the bard remarks upon the vanquished glory of his patron's hall while drawing attention to his own plight as a patronless bard:[84]

Gormanach tolmanach àlainn,
  Lachadh, lusach, dosach, cràighiach,
Fradharach gadharach breitheach
  Ag iomain na h-eilid gu nàmhaid.

Siumragach sealbhagach, duilleach,
  Mìnlachach, gormleudach gleannach,
Coire riabhach riasgach luideach,
  Far 'm biadhte chuideachd gun cheannach.

San am don ghrèine dhol air a h-uilinn
  Gasda glèidhteach reubach fuileach
Branach stràcach riachach finleach
  Sealgach marbhach targnach giullach.

With knolls and lovely green hillocks,
  dense and bushy, with duck and sheldrake,
a good look-out, a place for trapping
  the hind hounded towards her enemy.

Leafy, with clover and sorrel,
  camomile, green slopes and gullies,
brindled, tousled, ragged corrie,
  its company fed without payment.

When the sun is sinking on her elbow,
  well-protected the place for bloody tearing,
corn-husks and fennel, thumping and flaying,
  hunting, killing, gillies boasting.[85]

[84] *DG*, 302.
[85] *GC*, 210-13. See Appendix A for the full poem with translation.

Air dha bhith uair an Dùn Èideann

In a song, *Air dha bhith uair an Dùn Èideann*, composed by An Ciaran Mabach or, Gilleasbaig Ruadh mac Mhic Dhòmhnaill (*fl.* 1650), brother of Sir James MacDonald of Sleat (1605–1678), the bard contrasts the hunt with the humdrum of daily life. The song was probably composed while the bard was hospitalised in Edinburgh on account of a 'gammy leg.' The rest period required before his leg was healed and the resultant inactivity, compounded by boredom, incited memories of a more joyful and active time when he roamed the hills and hunted in Skye, Lewis and North Uist:

'S oil leam càradh na frìthe
(Is mi bhith 'n Lìte nan long)
Eadar ceann Sàileas Sìphort
'S rubha Ghrianaig nan tonn,
Agus Uiginnis riabhach,
An tric an d'iarr mi damh donn
'S a bhith triall chun nam bodach
Dh'am bu chosnadh cas chrom.

Chan eil agam cù gleusda
Is chan eil feum agam dhà;
Cha suidh mi air baca
Am monadh fada o chàch;
Cha leig mi mo ghadhar—
Chaidh faghaid an t-Sròim Bàin—
'S cha sgaoil mi mo luaidh
An Gleann Ruathain gu bràth.

Vexing the thought of the moorland
(while I'm in Leith of the ships)
between the head of Sàileas Sìphort
and Grianaig point of the waves,
and Uiginnis lying dappled
where often I brought down a brown stag,
instead I approach the old worthies
who'd make a living from a gammy leg.

I have no trained deerhound
and of one I've no use;
I'll sit on no peat-hag
on a moor far from all;
I have not hound to send after—
the Sròm Bàn hunt had dispersed—
and my lead I will scatter
in Gleann Ruathain no more.[86]

An alternative rendering of these lines from the stanza first quoted may read:

[86] *GC*, 178-79, 232.

'S a bhith triall chun nam bodach
Dh'am bu chosnadh cas chrom.

While travelling to the peasants
Who'd make a living with a foot plough.[87]

Thus An Ciaran Mabach expresses his contempt for agriculture and for peasants contrasting their situation markedly to the 'noble' life of the hunter.

At times, the chase is seen as a pursuit so worthy that a level of idealisation is reached where the hunter can do no wrong. In this symbiotic relationship, the deer, though seen as worthy (if fickle) opponents, are, nonetheless, as free from guilt as the actual hunter:

...Cha d'rinn mi fhathast beud no pudhar
Mura leag mi fiadh fo bruthach,
No biast mhaol na caolas cumhang
No dubh-sgarbh an cois na tuinne.

...Yet have I done no mischief,
Unless to fell a deer on a hill-side
Or an otter in slender narrows
Or a shag at the shoreline.[88]

In An Ciaran Mabach's song there are verses in which the bard emphasises both the deer's and the hunter's innocence, and yet, it would appear that there may be some latent eroticism:

B'iad mo ghràdh-sa a' ghreigh uallach
A thogadh suas ris an àird,
Dh' itheadh biolair an fhuarain
'S air 'm bu shuarach an càl;
'S mise fèin nach tug fuath dhuibh,
Ged a b' fhuar am mìos Màigh—
'S tric a dh' fhulaing mi cruadal
'S mòran fuachd air ur sgàth.

. . . . .

B'i mo ghràdh-sa a' bhean uasal
Dha nach d' fhuaras riamh lochd,
Nach iarradh mar chluasaig
Ach fìor ghualainn nan cnoc,
'S nach fuiligeadh an t-sradag
A lasadh ri corp:

[87] *GC*, 232; MacInnes, Rev. John, 'Clan Unity and Individual Freedom', *TGSI*, vol. XLVII (1971–72), 354, where this is interpreted, as the bard yearning for 'his Hebridean home and the fellowship of the humble folk who used the "cas-chrom" to earn their daily bread.'
[88] *GC*, 48-49.

Och a Mhoire, mo chruaidh-chàs
  Nach d' fhuair mi thu nochd!

My love the proud deer-herds
  that would rise up by the point,
who ate cress from the fountain
  and on kale looked askance:
I bore them no ill-will,
  though the chill month of May—
often have I suffered discomfort
  and great cold for your sakes.

. . . . .

My love the noble lady
In whom fault was never found,
Who desired no cushion
But the shoulder of the hill,
Who suffered not the lead-shot
To spark against her side:
Och, by the Virgin, it's my downfall
I have not found you tonight![89]

Hunting and Jacobite Polemics

The various Jacobite Rebellions allowed Gaelic bards to vent their own political agendas and propaganda. Arguably the most outspoken was Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair. A great piece of bombastic verse is *Dìomoladh Chabair Fèidh*, where he extols his own clan at the expense of the MacKenzies (whose emblem is the antlered stag). A legendary account of the alleged founder of the MacKenzies, Colin Fitzgerald, saving King Alexander III from a furious stag, has romantic connotations as well as a magnificent artistic depiction (fig. 4.1).[90] Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair uses the emblems of both clans: the brave MacDonald lion triumphing over the timid

[89] *GC*, 179-81.

[90] The background to this painting's commission may be given: In 1783 Francis Humberston Mackenzie, who but for the attainder of the 5th Earl of Seaforth after the 1715 Jacobite Rising, would have become 9th Earl, succeeded to the estates of Seaforth and Humberston. A decade earlier the expatriate Pennsylvanian painter Benjamin West had achieved international celebrity status on his appointment as historical painter to George III. In 1784 Humberston Mackenzie, whose title was still under attainder, commissioned the king's painter to produce an enormous painting celebrating the legendary origins of the Clan MacKenzie and the role of his presumed ancestor in saving the Scottish monarchy from certain destruction. For this spectacular piece of dynastic propaganda, completed in 1786, Humberston Mackenzie paid the huge sum of 800 guineas. The heraldic device of the MacKenzies derives from the traditional claim that their founder, Colin Fitzgerald, a fugitive from Ireland, saved King Alexander III (1249–1286) from a rogue stag while hunting. In gratitude the king is said to have rewarded Colin with Kintail. See Fraser, William, *The Earls of Cromartie: Their Kindred, Country and Correspondence* (Edinburgh: Thomas & Archibald Constable, 1876), ii, 462-64; MacKenzie, Alexander, *The Reputed Fitzgerald Origins of the Mackenzies* (Glasgow: Clan MacKenzie

MacKenzie stag. The poem was inspired mainly by the cowardly behaviour of the MacKenzies at Sheriffmuir when, after breaking rank, they turned tail and left their colours behind:

> ...'N taobh muigh den bhrataich Shàilich,
> Gun d' fhàg sibh Sliabh 'n t-Siorraim i.[91]
>
> ...The Kintail banner was left
> by you on the field at Sheriffmuir.

This barb must have stung the MacKenzies as nothing is worse (in military terms) than having to suffer the ignominy of fleeing before the enemy in complete disarray and, in the resulting confusion, to lose their clan banner:

> Gu bheil mi air mo ghèisgeadh,
> Le rèicil 'n daimh Charrannaich,
> Gun fhios nach ann sa bhùireadh,
> Air thùs thig do mhearan ort;
> Ma theannas tu ri bùirich,
> Ri ùinich, no langanaich;
> Rinn Dia dhiot creutair fiadhaich,
> Ro fhiamhaich gu carachadh.
>
> Ach 's beag bu chòir do fhear do chàil,
> Bhi labhairt an càs batailte;
> Ged nach faiceadh tu do nàmhaid,
> Ach air fàir', gun *starta* tu,
> 'S ann thug 'ur càileachd anns a' chàs ud,
> Bàrr air geàrr nam machraichean;
> Gum fòghnadh aon lasag fhùdair
> Chur sgeimhle dlùth fo 'r casan-se.[92]
>
> It is I who is much shaken
> By the Carron deer's roar
> Knowing full well in rutting time
> That madness will beset you.
> If you turn to roaring
> Bustling or bellowing;
> God made you a wild creature
> Ever skittish to skip and jump.
>
> Little should a man of your sort
> Be talking of hard battles;
> Even if you saw your enemy
> From afar, you'd run;
> Your inclination in such dire straits

Society, 1892); NLS, Gregory's Collections, MS 2133, ff. 213-245, 'Traditionary Account of the Origin of the Clan MacKenzie.'

[91] *PAM*, 300.

[92] *Ibid.*, 306.

Would be to outpace the hare of the plains.
One flash of gunpowder suffices
To put a tight throng under your feet.

Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's lambaste is strengthened when he compares the MacKenzies to cowardly deserters: a potent mixture of satire that was bound to rile and one which would reward MacDonald with MacKenzie enmity:

Nam faiceadh sibh 'n damh Sàileach,
Le bhàrr àrd 's le ghliogadan;
An còmhlan glas fon armaibh,
Fir chearbach nach misneachail;
Cha shaoileadh fear ri shealltainn,
Gun robh foill no bristeadh ann;
'S ann thàrr e mach air às an rang,
'S an ruaig gu teann ri easgaidean.

Ach ged rannsaich thu 's an àm
Gach uile shamhl' air gealtaireachd;
Measg gach beathaich a thaobh nàdair,
Gun tug Àdhamh baisteadh dhaibh,
Chan fhaiceadh tu tionail an fhèidh,
Na measg gu lèir air saidealtachd;
'S mì-fhortan a tharraing a chròc-cheann
Air brèid-sròil do bhrataichean.[93]

If you saw the Kintail stag
With his high, rattling antlered-head,
The grey-armoured band,
Cowardly, awkward men,
No man looking on would think
There was guile or even distress,
He broke from out of the ranks
With the pursuing host hard on his shanks.

And though at this time you may watch out
For every sort of cowardice,
Among all of nature's beasts
That Adam had baptised,
All you'd see would be a herd of deer
And each one of them timid,
Unfortunate to have an antlered-head displayed
Upon your clout-silked banners.

Aside from delivering a caustic drubbing, mac Mhaighstir Alasdair probably had an alternative agenda: to incite the MacKenzies to steel themselves and to stand their ground next time they took to the battle-field. Indeed, this is suggested by the

[93] *Ibid.*, 308.

inclusion of a complimentary stanza to the MacKenzies in *Òran nam Fineachan*, a pro-Jacobite rallying cry which preceded the 'Forty-five.[94]

Throughout this period, Gaeldom underwent an enormous change particularly in socio-economic, religious, political and cultural terms, and, therefore, small wonder that such concerns should be reflected in contemporary poetry and song. This is perhaps one of the reasons that mac Mhaighstir Alasdair managed to throw aside the yoke of the Panegyric Code and, thus, liberated Gaelic poetry by breathing new life into an idiom that had become conservative and, perhaps, even irrelevant. Freed from the shackles of tradition (though still under its influence), mac Mhaighstir Alasdair broke new ground, particularly through his innovative mimicking of classical pipe music. As well as this, mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's treatment of nature and politics, particularly Jacobite polemics, was an area in which his genius was given free reign to express itself.[95] For example, his *Smeòrach Chlann Raghnaill*[96] praises and exhorts Clan Donald, and also uses close bird observation which develops the use of a bird/singer poet. This is to the fore in the poem's opening before giving way and being immersed in political gestures, finally ending with toasting each branch of Clan Donald. Whether or not mac Mhaighstir Alasdair ever composed a more sustained piece of poetry on hunting is beside the point: his genius for portraying a sustained treatment on an epic scale can be easily discerned in *Bìrlinn Chlann Raghnaill*.

Likewise, albeit in a role very much reversed, mac Mhaighstir Alasdair has utilised the nature of the deer—a timid, shy and rather skittish creature at times—by metaphorically equating it with the MacKenzies' cowardly behaviour, while at the same time praising the brave and courageous MacDonald lion. For the metaphorical use of the deer in a political context, credit must be given to mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, and it is yet another example of re-using a powerful emblem in a novel fashion.

---

[94] *PAM*, 76-87, st. 15; Thomson, Derick S., 'Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's Political Poetry', *TGSI*, vol. LVI (1988–90), 185-213, for a wider appreciation and analysis of the role which Jacobite politics played in both Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's life and verse.

[95] See Thomson, Derick S., 'Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's Nature Poetry and its Sources', in Derick S. Thomson (ed.), *Gaelic and Scots in Harmony: Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on the Languages of Scotland* (Glasgow: Department of Celtic, University of Glasgow, 1988), 95-115; and Thomson, Derick S., 'Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's Political Poetry', *TGSI*, vol. LVI (1988–90), 185-213.

[96] *PAM*, 300.

The close association of warfare and the hunt provides an area where metaphorical images could be used to good effect. An example of its use is given by mac Mhaighstir Alasdair in *Òran nam Fineachan*:

> Gun tig na fiùrain Leòdach ort
> Mar sheochdain 's eòin fo 'n spàig...
>
> The heroes of MacLeod will come
> Like hawks that grip their prey...[97]

And also where the Clan Donald were to the fore of the battle where the image of predatory hounds ready for the pursuit is well put:

> 'Nam brataichean làn-éidicht'
> Le dealas geur gun chealg,
> Thig Domhnullaich 'nan déidh sin,
> Cho dìleas duit ri d' léine,
> Mar choin air fasdadh éille,
> Air chath chrith geur gu sealg;
> 'S mairg nàimhde do 'n nochd iad fraoch,
> Long, léomhann, craobh, 's làmh dearg.
>
> Then with their flowing banners,
> With unaffected zeal,
> Clan Donald quickly follows,
> As faithful as their raiment,
> Like hounds their leashes straining,
> A-tremble for the hunt;
> Pity the foes they show the ling,
> Ship, lion, tree, red hand.[98]

The hunting metaphor is simple yet apposite: the MacDonald hounds restrained only by their leashes are whimpering with excitement and battle-fervour, ready to go in for the kill. The hunting and battle environment, if it may be so called, are interchangeable. In a similar fashion, Iain Dubh mac Iain mhic Ailein (John MacDonald, *c.* 1665–*c.* 1725), of the Clanranald MacDonalds, composed a stirring roll-call and incitement to battle for the Jacobite Rising of 1715:

> Clann an Aba an seòrsa
> Thèid bòidheach fon triall:
> 'S glan còmhdach a' chòmhlain,
> Luchd leònadh nam fiadh;
> Iad fhèin is Clann Phàrlain,
> Dream àrdanach dhian —

[97] Campbell, John Lorne (ed.), *Òrain Ghàidhealach mu Bhliadhna Theàrlaich/Highland Songs of the Forty-Five* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 2nd ed., 1984), 78-79, ll. 89-90; *PAM*, 80-81.
[98] *Ibid.*, 76-77, ll. 57-64; *PAM*, 78-79.

'S ann a b' àbhaist dh'ur n-àireamh
Bhith 'm fàbhar Shìol Chuinn.

Stiùbhartaich ùrghlan
Na fiùrain gun ghiamh,
Fir mhùirneach nan lùthchleas
Nach tionndadh le fiamh…

The MacNabs are the tribe
Who handsomely march off:
They're a well-dressed company,
Those wounders of the deer;
They and the MacFarlanes,
A proud energetic race —
You're traditionally numbered
Among MacDonald supporters.

The fine noble Stewarts
And unblemished saplings,
Civil men who love field-sports
And wouldn't turn back in fear…[99]

Just as Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair names each clan and extols its virtues, so too, does Iain Dubh by using such hunting metaphors, and though more restrained, they are, nonetheless, just as apposite as those used by mac Mhaighstir Alasdair. In the main, however, these types of song do not have hunting as a central subject, but, rather, hunting imagery is used to reinforce and strengthen metaphors, especially in connection to warfare.

Moladh Beinn Dòbhrain: A Hunting Tour de Force

There is little doubt that one of the greatest paeans to hunting is *Moladh Beinn Dòbhrain*, composed by Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir (1724–1812). During his lifetime, Gaeldom underwent a tumultuous transition that finally led to the extinction of a clan-based society, ostensibly finished in all but name after the failure of the last Jacobite Rebellion. Macintyre was influenced by other major Gaelic poets of the 17th and 18th centuries, such as Iain Lom, and, Macintyre's near-contemporary, Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair. The latter was to have a major influence on Macintyre's compositions, especially his earlier songs, until Macintyre found his own voice producing what many regard as his greatest work, *Moladh Beinn Dòbhrain*. Shortly after the ill-fated Jacobite Rebellion, Macintyre became a stalker/game-keeper in the

[99] *L*, 40-41; Ó Baoill, Colm (ed.), *Iain Dubh: Òrain a rinn Iain Dubh mac Iain mhic Ailein* (Obar-Dheathain: An Clo Gaidhealach, 1994), 24-25, ll. 285-296.

forests of Breadalbane. This is known from a brief, if vague, reference when Macintyre was 'a forester to the Right Honourable the Earl of Breadalbane in Coire Cheathaich and Beinn Dourain.'[100] To anyone familiar with these place-names, they evoke many of his finest compositions. The twenty-year period of his life spent working in the hills and glens must mark his greatest creative period, as well as the height of his poetic skills. Once he removed himself (and family) to Edinburgh in 1767, he distanced himself from the natural inspiration that urged him to create so many manifold descriptions, detailing his love of nature (amongst other subjects), inspired by the Highland environment. Once this was removed, his inspiration to create great poetry diminished accordingly. In other words, it was a kind of 'poetical' removal to Edinburgh, where he produced nothing of real note thereafter other than *Cead Deireannach nam Beann.*[101] Macintyre retired from the City Guard in 1806, and died six years later in Edinburgh. A monument marks his grave in Greyfriars Churchyard (fig. 3.1), and a further memorial to his memory was raised in his homeland on Ceann-chaorach, Dalmally, lying to the east of Loch Awe (fig. 3.2).

Moladh Beinn Dòbhrain, probably composed early in the 1760s, is a paean to the mountain (especially its nature and deer); and is divided into eight movements loosely based upon *ceòl mòr* (the extended classical music of the bagpipe), ranging from the ground (*ùrlar*) to the finale (*crùnladh/crùnluath*).[102] These eight movements are further divided into three pairs of ground plus variation (*siubhal*), and each of the last two pairs have a ground followed by a finale. Different themes reflect each of these movements making the whole more than just a combination of its various parts. Briefly, these themes may be summarised: similarly to the piping equivalent, the first movement anticipates the main topics of the poem—the mountain (Ben Dorain), the deer and the hunt. The second and third movements delineate the relationship between the deer and its environment. The fourth movement concentrates upon flora and fauna found upon the mountain, eventually returning to the image of the buck and doe. The fifth movement draws a more detailed picture of the doe and attempts to define her

[100] *Ibid.*, xxiv.

[101] The first edition of Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre's love-songs and paeans to mountain scenery, *Orain Ghaidhealach*, appeared in 1768. Macintyre never received any formal education leaving him unlettered so he recited twenty-six songs (and possibly more) to the Rev. Donald MacNicoll (1735–1802), minister of Lismore, who then transcribed them for publication.

[102] By composing in this style, Macintyre was influenced by a model first introduced by the innovative genius of Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair in his *Moladh Mòraig*, see *L*, 126-33, 425-27; *PAM*, 212-32.

finest qualities and habits. A variation then follows where the poet praises many of his favourite deer-haunted corries and glens—Macintyre's favourite hunting grounds. The fourth and last ground (the seventh movement) draws all the previous movements together—the mountain, the deer, and the huntsmen who frequent it. The finale concludes with all these images converging to form a frenetic action where the poet describes the chase and killing of the deer.[103]

In terms of hunting, in this instance stalking (which probably gained more popularity from the beginning of the 18th century), the finale is probably the most arresting part of Macintyre's *tour de force*:

Tha 'n eilid anns a' ghleannan seo,
'S chan amadan gun eòlas
A leanadh i mur b' aithne dha
Tighinn farasda na còmhdhail:
Gu faiteach bhith na h-earalas,
Tighinn am faisge dhi mun caraich i,
Gu faiceallach, glè earraigeach,
Mum fairich i ga coir e;
Feadh sloc is ghlac is chamhanan,
Is chlach a dhèanadh falach air,
Bhith beachdail air an talamh
'S air a' char a thig na neòil air;
'S an t-astar bhith ga tharraing air
Cho macanta 's a b' aithne dha,
Gun glacadh e dh' a h-aindeoin i
Le h-anabharra seòltachd;
Le tùr, gun ghainne baralach,
An t-sùil a chur gu danarra,
A' stiùradh na dubh-bannaiche,
'S a h-aire ri fear cròice.
Bhiodh rùdan air an tarraing
Leis an lùbt' an t-iarann-earra,
Bheireadh ionnsaigh nach biodh mearachdach
Don fhear a bhiodh ga seòladh;
Spor ùr an dèis a teannachadh,
Buill' ùird a' sgailceadh deingean ris,
Cha diùilt an t-srad nuair bheanas i
Don deannaig a bha neònach.
'S e 'm fùdar tioram teannabaich
Air chùl an asgairt ghreannaich,
Chuireadh smùid ri acainn mheallanaich
À baraille Nic Còiseam.[104]

The hind is in this little glen,
and no unskilled fool

[103] Gillies, William, 'The Poem in Praise of Ben Dobhrain', *Lines Review*, vol. 63 (Dec., 1977), 43-44.
[104] *ÒDB*, 220-22, ll. 3228-3259. See Appendix A for the full poem with translation.

could stalk her if he did not know of
making contact with her quietly;
guarding against her warily,
drawing near before she stirs,
cautiously, most toilsomely,
lest she should sense him;
among pits, folds and clefts,
and rocks which conceal him,
taking note of the terrain,
and the way the clouds approach,
advancing on the trail,
as softly as he knows,
that he will trap her, despite her,
by exceptional cunning,
with skill and judgement,
targeting the eye unflinchingly,
aiming the crafty dame,
levelled at the antlered-one.
Finger ready to pull
on the hinder spring bend,
that would give a sure hit,
to the one who aimed it,
a new flint, sure and tight,
hitting the hammer with a crack,
sparking when contact is made,
the pinch that is a marvel.
Dry, matured gun-powder
behind the shrivelled tinder,
the hail-like charge ablazing
from Nic Còiseam's barrel.

The most striking aspect of the poem, apart from its verbal fluency, musicality and sheer delight, is that, it would seem, an ecological consciousness—a cultural construct in itself—pervades the whole. This is revealed through Macintyre's reflections (which are never introspective) upon his minute observation of deer and their habitat, as well as his close attention to detail in general, which go beyond mere description. Iain Crichton Smith observed of the poem that 'we learn a lot about deer[...]as well as about the mechanism of eighteenth century guns. There is also some information about plants and the techniques of hunting.'[105] Smith's interpretation, though obviously appreciative of all that makes the poem great, does not perceive any greater depth beyond empirical descriptions of which the poem abounds. Beyond the raw data given in the song there is no message, or deeper meaning. This tells only half the story. John MacInnes, on the other hand, sums up the attributes of the song in these

[105] Smith, Iain Crichton, *Ben Dorain: Translated from the Gaelic of Duncan Ban Macintyre* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Northern House, 1988), 4.

succinct terms: 'His masterpiece[...]is a poem of extraordinary sophistication and sensibility, realising physical nature with a bold sweep of perception but also with a minute, precise, sensual delicateness: the lines of the landscape, the movement of deer, the qualities of the vegetation of the moor. It is a visual documentary, invented before the camera.'[106]

Nevertheless, there is a lack of 'morality' in the poem because, though Macintyre adores the deer, and knows their habits and haunts intimately, they are there to be killed. He has absolutely no qualms in pulling the trigger—sentimentality is all but absent. Though the deer are not reduced to mere venison on the hoof, Macintyre does not shirk from describing the hunt's violence, especially the section where the deer are bleeding to death in pools that are too deep for them; or the dogs whimpering with excitement, and running along with their red tongues lolling out. The poem is rooted in reality (and is in no way sensationalised) lending an effervescent quality especially with regard to the finale, culminating in a successful stalk—the kill that closes, and, thus resolves the song's cyclical movement.

William Gillies perceives a poem of visionary quality and qualifies his argument by drawing upon the transfer of bardic images from the eulogy of chiefs and dignitaries being applied figuratively to the mountain:

> When Duncan Ban asserts the right of the deer to live on the mountain because her ancestors took possession of it[...]I find it hard not to reverse the figure and think of Duncan Ban's own countrymen in the 1760s; and at the points where the bardic strains are most insistent the absence of a lord of the hunt or[...]the mountain is striking[...] 'Moladh Beinn Dobhrain' as a serious and courageous attempt to create a dialectic for the expression of some pretty powerful ideas[...]I believe that what he wanted to express concerned men as well as deer, and that the poem's claims to importance[...]are tied up with this fact.[107]

The allegorical meaning expressed suggests that it is the rightful assertion of the ancient inhabitants of the lands to re-take or re-assert their possession; and that it was a sacred obligation to those that 'owned' the land to treat it more than merely a hunting reserve. A reverence for nature, and all her aspects of flora and fauna, resonates throughout the song. A hint of nature's permanence (the mountain and its environs) surfaces lying in stark contrast to the transience of people and, perhaps, even deer. It may be that a subconscious political commentary is at play which runs

---

[106] *DG*, 172.
[107] Gillies, William, 'The Poem in Praise of Ben Dobhrain', 47-48.

through the song as Macintyre was well aware of the changing shifts in post-Culloden Highland society, especially with regard to politics and culture. If this is true then it manages to surface only now and again through the myriad of lyrical descriptions and impressions which imbue the song.

Derick Thomson has summarised *Moladh Beinn Dòbhrain*'s themes by placing its importance and remarking upon the transference of the convention of praising the clan chief to that of the mountain and its deer:

> The theme of the deer is developed in remarkable detail, with many sub-themes such as hunting technique; the appearance and construction and operation of the gun, the different ages and stages of hind and stag, their way of life, food, and whimsically, their feelings[...]this is a song in praise of deer, and[...]it is the foremost praise-song in Gaelic—an ironic reflection, when[...]generations of bards trained to praise human chiefs and patrons.[108]

The main irony is that praise normally reserved for chiefs has been transferred to the mountain. It seems that an ecological consciousness, from Macintyre's own viewpoint, pervades the whole of the poem and raises it beyond a mere paean to nature, although this is certainly the main thrust of the song. Such an interpretation may read too much into Macintyre's intentions, but, a greater appreciation may be realised for the mountain that God had made and Macintyre had praised so well.[109]

Equally, and in contrast, Macintyre's sometimes sycophantic addresses to various Campbell chiefs and dignitaries is rooted in the tradition of praise poetry. *Òran do Mhormhair Ghlinn Urchaidh*, composed in honour of John Campbell, who, in 1752, succeeded as Earl of Breadalbane, shows Macintyre to be well versed in 17th century eulogistic song, and also in commonplace motifs which contain the usual hunting episodes:

> Sàr phòitear an fhìon thu,
> 'S tu dh'òladh 's a dhìoladh;
> Fhuair thu fòghlam gach rìoghachd,
> Meòir as grinne nì sgrìobhadh;
> Bu tu sealgair na sìdhne
> Le d' chuilbheir caol dìreach,[110]

---

[108] Thomson, Derick S., *Introduction to Gaelic Poetry*, 186-87.

[109] See *L*, 490 for this anecdote.

[110] Campbell, John L., 'Cuilbheir: An Etymological Note', *Éigse: A Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. II (1940), 44, points out that the word is derived from English 'caliever', 'caliver', a light kind of harquebus (originally of a certain calibre) fired without a rest, and not from the English 'culverin' which was a piece of heavy artillery. This was the weapon of choice which replaced the bow and arrow used by the Highlanders for hunting and fowling.

Nuair a thàrladh tu 'm frìth nam beann àrda,
Nuair a thàrladh tu 'm frìth nam beann àrda.

An àm dhuit bhith tadhal
Anns a' bheinn am bi 'n fhaghailt,
Leat bu mhiannach a' ghreadhain,
Fuaim mhiosar ri h-adharc,
Gunna-glaice do roghainn,
Nuair a rachadh e 'n deaghaidh fir cràice,
Nuair a rachadh e 'n deaghaidh fir cràice.

Of wine a fine drinker,
one who quaffed and who treated;
who won learning of kingdoms,
whose fingers wrote fairest,
of game a fine hunter
with your straight and slim musket.
when you were in the high-peaked deer-forest,
when you were in the high-peaked deer-forest.

When you made an excursion
to the hill of hunting,
you joined the jovial company
where the horn touched the measure,
your choice was the shot-gun,
baying cry of the deer-hound
as he chased the one-with-the-antlers,
as he chased the one-with-the-antlers.[111]

Macintyre also returned to the theme of the hunt in his swan-song, *Cead Deireannach nam Beann*. This song rehearses the same kind of sentiments as *Moladh Beinn Dòbhrain* but from the perspective of an older (and perhaps wiser) hunter, and so, the song is more reflective and sentimental. It is a more introspective piece, as Macintyre's praise is tempered by mature judgement, and, as such, may have been influenced by *Òran na Comhachaig* when the bard bade his final farewell:

Mo shoraidh leis na frìthean,
O 's mìorbhailteach na beannan iad,
Le biolair uaine 's fioruisg,
Deoch uasal rìomhach cheanalta;
Na blàran a tha prìseil,
'S na fàsnaichean tha lìonmhor,
O 's àit' a leig mi dhìom iad,
Gu bràth mo mhìle beannachd leò.

My farewell to those deer-forests—
they are hills that are most wonderful,

[111] Thomson, Derick S. (ed.), *Gaelic Poetry in the Eighteenth Century: A Bilingual Anthology* (Aberdeen: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1993), 88-89, ll. 695-710; see also *ÒDB*, 40-41, ll. 573-588.

with green watercress and pure water,
a fine noble drink, so excellent;
those meadows that are precious,
those wilds that are abundant,
since I have now relinquished them,
for ever my thousand blessings there.[112]

A contemporary of Macintyre, the Strathspey bard William Smith (*d. c.* 1809), or Uilleam Ruigh an Naoimh, was a noted deerstalker of his day and is famous for his composition *Allt an Lochain Uaine*.[113] His muse was not confined to praising his favourite haunt as he stalked in many parts of the Grampian mountains. This song is typical of the conventional use made of hunting motifs:

Fhuair mi naidheachd an dè
Bho shealgair an fhéidh,
Chuir clach eadar mi féin 's mo bhròg.

'S mi bhi 'n garbh-choire Dhé,
Ann an aròs an fhéidh,
Far an cuireamaid féum air lòn.

Troimh sneachda nan spéur,
Seal mu 'n éirich a' ghréin,
Air mo bhreacan 'ga fhéileadh orm.

'N uair théid Mac-Alpein do 'n Ghleann,
'S nighean an Tuairnir 'na làimh
Bi'dh fuil air damh seang na cròic'.

Tràth 's shiùbhlas Mac-Aidh
Le bhrod chù bàn,
Agus crith air a' bhrang 's e 'falbh.

Gu 'm beil mulad orm féin,
Nach d' rinn sinn bonn féum—
Chualas langan an fhéidh 'sa cheò.

'N uair 'thig Mac-Alpein bho 'n bheinn,
'S e 'na shuidh' 'san taigh-sheinns'.
Aig a ghillean bhiodh béin ri òl.

'N uair a thigeadh tu 'n Dùn,
Far an suidheadh a' chùirt,
Chluinnteadh sunnd ann ad rùm air ceòl.

Bhiodh do chupachan làn,

[112] Meek, Donald E. (ed.), *Caran an t-Saoghail—The Wiles of the World: Anthology of 19th Century Scottish Gaelic Verse* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2003), 10-11. See Appendix A for the full song and translation.
[113] Sinton, Rev. Thomas, 'Snatches of Song collected in Badenoch', *TGSI*, vol. XXII (1897–98), 234-35.

'Cur suas deochan-slàint',
Fìon dùbailt' bho 'n Spàinnt 'g an òl.[114]

Yesterday I got news of the deer-hunter
That put a stone between me and my shoe.

And I in the rough corrie of Dee—
in the abode of the deer,
where we'd have a meal.

Through snow falls from the skies,
a while before the sun will arise,
on my plaid, folded over me.

When MacAlpine goes to the glen,
with Turner's daughter to hand,
blood will be on the nimble antlered stag.

Mackay sets off
with his choice white hound,
whose muzzle trembles as he goes.

I feel aggrieved
that we did nothing—
though a deer was heard bellowing in the mist.

When MacAlpine returns from the hill,
he sits in the change-house,
and his gillies would drink their hides.

When you'd come to Doune,
where the company would sit,
merriment could be heard in the music room.

Your brim-filled cups,
quaffing at strong Spanish wine,
and raising health-toasts.

The episodic treatment of the hunt would not look out of place in earlier songs, which strongly suggests that such structures were fairly conservative.

Influence of the Panegyric Code

The structure of the Panegyric Code continued to influence as the images and formulae contained are essentially of the same nature as those present within other Gaelic poetic traditions. One can only agree with John MacInnes's opinion that although 'panegyric in[...][a] sense is only a framework, which allows the

[114] *PB*, 187-89, 464-65; MacLean, Donald P., 'The Songs of William Smith', *TGSI*, vol. LX (1997–98), 133-34, 146.

imagination a good deal of freedom, in the end it became a strait-jacket.'[115] In effect, the Panegyric Code possessed both an inherent strength and weakness. Though Gaelic poetry is not theoretically restricted to any particular choice of theme or subject, nonetheless, in reality, many of the components of this rhetoric were already present, giving strength to the image, through repeated variations and through the weight and authority of tradition, and giving an audience a sense of familiarity. The formulae of the Panegyric Code became through time conventional markers of Gaelic cultural identity. The articulation of such themes as love, war, religion, and, indeed, the hunt were definable formulae that arose from the same creative matrix. Such are the motifs in the Panegyric Code that a bard could create a phrase where 'even the shortest utterance sets off a train of memories of linked epithets.'[116] Further, in terms of the hierarchical nature of clan society 'every commonplace[...]focuses upon a particular facet of aristocratic life, including relationships to those who provide imaginative, spiritual, and economic support for the aristocracy.'[117] Various songs and poems emphasise these commonplaces according to the creative whim of the bard who is ultimately responsible for its composition though he (and sometimes she) always had an audience in mind. These previous selections from songs have naturally emphasised hunting themes, though it is obvious that the bard concentrated upon these aspects at the expense of others which may have been given only a perfunctory treatment, if, indeed, they were mentioned at all. Regarding this, Colm Ó Baoill states: 'Different poems and songs will have different emphases over the range of commonplaces, and sometimes a poem may concentrate so heavily on a single episode that the perfunctory treatment of the others leads the reader to view the poem as being concerned with one 'commonplace'.'[118]

The manifold examples of motifs in the Panegyric Code, not to mention panegyric elements in storytelling, readily seen, for example, in Fenian lore, suggest that Gaelic society encouraged a whole literature of encomium, sustaining both mythological heroes and great leaders through praise as a type of hero-worship. As has been demonstrated, it was a favourite technique of professional bards to develop an analogue which implicitly compared a patron to a legendary hero. For a particular

[115] *DG*, 266.
[116] *DG*, 275.
[117] *DG*, 275.

hero the onus was somehow or other to aspire to that very ideal which was more or less arbitrarily thrust upon him. It can then be asked: why should such a state of affairs have arisen in the first place? It then follows to ask why such commonplaces, and, more particularly, the episodic treatment of hunting, were so pervasive?

It would appear that all literature to some extent or another reflects the processes and issues of a society's history, and so literary and cultural history is to that extent entwined with various other strands of historiography. With regard to Scottish Gaelic literature in general and praise-poetry in particular, it would seem that cultural history and panegyric, along with other traditions, can hardly be discussed apart from each other. Such praise poetry and related clan legends are integral to an heroic age—a warrior society where warfare is an aristocratic game, and so is blood sport by transference,[119] where emphasis is laid upon the warrior-hunter ethos, single combat, heroic adventure and so forth. Take, for example, a few verses from an elegy composed by Niall MacMhuirich to Ailean Dearg, a Clanranald chief, slain at Sheriffmuir (1715), where the association could not be made more explicit:

> Mian oile na*r* chora cheilt,
> a baig ccean sluaigh na ae*cht* noirder
> ria*r*т gach maithe re mean*m*a
> slion catha lu*cht* lean*ma* na
>
> Seirm ciuill is dea*cht*adh dána,
> clea*cht*adh uird gach eallana,
> slusghreadh a*r* e*m*rleabhraibh laoch,
> scoin go feid*m* dearbhtha a*r* fiagh.
>
> Another desire that should neither be concealed,
> Was to be at the head of a glorious host,
> To satisfy every chief's mind,
> And his followers to have plenty battles.
>
> Playing music and inditing poems,
> Practising the order of every art,
> The attentive study of the military books of heroes,
> And dogs fully effective for deer.[120]

Warfare and the hunt are also cheek by jowl in a verse, composed by Sìleas na Ceapaich, from *Do Dh' Fhearachd Mhorair Màr*:

---

[118] Ó Baoill, Colm, '*Caismeachd Ailean nan Sop*: Towards a Definitive Text', SGS, vol. XVIII (Spring, 1998), 107.
[119] MacLeod, Rev. Canon Roderick C., 'The West Highlands in Peace and War', *SHR*, vol. XXIV (1927), 127.
[120] *RC*, ii, 252-53.

Beir soraidh an deaghaidh nan laoch,
Gus a' bhuidhinn ga'n suaicheantas fraoch,
Gu ceannard a' Bhràghad
S a' chuid eile de m' chàirdibh:
Buaidh shìthne 's buaidh làrach leibh chaoidh.

Convey a greeting after the heroes,
To the band whose badge is the heather,
To the leader of the Brae
And to the rest of my friends:
May you have victory in hunt and in battle forever.[121]

Or, indeed, when Iain Lom refers to the enemy as stricken deer in *Cath Raon Ruairidh*:

Gach aon latha dol sìos,
Guin cach claidheamh 'nur bian,
Coin ag caitheamh an dìol air sléibhte dhibh.

That on every battlefield there be a gnawing of swords
In your hides, and dogs consuming their fill of you on the hillsides.[122]

The importance of hunting imagery is reflected in its appearance in many commonly defined areas of Gaelic literature, and, sometimes, due to its pervasiveness in other less common areas.

Warfare, Hunting and Heroic Ideals

Briefly, the clan 'system', emerging from the 14th century as a reaction to lawlessness,[123] and forming a backdrop to the creative force of literature and tradition being examined, was a socio-political unity with claims upon an ideology of kinship which was also based on (real or imagined) historical roots. It was a hierarchical system whereby a chief led his people, below which were his subordinates (the *fine*, or clan gentry/élite), who were usually (though not necessarily) blood-kin to the chief, and with the remainder at a lower rung. The cohesive nature of clan society's socio-political make-up was bound up in territory that provided a focus (and sometimes a distraction) for any given clan's geo-political activities. Perhaps a 16th century description of clans being united by 'pretense of blude or plaice of thair duelling' neatly expresses the mixture of genuine kinship and geographical propinquity that fostered unity. This, in turn, reinforced the primary function of the 'protective ethos of

[121] Ó Baoill, Colm (ed.), *Bàrdachd Shìlis na Ceapaich c.1660–c. 1779*, 22-23, ll. 253-257.
[122] *ÒIL*, 194-95, ll. 2502-2504.
[123] Stevenson, David, *Highland Warrior: Alasdair MacColla and the Civil Wars*, 10-12.

clanship[...]personified in the chiefship, specifically in the designation of the chief as[...]head of the kindred and was made manifest specifically by his bestowal of hospitality and generally by his patriarchal attitude towards his clan. These traditional values were pre-eminently propagated through the tightly structured, if stereotyped eulogies and elegies of the bardic schools...'[124] Once the remarkably conservative linguistic tradition (lasting to the mid-17th century) of the bardic schools had eroded, the poets who composed in the vernacular inherited its basic social and political attitudes and were able to draw freely upon the resources of imagery developed by their classical antecedents.

The clan system continued more or less until its destruction (although a process of weakening was apparent from the mid-17th century onwards)[125] on the field of Culloden when the Jacobite Rebellion met its final and bloody end.

Warfare, endemic to clan society in the form of feuding, was, at times, a prime focus of its activities. As well as this 'clans and their chiefs were also associated with a distinct ideology of behaviour. The central features of this behaviour were displays of feasting and feuding. Feasting involved the extravagant consumption of vast quantities of food at chiefly feasts[...]with entertainment provided by pipers, harpists, storytellers and clan historians. Feuding was no less an endemic feature of clan relations[...]Less widely appreciated is the extent to which feuding, like feasting, was also food-centred, with inter-clan raids destroying standing crops, setting fire to grain stores and stealing cattle[...]In effect, feuding can be seen as a means of diminishing the capacity of rival clans for feasting whilst enhancing one's own capacity.'[126] Hunting was part and parcel of this process and though it may have not been so important in purely economic terms compared to other resources, nonetheless, it would have more than made up for this deficit through its powerful symbolism.[127]

Inevitably, a good day's hunt was followed by feasting, together with much drinking, in order to celebrate the catch, and, doubtless, accompanied by much boasting of the day's events. In the episodic themes of the Panegyric Code, this is usually the last commonplace to be mentioned.

---

[124] *CCSH*, 4.
[125] *HSGW*, 163-67.
[126] Dodgshon, Robert A., *From Chiefs to Landlords: Social and Economic Change in the Western Highlands and Islands, c. 1493–1820* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 8.
[127] *Ibid.*, 84-92.

There are passing mentions of exchanging of gifts (venison, wildfowl, dogs and so on), sometimes for diplomacy, but more often than not as acts of generosity in aristocratic correspondence. In 1506, Sir Duncan Campbell was supplied with salt in order that venison from his Breadalbane estates could be exported to the Spanish king.[128] A year later, King James IV, in 1507, was presented with a gift of hounds from Highlanders while hunting in Perthshire and Argyll.[129] Venison was supplied from the Breadalbane estates for Prince Henry's christening in 1594, and also when Charles I was about to visit Scotland in 1631.[130] King James VI sent hunting dogs to the King of Denmark, no doubt so that he would also be 'rycht desirous to haif sum pleisir and solace be chace of hundis.'[131] There was even a gift of a rare capercaillie.[132] Of course, venison was part of any festive occasion, and the distribution of it to retainers and allies was clearly associated with chiefly largesse within a chain of food hierarchy.[133] After all, it could hardly be called a celebration without the provision of noble meat, and more often than not that was venison.

Warriors were held in high esteem in Gaelic society as they were fighting professionals of the highest rank. Martin Martin relates *c.* 1695, there was 'a competent number of young gentlemen called lucht-taeh[...]who always attended the chieftain at home or abroad. They were well train'd in managing the sword and target, in wrestling, swimming, jumping, dancing, shooting with bows and arrows...'[134] Due to the conservative nature of Gaelic society, the influence of deer-hunting culture in the Highlands survived longer than many other comparable regions. Hunting fulfilled many cultural functions: sending adolescents through a rite of passage to the manly world of the hunter; maintaining the social cohesion of clan society by continually reinforcing the need for mutual endeavour; and, of course, taking part in a sporting pastime. As an imitation of war, it inculcated values of courage, honour and also tested martial skills. This had a long pedigree in Scotland with regard to a legendary

[128] *BBT*, xxxiii.
[129] *TA*, iii (1506–1507), 399.
[130] *BBT*, xxxiii, 431, 433.
[131] MacDonald, Alexander *et al* (eds.), *Miscellany of the Maitland Club: Consisting of Original Papers and other Documents illustrative of the History and Literature of Scotland*, 7 vols. (1833–1847), iii, 339-45.
[132] *BBT*, xxxiii, 433-34.
[133] Gibson, Alex J. S. & Smout, T. C., 'Food and Hierarchy in Scotland, 1550-1650', in Leah Leneman (ed.), *Perspectives in Scottish Social History Essays in Honour of Rosalind Mitchison* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), 33-34.
[134] *DWIS*, 167.

Scots king, Dornadilla, whose activities echo the very same sentiments expressed by Xenophon many centuries before, as 'He spent a great part of his time hunting, for he considered that exercise suitable to time of peace, as healthful, and calculated to strengthen the body for military exercises[...]and protecting it against the pernicious vices, which are produced by indolence.'[135] A relation between the predatory raid of lifting cattle and hunting exists, where men needed to band together and co-operate in order to take a foray or to hunt. These were vital rites of passage and functioned very much as 'a surrogate of war' and also 'as part of the initiation of young warriors.'[136] Although Walter Burket, wrote, from a social anthropological viewpoint, about early Greek society, the belief, that, in the absence of war, nothing tested a young man's courage as much as hunting, persisted throughout Europe into the 18th century:

> ...man ever since the development of hunting has belonged to two overlapping social structures, the family and the *Männerbund* [hunting pack or fraternity]; his world falls into pairs of categories: indoors and out, security and adventure[...]At the core of this new type of male community[...]are acts of killing and eating. The men must constantly move between the two realms, and their male children must one day take the difficult step[...]to the world of men[...]When a boy finally enters the world of men, he does so by confronting death[...]A man had to be courageous to take part in the hunt; therefore courage is always included in the conception of an ideal man.[137]

Just as the hunt made a young man confront the adult world with all its concomitant dangers, so 'in like manner, the ritualistic *creach*/predatory raid – whereby the sons of the *fine*[...]demonstrated their virility by lifting livestock from a neighbouring clan[...]The *creach* had been, in effect, a graduation ceremony[...]in which the sons of the gentry were instructed in athleticism and military expertise...'[138] Such raids, nevertheless, were also dictated by an economic imperative. Within these rituals of manhood, hunting took its place as an adolescent marker to enter into a world where the hunt was secondary in importance only to warfare. Indeed, MacInnes makes the point, though perhaps putting too much emphasis upon external political pressures on Gaeldom, that 'the historical realities of this precarious situation ensured that an artist was honoured in proportion as he celebrated those qualities and those values that were

---

[135] Burt, Edward, *Letters from a Gentleman the North of Scotland*, 2 vols. (London: S. Birt, 1754), ii, 105-06.
[136] *DG*, 53.
[137] Burket, Walter, *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth* (Berkeley, California; London: University of California Press, 1983), 18-19.
[138] *CCHS*, 33.

necessary for the survival of the nation. That is the reason why the warrior's role is the apex of the panegyric code[...]the warrior who is protector and rewarder.'[139]

Elsewhere, John MacInnes has admirably summed up the role the Panegyric Code played within the cultural context of the 16th and 17th centuries:

> ...the verse is codified in sets of conventional images most densely concentrated in the heroic elegy composed at the point of crisis brought about by the death of a leader—precisely when it was most necessary to reaffirm the customary expectations of society[...]There are stock descriptions of the warrior as hunter, horseman, seaman; of his strength, and handsomeness[...]His social roles are emphasised: his generosity, the magnificence and hospitality of his household[...]references to his justice, mildness to his own people, in contrast to his courage in battle and tenacity in pursuit of his enemies. His piety and loyalty are cardinal virtues. We are given highly stylised vignettes of life in a chief's castle; a hall where the music of harps, viols and pipes is to be heard while board games are played, wine is dispensed freely, gold and silver vessels shine, and wax candles blaze.[140]

Conclusion

Within the Panegyric Code, hunting motifs played an important role, for it was a society which extolled the virtues of martial endeavour. The closeness of hunting and warfare gave poets an area in which to exploit imagery of 'the warrior, protector of *fine* and *tuath*, great in body, with immense physical strength, is both centre and apex[...]through epithets, references to battle, ancestry, physical strength, weapons and loyalty[...]the bards produce a glorification of the warrior that permeates these poems of a brief, late manifestation of an heroic age.'[141] The important point to draw here is that an heroic age survived in Gaeldom far longer than many other comparable regions of Europe; and, though hunting was seen in Europe until around the 18th century as a surrogate for war, it can be argued strongly that this perception held good and, indeed, was probably more intense and real for pre-modern Gaels. There are hundreds of vignettes of a hunter clad in *breacan*, carrying a bow, or gun, with dogs held at the leash, chasing the deer, or other quarry. Such descriptions are naturally a complement to and identifiable with the other 'hundreds of vignettes of the weapon-bearing warrior', whose 'dress and weapons alike both function as symbols that command society's highest respect and approval.'[142] The Gaelic aristocracy were

---

[139] *DG*, 317.
[140] MacInnes, John, 'A Notional Unity', *The Drouth* (Summer, 2003), 56-57.
[141] *DG*, 281.
[142] *Ibid.*, 282.

above all else a warrior élite—ready at all times to take part in risk-taking behaviour such as deer-hunting or raiding which perpetuated their status as a military élite.

Thus the pre-modern Gaelic perception of an ideal leader was that of a warrior-hunter, and such an image of a clan chief was carefully cultivated and fixed in the minds of the people, through the mediation (or, indeed, propaganda) of the professional and vernacular poets, in a similar manner to the image of the emperors of imperial Rome, or, for that matter, Persian, Assyrian and Egyptian rulers. The monarchs of Scotland themselves were portrayed as brave protectors of their people against ferocious animals or enemies that beset them.[143] Deer-hunting culture as a social convention was well established by the medieval period in Gaeldom, due, in the main, to its exemplification of martial values of a warrior aristocracy. This, then, was the most essential strand of the hunting motif, though, as will be shown in the next chapter, it was a theme, somewhat through its versatility, which attracted other traditions outwith the confines of the Panegyric Code.

[143] Anderson, John K., *Hunting in the Ancient World* (Berkeley, California; London: University of California Press, 1985), chs. 5–7.

Chapter Four

Hunting Themes in Gaelic Song Tradition

Bu tu sealgair an fhéidh
Leis an deargta na béin;
Bhiodh coin earbsach air éill
Aig an Albannach threun;
Càite am faca mi féin
Aon duine fon ghréin
A dhèanadh riut euchd flathasach?

You were the hunter of the deer
By whom hides were reddened;
Trusty hounds would the mighty man
Of Alba hold on a leash;
Where have I beheld beneath the sun
One man that'd vie with you in a princely feat?

CHAPTER FOUR

HUNTING IN GAELIC SONG TRADITION

Beyond the pervasive style of the Panegyric Code in heroic song and verse, hunting themes permeate Gaelic song tradition, suggesting that they touched upon aspects of everyday life. The purpose of this chapter is to examine hunting themes in Gaelic song, a difficult genre to define but one which has been classified as sub-literary.[1] Many of these themes cover the same subject areas as those in the previous chapter, especially with regard to panegyric or eulogistic song. It has been suggested that one way to define such folksong is that which is 'left once[...]the professional Gaelic or bardic verse and the semi-bardic verse' has been abstracted. Even so 'it is often very difficult, if not impossible, to make any distinction between the work of an aristocrat and a peasant on grounds of content, style or social attitudes[...]the difference between written and oral is not a simple contrast between art song and folksong: orally composed and transmitted song is not confined to any social grade[...]the test of anonymity, sometimes taken to be a mark of folksong, has a limited application: Gaelic oral tradition often transmits authors' names and accounts of the circumstances of composition.'[2] In general, Gaelic folksong is anonymous, as in, for example, waulking songs, whereas traditional songs, commonly composed with an *amhran* metre, usually have a named author(ess). The composers of these songs shared a similar world to the professional poets and, as such, their inspiration was drawn from similar circumstances. In the words of John MacInnes, Gaelic society, by the mid-17th century 'had[...]become one with the former warrior-hunter aristocracy in attitude[...]subscribing to the ideals that bards express so eloquently in their panegyrics.'[3] In terms of content there are overlapping areas, but there are also differences in the form in which folksongs were created in comparison with the more formal poetic output of the bardic schools. These vernacular folksongs are instructive, as they offer a more emotive and direct response to the subject-matter in view; but they are, nevertheless, fragmentary for they are 'almost entirely unknown before the

[1] *CGS*, 77; and, generally, see, Ross, James, 'A Classification of Gaelic Folk-song', *SS*, vol. 1 (1957), 95-151
[2] *Ibid.*, 79.
[3] *OLPC*, 90.

sixteenth century.'[4] This is especially relevant to the (mainly anonymous) waulking song tradition where the perspectives of women with regard to hunting will be analysed. It should be borne in mind that hunting, although a pastime predominately enjoyed by men, was not merely a masculine reserve, for, during the medieval period and later, it was not uncommon for women (or children) to take part in the chase, even if such activity was usually on an ancillary level.[5] Though the medieval and early modern culture of Gaeldom was imbued with a strong patriarchal ideology, illustrated clearly by clan society, it should be emphasised that women were not a merely a passive audience, willing to acquiesce in submissive roles; rather, they could be acute and abrasive spokespersons, albeit in a more localised fashion, for events that caught their attention. This is illustrated from *òrain luaidh* (waulking songs), a traditional accompaniment while fulling cloth; and *luinneagan* (songs or ditties), created by women and intended primarily for a female audience.

Hunting themes also appear in dialogue songs, where a poetic debate—usually involving a degree of political commentary—takes place between a hunter and either his gun or a stag. Satire also makes an appearance, whether as a parody on a clan, such as *Dìomoladh Chabair Fèidh* composed by Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair (inspired as a counterblast to *Moladh Chabar Fèidh*,[6] a composition by Tormod Bàn MacLeòid of Assynt and/or Am Bàrd MacMhathain (Murchadh MacMhathain), extolling the MacKenzies); or where a hunt ends in a farcical failure as, for example, in Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre's *Òran Seachran Seilge.*

Nature pervades much of Gaelic poetry and hunting themes, inspired by the environment in which they take place, are depicted, as well as the manifold beauty of the landscape. Examples of such praise songs are *Òran na Comhachaig* and *Moladh Beinn Dòbhrain.* A sub-genre of hunting is, of course, poaching, and songs inspired by such illegal activity, inviting socio-political commentary, will be analysed in chapter six. All these genres, though clearly influenced by the Panegyric Code, use hunting themes in a broader way, allowing a greater freedom of expression, in comparison with the somewhat restrictive use of hunting motifs previously seen in the

---

[4] *DG*, 31.

[5] *MH*, 143-66; Manning, Roger B., *Hunters and Poachers: A Social and Cultural History of Unlawful Hunting in England 1485–1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 200-01; see also Prouty, C. & R., 'George Gascoigne, *The Noble Art of Venerie*, and Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth', in James G. McManaway, Giles E. Dawson & Edwin E. Willoughby (eds.), *John Quincy Adams Memorial Studies* (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1948), 639-65.

last chapter. Clearly, the vernacular bards, using demotic language, had a wider social sphere of reference to hand, which gave their work a common touch, and thus a greater directness. Thus, in many respects, the material contained within these songs allows a more realistic consensus to be garnered of Gaelic ethnographic perspectives with regard to hunting.

Hunting in Eulogies and Elegies in Gaelic Song Tradition

The vernacular response to moments of crisis or celebration was broadly similar to the more formal productions of the professional poets. By supporting (and, at times, subverting) the conventional areas of a subject's virtues, whether a chief, or a nobleman, the composer had the ability to use familiar images in order to conform (or otherwise) to a standard that was expected by the social milieu which supported and patronised them. Martial and hunting skills were, therefore, emphasised when poets eulogised their patrons, and this could be used for purposes of propaganda and aggrandisement. For example, in *Marbhrann do Mhurchadh mac Alasdair*, who died through exposure while hunting in the winter of 1620 in Glen Lic, Kintail, the lament rehearses the attributes and character of the deceased in a conventional fashion, adding that the deer would now be safe from his gunshot which had been as accurate as it had been deadly:

Faodaidh 'n earbag a' nochd,
Eadar mhaoisleach 'us bochd,
Cadal samhach air cnoc gun churam.
Faodaidh 'n earbag, &c.

Faodaidh iadsan bhi slan,
Siubhal iosal 'us ard,
O mach maireann mo shar fhear cliuiteach.
Faodaidh iadsan, &c. [7]

Tonight, the little roe,
between doe and buck,
may sleep safe and sound on a hummock.

They (the deer) may now be safe,
roaming the heights and dells,

[6] *L*, 110-21, 412-23.

[7] Ailleasach, 'Marbhrann do Mhurchadh Mac Alasdair', *The Highlander*, vol. III, no. 130 (06 Nov., 1875), 3; Chisholm, Colin, 'Unpublished Old Gaelic Songs', *TGSI*, vol. XII (1885–86), 131-33; Mackenzie, William, 'Leaves from my Celtic Portfolio. IV', 100-05, where it is attributed to Iain Lom MacDonald. For another elegy on the same subject, see also Chisholm, Colin, 'Unpublished Old Gaelic Songs', *TGSI*, vol. XII (1885–86), 133-35.

from my late renowned and excellent friend.

In a lament by an Abernethy woman, said to have been composed in 1637, who had suffered in consequence of the Tulloch tragedy, she describes her lover as an expert hunter:

...Ort cha ghabh an droch la,
Cuir na cathadh, na sian chruaidh,
Is tric a shiubhail thu monadh' Adholl
Ri latha ceothaich, gun ghruaim.
Is tric bheum do lamh teinne
Aig ceann Loch Earaicht ud shuas.
Leis a ghunna nach diultadh,
Is leis an fhudar chaol chruaidh,
Is tu sealgair Choire Chaorach,
'S Coire Laogh nan damh donn,
A's ann an Eidhlig a Chuilionn,
'S tric a dh' fhuilich do lann.
'S tric rinn do lamh sithionn,
Os ceann ruigh an Allt bhan,
'S bhiodh bus dearg air do chuilean...[8]

...Whether in snow-drift or storm,
Often you'd rove the Atholl hills
In a good mood on a misty day.
Often did your gun give report
Yonder at the head of Loch Ericht.
With your unfailing gun,
Full of narrow, hard powder,
You were the hunter of Coire Chaorach,
And Coire Laogh of the brown stags,
And in Eidhlig of Cuilionn,
Often your sword was bloodied
By the venison that you culled,
Above the slope of Allt Ban,
Along with your bloody-snouted whelps...

Similarly in a lament, *Òran do Ghilleasbaig Mac Caluim Sealgair*, composed by his widow, a forlorn atmosphere is evoked by contrasting the once active huntsman in his familiar haunts to her own feelings of sad emptiness as she roams the deer forest:

Tha mulad, tha sgìos orm
'S mi nìos ris an stùic,
'S mi 'g amharc na frìthe
'S tric a dhìrich mo rùn;
Anns 'na ghuin tha damh pìceach,

[8] F., 'Lament By an Abernethy Maiden for Her Lover', *Northern Chronicle*, no. 794 (18 Mar., 1896), 3; see also Forsyth, Rev. William, *In the Shadow of Cairngorm: Chronicles of the United Parishes of Abernethy and Kincardine* (Inverness: Northern Counties Publishing Co., 1900), 388-89; and for a brief background to the Tulloch tragedy, see, *Ibid.*, 278-81.

'S d 'uileann chlìth air do ghlùn:
Sin an obair bu dual duit,
Is bha thu suairc air a cùl.
'S mi dìreadh a' bhruthaich
'S gun mo shuibhal dom' réir,
'S tric snidh air mo shùilean,
'S e sìr-dhrùthadh orm féin;
'S mi 'g amharc an fhirich,
Far am pilleadh tu 'n spréidh;
'S mi faicinn daimh cabair
Is tric a leag thu san fheur.[9]

I am tired and weary
I who am up at the peak
Looking over the deer-forest
Where often my love climbed,
The antlered-stags are pierced
By your left elbow [i.e. aiming of the gun] on your knee:
That was the work you were accustomed to
Though you were mild in nature.

I who am climbing the brae
Not accompanying my loved one
Often have tears fallen from my eyes
Forever marking my face;
I who am looking over the deer-forest
Where the herd would return
I who see the antlered stags,
Often you felled them in the grass.

In an anonymous song, entitled simply *Òran*, composed by a man in order to woo a potential lover, the hunter emphasises his healthy lifestyle as well as his ability to provide food and sustenance while declaiming his abstinence from strong drink. In short, it is an example of a 'serenade' which has, of course, the prime objective of capturing his sweetheart's affection:

Sid an rud dh'an tug mi spéis
Bhi 'siubhal 'n t-sléibh' 's nan gleann;
'S a bhi dlùth ruith mach 'n fhéidh
Le m' chuilean geur-shronach seang.

Nuair a bha mi 'm' fhleasgach òg
'S mi a' fuireach a chòir nam beann;
Cha b' e m' fhasan a bhi 'g òl
No bhi pòiteireachd air leann.

B' annsa leam éirigh le sunnd,
Mo cheum sùrdail dol gu feum;
Gheibhinn an luirg air an driùchd

[9] *G*, 53.

S bhithinn gu dlù air a dhéidh.

Bheirinn eala far a chuain
A nì'n guileag suairce binn;
Bheirinn na ròin far an eilein
'S bheirinn eilid as a bheinn.

Bheirinn bradan far na linnidh
Le morghath fribhacach geur;
Bheirinn coillich as an fhireach
S buic bhiorrach a coille nan geug.

'S fuathach leam éisdeachd ri bòsd,
Thug mi bòid nach òlainn dram
B'annsa gruagach a chùil duinn
'S a bhi 'sùgradh ri 's ghleann.

Bu bhinn cracaireachd mo ghaoil
'S sinne 'nar sìneadh feadh nan tuilm;
B' annsa leabaidh fo ar taobh
Barr an fhraoich ghaganach ghuirm.[10]

The very thing I respected most
Was to traverse the hills and glens,
To hotly pursue the deer
With my short-snouted lithe hounds.

When I was but a youth
And stayed near the mountains,
It was never my habit to drink
Nor to get drunk on beer.

I'd prefer to rise early,
With an energetic, purposeful step,
I'd find their footprints on the dew
I'd closely follow them in pursuit.

I'd get a swan from the sea
That has a joyful sweet song,
I'd get the seal from the island
I'd get the hind from the hill.

I'd get a salmon from the pools
With sharp and barbed bait,
I'd get the moorcock from the forest
And the taper-headed buck from the wood.

I cannot abide listening to boasting:
I took a pledge not to drink a dram,
I much prefer the brown-haired maiden
To be courting her in the glen.

Sweet is the talk of my love,

[10] Henderson, George, 'Lamh-Sgriobhainnean Mhic-Neacail', *TGSI*, vol. XXVII (1908–11), 400-01.

As we lay among the hills,
I much prefer as our bed
The tufted purple heather.

This is a common enough conceit whereby a potential lover boasts not only of his noble stature as a hunter but also that he will be a great provider. A serious petition was made to his potential bride in *Òran do m' Nighean Bhàn*, and, given the esteem in which hunting was held, would have been an attractive proposition:

'S éutrom a shiubhlainn na m' dheann
Do 'n ghleann 's am bi 'ghreidh fhiadhanach,
'S mharbhainn an eilid air a' chàrn,
Ge mòr a geàrd roimh ghiomhanaich;
Le m' ghunna sgaiteach air dheagh ghléus,
A dheanadh féum 'n uair dh' iarruinn e,
'S bheirinn coileach dubh dhe sgéith dhuit,
Seal mu 'n éireadh siogaire.[11]

Swiftly I would travel in flight
to the glen where the wild herd is,
I'd kill the hind on the high peak
mo matter if watched over by gamekeepers,
With my powerful well-primed gun,
That would fire when called upon,
I'd provide a blackcock for you,
A while before any sluggard arises.

Irrespective of whether the subject of a song was alive or dead, the virtues that were praised were virtually similar. In an elegy to Tòmas Bàn mac Iain Uilleim, the authoress depicts a striking image of a Gael in the prime of his manhood, comely and handsome, dressed in a plaid, well-armed for hunting in the hills:

'S math thig féileadh cuaich am pleatadh
Air 'n da shliasaid 's gile craicionn;
Còta fiarte de'n a' bhreacan,
Math ri osan geàrr is gartan.

Agus boineid dùghorm tana,
Cocan àrd os cionn do mhala;
Sùil chorrach, ghorm, mhothar mheallach,
Sheallas gu beacant', foirmeil, fearail.

Calpa loinneil, dòmhail, finealt',
Troidh bu chuimir, 's ceum bu chinntich;
Dol ri Strath-Feichlinn ga dhireadh,
Iasgar bradain, sealgair sithne.

[11] MacDonald, Alexander [Gleannach], 'Unpublished Gaelic Poetry', *TGSI*, vol. XXVIII (1912–14), 331.

Sealgair sithn' a frith nam badan,
Mu 'n Doire Mhiorach, 's mu' n a' Chaigionn;
Leat bu mhiannach a bhi sadadh,
A' ghreidh riabhach nach iarradh an aitreabh.
. . . . .

Cruinne chas a shiubhal a' mhonaidh,
Laimh ghrinn a ghiulain a' ghunna;
'Nuair a shineadh tu air t-uilinn
Dheanadh daimh na frith fiut fuireach.

Leat mu mhiann bhi moch is anamoch
Ann am frith nam fiadh 's nan earban;
Le cuilbheir breac nam ball airgid,
Miol-choin sgaiteach air sùnnd seilge.

Leam-s' bu mhiann bhi tarruing dlù riut
Anns a' bheinn 's am bi ghreidh-shiùbhlach;
Bu chinnteach mi a lamhach t-fhudair,
Gu'm biodh mac na h-eilde brùite.

'N uair loisgeadh tu luaidh dhùghorm
A gunna glaice nach diùltadh;
Air a' bheinn da 'm b' ainm A' Bhùrach,
Gheibht' am meann 's a chnaimh air smùiseadh.[12]

The neat-pleated kilt becomes you
On your thighs of whitest skin;
A tight-fitting coat made of tartan
Goes well with short hose and garters.

A slender dark-blue bonnet
With a high cockade above your brow,
Roaming blue eyes gazing over the hills
Showing off your orderly and manly stature.

Calves shapely, neat and muscular
A neat foot of sure standing
Going up to climb Strath Feichlin,
Salmon fisher and venison hunter.

Hunter of the deer-forest hummocks
Around Doire Mhiorach and A' Chaigionn
It was your wont to kill
The grizzled herd that never took shelter.
. . . . .

Muscular legs to travel the hills,
A neat hand to carry the gun,
When you lay prone on your elbow
The forest stag was your bounty waiting.

Your wish was either late or early
To be in the forest of deer and roe,

[12] *Ibid.*, 338-39; see, 335-37, for another hunting song that mentions a Tòmas Bàn mac Uilleim also.

With a speckled caliver of silver bosses,
Greyhounds in full cry of hunting joy.

It was my wish to be in your company
When in the mountain of the swift herd,
I'd be sure of how you'd fire
And the son of the hind would fall.

When the blue-black lead was fired
From the shot-gun that never misfired,
On the mountain called A' Bhurach
You'd get the fawn of juicy bones.

Finally, in a lament from Lochaber tradition, *Do Dhomhnall Camshron, d'an bu cho-ainm Domhnall Mor Og,*[13] hunting motifs are used to good effect in which the nobility of the deceased is emphasised. This elegy, which can be dated towards the end of the 18th century, is 'one of the latest examples of the conventionalised Gaelic praise poetry whose formulae (but not the metre) derive in an unbroken line from the mediaeval bards':[14]

Fhir a chuirp a b' fhearr cuma',
Bho chrun do mhullaich gu d' bhonn,
Pearsa ghasda dheas dhireach,
Dh' fhas gu mìleanta, trom,
'N àm an creachunn a dhireadh,
Fhir a b' inntinneach fonn,
Co bhuidheachadh geall stri ort,
A' siubhal frith na 'n damh-donn.

Co sealgair thug bàr ort,
Am bun, no 'm braigh na 'n gleann,
Eadar crioch Arraghaidheal,
Agus Baideanach thall?
B'e do roghuinn a's t-ailgheas
Bhi 'siubhal fasaich a's beann,
'S ann an deoighidh do laimhe,
Gheibhte 'n cnaimh nach biodh gann.

Nuair a sgaoileadh tu 'n fhaoghaid
'S a mhaduinn fhoghair ri dealt,
Bhiodh do mhiol-choin 'g an taghadh
Gu d' mhiann 's do roighinn thoirt leat:
Nuair a leagadh tu 'n lan-damh,
Am fasach na 'n glachd,
Bhiodh a scornan 'g a riosladh
Ann am bial do choin ghlais.

[13] There are many stories and traditions that concern this individual in Lochaber tradition. He belonged to Leac Ruaidh in Brae Lochaber and was a factor to the Duke of Gordon.
[14] MacDonald, John, 'Dòmhnall Mór Òg', *Toch.*, no. 39 (1986), 168.

'S tric a laidh thu air t-uilinn,
A' monadh Dhrumainn 's an fhraoch,
Cuilein seang aig do chasaibh,
'S do chuilbheir snaighte ri d' thaobh,
Aig gabhail beachd air an adhar,
Ciod e bu rathad do' n ghaoith';
Ag iarraidh fàth air na damhaibh,
'S do shuil 'san amharc gu caol.

Bu tu namhaid a' choilich
Is moch a ghoireadh 's a chraoibh
Agus giomanach, eala,
'S an Fhaoileach earraich ri gaoith';
Nuair a thairneadh tu 'n acfhuinn
Bhiodh luaidhe Shas'nach na taobh,
'S i gun chomas, gun astar,
Gu dol dhachaidh thair caol.[15]

Man of most perfect form,
from the hair of your head to the sole of your foot,
A fine, handsome, straight body
soldierly, and mighty:
When climbing the steep slopes
most keen-spirited—
Who would outpace you
ranging the haunts of the red deer?

Where was there a hunter to beat you,
high or low in the glens,
Between the bounds of
Argyll and Badenoch yonder?
It was your wish and your delight
to roam the wild hills:
When your shot was fired
the spoils would be rich.

Many a time you lay on your elbow
among the heather on Drummin Moor,
A lithe young hound at your feet,
your graven gun by your side,
Studying the sky above
for the direction of the wind,
Taking note of the stags,
your eye watching them closely.

You were the foe of the moorcock
that calls earliest from the branch
And the stalker of the swan,
in the cold spring wind:
When you pulled the trigger
English lead would pierce her side,

[15] Dughalach, Ailean, *Orain, Marbhrannan agus Duanagan Ghaidhealach* (Inbheirnis: Alastair Mac-an-Toisich, 1829), 127-31.

Leaving her feeble and powerless
to go home over the narrows.[16]

Although a great many other examples of hunting themes could be given, the above selections are representative of those to be met with in Gaelic traditional song. In general, as both go hand in hand, there is little to differentiate the imagery of the warrior with that of the hunter. One of the main reasons for the longevity of hunting motifs was the identification of the subject as a nobleman, and by extension, a warrior. In short, a song that draws upon hunting motifs was one that reflected or boasted about the nobility of the person so described and so became an *idée fixe* of an honour-bound society.

Feminine Perspectives on Hunting in Gaelic Song Tradition

One can only agree with John MacInnes's view of the feminine genre of choral songs that 'are essentially the women's contribution to Gaelic literature, and in this poetry we view through their eyes the order of society.'[17] Given an alleged extempore method of composition, there can be, at times, a passionate and personal freedom of expression, which lifts such songs from a mundane level of female gossip and hearsay.[18] There can be a genuine feeling which lends a female voice to communal opinion—a voice that needed to heard, given both the dominance of the manly world of the Gael, and the hostility to women with pretensions to enter the male preserve of bardic poetry.[19] Nevertheless, John MacInnes has pointed out that such a lacuna is surprising 'for this praise-poetry is intensely focused on the activities of the warriors and hunters who formed the upper class.'[20] Further, William Gillies argues that 'Traditional critics[...]praised the affected, inflated and mercenary poetry of the bardic world at the expense of its unaffected, starkly realistic, spontaneous poetic heritage of the Old Songs.'[21] In other words, folksong is worthy of investigation in order to elicit different perspectives on the Gaelic world. Nonetheless, though much

[16] MacDonald, John, 'Dòmhnall Mór Òg', 164-65.
[17] *DG*, 305; Bruford, Alan, 'Workers, Weepers and Witches: The Status of the Female Singer in Gaelic Society', *SGS*, vol. XVII (1996), 64-65; see also *DG*, 211-29.
[18] *HSGW*, 125-33.
[19] For further commentary on these themes, see Ó Baoill, Colm, ''Neither Out or In': Scottish Gaelic Women Poets 1650-1750', in Sarah M. Dunnigan, C. Maire Harker & Evelyn S. Newlyn (eds.), *Women and the Feminine in Medieval and Early Modern Scottish Writing* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 136-52.
[20] *OLPC*, 89.

of the corpus is taken up by the (perhaps universal) themes reflected by the Panegyric Code, the underlying treatment is transformed into a female perspective 'through the erotic strain which pervades the genre.'[22] Such traditional songs occupied 'the same world as that presented in the predominantly men's poetic tradition of courtly eulogy and elegy.'[23] For example, in *òran luaidh*, or *òran teannachaidh*, a type of song used to accompany the tightening of cloth, the feminine viewpoint on the hunter is on occasion to the fore. Even though it expresses an attitude which may well be far older, these types of sentiment survive and are embedded in this genre:

> ...Chaidh mi na Ghleannan-sa as t-Fhoghair,
> Thilg mi na cruinn is fhuair mi 'n taghadh,
> Fhuair mi 'n t-òg-fhear seòlta seadhach,
> Òganaich gun tòir na dhèidh,
> Thèid thu 'n a' bheinn am bi 'mheagail,
> Le do mhìolchoin, gheala-choin sheadhach,
> 'S le do choin bheag as an dèidh.
> Siud mo leannan, 's cha b' fhear fuadain,
> 'S cha bu lurg bhreac o luath e
> 'S cha bu ghlasneulach bhon fhuachd e.
> Siud mo leannan, Gille Calum,
> Siud mo leannan Calum gaolach...[24]
>
> ...I went to the Little Glen in Autumn,
> I cast lots, and won the pick of them,
> I got the clever, wise young man,
> A youth not wanted as an outlaw.
> You go to the hill where there's joyous outcry,
> With your white sagacious hunting-hounds,
> And with your little terriers following after.
> That's my darling, not a wanderer,
> Not a speckled-shank from the fireside
> Not a pale-face fearing cold
> That's my lover, Gille Calum,
> That's my lover, dear Calum...

In another waulking song, the singer says that the deer on the moor, and the geese on the strand, are safe from the hunter, since a 'brown-haired sportsman lies enfolded.'[25] Whether or not the lover referred to in the latter song met his death while hunting, it

---

[21] Gillies, William, 'Traditional Gaelic Women's Songs', in Marco Fazzini (ed.), *Alba Literaria: A History of Scottish Literature* (Venice: Amos Edizioni, 2005), 171.
[22] Stiùbhart, Dòmhnall Uilleam, 'Women and Gender in the Early Modern Western Gàidhealtachd', 238.
[23] Gillies, William, 'Traditional Gaelic Women's Songs', 173.
[24] Tolmie, Francis, 'One Hundred and Five Songs of Occupation from the Western Isles of Scotland', 227-28.
[25] *Ibid.*, 236.

does not say. Women, however, in general, would have been well aware that there could be particular dangers for those who went to the hill:

Tha na fèidh
Am Beinn Ùige,
Tha na fèidh
Am Beinn Ùige
Och! mo dhiùbhail mar thachair.

Tha mo shealgair
Na shìneadh
Tha mo shealgair
Na shìneadh
Gun dùil ri tighinn dachaidh.

The deer are on Ben Uig,
The deer are on Ben Uig
And woe is me, how this happened!

My huntsman lies prone,
My huntsman lies prone,
With no hope of coming home.[26]

Female involvement in the composition of other Gaelic song traditions was also vibrant. One of the most heart-rending and melodious elegies in Gaelic song of the 18th century is *Mo Rùn Geal Òg*, composed by a widow, Christina Ferguson, a native of Contin, for her husband, William Chisholm.[27] He was a tacksman of Innis nan Ceann in Strathglass, and was slain at the Battle of Culloden. A conventional hunting motif is used to emphasise his prowess in the chase with his unerring gun and keen hounds:

Bu tu iasgair na h-abhann,
'S tric a thaghaich thu fhèin i;
Agus sealgair a' mhunaidh,
Bhiodh do ghunn' air dheagh ghleusadh;
Bu bhinn leam tabhann do chuilein
Bheireadh fuil air mac eilde;
Às do làimh bu mhòr m' earbsa,
Gur tric a mharbh thu le chèil' iad—

[26] Tolmie, Francis, 'One Hundred and Five Songs of Occupation from the Western Isles of Scotland', 240; MacLean, Samuel, 'Realism in Gaelic Poetry', *TGSI*, vol. XXXVII (1934–36), 90; and Carmichael, Alexander, 'Cumha an t-Sealgair (The Hunter's Lament)', *The Highlander* (Aug., 1881), 52-54. Other elegies for a hunter appear in *G*, 133-34, 'Oran air Sealgair am monadh Adhoill.' This song has a traditional connection with the Laird of Monaltrie's death, who, it is said, fell over a rock with fatal results while hunting; see, Whyte, Henry [Fionn], 'The Fate of Monaltrie', *Oban Times*, no. 736 (14 Jul., 1880), 3.

[27] According to MacKintosh, Angus, 'Mo Run Geal Og', *CMon*, vol. III, no. 12 (Sep., 1895), 240, a rough stone slab was erected by Alexander Fraser, near Maud, Strathglass, bearing the inscription 'W C / 1746 / "Mo Run Geal Og"'.

Mo rùn geal òg.[28]

You were the angler of the river,
You frequented it often
While as hunter of the moor,
Well-primed was your gun—
I loved the bark of your whelps
Who would blood a hind's son;
I fully trusted your hand—
You often shot them both—
My fair young love.

In a Lochaber song, *Fhleasgaich Ùir, Leanainn Thu*, a striking and graphic image of the hunt is portrayed after rehearsing some personal epithets of male handsomeness (descriptions of which sometimes chime with those used for a feminine ideal):

Fuil a' bhruic air do léine,
'S fuil an fhéidh air do chòta.

Fuil an laoigh bhric, bhallaich,
Mar bhannaibh mu d' dhòrnaibh.[29]

Blood of the badger on your shirt,
and blood of the deer on your coat.

Blood of the speckled, spotted deer-calf
like cuffs above your fists.

In another 17th century waulking song, *Chunnaic mi 'n t-Òg Uasal*, the authoress longs so much to be in contact with her lover that she yearns to be near, and even identifies with, her sweetheart's real or supposed work environments:

'S truagh, a Rìgh, nach mi 'n gunna
Ris an cuireadh tu 'n gleus.

'S truagh, a Rìgh, nach mi 'n garbhlach
Air am marbhadh tu na fèidh.

'S truagh, a Rìgh, nach mi 'm bàta
Ris an càireadh tu 'm brèid.

I wish, my King, I were the gun

---

[28] *L*, 176-77; Stewart, Alexander & Stewart, Donald (eds.), *Cochruinneacha Taoghta de Shaothair nam Bard Gaëleach*, ii, 441-42; MacKenzie, John, *Sar-Obair nam Gaelach, or, The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry, and Lives of the Highland Bards* (Glasgow: MacGregor, Polson & Co., 1841), 373.

[29] Anon., 'Fhleasgaich Uir, Leanain Thu', *An Gàidheal*, leabh. XX, earr. 12 (An t-Sultain, 1925), 185; Mac-na-Ceàrdadh, Gilleasbuig, *An t-Oranaiche: Comhchruinneachadh de Orain Ghaidhealach, a' Chuid Mhor Dhiubh a Nis air an Clo air son na Ciad Uaire* (Glasgow: Archibald Sinclair; Edinburgh: R. M'Gregor & Co., 1879), 284; Anon., 'Fhleasgaich Uir, Leannan Thu: A Lochaber Song and Melody', *An Deò-Gréine*, leabh. XX, earr. 12 (1925), 185.

That you'd prepare to fire.

I wish, my King, I were the rough ground
On which you'd kill the deer.

I wish, my King, I were the boat
On which you'd hoist the sails.[30]

Her complaint was that her lover was not paying her enough attention. In addition, there are many, many vignettes of a successful hunter given within the corpus of waulking songs. Usually, the symbol of hunting is used to emphasise the desirability and nobility of the subject in view. A couple of examples will suffice to give an idea of how typical these appear within this particular genre of songs:

...Sealgair féidh thu 'm beannan a' chùirn,
Laoigh bhric bhallaich, choilich nan craobh,
'N eala bhàin as binne gu ciùil
'S an ròin mhaoil o aodann an tiùrr.

...Hunter of the deer in the hill of cairns,
Of the blackcock and the speckled fawn,
Of the white swan which sweetest sings,
Of the smooth seal from the foreshore.[31]

And also where wildfowl and seals are mentioned as objects of the quarry:

Bu tu sealgair a' chathain
Théid do'n athar a' ruaiseadh,
Agus nàmhaid ròin theilich
Thig o sgeirean a' chuain ghlais,
'S na circeige duinne
Bheireadh gur as an fhuairniod.

Hunter of wild geese
That take to flight quickly,
Foeman of the fat selchie
From the grey ocean's skerries,
And of the brown moor-hen
Who raised brood from the cold nest.[32]

---

[30] *L*, 10-11.

[31] Campbell, John Lorne (ed. & transl.), Collinson, Francis (trancs.), *Hebridean Folksongs II: Waulking Songs from Barra, South Uist, Eriskay and Benbecula* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 85-85, ll. 745-748.

[32] Campbell, John Lorne (comp. & ed.); MacComick, Donald (coll.), MacDonald, Fr Allan (transl.), & Collinson, Francis (transc.), *Hebridean Folksongs: A Collection of Waulking Songs I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 78-79, ll. 416-422. For further examples of hunting motifs in waulking songs, see 58-59, ll. 175-180; 76-79, ll. 397-408; 82-83, ll. 470-475; 84-85, ll. 490-494; 88-89, ll. 542-548; 128-29, ll. 1004-1008; 134-35, ll. 1083-1088; 140-41, ll. 1168-1171; 142-43; ll. 1190-1194, ll. 1326-1330; 156-57, ll. 1363-1366; Campbell, John Lorne (ed. & transl.), Collinson, Francis (trancs.), *Hebridean Folksongs II: Waulking Songs from Barra, South Uist, Eriskay and Benbecula* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 28-29, ll. 111-122; 60-61, ll. 471-473; 78-79, ll. 692-93; 84-85, ll. 745-748;

The old ideal of the young, vigorous hunter, providing for wife and family, is one that dies hard, and it resurfaces in 18th century Gaelic poetry at various times, such as Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre's *Òran d' a Chèile Nuadh-Phòsda*:

> ...Mharbhainn duit geòidh is ròin is eala
> 'S na h-eòin air bharraibh nan geug;
> 'S cha bhi thu ri 'd bheò gun seòl air aran,
> 'S mi chòmhnaidh far am bi féidh.
>
> ...for thee I would slay geese, seals and swan,
> and the birds on the topmost twigs;
> nor, all thy long life, wilt thou lack means for bread,
> while I dwell in deer country.[33]

A similar contrast is also made in an earlier song, *'S Mòr mo Mhulad*, referring to Ann McHardy, a niece of the Earl of Mar. The composer is either the Laird of Crandart in Glen Isla, or a Robertson of Piteaghabhann, near Struan in Atholl. The latter was a prominent Jacobite in the 'Forty-five:[34]

> Gar am bheil mi eòlach air cur an eòrna
> Ghleidhinn duit feòil nam mang.
>
> Fiadh à fireach is breac à linne,
> 'S damh biorach donn nan càrn.
>
> Damh chinn riabhaich sa' bheinn liath-ghlais,
> Bhiodh san t-sliabh uam marbh.[35]
>
> Though I know how to sow barley
> I'd preserve for you the flesh of the calf.
>
> Deer from the forest and trout from the pool
> And the antlered brown stag of the cairns.
>
> Brindle-headed stag in the blue-grey hill
> By me would be dead on the hillside.

86-89, ll. 772-787; 104-05, ll. 910-918; 172-73, ll. 598-603; Campbell, John Lorne (ed. & transl.), Collinson, Francis (tancs.), *Hebridean Folksongs III: Waulking Songs from Vatersay, Barra, South Uist, Eriskay and Benbecula* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981) 52-53, ll. 116-119; 60-61, ll. 224-229; 64-65, 258-261; 70-71, 316-321; 74-75, ll. 368-378; 80-81, ll. 404-406; 88-89, ll. 473-478; 172-73, ll. 1337-1338; 222-33, ll. 1754-1757.

[33] *ÒDB*, 114-123, ll. 1760-1763.

[34] Thomson, Derick S. (ed.), *The MacDiarmid MS Anthology* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1992), 243; *G*, 136-38, 'Oran le fear Chrannard an Gleann-ilea do thigh Piteaghabhann do mhnaoi do mhuintir Mharr a thug se am fuadach oi'ch' a cluiche'; Sinclair, Rev. Alexander MacLean, *The Gaelic Bards from 1411 to 1715*, 2 vols. (Charlottetown: Haszard & Moore, 1890), ii, 69.

[35] *Ibid.*, 241, ll. 1479-1484.

A common feature of this type of Gaelic love song is the contrast of the more heroic bread-winning patterns of the warrior-hunter with those of arable farmers or, indeed, people of other crafts. In an elegy composed in the early 17th century, the mother of the hunter, Iain Ruadh mac Dhubhghaill, of the Uig MacAulays in Lewis, who had been drowned, praises her son for his utter neglect of menial tasks that pertain to land cultivation. This stalwart was wedded to the bow rather than the foot-plough or cattle-fold:[36]

> Cas a shiubhal nam fuar bheann,
> Ghabh thu roghainn bha uasal,
> 'S tu gun treabhadh no buailtean air dòigh.[37]
>
> A fleet foot that ranged the cold mountains,
> Your choice was a noble one,
> Never did you plough or tend cattle.

Further, John MacInnes observes 'that despite the central place that cattle occupied both in the economy and in the aristocratic "war-game" of *togail chreach*, possession of cattle is not a topic of rhetorical importance in the strictly bardic tradition.'[38] Why this should be so remains unclear, yet cattle and cattle-raiding are mentioned frequently enough in Gaelic song tradition and narrative storytelling.

Again, a woman's love for her hunter is expressed simply in a fragment which captures the masculine ideal, one assumes, for a female audience:

> Is toigh leam coisiche na frìthe,
> Giomanach nam beanntan fuara,
> Is toigh leam coisiche na frìthe.
>
> Is toigh leam giomanach nan àrd-bheann,
> Nuair bhios càch nan cadal suaimhneach.
>
> Is toigh leam giomanach a' mhonaidh,
> Thèid air uilinn anns a' luachair.[39]
>
> I love the deer-forest walker,
> Hunter of the cold mountains,
> I love the deer-forest walker.
>
> I love the hunter of the high mountains,

---

[36] *Cf. DG*, 40.
[37] MacIain, 'Iain Ruadh Mac Dhughail (John Roy MacAulay, The Famous Hunter)', *CMag*, vol. II, no. XXIV (Oct., 1877), 485; Sinclair, Rev. Alexander MacLean, *The Gaelic Bards from 1411 to 1715* (Charlottetown: Haszard & Moore, 1890), 27-28.
[38] *DG*, 280.
[39] Maclean, Calum I., 'Traditional Songs from Raasay', *TGSI*, vol. XXIX/XL (1942–50), 184-85.

When the rest are in their deep sleep.

I love the hunter of the moor,
Who goes on his elbow in the rushes.

Seldom, however, does the course of love run smoothly, as is shown in yet another 17th century song, *Hi Rì Him Bó*. The hunter has gone to the hill, only to arrive back to find that his love is betrothed to another. The man bewails this fact at the opening of the song that works through a dialogue framework:

Hi rì him bó hil ó bha hó,
Hi rì him bó hi rì hil ù,
Hi rì him bó hil ó bha hó.

Tha sgeul ùr air tighinn don bhaile,
Gun do rèitich mo chiad leannan.

Gun do rèitich mo chiad leannan,
'S i bean òg nam blàth-shùil meallach…[40]

A new story has come to town
That my first love is betrothed.

That my first love is betrothed—
Young lassie of warm beguiling eyes…

She then answers her dejected lover:

Chì mi na fèidh air a' bhealach
Is an gìomanach donn gan leanail.

Is an gìomanach donn gan leanail,
Le ghunna caol is le bhreacan ballach.

Le ghunna caol is le bhreacan ballach,
Dh' fhàgadh tu an damh donn gun anail.

Dh' fhàgadh tu an damh donn gun anail,
Air an fhraoch a' call na fala.

Air an fhraoch a' call na fala,
Bhiodh do ghillean sgìth gan tarraing.

Bhiodh do ghillean sgìth gan tarraing,
Bhiodh do mhìolchoin dian ga leanail.[41]

---

[40] *Ibid.*, 185-86.

[41] *Ibid.*, 185-86; Mac-na-Ceàrdadh, Gilleasbuig, *An t-Oranaiche*, 40-42; and for possible a variant of this song, see Henderson, George, 'Lamh-Sgriobhainnean Mhic-Neacail', *TGSI*, vol. XXVII (1908–11), 397; Anon., 'Oran do Dh-Ailain Muirdetach', *Mac-Talla* vol. II, no. 5 (29 Jul., 1893), 8; MacLellan, Lauchie (auth.); Shaw, John (ed.), *Brìgh an Òrain/A Story in Every Song: The Songs and Tales of Lauchie MacLellan* (Montreal: M^{c}Gill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 234-36.

I see the deer at the edge of the precipice,
And the brown-haired hunter in pursuit.

And the brown-haired hunter in pursuit,
With his slender barrelled gun and dappled kilt.

You left the brown stag lifeless,
In the heather, dripping blood.

In the heather, dripping blood,
Your gillies were wearied carrying them.

Your gillies were wearied carrying them,
And your keen hounds following them.

The hunting imagery is conventional enough though one may suspect that the would-be bride may be referring to herself as the lifeless stag lying on the moor, dripping blood. Certainly it could be a matter-of-fact description, but there may be an ambiguity of interpretation which may release a more personal meaning behind these conventional images. What is beyond dispute, however, is the emotional sincerity that characterises this genre of folksongs.

In a song composed to Dòmhnall Daoilg (referring to a place in Glen Elchaig), Donald MacRae, Laird of Ardintoul,[42] by his wife, she wakens to find her 'hero' already on the hill:

...Leat bu mhiannach bhi glacadh
Pìc chòrr chùil:
Pìc a dh'iubhar na crè,
Ùr fallain nach leumadh;
Chìte faileas le grèine,
Do dhòrlaich.

Bidh cinn-iùil on t-sliosnaich,
Chùil bhuidhe 's glan sliosa;
'S dos na h-iolaire brice
Ga seòladh:
Bidh cèir dhathte on Gheilbhinn,
Chuireadh dreach air na h-airmibh;
Cinn chruadhach on cheàrdaich,
'S deagh cholg' orr'.

Slat an iubhair bu dìreach,
Air bu ro-mhath cur sìoda,
Agus fleistear Ghleann Lìobhann
Cur smeòirn orr'.

[42] Campbell, John F. (coll.); McKay, John G. (transc. & transl.), Watson, William J., MacLean, D. & Rose, H. J. (eds.), *More West Highland Tales Vol. II* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1994), 16-20.

'N àill leibh! shlealgair a chreach-uill,
A' choilich 's a' ghlas gheòidh,
Fhuair thu t' fhoghlam air gaisgeachd
As t' òige.

'N àm dìreadh na bruthaich,
Cha bhi sgìos na dà shiubhal,
Agus pìc a' chuil bhuidhe
'Ad dhòrlach:
Gum bi t'eudan air lasadh,
'S do dheud mar a chailce;
Tha falt dubh ort, 's chan fhacas
Nas bòidhche.

. . . . .

Ach a-nise ma sguir thu,
'S gun do lìbhrig thu 'n gunna
Chaoidh cha dìrich thu uillinn
Na mòr-bheann
Ma choisg iad am fiadh ort,
Le àr smachd an Iarla;
Cha bhi mhanntal nan t-sliasaid
Air d-òlach.[43]

...You wish to hold
A knobbly-backed bow,
of supple yew,
New, sound and flexible,
And your quiver seen in
the sun's reflection.

Aimed from your thigh
With yellow back and clean side,
Plume of the speckled eagle
Guiding it—
Coloured wax from Galway
Hued the armament,
Hard points from the smithy,
With good barbs.

Straight yew rod,
Excellent for wrapping silk,
The Glen Lyon fletcher
Setting barbs on them.
Forsooth, hunter of the guided-destroyer
Of blackcock and grey goose,
In your youth
You were schooled in heroism.

Climbing the brae,
No fatigue will be felt or no return trip,

[43] MacRae, Donald, 'Oran Dhomhnuill Daoilg le a Bhean', *TGSI*, vols. III/IV (1873–87/1874–75), 189-90.

The yellow backed-bow
In your quiver:
The string would be loosed,
Your chalk-like teeth,
And you have the most beautiful black hair
That was ever seen.

. . . . .

But if you stop now (the use of the bow)
Now you have handled the gun,
Never will you climb the bent ridge
Of the high hill.
If, by the Earl's authority,
They make you pay for the deer,
No mantle will cover either your thigh
Or modesty.

Not only does the authoress display a very good knowledge of archery and the make-up of bows, but, it would seem, she was far keener for her husband maintain its use than to take up a new-fangled gun. It would also appear that her husband may have been in trouble for poaching, but the reference here is rather oblique.

An expansive description of bows is given in *Saighdean Ghlinn Lìobhainn*, composed around 1603, judging by an oblique (if unsubstantiated) reference to Ruaig Ghlinne Freòin. The subject of the song is assumed to be Alasdair MacGregor of Glenstrae, who was executed after the Rout of Glenfruin (1603). It may well be, however, that the subject of the elegy was his brother, Iain Dubh, who was slain at the Rout of Glenfruin:

Coin air iallaibh
Garg an gnìomhan:
B'e do mhiann bhith sealgaireachd.

Pìc nad dhòrnaibh
'S mill nas leòir oirr',
'S ann le treòir a thairgnear i.

Glac nach leumadh
Re teas grèine
Agus cèir on Ghailbhinn oirr.

Ite an eòin lèith,
Brice na déidh,
Air a gleus le barbaireachd.

Sìoda à h-Eirinn
'S meòir ga rèiteach:
Cha tig brèin' fir cheàird air sin,

Ach fleisteir finealta
A Gleann Lìobhainn
Sìor-chur sìoda air chalpannan.

Cinn bhreac sgiathach
Air dhreach dialtaig:
Cha tig iarann garbhcail orr;

Gun chron dlùthaidh
Fod' làimh lùthmhoir,
Ite chùil is eàrr oirr sin.

Hounds on leashes,
ferocious in action:
hunting was your greatest happiness.

A bow in your fists,
studded with knobs,
its string drawn back with energy.

A quiver that would not burst
in the heat of the sun,
with wax from Galway made flexible.

Feather of the eagle,
a speckling behind it,
an arrow with barbed ornament.

Silk from Ireland
unravelled by fingers:
no rude tradesman will attain its excellence.

But a skilled fletcher
from Glen Lyon
winding silk round and round the swelling shafts.

Tails flanged and speckled,
the appearance of batwing:
iron, course and crude, comes nowhere near.

Unharmed by the straining
of your powerful handling,
on each arrow, a wing and tail-feather.[44]

The poem extols the virtues of an idealised bowman enjoying the chase (as it was his 'greatest happiness') with his excitable hounds; and the poet was obviously more than merely conversant with archery as he or she draws upon the stock phrases connected to the use of the bow, but, as John MacInnes points out 'individual emotion may be

[44] *GC*, 70-71, 220-21.

present but must not obtrude.'[45] This poem is a unique source for many Gaelic technical terms applied to archery.

Arm-makers, and armourers, were held in great esteem as can be seen in a song which probably has a Mull connection with Clann Duiligh, the Rankin pipers:[46]

> ...ceàrd a dhèanadh nan arm,
> Leis an cinneadh an t-sealg
> Coileach dubh is boc-earb
> Nuair dhìreadh tu 'n stùc,
> Le d' ghunna 's le d' chù,
> Chaogadh tu 'n t-sùil,
> Is lùbadh tu 'n glùn,
> Mac an fhèidh bhiodh gun sunnd
> Call fal' air an drùchd,
> Thug mi 'n cion, cuim' an ceil mi?
> Do shealgair na h-eilid,
> An dòbhrain duinn 's an ròin mheillich.
>
> ...a craftsman of arms,
> With whom the hunt prospers
> Of black-cock and roebuck.
> When you'd climb the heights
> With your gun and hound
> You'd aim your eye
> And bend your knee,
> Then the deer's son would be cheerless
> Losing its blood on the dew,
> I gave my affection—why deny it?—
> To the hunter of the hind,
> The brown otter and the thick-lipped seal.[47]

In *Cumha Iain Ghairbh Mhic Ghille Chaluim Rarsaidh*, composed by his sister, Seònaid, around the same time as the more famous lament by Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh, an image is drawn of dead greyhounds washed up on the shoreline. This embodies by transference a heart-rending loss—their motionless corpses (like their master) are in complete contrast to their once vigorous life as hounds in the chase, ever ready to bite at the fleeing quarry. Or, perhaps, the loss of Iain Garbh was simply too much to bear, and so the less painful imagery of the lifeless hounds is used rather than a direct reference to her dead brother:

> Tha do mhìolchoin gun ghluasad,
> Gun luasgan gun fhuran,

[45] *DG*, 274.

[46] Morrison, Neil Rankin, 'Clann Duiligh: Piobairean Chloinn-Eathain', *TGSI*, vol. XXXVII (1934–36), 59-79.

[47] *FSPTFWB*, 80-81; Morrison, Neil Rankin, 'Clann Duiligh: Piobairean Chloinn-Eathain', 66-67.

Gun fhaoilte bho'n uasal
D'am bu dual a bhith duineil.

Gun fhaghaid gun iallach,
Gun triall chum a' mhunaidh,
Gu fireach na sealga,
Gu garbhlach a' Chuilinn.

Thy greyhounds are unstirring,
Without wagging or rejoicing,
Without welcome from the noble
Whose forebears were manly.

Without coursing or huntsmen,
Without trek to the hill,
To the heights of the hunt,
To the rough peaks of the Coolin.[48]

In another dirge, attributed to Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh, there is an allusion to hunting. Indeed, the song opens with a stanza that reflects the esteem in which hunting was held and also that it was crux of self-identity in terms of Gaelic nobility:

Och nan och 's mi fo léireadh
Mar a dh' éirich do'n ghaisgeach;
Chan 'eil sealgair na sìthne
An diugh am frìth nam beann casa.[49]

O alas I am sorrowful,
For the fate of the hero,
The hunter of venison
Is not in the steep-hilled deer-forest today.

Marbhrann do Iain Garbh Mac Ghille Chaluim Ratharsaidh by Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh also contains strong hunting imagery:

Bu tù sealgair a' gheoidh,
Làmh gun dearmad gun leòn
Air am bu shuarach an t-òr
Thoirt a bhuannachd a' cheoil,
Is gun d' fhuair thu na's leoir is na chaitheadh tu.

Bu tù sealgair an fhéidh
Leis an deargta na béin;
Bhiodh coin earbsach air éill
Aig an Albannach threun;
Càite am faca mi féin
Aon duine fo'n ghréin
A dhèanadh riut euchd flathasach?

[48] *CG*, v, 303-05; MacDonald, Rev. Angus & MacDonald, Rev. Archibald (eds.), *The MacDonald Collection of Gaelic Poetry* (Inverness: Northern Publishing Co., 1911), 155.
[49] *GSMM*, 100.

Thou were a hunter of the wild-goose, thine a hand
unerring and unblemished, to which it were a light thing
to bestow gold for the maintenance of music; for thou
hast gotten plenty, and all that thou wouldst spend.

Thou were a hunter of the deer, by whom sides were
reddened; trusty hounds would the mighty man of Alba
hold on leash; where have I beheld beneath the sun one
man that would vie with thee in a princely feat?[50]

The usual reference to Iain Garbh's sure hand and aim with an unerring gun appears later in the dirge:

Is math thig gunna nach diùlt
Air curaidh mo rùin
Ann am mullach a' chùirn
Is air uilinn nan stùc:
Gum biodh fuil ann tùs an spreadhaidh sin.

A gun that readily answereth, well would it become my
dear warrior in the cairn's summit or on the elbow of
the peaks; blood would flow in front of its discharge.[51]

This song draws upon the motifs of the Panegyric Code through its portrayal of the warrior-hunter, full of skill and prowess. There is little, if anything, to differentiate the treatment of the subject from a feminine point of view. Regardless of gender, the ideal of the hunter-warrior was praised with reference to paradigms of masculinity, and, as such 'glorifies the heroic ideal and celebrates the warrior class', by drawing upon 'rhetorical techniques that employ an inherited store of imagery.'[52] This is, perhaps, best shown in *Do Mhac Leòid*, probably composed as a lament to Ruaidhri MacLeod (*d.* 1699), son of the redoubtable Iain Breac MacLeod (1637–1693), where the hunting episodes are intricately, if conventionally, described:

Cuid dha t'àbhaist 's dha d' bheusan
A bhith gu fuilteach tric bèin-dearg
Air chuideachda chèir-gheal nan cròc.

Leat bu mhiann na coin lùthmhor
Dhol a shiubhal nan stùc-bheann,
Is an gunna nach diùltadh re òrd.

'S i do làmh nach robh tuisleach
Dhol a chaitheamh a' chuspair
Le d' bhogha cruaidh ruiteach deagh-neòil.

[50] *GSMM*, 26-27, ll. 296-307
[51] *GSMM*, 28-29, ll. 322-326.
[52] *DG*, 40.

Bhiodh glac throm air do shliasaid
'S i gun ghaiseadh gun fhiaradh,
Bàrr dosrach de sgiathaibh an eòin.

Bhiodh cèir air do chrannaibh
Bu neo-èisleineach tarraing
Nuair a leumadh an tafaid bho ur meòir.

Nuair a leigteadh o d' làimh i
Cha bhiodh aon mhìr gun bhàthadh
Eadar corran a gàinne is a smeòirn.

A part of your pastime and custom,
often your hide blood-spluttered,
was with the antlered white-buttocked throng.

You loved the lithe deerhounds
roaming the peaked hills
with the gun that always yielded to its lock.

Your hand would not falter
taking aim at the target
with your bow, ruddy and hard of good hue.

On your thigh a heavy quiver,
arrows without twist or defect,
plumed tips of the wings of the fowl.

Your shafts sealed with beeswax
were not sluggish in bending
when the bowstring would leap from your hold.

When it was released from your fingers
no length would be unburied
between its pointed tip and its notch.[53]

In a song to Iain Crùbach, Laird of Ardgour, who sprained his foot so badly while hunting on his estate leaving him with a permanent limp, his nurse praises his hunting prowess in previous exploits to try and lift his doleful spirits:

Sàil-a'-bhùiridh nan damh dearg!
Gharbh-dhoire nan earb' 's nam boc!
Far an tric an robh mo rùn
Le 'ghillean air chùl nan cnoc.

Beinne-mheadhoin ghlas an fheòir
Mun sgaoil ceò 's mun èirich grian!
'S tric 'bha thu air a mullach àrd,
Air d' uilinn air sgàth nam fiadh.[54]

[53] *GC*, 136-39, 227; *GSMM*, 22-25, ll. 255-269.
[54] Anon., *Oran Seilg a Rinneadh do Dh'Iain Crubach, Triath Aird-Ghobhar* (Glasgow: Archibald Sinclair, 1863), 5; Chisholm, Colin, 'Unpublished Old Gaelic Songs', *TGSI*, vol. XII (1885–86), 159-

Sàil a' Bhùiridh of the russet deer,
Gharbh Dhoire of the roes and bucks—

Often my love was there
With his gillies at the knoll's back.

Beinn a' Mheadhain of the green grass
Where the mist diffused before the sun rises,

Often you were on her high top,
On your elbow aiming at the deer.

While Iain Crùbach was laid up, Lochbuie (referred to as mac Mhurchaidh Bhàin), took advantage of the situation and hunted around the Laird of Ardgour's favourite haunts. Lochbuie is referred to in derogatory terms as well as his deerhound, referred to in the diminutive Torman in contrast to Ardgour's Torm:

'S cha b'e *Torman* mhic *Mhurchaidh* bhàin,
'Cur ghabhar á gàradh gairt!
'N uair leigeadh *Iain* an Cù bàn
Bhiodh fear a' chinn àird fo lot.

Ach thusa 'mhic *Mhurchaidh* bhàin!
Imich uainn thar sàil gu luath,
'S bidh sealgaireachd air laoigh na tràgh'd,
On 's e b' àbhaist dhuit o d' thùs.[55]

It is not the son of fair-haired Murdo's Torman,
That sends the hounds out of the garden:
When John would slip the white hound
The high-headed one would be felled.

But you, O son of fair-haired Murdo,
Quickly remove yourself from us
And go hunt sea-calves on the strand,
For such was your habit of old.

A women's ideal perception of masculinity, though mainly a lover's preserve, was not always exclusive to love songs, such as a song by Andrew MacPherson's nursemaid, Elspeth Grant, shows, when she saw him leave his native Badenoch for overseas service in the British army. Her song contains hunting motifs that would not look out of place from a composition that could date to some three centuries earlier:

Bu tu iasgair na h-amhainn,
Tric ga tàmhaich le leus;

60, where a similar song is attributed to Duncan Macrae, son of Farquhar Òg of Morvich, Kintail, on being laid up after spraining his foot.
[55] *Ibid.*, 6.

Agus sealgair a' mhonaidh,—
Bhiodh do ghunn' air dheagh ghleus.

Nuair a chluinnte do làmhaich,
Cha bu shlàn mac na h-eild';
'S tric a bheum do làmh teine,
Taobh Loch Eireachd seo shuas.

Bu tu marbhaich an fhìor-eòin,
'S eòin chrìon na sgèith ruaidh',
Agus sealgair a' choilich
'S tric a ghoireas sa bhruaich.

Nàile! Bheirinn ort comhairl',
Nan gabhadh tu i bhuam;—
Ach bidh mo dhùrachd 'ad dheaghaidh,
Bhon chaidh tu thar chuan.[56]

You were an angler of the river,
Often there with a torch,
And a hunter of the moor
With your gun well-primed.

When your firing was heard,
The hind's son would be felled
Often did your hand fire
Up from here west on Loch Ericht side.

You were the slayer of the eagle
And of the little red-winged bird,
The hunter of the cock
That often crows on the bank.

Truly! I would advise you
If you'd take it from me—
But my good wishes are with you
Since you have gone across the sea.

Conversely, the hunter could use his prowess in chasing the deer to either jilt or woo potential lovers, as seen in an extract from *Thogainn Fonn air Lorg an Fhèidh*:

'S miann le breac a bhi 'n sruth cas,
'S miann le boc bhi 'n doire dhlùth,
'S miann le eilid bhi 'm beinn àrd,
'S miann le sealgair falbh le 'chù.
Bheir mi, &c.

Cha mhiann bodaich mo mhiann féin—
Cha mhiann leis éirigh ach mall;
Cha lùb gruagach 'n a sgéith;
Tairngidh e leis féin an t-srann.

[56] *PB*, 99-100, 412-13; Sinton, Rev. Thomas, 'Gaelic Poetry from the MSS. of the late Mr. James MacPherson, Edinburgh', *TGSI*, vol. XXIV (1899–1901), 397-98.

Bheir mi, &c.

Nithean sin do'n d' thug mi spéis,
'S bu mhiannach leam iad bhi 'm chòir:
Mo ghunna glaic air deagh ghléus,
Direadh ri beinn, a's bean òg.
Bheir mi, &c.

'S nithean sin do 'n d' thug mi fuath:
Bean luath, a's cù mall,
Oighre fearuinn gun bhi glic,
Agus slios nach altruim clann.
Bheir mi, &c.

Bu mhiann leam ri latha fuar,
Dìreadh suas ri aonach cas,
'N uair a thilginn mac an fhéidh,
Coin air éill, 's ga 'n leigeil as.
Bheir mi, &c.

Leam bu mhiann bhi 'siubhal bheann,
Osan teann a bhi mu m' chos;
Brogan iall a's gunna cruaidh,
Eilid ruadh a's cù m'a dos.
Bheir mi, &c.

'S ged fhaighinn bean a' chinn bhàin,
Air do laimh,[57] bu bheag mo spéis;
'S mor gu'm b' annsa leam bean dhonn
'Bheireadh trom-ghaol domh le céill.
Bheir mi, &c.[58]

The trout wants to be in a fast stream,
The roe wants to be in an oak grove,
The hind wants to be on the high hills,
And the hunter wants to go with his hound.

An old man would not have my needs—
He only wishes to arise slowly,
A lassie wouldn't tend to his sickness
As he'll draw out his own snores.

The lassie to whom I gave respect,
And I'd like them to be in my company:
My shot-gun well-primed
To climb the hills with a young wife.

And you lassie to whom I gave my spite:
A quick woman, with a slow dog,
A landed heir without wisdom,

[57] An asseveration, a not uncommon feature of Gaelic song tradition.
[58] Mac-na-Ceàrdadh, Gilleasbuig, *An t-Oranaiche*, 77-79; Mackenzie, William, 'Leaves from my Celtic Portfolio. IV', *TGSI*, vol. VIII (1878–79), 113-15; Anon., 'Thogainn Fonn air Lorg an Fheidh', *The Highlander*, vol. I, no. 15 (23 Aug., 1873), 3.

With her side unable to bear children.

I'd wish to be on a cold day
Ascending the steep upland moors,
When I would fell the deer's son,
With hounds on a leash and letting them slip.

I'd wish to be roving the hills,
With tight hose around my legs;
Thonged brogues and a hard gun
A red hind with a hound about her scruff.

And though I'd leave the fair-haired woman,
By your hand, little was my respect;
Far more did I prefer the brown-haired woman
That would as my spouse give true love to me.

Due to the longevity of hunting motifs, reflecting their ability to conjure up a picture of striking manhood and hunting prowess, a concomitant lack of personal expression, at times, surfaces that would give a more individual and creative slant. In general, however, such traditional songs have 'an arresting directness and openness.'[59] Take, for example, the use of the hunting metaphor used by Sìleas na Ceapaich in her *Laoidh na Maidne*, where the seven deadly sins are seen as monsters ready to be hunted down:

Uabhar, sannt, drùis is craos,
Leisg, farmad agus fearg—
Sin na cinn a th' air a' bhèist
Bhios gach aon là 's a' bheinn a' sealg.

Tàirnidh i faghaid mun cuairt duinn
Mur robh ar buachaillean glic;
'S gun dèan sinn d' an comhairlean feum,
Marbhaidh sinn i fhéin 's a sliochd.

Pride, covetousness, lust and gluttony,
Sloth, envy, and anger—
Those are the heads of monsters
Which hunts every day on the hill.

It will bring the chase around us
If our herdsmen are not prudent;
And in order to make use of their counsel
We will kill it and its offspring.[60]

Usually the women's perspective on hunting is one of prescription as well as description. For many women the ideal choice of a companion was a man of noble

[59] Gillies, William, 'Traditional Gaelic Women's Songs', 172.

stock and thus the setting of the hunt, whether given as a vignette or given a longer treatment, fits naturally into a setting where the hunter is given a type of iconic status. In an anonymous elegiac waulking song, *Mhic Iarla nam Bratach Bàna*, which may date to second half of the 16th century, a woman laments her abandonment by a nobleman, a common theme in folksongs between the 16th and 18th centuries:

> M' inntinne trom, m' fhonn, air m' fhàgail,
> Mun fhiùran fhoghainneach àlainn,
> Sealgair sìthn' o fhrìth nan àrdbheann,
> 'S an ròin lèith o bheul an t-sàile,
> An earba bheag a dh' fhalbhas stàtail,
> Le crios iallach ullach airgid
> Air uachdar a lèine bàine.
>
> My mind is heavy, all desire has left me,
> on account of the beautiful strong hero,
> hunter of deer from the mountain moorlands,
> and of the grey seal at the mouth of the ocean,
> of the dainty roe that moves proudly,
> with thronged belt with tips of silver
> over his shift of white linen.[61]

Some of the imagery invoked in this particular song is striking, such as the description of the ship with a helm of gold and a couple of silver masts. This suggests the creative process in which such songs were produced could be one of extemporary composition where, at times, such idealistic imagery could come to the fore.[62] The relationship of women's songs to other areas of Gaelic literary tradition has been remarked upon by William Gillies:

> Another way in which these songs bear comparison with the main body of the Gaelic literary tradition is in their expression of personal feeling, which is a prime concern of their authors. They often externalise love and hatred by objectifying it in expressions of praise or dispraise, which they convey by means of sets of poetic symbols for the qualities being admired or derided. When one analyses these, it is clear that this poetry idealised its objects of praise just as much as the literary genres do. One can classify the conventional attributes and construct a consistent picture of the women's *beau idéal* from the recurrent references to his physical figure and prowess, his beauty, his mental qualities of leadership and education, his liberality, and his sporting and martial prowess. They clearly bear comparison with the equally conventional virtues and vices praised or satirised in the men's poetry of panegyric, though there are some differences.[63]

---

[60] Ó Baoill, Colm (ed.), *Bàrdachd Shìlis na Ceapaich c.1660–c. 1779*, 84-85, ll. 995-1002.
[61] *DS*, 412-13, ll. 9-15.
[62] Gillies, William, 'Traditional Gaelic Women's Songs', 169-70.

Hunting in Songs of Nature

A great deal of nature poetry was composed by Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair[64] and, in *Fàilte na Mòrthir*, he poetically described the natural charms of Morar, a place close to his heart where he resided latterly until his death. The detailed observation of deer within a wider thematic range of creatures such as salmon, cattle, birds, produce, landscape and people is, perhaps, not on a par with the best of Macintyre's descriptions of similar thematic subjects. In mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's case, there is no sustained mention of hunting, as he was clearly more concerned with nature for its own sake. A lusty atmosphere pervades the poem throughout, and even the intensity of natural observation is sustained in its lighter, joyful moments such as when the poet remarks upon the mating habits of deer:

> Bidh greigh dhearga am bràigh an fhirich,
> Eilid bhinneach 's mang aic'.
>
> Damh le rùtas dol sa bhùireadh,
> 'S e ri bùirein-cleamhnais.
>
> Boc air dàradh timcheall daraig',
> 'N dèidh a leannain chinn-deirg.[65]
>
> Red herds will be in the forest uplands,
> A taper-headed hind with her calf.
>
> A lusty stag goes to roar,
> Bellowing as he copulates.
>
> Pairing roe-buck around the oak saplings,
> After her red-headed lover.

The strong pastoral element of his nature poetry is influenced by realism and also by carefully detailed, and even loving, observation. Sometimes, it is as if he is painting a picture of a lost earthly paradise, to such an extent that it may be argued that a sense of religious reverence surfaces in his eulogy of nature.

---

[63] *Ibid.*, 174.

[64] Thomson, Derick S., 'Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's Nature Poetry and its Sources', in Derick S. Thomson (ed.), *Gaelic and Scots in Harmony: Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on the Languages of Scotland*, 95-115.

[65] *PAM*, 38. Apparently mac Maighstir Alasdair's poetic nemesis, *An t-Aireach Muileach* [Iain MacDhòmhnaill?], a MacLean, composed a memorable satire on the Moidart man as well as a satire on *Fàilte na Mòrthir*, entitled unsurprisingly, *Dìomaladh na Mòrthir*, of which only a few stanzas remain, see Sinclair, Rev. Alexander MacLean, *Na Baird Leathanaich/The MacLean Bards*, 2 vols. (Charlottetown: Haszard & Moore, 1898–1900), i, 251.

A different socio-political commentary from a Gaelic perspective on sheep is shown from a song where they are seen as the enemies of deer, and will inevitably leave the deer-forests desolate:

> Ge sìmplidh a' chaora,
> 'S nàmh coill' i is sprèidh:
> Chan fhàg i ruadh-eun air fraoch,
> Coileach taobh-dhubh air gèig;
> Chan fhàg i ruadh-bhòc an coill'.
> Don àrd-bheinn fògraidh fèidh;
> 'S ge tric bhualas gach seun orm,
> Air an fhèill 's tearc mo bheum.
>
> Though the sheep are simple,
> They are the enemy of forest and cattle:
> They will not leave a single grouse on the heath
> Or a black-cock on the tree branch;
> They will not leave a single roe-buck in the forest,
> Deer will be banished to the high mountain;
> No matter how many charms I try,
> Seldom will I strike blows in the engagement.[66]

A similar attitude, though more perceptively expressed, surfaces in Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre's *Òran nam Balgairean*,[67] where the tables are turned on sheep as they are seen as vermin destroyed by foxes.

Given the historical allusions to hawking, or falconry, in the Highlands, it is surprising to find only fleeting mentions of this sport in either Gaelic literature or tradition. Although this may suggest that falconry was a not particularly popular in comparison to other methods of hunting, it is probably due to its prohibitive cost as it was exclusive to the very wealthy. Nonetheless, falconry was assumed to be *the* noble sport during the Middle Ages and later until its popularity began to ebb in the early 17th century.[68] Thus it may well be the paucity of extant Gaelic manuscripts from before this period which accounts for the lack of source material with regard to hawking. In addition to this, falconry required huntsmen to be mounted, and thus, it may be assumed, debarred much of Highland terrain from such activity. Nevertheless, the Highlands (and the Northern Isles) were good breeding grounds and falconers,

---

[66] Newton, Michael, *Bho Chluaidh gu Calasraid: From the Clyde to Callander* (Stornoway: Acair, 1999), 246-49; for other examples of charms, see Mackenzie, William, 'Gaelic Incantations, Charms, and Blessings of the Hebrides', *TGSI*, vol. XVIII (1891–92), 139-44.

[67] *ÒDB*, 346-49, ll. 5017-5064. The other side of this coin can be seen in a Braemar dialogue song, see Watson, Adam, 'Old Gaelic Songs from Aberdeenshire', *SGS*, vol. XIV, pt. I (Winter, 1983), 37-40.

[68] Gransby, Richard, 'The Decline of Falconry in Early Modern England', *Past and Present*, vol. 157 (1997), 37-62.

during the late-medieval period, were periodically sent to source birds of prey there. There is, however, an early mention made in a Fenian source by Dargo's wife who, on hearing of her husband's death, the very shock of which killed her, is said to have composed the following:

> Chì mi an t-seobhag, chì mi an cù
> Leis an dèanamh mo rùn 'n t-sealg
> On a b' ionmhainn leis an triùir
> Carair sinn san ùir le Dearg.
>
> I see the hawk, I see the hound
> With which my love hunted;
> Since well he loved the three,
> Let us be laid in the grave with the Red.[69]

Another example, from Cathal MacMhuirich (*c.* 1618–*c.*1661), alludes to the four falcons of Clan Donald (*c.* 1636). This does not necessarily refer to the sport of falconry but uses effective imagery of birds of prey:

> Ceithre seabhaic chrichthe cui*nn*
> sinte fa chloch*aibh* sa*n* chill
> cnúas am*ét* ni choi*m*hreic coill
> ar nég do*n* chlion òirdhe*r*c fhin.
>
> The four falcons of the land of Conn
> Are stretched under stones in the church;
> The wood had not yielded so much fruit
> Since the death of the noble descendants of Fionn.[70]

Hunting in Dialogue Songs

Another feature of Gaelic song is the dialogue format where the hunting theme is strongly represented. This was a pervasive form in medieval literature, both courtly and popular, where the interlocutors were usually human or personified figures. This format's pedigree is well attested in Old Irish, previously seen in Fenian literature. A similar framework is used in *Òran na Comhachaig* where an interlocution takes place between the bard and the Owl of Strone, acting as a 'survivor' of the past. She was thus able to recollect the lore of bygone days, and the poem works through the medium of a conversation similar to that in which Oísin tells St Patrick of the heroic deeds of the Fenian warrior-hunters. Not only does the introduction of the saintly

[69] *FSPTFWB*, 5; Nicolson, (Sheriff) Alexander (ed.), *A Collection of Gaelic Proverbs and Familiar Phrases* (Edinburgh: MacLachlan & Stewart, 1881), 415; *G*, 301; MacBain, Alexander, 'Celtic Burial', *TISSFC*, vol. III (1883–88), 160.

figure provide a more believable platform for these semi-mythological stories, but it also, and more importantly, updates them for a medieval audience. In some ways it allows the audience to take a collective breath before plunging into a deep pool of legendary lore in order to suspend their disbelief.

Many dialogue poems from the 18th century mention hunting, and, more often that not, they include an element of lament, anticipating, in some respects, some of the rather nostalgic themes of 19th century Gaelic verse and song. In addition, these dialogue songs are partly inspired by contemporaneous political events. The post-Culloden proscription on Highland dress and the carrying of firearms[71] surfaces in a song where the hunter's situation is expressed by Fear Srath Mhathasaidh (Lachlan MacPherson), tacksman of Strathmashie (*c.* 1723–*c.* 1796), in a dialogue with a deer which has less reason to complain about his lot:

Sealgair:
Ge blàth an t-aodach a' bhriogais,
Cha b'e siud a b' fheàrr leam;
B' annsa leam am fèile preasach,
Gu deas air a chàradh;
Sin 's mo bhreacan air m' uachdar,
'Cumail fuachd nam beann dhìom;
Seach slaodaire dubh do chasgaig,
Crochta mu mo mhàsan.

Fiadh:
Chunnaic mise siud ort roimhe,
Ge coimheach an-dràst' thu;
'S tric a thachair sinn air fuaran,
Shuas ann am Beinn Eallair;
Agus a loisg thu rium do luaidhe,
Le fuaim am measg mo chàirdean;
Ach nì luchd nan còtan ruadha,
Thusa 'fhuadach as an fhàsach.

Sealgair:
'S truagh nach fhaighinn-'s thus' is Seòras,
Còmhlath fon aon làmhach;
'S gach aon duine mòr san rìoghachd,
Tha ri dìteadh Theàrlaich;
Gar an toimhsinn tro thar dìsinn,
Ach mo shìth bhith 'm Pàrras;
Nàile! chosdainn-sa mo phearsa,
R' ur toirt dachaidh màireach.

---

[70] *RC*, ii, 234-35.
[71] Millar, A. H., 'Note on the Proclamation for Disarming of the Highlands in 1746', *PSAS*, vol. XXX (1895–96), 210-22.

Fiadh:
Ach chan fhaigh thu sinn le chèile,
Sa bheinn fon aon làmhach;
'S ma chluinnear gu bheil thu fhèin ann,
Eighear thu ad mhèirleach;
Ach nam b' aithne dhòmh-sa 'n rathad,
Rachainn gu Bruach Màiri,[72]
Dh' innse gu bheil gunna 's breacan,
Agad-s' ann an àite.[73]

Hunter:
Though breeches are warm clothing,
That isn't my preference
For I love the pleated kilt,
Well arranged and fitting,
Along with my plaid,
Keeping out the mountain cold
Rather than the clumsy back cassock,
Hung around my hips.

Deer:
I saw your wearing that before
Though now you look strange.
Often we met at the well-spring
Upon Ben Alder.
And you fired the shot at me
With noise among my companions.
But the folk of the red coats
Will drive your from the forest.

Hunter:
It's a pity I wouldn't get you and George,
At the same time under fire
And every other great man in the country
That condemns (Prince) Charles
Though I wouldn't measure a foot over the dice,
But for my peace in Paradise,
Forsooth! I would spend my person
To bring you home tomorrow.

Deer:
But you will not get us together
In the hill under the same fire.
And if you are heard there yourself,
You will be proclaimed a thief.
But if I knew the way,
I'd go to Maryburgh,
To say that you've a gun and plaid
Hidden in a certain place.

---

[72] Referring to the historical name Maryburgh, after Queen Mary, for Fort William.
[73] *PB*, 168-71, 454-56; Seamrag, 'Oran Eadar an Sealgair is an Fiadh', *Mac-Talla*, vol. X, no. 26 (14 Mar., 1902), 199; Mackenzie, William, 'Leaves from my Celtic Portfolio. V', *TGSI*, vol. IX (1879–80), 61-63.

The dialogue form is well represented in these poems in which participants are often a hunter and a deer or a gun (usually given a feminine nick-name, or named *spàinnteach*). Generally, the effect is of a relatively superficial literary device, and, in the main, the songs fail to carry the impact of conversational dialogue so prominent in Fenian literature, or, indeed, in *Òran na Comhachaig*. Many of these dialogue poems refer to hunting in former times as part of a lament for the loss of a companion in the chase. Other examples of this genre, reflecting its popularity as a framework for composition at this time, are: another by Strathmashie,[74] *Gur h-i Bean mo Ghaoil an Spàinnteach*,[75] *Òran na Spàinntich*,[76] apparently composed by Gilleasbaig Dòmhnallach,[77] *An Sealgair agus Am Fiadh*,[78] attributed to Dòmhnall Mòr Òg and *A' Chàim*[79] by Uilleam MacCoinnich. Songs were also composed in praise of firearms. A famous one by Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre is *Òran do Ghunna Dh'an Ainm Nic Coiseim*,[80] and also his *Òran don Mhùsg*.[81]

Guns were commonly given feminine nick-names: NicCòiseim (fig. 4.1), *NicAilpein* (William Smith's gun), *Nic an Ròsaich* (Iain mac Mhur' 'ic Fhearchair 'ic Rath's gun), *Nighean Ruairidh* and so on. Other nick-names for famous firearms are also recorded in the Highlands: *An t-Slinneanach* allegedy used in the assassination of Cailean Caimbeul Ghlinn Iubhair (1752); and the murderous gun, *A' Chuthag*, of a Clanranald chief, Dòmhnall Dubh mhic Dhòmhnaill.[82] Other songs which praise fire-

---

[74] *PB*, 177-78, 460-61; 179-80, 461-62.

[75] Anon., 'Gur h-i Bean mo Ghaoil an Spainteach; Oran Eadar Sealgair agus a Ghunna', *Mac-Talla*, vol. II, no. 36 (31 Mar., 1894), 8.

[76] MacDonald, Alasdair [Alasdair an Ridge], 'Oran na Spainntich', *Mac-Talla*, vol. VI, no. 20 (12 Nov., 1897), 159. Ascribed to *Forsair Choire an t-Sìdh* by William Matheson, see Matheson, William, (ed.), *The Songs of John MacCodrum: Bard to Sir James MacDonald of Sleat* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1938), 340; Mac-na-Ceàrdadh, Gilleasbuig, *An t-Oranaiche*, 515-16.

[77] His by-name was Forsair Choir' an t-Sìth.

[78] Anon., 'Sealgair agus am Fiadh', *Mac-Talla* vol. III, no. 30 (26 Jan., 1895), 8; MacLeod, N., 'An Old Gaelic Song: An Sealgair agus Am Fiadh', *Oban Times*, no. 1693 (18 Oct., 1890), 3; Loch Aillse, *The Highlander*, vol. VIII, no. 400 (5 Jan., 1881), 6; Mackenzie, William, 'Leaves from my Celtic Portfolio. V', 61-63.

[79] MacPherson, Donald C., *An Duanaire: A New Collection of Gaelic Songs and Poems* (Edinburgh: MacLachlan & Stewart, 1868), 57-59; Anon., 'Sealgair agus am Fiadh', *Mac-Talla*, vol. III, no. 30 (26 Jan., 1895), 8.

[80] *ÒDB*, 226-29, ll. 3320-3378.

[81] *ÒDB*, 16-19, ll. 209-252.

[82] MacCrimmon's bagpipe was nick-named An Oinseach and mac Mhaighstir Alasdair praised MacCriommon's bagpipes (who may have been mac Mhaighstir's contemporary Dòmhnall Bàn, famously killed at the Rout of Moy) in a poem, *Moladh air Pìob Mhòr Mhic Cruimein don Ainm an Oinseach*, see *PAM*, 56-68.

arms are the following: *Òran don Ghunna*,[83] *Òran eile don Ghunna*,[84] *A' Mhusg Bhreac*,[85] by MacCoinnich Òg, a MacKenzie chief, *Duanag don Ghunna*, by Iain mac Mhur' 'ic Fhearchair 'ic Rath, from Kintail,[86] and *A' Mhuscaid Dubhair Alchainn*.[87] Mention, sometimes substantial, of other weaponry (swords, daggers, pistols, targes and so on) in Gaelic song tradition was not uncommon.

Other Hunting Themes in Gaelic Song Tradition

On a lighter note, Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre's *Òran Seachran Seilge* refers to a hunt that did not go according to expectation. Such was the disastrous result that it inspired the hunter-bard to compose a ditty about the event:

'S mi teàrnadh a Coir' a' Cheathaich,
'S mór mo mhìghean 's mi gun aighear,
Siubhal frìthe ré an latha:
Thilg mi 'n spraigh nach d' rinn feum dhomh.
Chunna mi 'n damh donn, &c.

Ged tha bacadh air na h-armaibh,
Ghléidh mi 'n Spàinteach chun na sealga,
Ged a rinn i orm de chearbaich
Nach do mharbh i mac na h-eilde.

As I descended from Misty Corrie,
great is my dudgeon, I am cheerless,
ranging forest all day long:
I fired the burst that gained me nothing.
I spied the brown stag, &c.

Though there is a ban on weapons,
I saved the Spanish gun for hunting,
yet she did me this disservice,
that she did not slay the hind's son.[88]

Macintyre then proceeds to describe preparations for loading and firing the gun, and how he stalked carefully to get a shot off, only to see the deer bound away unscathed. All his efforts had been undone, and thus tired after a weary stalk he retires to hunt another day. He may have lost the deer on that particular occasion but he clearly kept

[83] MacIntosh, Duncan, *Co-chruinneachadh dh'òrain taghte Ghàelach: nach robh riamh roimh ann clo-buala* (Edinburgh: John Elder, 1831), 110-13.
[84] *Ibid.*, 114-17.
[85] Sinclair, Rev. Alexander MacLean, *Clarsach na Coille: A Collection of Gaelic Poetry* (Glasgow: Alex. MacLaren & Sons, 1921), 184-88.
[86] Loch-Aillse, 'Duanag do'n Ghunna', *The Highlander* (Jul., 1881), 19.
[87] Kennedy, Rev. John, 'Unpublished Gaelic Ballads from the MacLagan MSS', *TGSI*, vol. XXIV (1899–1901), 157-59.

his wry sense of humour, as well as his confidence in firing a shot on another day with better result:

'S mudalach bhith siubhal frìthe,
Ri là gaoith' is uisg' is dìle,
'S òrdugh teann ag iarraidh sìdhne
Cur nan gìomanach 'nan éigin.

'S mithich teàrnadh do na gleannaibh
On tha gruamaich air na beannaibh,
'S ceathach dùinte mu na meallaibh
A' cur dalladh air ar léirsinn.

Bidh sinn beò an dòchas ra-mhath
Gum bi chùis na 's fheàrr an t-ath-là,
Gum bi gaoth is grian is talamh
Mar as math leinn air na sléibhtibh.

Bidh an luaidhe ghlas 'na deannaibh,
Siubhal réidh aig conaibh seanga,
'S an damh donn a' sileadh fala,
'S àbhachd aig na fearaibh gleusda.

'Tis dreary to be ranging forest
on a day of wind, rain, and deluge,
while strict command requiring game
subjects the gamekeepers to hardship.

'Tis time to descend to the valleys,
since the mountains are forbidding,
and mist, enveloping the hill-tops,
totally obscures our vision.

We will live in hope unfailing,
that matters will be better next day,
and that wind and sun and terrain
will be as we wish, on the mountains.

The grey lead will be flying swiftly,
lean hounds will have unhindered coursing,
then the brown stag will be bleeding,
and men of prowess will have pastime.[89]

Hunting and satire also inspired other poets, for example, when John MacDonald and Rob Donn went fowling to Rannich Island, MacDonald was not used to fowling and, unfortunately, scared the wildfowl away by his clumsy approach. This inspired Rob Donn to compose these trivial verses:

[88] *ÒDB*, 156-57, ll. 2173-2181.
[89] *ÒDB*, 158-59, ll. 2198-2213.

'N uair ghlac Iain gunna 'n a dhòrn,
Ghlac na h-eòin an tonn,
Le àirde 's a thogaidh e thòn,
'S aghaidh air an *Stòir* ud thall.[90]

When John took the gun in his hand,
The birds took to the wave,
He lifted his arse up the slope,
With his face towards the Storr yonder.

And one suspects that this little ditty was a barb pointed at a certain hunter:

Tha na fèidh, o-ho!
B'è na fèidh iad!
Tha na fèidh, o-ho!
Air a' Bheinn àrd.
All-ail-a hó hó-an!
All-ail-a hó ho!
Aill-ail-a hó, hó-an.
O hó-an ó.

Leig an cù riutha;
Cuir an cù annt';
Leig an cù riutha;
An cù dona dall.

The deer are there, o-ho!
The deer certainly are!
The deer are there, o-ho!
High up the Ben.
All-ail-a hó hó-an!
All-ail-a hó ho!
Aill-ail-a hó, hó-an.
O hó-an ó.

Slip the dog after them,
Set the dog on them,
Slip the dog on them.
The dog useless and blind.[91]

After all, what would be the benefit of sending in a blind, useless dog after the quarry? The reference may have been to a hunter who had done just that, as he probably refused to part with his loyal dog even if it had passed its hunting prime. It may, on the other hand, just be made-up nonsense inspired by making a song that purportedly passes on practical wisdom in the chase only to be followed by an obvious punch-line. In any case, it shows that hunting themes were not merely the

[90] *SPRD*, 448.
[91] Tolmie, Francis, 'One Hundred and Five Songs of Occupation from the Western Isles of Scotland', 227-28.

preserve of great Gaelic songs but could also inspire the muse for more trivial and light-hearted verse.

In contrast, in *Cumha Aonghais Mhic Raghnaill Òig na Ceapaich*, composed by Iain Lom, the poet laments the deaths of his chieftain and his own father, killed whilst on a foray after they descended into Campbell country and joined battle at Sròn a' Chlachain (1646).[92] The bard, who took part in the raid, uses poetical allusions by comparing his chieftain and his father to greyhounds:

> On a chaill mi na gadhair,
> Is an t-eug 'gan sìor thadhal,
> 'S beag mo thoirt gar an tadhail mi' m Bràighe.
>
> Since I have lost the greyhounds whom death is
> Constantly seeking out, it matters little to me if
> I do not visit Brae Lochaber.[93]

This choice of literary allusion is significant because it highlights the implicit courage of hounds. The song may also indicate a high fatality rate amongst deerhounds whilst hunting with its reference to death.

Similarly, though in a completely different context, Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre composed a short song lamenting the death of a faithful deerhound in *Marbhrann do Chù a chaidh troimh 'n Eigh*:

> ...Leig e 'na shiubhal an cù
> A bha luath làidir lùthmhor dian;
> Cha robh a leithid riamh 'san tìr
> Ach Bran a bh' aig rìgh nam Fiann.
>
> Gadhar bu gharg calg is fionnadh,
> Cruaidh colgarra sùil is mala;
> Bu mhath dreach is dealbh is cumachd
> A' churaidh bu gharg 'sa' charraid;
> Bheireadh e 'm fiadh dearg a mullach
> 'S am boc-earb' a dlùths a' bharraich;
> B' e fhasan a bhith triall do 'n mhunadh
> 'S cha tàin' e dhachaigh riamh falamh.
>
> ...he let the dog go off a-coursing—
> swift strong, sturdy, ardent was he:

---

[92] For the background to Sròn a' Chlachain, see Stewart, Alexander, *A Highland Parish, or, The History of Fortingall* (Glasgow: Alex. MacLaren & Sons, 1928), 95-96; MacDiarmid, John, Alex., 'Folktale of Breadalbane', *TGSI*, vol. XXVI (1904–07), 147-48; MacDonald, Rory, 'Sron A Clachain', *Clan Donald Magazine*, no. 9 (1981), 32-34; Sinclair, Rev. Alexander MacLean, *The Glenbard Collection of Gaelic Poetry* (Charlottetown: G. H. Haszard, 1890), 145-48; Diarmad, 'Latha Blar Shron-Chlachain', *An Deò-Gréine*, leabh. XVI, earr. 6 (1921), 84.

[93] *ÒIL*, 10-11, ll. 77-79.

his peer was never in the country,
save Bran, owned by the Fiann's king.

A deerhound rough of coat and bristle,
stern and wild eye and eyebrow;
good were his aspect, form and figure
of the hero that was fierce in fighting;
he would fetch the red deer from the hill-top,
and roebuck from dense undergrowth;
he used to fare forth to the mountains,
and never did he come home with nothing.[94]

Surprisingly, given the intimacy of the piece, the name of the hound is not given though a comparison is made harking back to the prowess of the Gaelic archetype of a hunting hound, Fionn's Bran. It is a simple eulogy to a deerhound, and exemplifies the heart-rending break-up of a close companionship between a hunter and hound. Overall, the lament has a feel of hunting from the old days and it is probably a technique used in order to heighten the praise of the hound by introducing an archaic feel. Macintyre may have had the great Fenian hunting lays in mind when composing the song.[95]

In *Moladh na Landaidh*, the island of Islay (or part of it) is seen as if it were a larder which the bard sees a natural storehouse of foodstuffs, ready to be hunted. The abundant game to be had no doubt reflects the fertility of the island:

'S ged tha 'n Landaidh creagach, ciar
'S moch a dh' éireas oirre ghrian;
Innis nam ba-laoigh 's nam fiadh,
'S gu 'm b'e mo mhiann bhi thall ann!
Ho rò, &c.

'S 'n uair a dh' éirinn moch 's an àird,
Bheirinn sgrìob do cheann an t-sàil'—
Bhiodh na lachan air an t-snàmh,
'S cha b' fhad' am bàs o m' laimh-sa.
Ho rò, &c.

---

[94] *ÒDB*, 406-07, ll. 5812-5823. Macintrye's elegy has a precedent in Irish bardic poetry for which see Carey, John, 'Remarks on Dating', in Cathal G. Ó Háinle & Donald E. Meek (eds.), *Unity and Diversity: Studies in Irish and Scottish Gaelic Language, Literature and History* (Dublin: Trinity College Dublin, School of Irish, 2004), 15, where it is stated that an '*...Slán dona saoithibh sealga*, an elegy on the death of a hound belonging to Diarmaid Mág Carthaigh (died 1368) [is] preserved in Franciscan MS A 25. Since this formidable hunting dog is dead, opines the poet, 'the herds of young deer will now live out their lives throughout the fertile plains of Ireland, in their gameland/forest' (*caithfidh táin óccdhamh a n-áois / fa fhódhmhagh fáil na bfaraois*).'

[95] For further analysis and discussion, see Gunderloch, Anja, 'Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre's 'Marbhrann do Chù' and the Gaelic Ballad Tradition', in Arbuthnot, Sharon & Hollo, Kaarina (eds.), *Fil sùil nglais—A Grey Eye Looks Back: A Festschrift in Honour of Colm Ó Baoill* (Ceann Drochaid: Clann Tuirc, 2007), 53-62.

'S tric a leag mi air a' bhruaich
Earba ghlas a' mhuineil ruaidh;
Bhiodh an liath-chearc leum a nuas,
A's coileach ruadh an dranndain.
Ho rò, &c.[96]

And though Islay is rocky and dusky,
Early the sun rises on her—
Meadow of the calves and the deer,
My wish was to be over there!

When I'd rise early to the promontory,
I'd take a walk to the sea—
Ducks would be swimming there
And by my hand had not long to live.

Often I'd fell them on the uplands
The grey roe-deer of the red neck.
The grey hen would jump up,
And the red cock warbling.

Such vignettes commonly make an appearance where the prime objects of the hunt are named such as red deer (including hinds and fawns), roe deer, seal, otter, swan, goose, ptarmigan, blackcock, capercaillie and, when speaking of angling, salmon and trout. The great object of the chase was always the red deer or hart,[97] which in a rather neat, if informal, way agrees with the formal demarcation of the medieval hunting manuals which concentrate on the nobility of the quarry, or the 'beasts of venery'—stag, hart, hare, boar and wolf as opposed to 'beasts of the chace'—buck, doe, fox, marten and roe. In any case, the primacy of naming the red deer first conforms to the commonplace motifs of the Panegyric Code. This distinction (though not as hard and fast as all that) was understood by Twici to mean that the former 'involved a quest with a lymer, whereas the pursuit of the latter was begun simply by allowing running-hounds to find the scents themselves.'[98] A common signature and typical game for the hunter are reflected in:

Bu tu sealgair a gheoidh
'S a' choilich air ghéig
Marbhach eala agus féidh agus ròn.[99]

You were a hunter of the goose,

[96] Mac-na-Ceàrdadh, Gilleasbuig, *An t-Oranaiche*, 52-53.
[97] *MH*, 62-64.
[98] *HHAMH*, 85-86.
[99] Henderson, George (ed.), *Leabhar nan Gleann: The Book of Glens* (Edinburgh: Norman MacLeod, 1898), 109-10.

And the cock on the branch
Killer of the swan, deer, and seal.

Murchadh Mòr mac Mhic Mhurchaidh, in *An Làir Dhonn*, *c.* 1670, using a three-line stanza format popular during the 17th century, gives a whimsical description of his boat and also reminiscences about his life in Lewis. Among his vivid descriptions are vignettes of deer-hunting and seal-hunting:

An uair ghabhmaid gu tàmh
Anns a' chaladhphort shàmh,
Cha b' fhallain o m' làmh-s' an ròn.

Bhiodh eilid nam beann
A' teirinn le gleann,
Is mo pheileir gu teann 'na lorg.

Bhiodh ar sgeanan-ne geur
Gu feannadh an fhéidh,
Is cha b' annas an gleus sin oirnn.[100]

When we'd take to shelter
In the quiet harbour
By my very hand the seals would be culled.

The hind of the mountains
Descending the glen
And my bullet speeding to hit her.

Our knives were sharp,
To skin the deer,
And that was no novelty for us.

Prevalent in the Hebrides (and also in the Northern Isles) was seal-hunting (for their meat, oil and pelts) and Martin Martin tells how the men of North Uist caught seals in a narrow channel (which might be described as a marine version of an elrick) by means of a net of horse-hair ropes 'contracted at one end like a Purse,' and gives a detailed account of a seal-hunt in the Hebrides on the Isle of Heisker:

> ...this crew[...]surround the passes, and then the signal for the general attack is given[...]they beat them down with big staves. The seals on this onset make towards the sea, with all speed[...]Those that are in the boat shoot at them as they run to the sea, but few are caught that way[...]I was told also that 320 seals, young and old, have been killed at one time in this place.[101]

[100] Watson, William J. (ed.), *Bàrdachd Ghàidhlig: Specimens of Gaelic Poetry 1550-1900* (Stirling: A. Learmonth & Son, 1959, 3rd ed.), 218-19, ll. 5839-5847.
[101] *DWIS*, 133-34.

Despite such fleeting mentions, there seems to be no sustained poetry or songs about the seal-hunt that have survived, though, needless to say, there are many other traditions, especially those associated with the MacCodrum family of North Uist.

Conclusion

Although hunting themes were prevalent within the corpus of Gaelic literature, it is clear that hunting was seldom used as allegory (apart from warfare), which was so prominent in medieval romance literature. The interpretation of the hunt within Gaelic literature points clearly towards concrete and realistic models, necessarily based upon experience, though many of the images were developed to an idealistic level, especially with regard to imagery drawn upon the Panegyric Code. This is in marked contrast to the cerebral and intellectual use of hunting themes in allegory, either as an erotic or religious device, which was a mainstay of English and Continental literature of a comparative period.[102] Perhaps this was due to the fact that during the medieval period Gaeldom turned inwards towards herself, and cultural influence from Europe appears to be have been rather minimal 'where Gaels developed their own life and culture with little regard for anyone else's'.[103] Colm Ó Baoill further observes that 'Gaels carried on blithely disregarding the fact that the rest of Europe, including the Lowlands, was linked together in a network of cultural, political and military ties.'[104] This observation is probably overstated with regard to political and military matters, but European influence, in cultural terms, may have taken longer to gain a foothold in Gaeldom. Such influences are discernable in *BDL* and, generally speaking, in medieval Scottish historical sources.[105] This is not to say, however, that Gaeldom had ever existed in splendid isolation, but rather that the Gaels had a vibrant cultural environment and, had recourse to their own native productions that sustained them throughout this period. This is strongly suggestive of self-confidence in their own culture which reached its height under the hegemony of the Lordship of the Isles.

---

[102] Cartmill, Matt, *A View to a Death in the Morning*, 67-71.
[103] Ó Baoill, Colm, 'The Scots-Gaelic Interface', in Charles Jones (ed.), *The Edinburgh History of the Scots Language* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 553; Thomson, Derick S., 'Influences of Medieval Thinking on the Gaelic World in Scotland, in the Sixteenth Century and Later', in Marie-Françoise Alamicheal & Derek Brewar (eds.), *The Middle Ages after The Middle Ages in the English-Speaking World* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: D. S. Brewer, 1997), 17-26.
[104] *Ibid.*, 153.
[105] Hudson, Benjamin T., 'The Language of The Scottish Chronicle and its European Context', *SGS*, vol. XVIII (1998), 57-73.

The versatility, as well as the longevity, of the hunting theme meant that it could be used and referenced in a variety of ways which, in some respects, reflected the changes that Gaelic society underwent from the medieval though to the modern period. Even the most pedestrian uses of hunting motifs provide valuable ethnographic evidence as they help to establish a range of themes, demonstrating their commonly accepted associations and shows where and how different compositions can deviate from such conventions. The thematic element of a piece of poetry or song, the recurrent verbal formulae, or similar phrasing, help to define the function of the motif in comparable narrative sequences. The hunt remained an integral part for many elements of Gaelic society (especially the upper echelons), as it would have been encountered on a regular basis by the vast majority of the populace, and, therefore, it is little wonder that folksong poetry, as well as traditional lore, should reflect this occupation, whether from the feminine perspective of an idealised warrior-hunter or a hunting dialogue song. In other words, the hunting theme is pervasive and turned to time and again by the vernacular bards as it was a universal theme with sustained force—and, as with the professional poets, extolled the status of the warrior-hunter—that created inspirational songs, narrative traditions, and, at times, songs of captivating beauty.

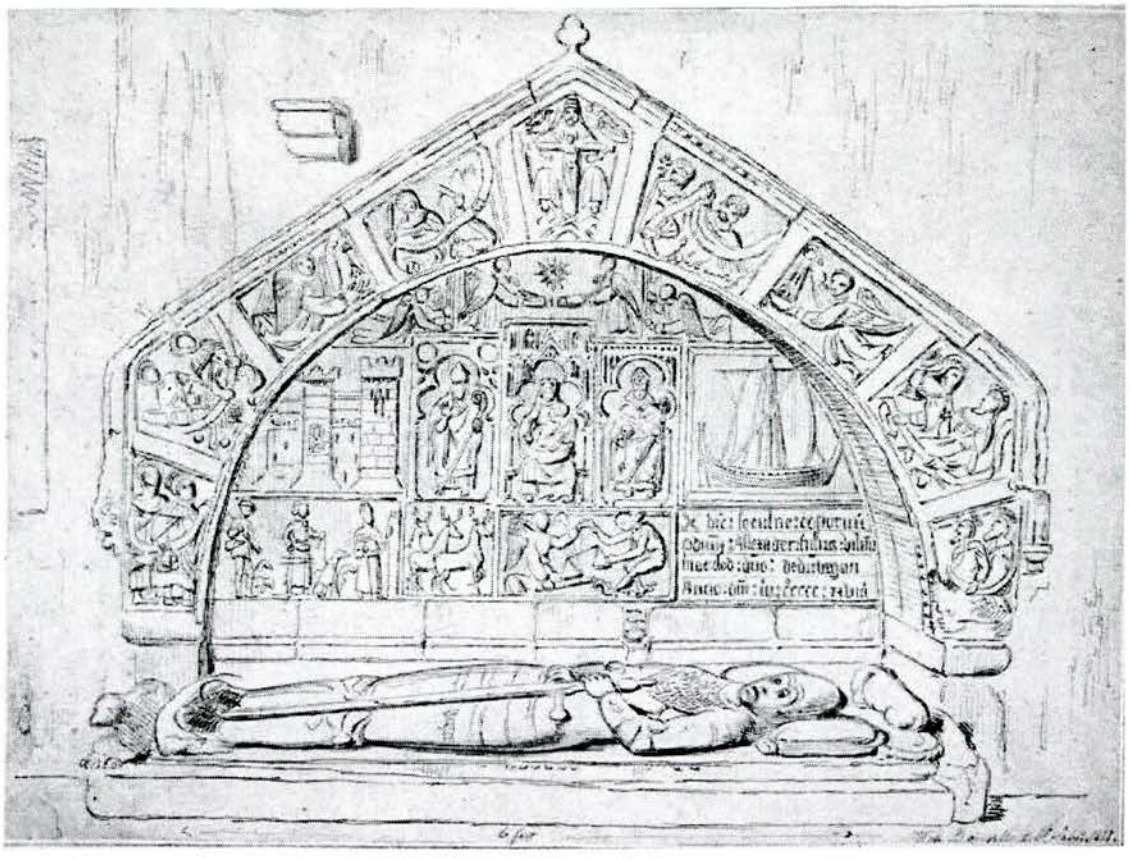


Figure 1.1. Sketch entitled 'In the priory at Rowadill, Isle of Harris' by William Daniell, dated July 1818, showing the tomb of Alexander Crotach MacLeod of Dunvegan and Harris, in St Clement's Church, Rodel, Isle of Harris (1528).

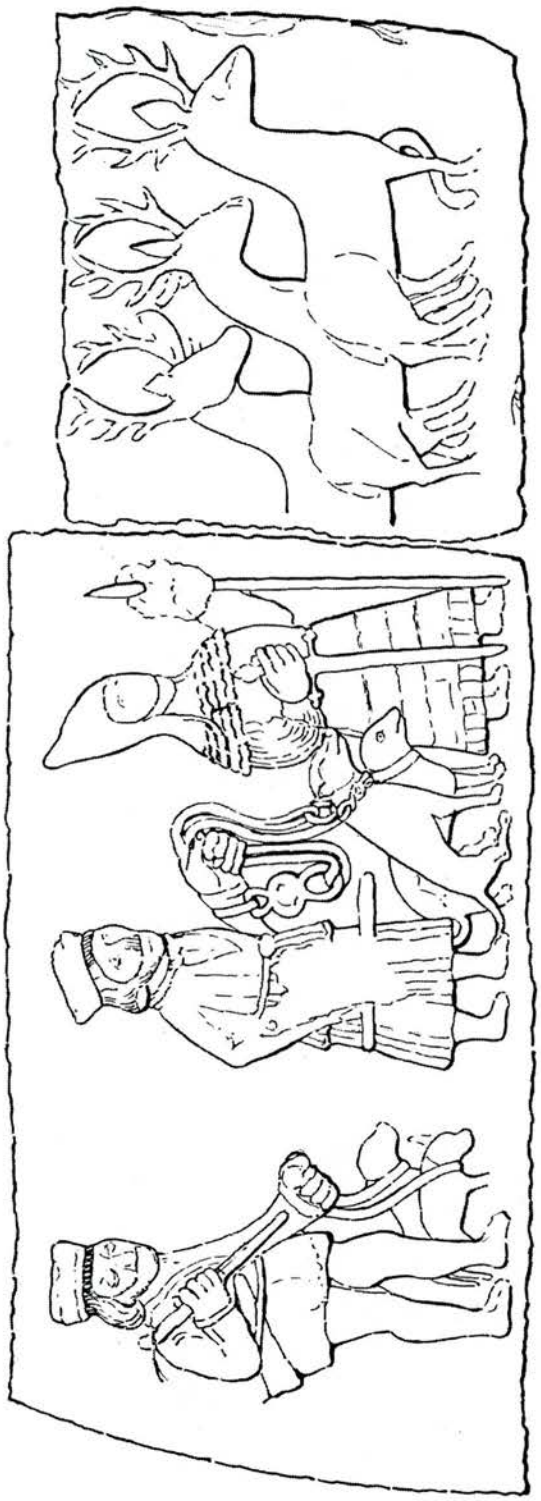


Figure 1.2. Line drawing detailing the hunting panels in the arched recess of the Tomb of Alexander Crotach MacLeod of Dunvegan and Harris, in St Clement's Church, Rodel, Isle of Harris (1528).



Figure 1.3. MacMillan Cross, Kilmory, Knapdale.

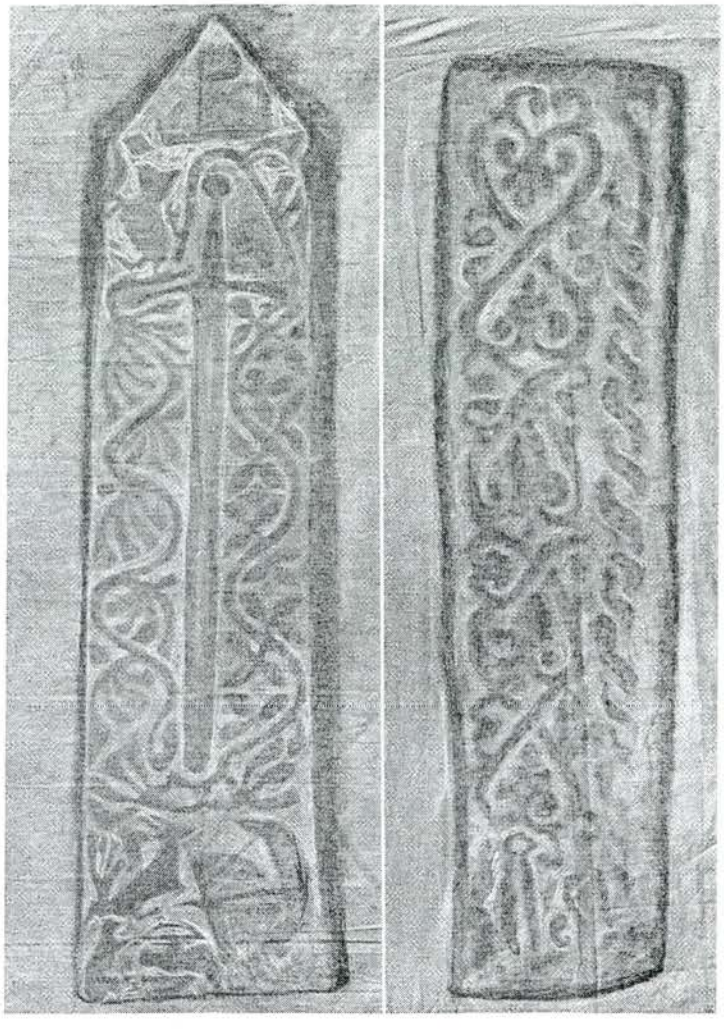


Figure 1.4. Grave-slab, Kilchoan, near Inverie, Knoydart.

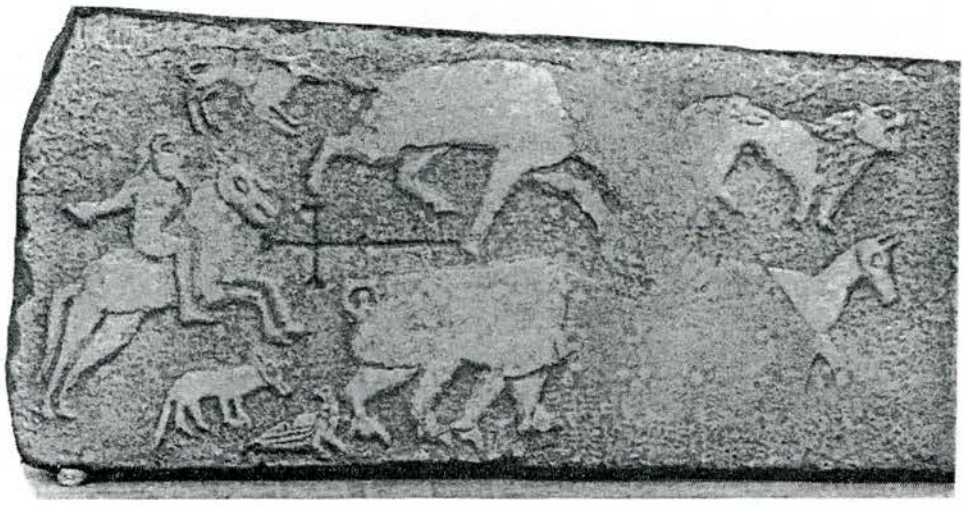


Figure 1.5. Class III slab, reverse side of cross-slab at Kildonnan, Isle of Eigg.

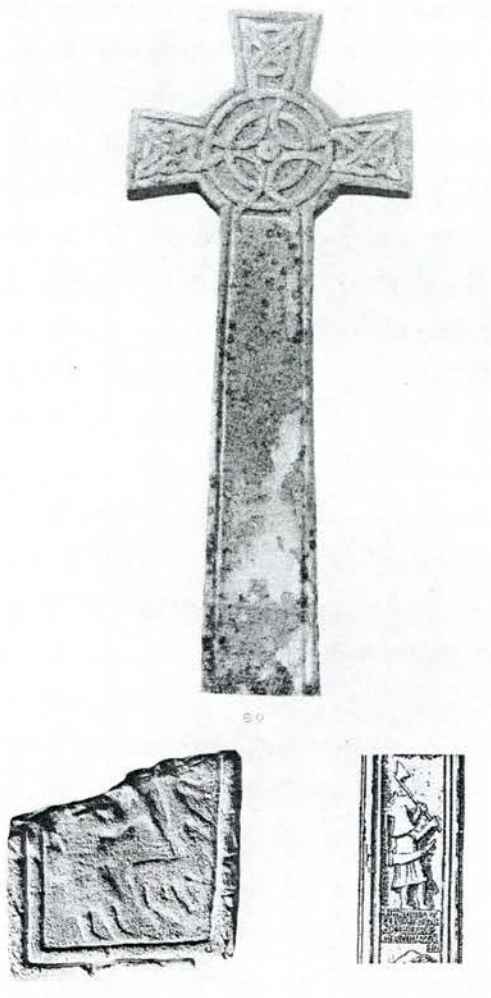


Figure 1.6. Kildalton, Islay. The lower half is compared with the Kilmory huntsman on the MacMillan Cross.



Figure 1.7. Reverse view of the cross-shaft stone, Isle of Texa, commemorating Reginaldus (or Ranald) of Islay (*d.* 1380).

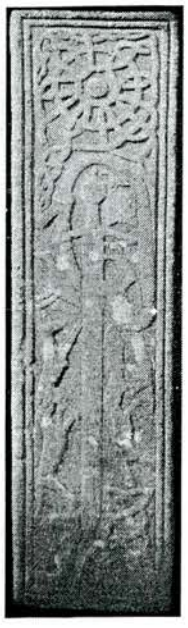


Figure 1.8. Grave-slab commemorating Donald MacDuffie, Augustinian Priory, Oronsay.

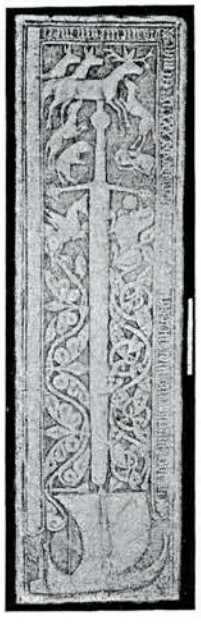


Figure 1.9. Grave-slab commemorating Murchardus (or Murchadh) MacDuffie, Augustinian Priory, Oronsay.



Figure 1.10. Grave-slab, Augustinian Priory, Oronsay.

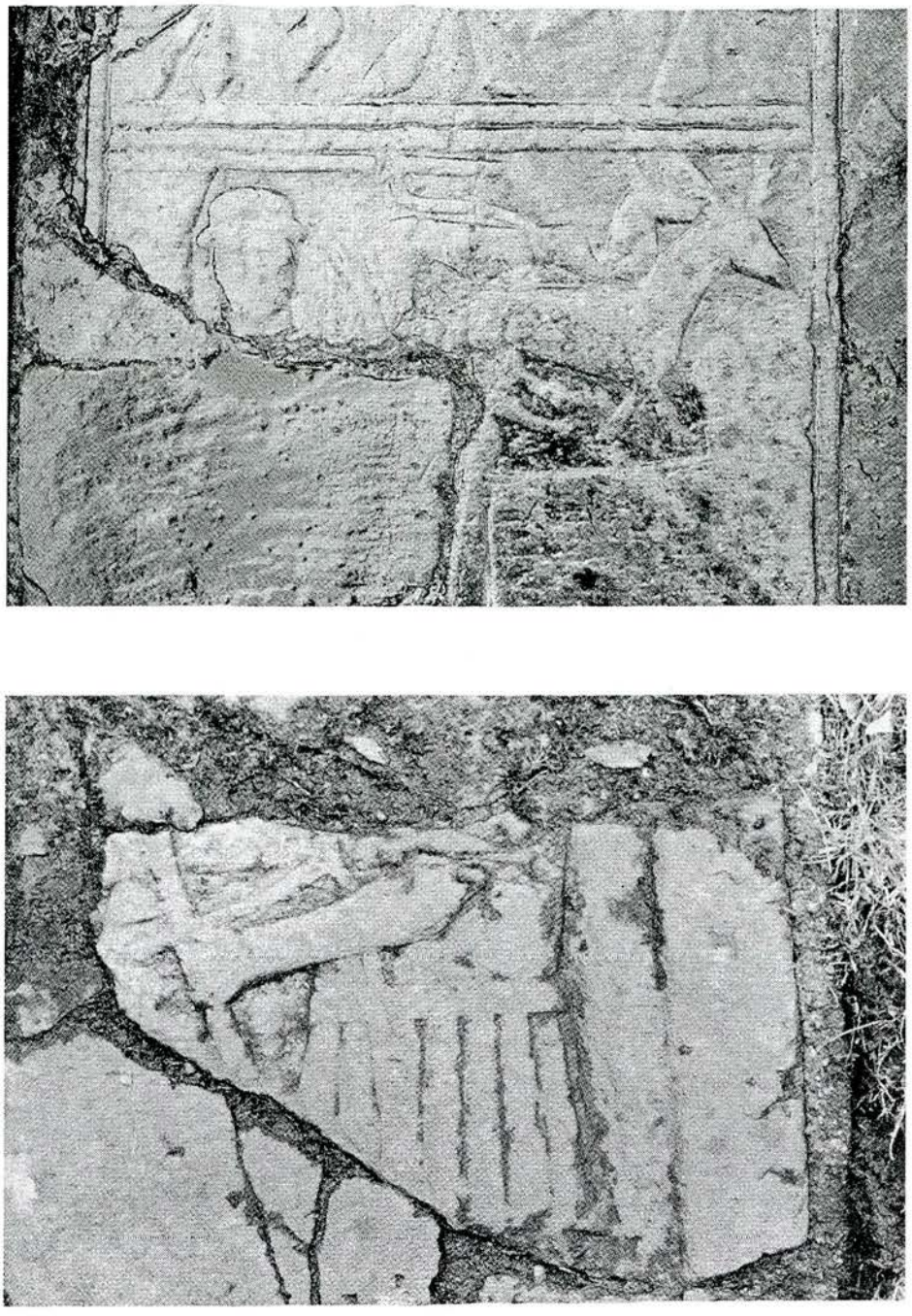


Figure 1.11. Grave-slabs, Kilmory, Arisaig.

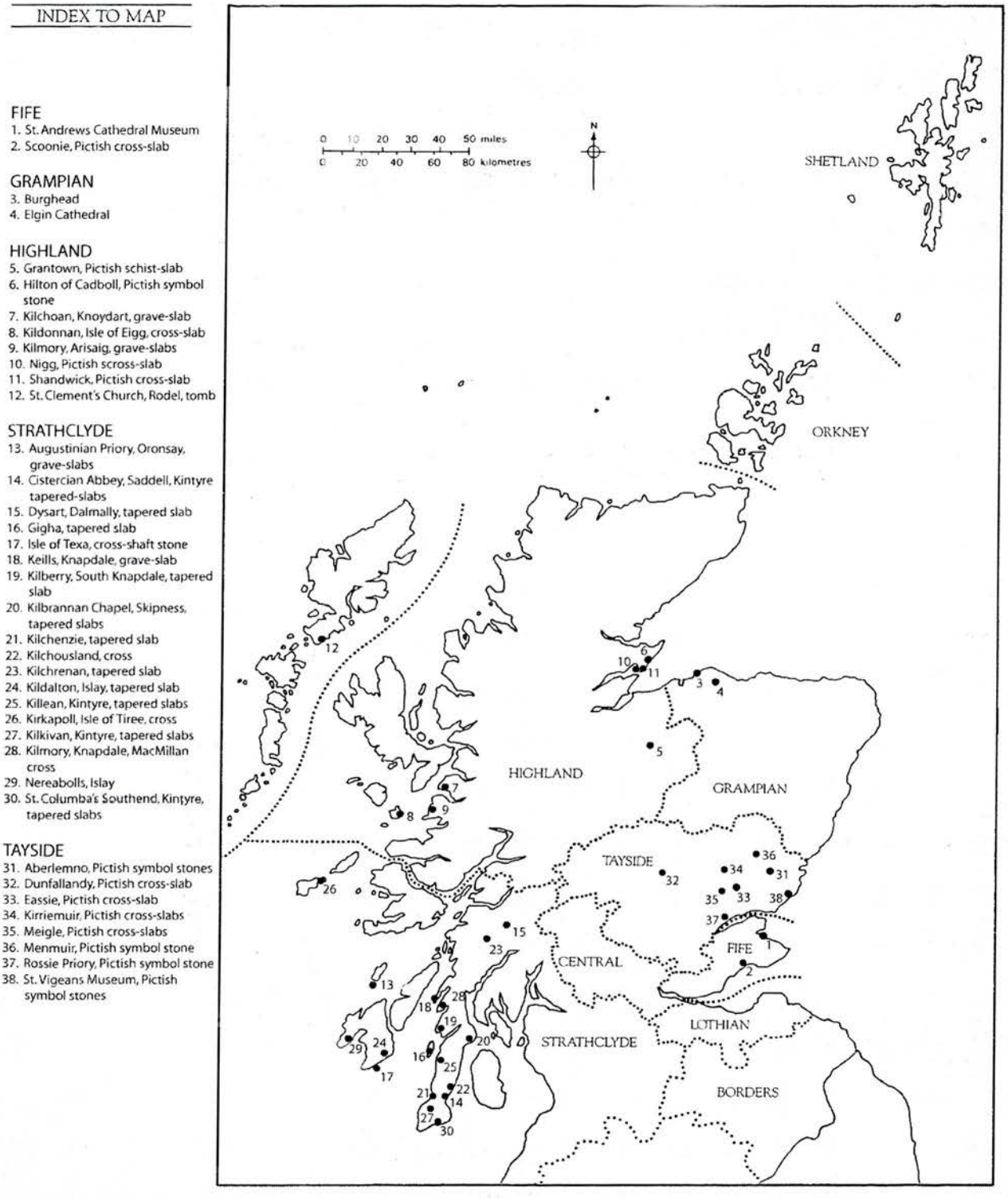


Figure 1.12. Map of the distribution of hunting motifs on Late West Highland Medieval and Pictish sculptures.

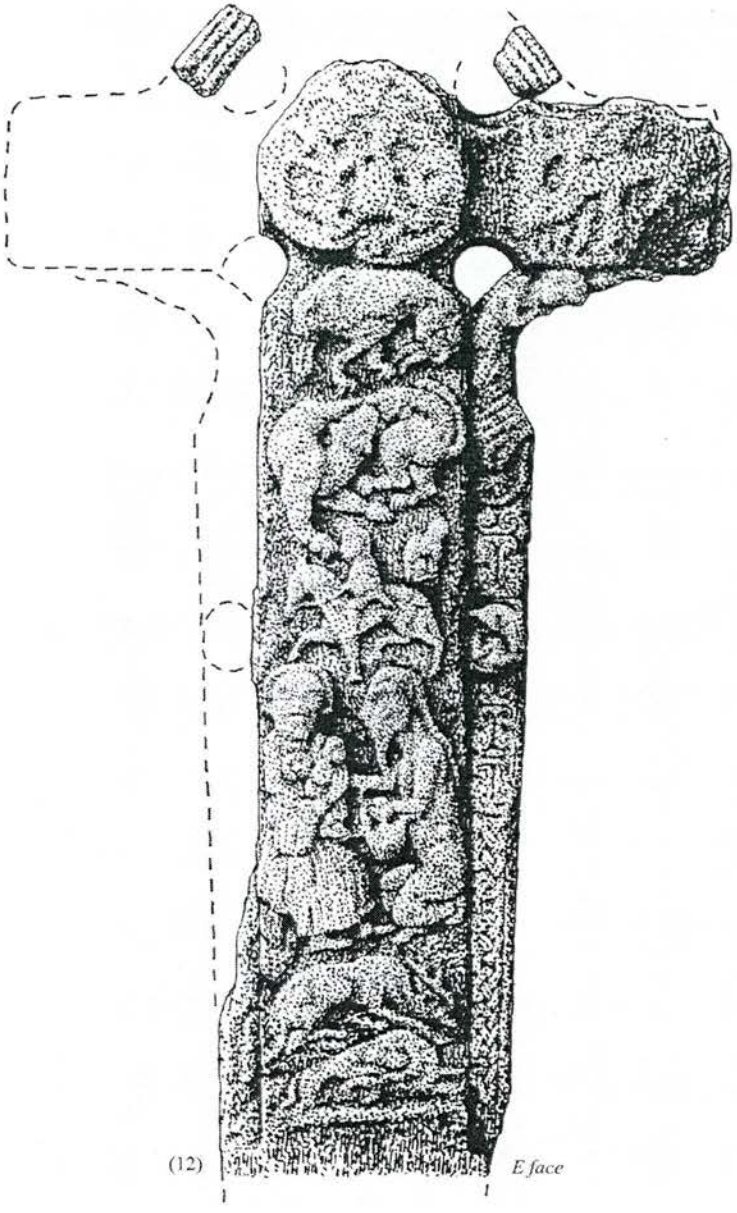


Figure 1.13. A' Chill, Canna.

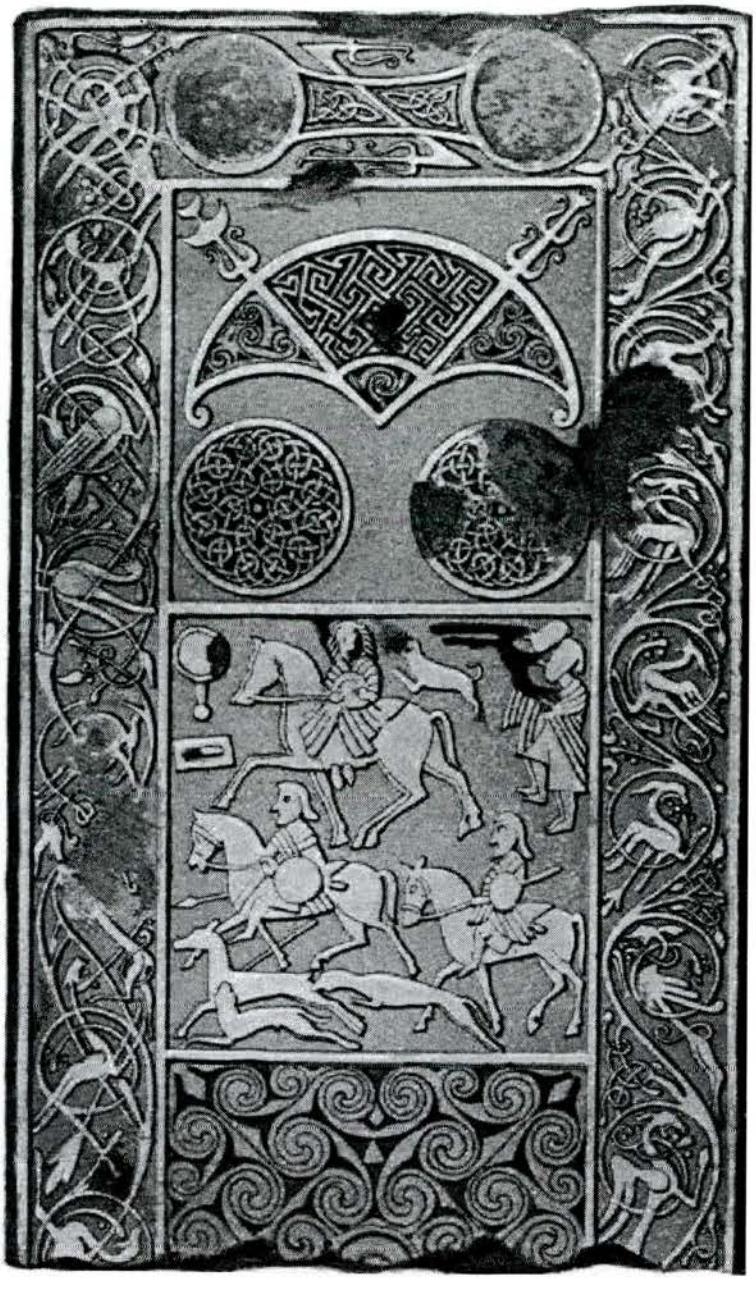


Figure 1.14. Hilton of Cadboll.

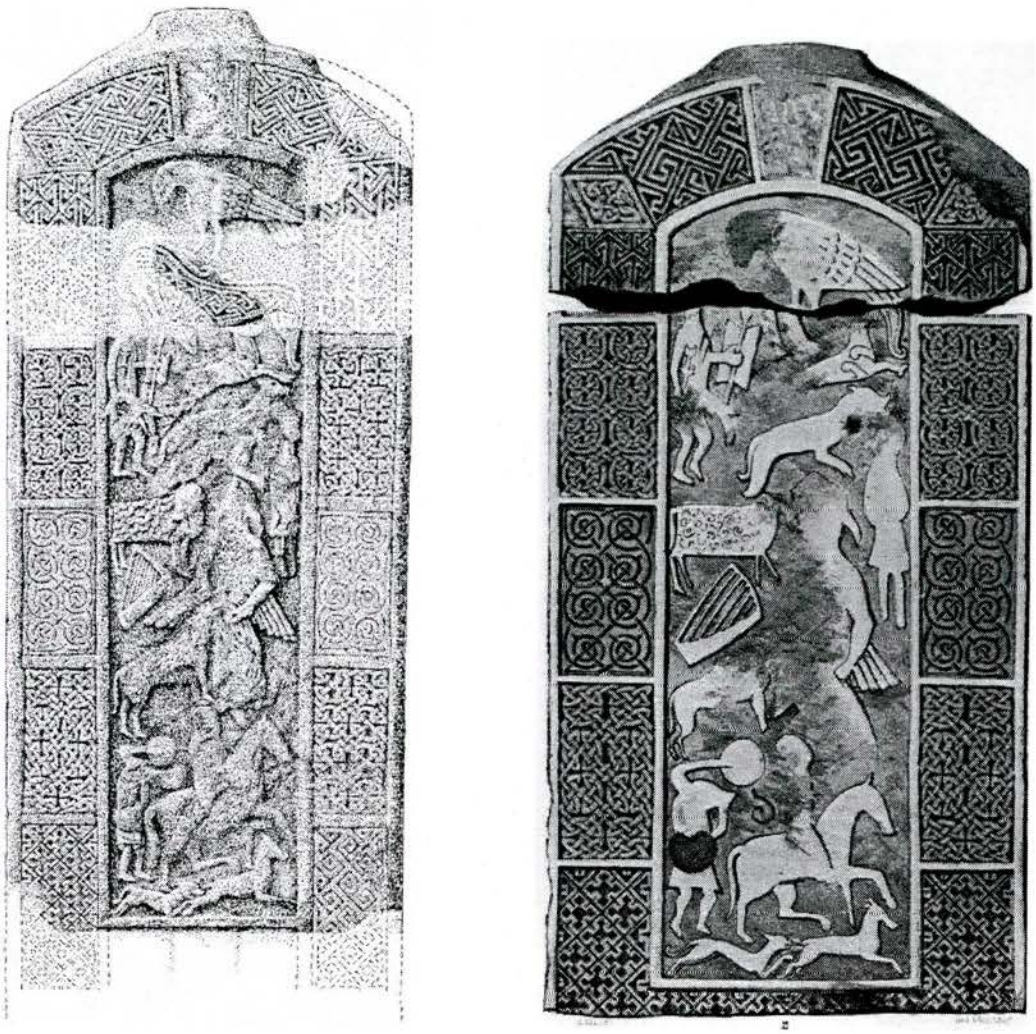


Figure 1.15. Cross-slab at Nigg, Easter Ross.



Figure 1.16. Line drawing of the hunting scene, Shandwick, Easter Ross.



Figure 1.17. Cross-slab, Elgin Cathedral.



Figure 1.18. Cross-slab, Eassie, Angus.



Figure 1.19. Detail of St Vigeans 1, Drosten Stone, Angus.



Figure 1.20. Aberlemno 3, Angus.

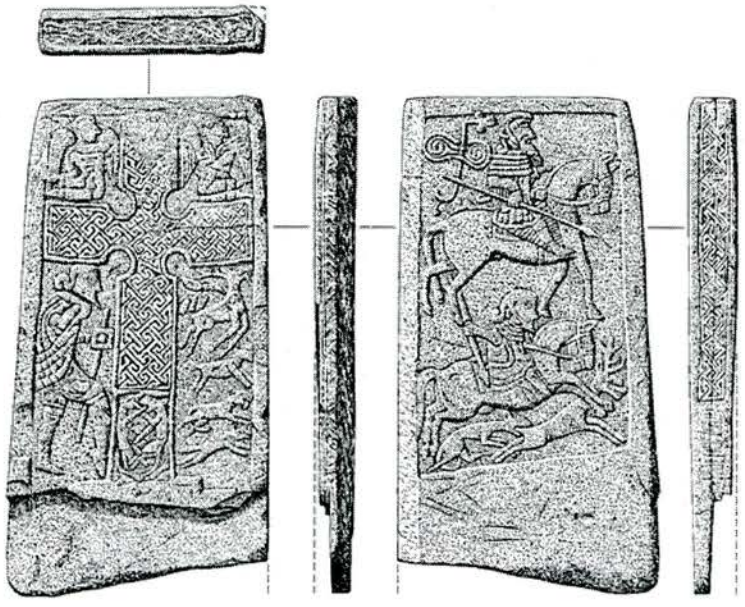


Figure 1.21. Kirriemuir 2, Angus.

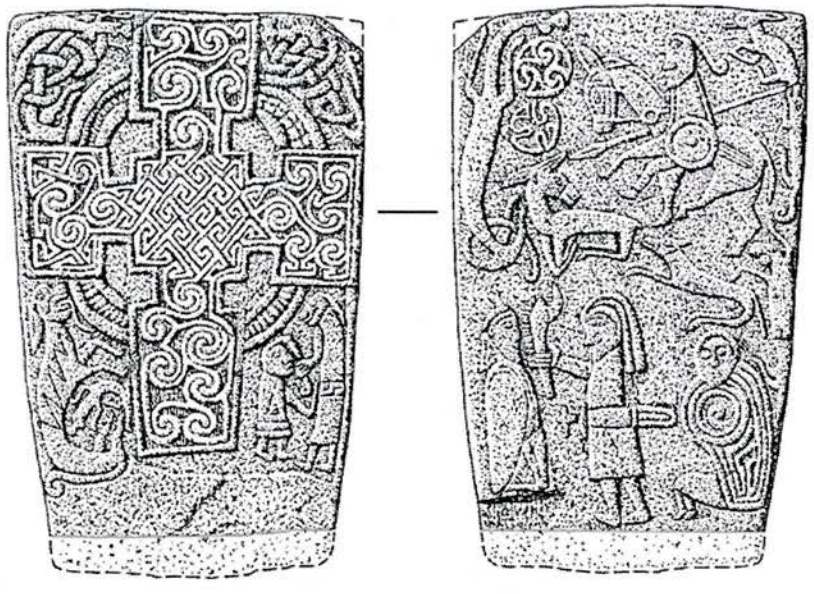


Figure 1.22. Inchbrayock 1, Angus.

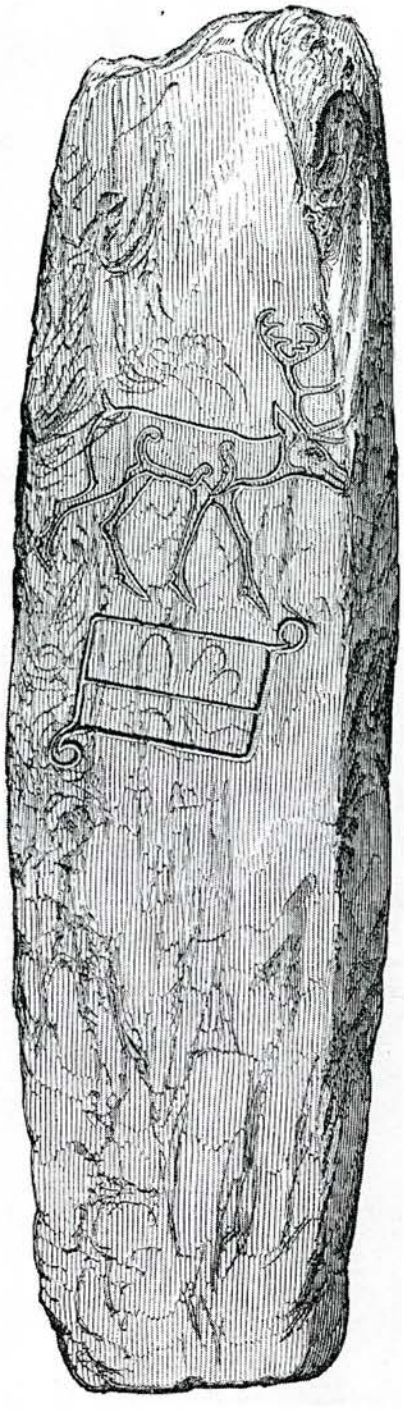


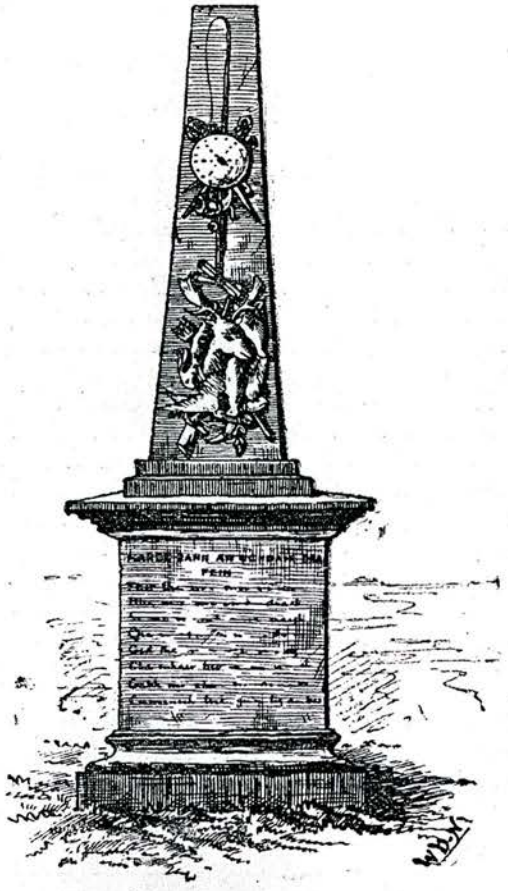
Figure 1.23. Class I schist-slab, Cnoc an Fhraoich, Grantown, Strathspey.



Figure 1.24. Drawing of the Burghead Pictish Stone, Moray.



Figure 1.25. Dacre Cross-shaft, Cumbria.



MONUMENT TO DUNCAN BAN IN GREYFRIARS CHURCHYARD, EDINBURGH.

Figure 3.1. Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre's Monument, Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh.

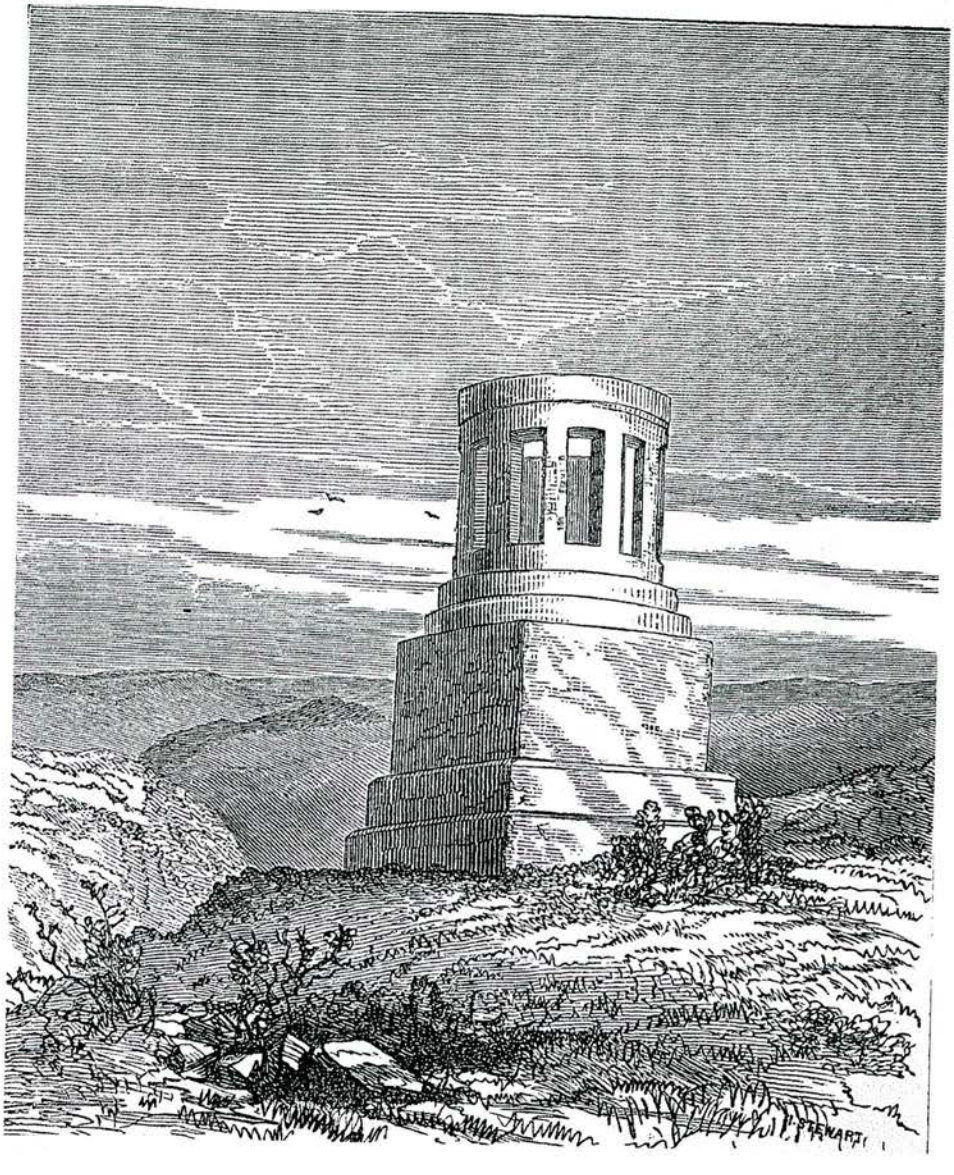


Figure 3.2. Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre's Monument at Ceann-chaorach, Dalmally, near the Beacon Hill to the east of Loch Awe.

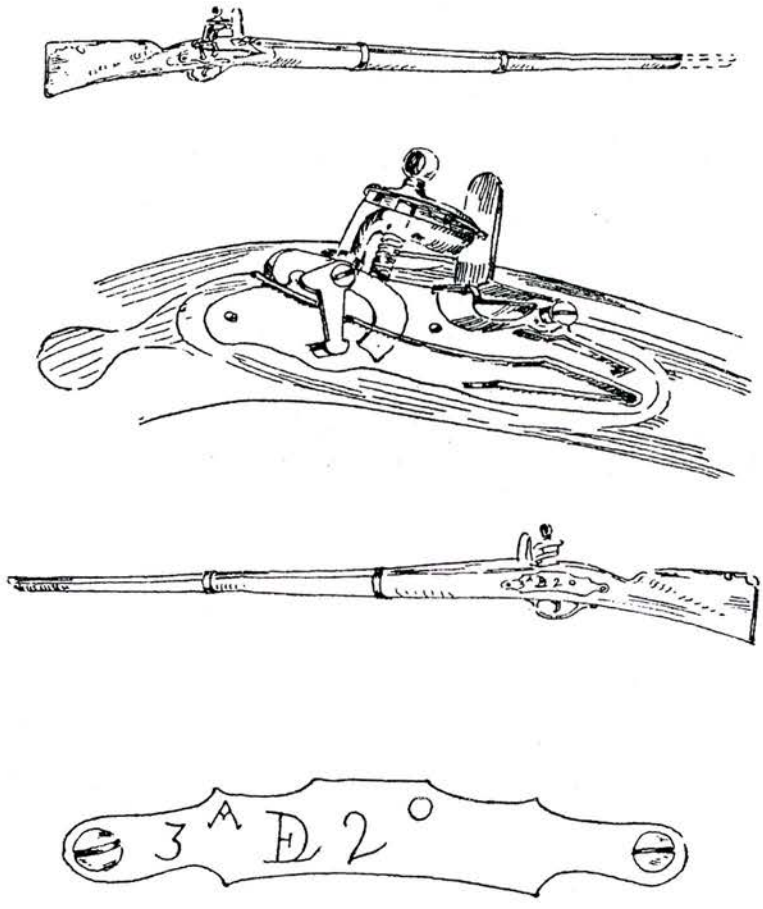


Figure 4.1. Drawings of Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre's Gun *NicCòiseam* according to tradition.



Figure 4.2. Death of a Stag by Benjamin West (1738–1820). Alexander III of Scotland rescued from the Fury of a Stag, by the Intrepidity of Colin Fitzgerald (1786). Original in the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh.



Figure 5.1. Contemporary portrait of King James IV (1488–1513) by Daniel Mytens the Elder.

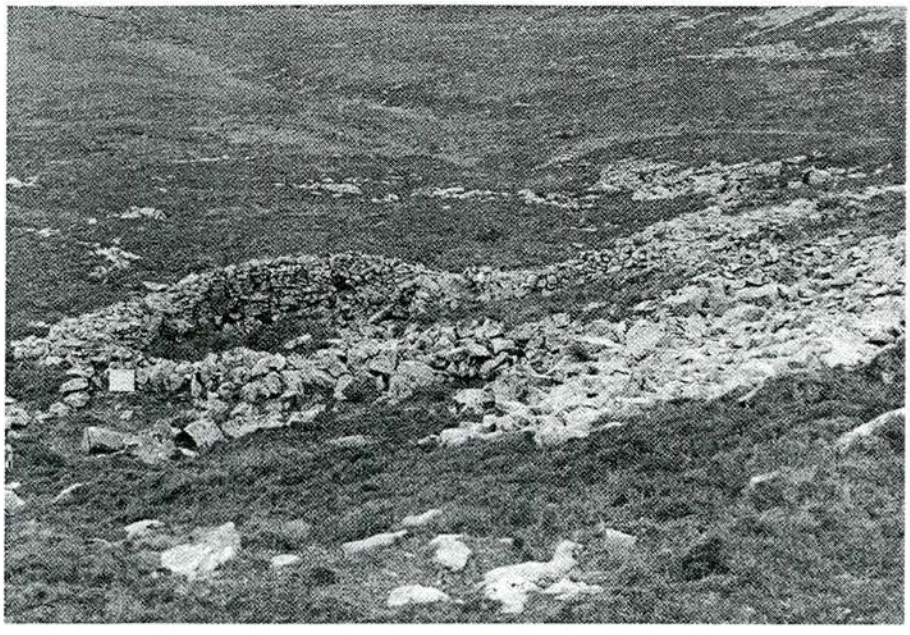


Figure 5.2. Deer-traps used in tinchels, Isle of Rum.



Figure 5.3. Map of deer-traps on the Isle of Rum.



Figure 5.4. Contemporary portrait of John Erskine (*c.* 1558–1634), 2nd Earl of Mar, High Treasurer of Scotland, attributed to Adam de Colone, 1626. Original located at Alloa Tower, Alloa, Clackmannanshire.



Figure 5.5. Contemporary portrait (after an etching by W. Forrest) of Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy (1583–1631), known as Donnchadh Dubh a' Churraic, by an unknown artist. Original in the Breadalbane Apartments, Holyrood, Edinburgh.



Figure 5.6. Contemporary portrait of Sir Mungo Murray (1668–1700) by John Michael Wright (1617–1694) *c.* 1683. Lord Mungo, the fifth son of the Marquis of Atholl, is shown dressed for hunting. This painting was formerly known as 'Highland Chieftain.' Original in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh.



Figure 5.7. Portrait by John Smith (1652–1743) (after Sir Godfrey Kneller) of John Erskine Earl of Mar (1675–1722), known as Bobbin' Jock, who organised the last great Tinchel 'The Hunt of Braemar' and was the leader of the 'Fifteen.



Figure 6.1. King James VI & I 'taking the assaye' of a newly slaughtered stag, from George Turberville's *Noble Art of Venerie or Hynting* (1611).



DECLINE OF RED DEER—DISTRIBUTION IN PREHISTORIC TIMES, IN THE MIDDLE AGES, AND AT THE PRESENT DAY.

Distribution at Present Day | Distribution in Middle Ages | Distribution in Prehistoric Times

Figure 6.2 Map representing the decline of red deer—Distribution in Prehistoric Times, in the Middle Ages, and at the Present Day.



Figure 7.1. Contemporary portrait of Captain John MacPherson (1724–1800), known as An t-Othaichear Dubh, by an unknown artist. Original in the Clan MacPherson Museum, Newtonmore, Badenoch.

Chapter Five

Great Hunts in the Highlands

Low lands, your sports are low as is your seate,
The high-lands games and minds, are high and greate.

John Taylor, The Water Poet,
Braes o' Mar, 1618

CHAPTER FIVE

GREAT HUNTS IN THE HIGHLANDS

A chronicler, Raphael Holinshed, observed that 'the Scottes sette all their delighte in hunting and fowling, using about the same to go armed in jackes and light iesternes with bowe and arrows, no otherwise than if it had been in open warre, for in this exercise they placed all their hope of the defence of their possessions, lands and liberties.' The connection between the hunt and warfare is made clear, and Holinshed also justified his observation by adding a religious context for, he perceived, the Scots had an immense zeal for the Roman huntress who 'amongst other[...]Goddes[...] whiche the Scottishmen had in most reverence, Diana was chiefe[...]for[...]she was taken to be the Godesse of hunting, wherein consisted their chiefest exercise, pastime and delite.'[1] It has also been stated that in 'medieval Scotland barons probably spent more time, effort and thought on hunting than any other activity.'[2]

Along with other Scots monarchs, King James IV (1473–1513) was very keen on the chase, and made several hunting and hawking expeditions (thus making a very public display of the necessary trappings of medieval kingship) to the western and central Highlands. A contemporary portrait, by Daniel Mytens the Elder, shows the king holding a peregrine falcon on his left hand with a bow perch on his right (fig. 5.1).[3] On at least one occasion, Lachlann Cattanach MacLean (1465–1523) of Duart sent King James IV hawks;[4] and it is likely that, although far fewer details of their forests survive, the chiefs of the isles were as passionate huntsmen as their mainland equivalents.[5] Thus, the Highlands, for a long period, have been associated with and used as hunting grounds for royalty, as well as for their own native Gaelic aristocracy. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the social and political dimensions of these

---

[1] Holinshed, Raphael, *The Firste Volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande: Conteyning the Description and Chronicles of England, from the First Inhabiting vnto the Conquest: the Description and Chronicles of Scotland, from the First Originall of the Scottes Nation, Till the Yeare of our Lorde 1571: The Description and Chronicles of Yreland, Likewise from the First Originall of that Nation, vntill the Yeare 1547*, 2 vols. (London: Lucas Harrison, 1577), i, bk. 2, 6, 13; *CSHB*, i, 32, bk. 1, c. 4.

[2] *HHRMS*, i.

[3] *TA*, iv (1507–1513), lxxxvi.

[4] *Ibid.*, 352.

[5] MacLean-Bristol, Nicholas, *Warriors and Priests: The History of Clan MacLean 1300–1570* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1995), 80.

great hunts and the reasons why its popularity was maintained in the Highlands throughout the medieval period until the beginning of the 18th century.

Early References to Hunting in the Highlands and Medieval Hunting Manuals

In a rather strange document, *A Proposal for Uniting Scotland with England, Addressed to King Henry VIII* (1543), by a clerk, John Elder (Reddshanke), the author entreats the English monarch to understand the Gaels as hardy hunters:

> ...that we of all people can tollerat, suffir, and away best with colde, for boithe somer and wyntir[...]goynge alwaies bair leggide and bair footide, our delite and pleasure is not onely in hwntynge of redd deir, wolfes, foxes, and graies[...]but also in rynninge, leapinge, swymmynge, shottyne, and thrawinge of dartis: therfor, in so moche as we vse and delite so to go alwaies, the tendir delicatt gentillmen of Scotland call ws Reddshankes.[6]

He then goes on to explain, quite bizarrely given the person to whom he was addressing his epistle, how the Gaels' brogues were made from newly slaughtered deer-hides, and thus 'compasinge and mesuringe so[...]as shall retche vp to our ancklers[...]and stretchide vp with a stronge thwange...' Shod in such footwear they earned themselves the nick-name 'roghe footide.'[7] Such ethnographical sidelights, more or less 'casually' thrown in as snippets of information, enhance Elder's account as well as lending his account an unorthodox charm.

Similarly, Sir Robert Gordon (1580–1661), writing of Sutherland Highlanders, describes that 'The bodies and mynds of the people of this province ar indued with extraordinarie abilities of nature; they are great hunters, and doe delyte in that exercise, which maks them hardened to endure travell and labor.'[8]

These various independent remarks made by these historians combine to form a consensus of opinion that hunting was an integral part of Highland life and culture throughout the late medieval period and beyond.

Despite the popularity of hunting during the medieval period in Scotland, however, there is/are no known Scottish version(s) or equivalent(s) of hunting manuals describing techniques and practical hunting methods. Influential treatises that were popular during the medieval period in England and probably in Scotland (as well

---

[6] *CRA*, 28.
[7] *CRA*, 29.
[8] Gordon, (Sir) Robert (of Gordonstoun) (auth.); Weber, Henry William & Gordon, Gilbert (of Sallagh) (eds.), *A Genealogical History of the Earldom of Sutherland from its Origin to the Year 1630* (Edinburgh: A. Constable & Co., 1813), 12.

as on the Continent) are: *De Arte cum Avibus* (1247) by Frederick II of Hohenstaufen; *Le Art de Venerie* by Guaillaume Twiti, or Twici (chief huntsman at the court of King Edward II), *c.* 1323; *Les Livres du roy Modus et de la royne Ratio* by Henri de Ferieres, *c.* 1328/38; the influential *Livre de la chasse* by Gaston de Phébus, Count de Foix and Viscount de Béarn, 1387/1389; *The Maystre of Game* by Edward Plantagenet, Duke of York (a grandson of King Edward III), *c.* 1406/13, consisting of thirty-six chapters, of which only the last three, and a paragraph of the opening chapter or prologue, are original; *The Boke of St. Albans* (*c.* 1486), the first (on hunting) of the four main treatises, allegedly written by Dame Juliana Berners (Barnes or Bernes), and the *Noble Arte of Venerie or Hunting* by George Casgoine but long attributed to George Turberville (1575), a reproduction of *La Vénerie de Jacques du Fouilloux* (1561); and, finally, *A Short Treatise of Hunting* (1591) by Sir Thomas Cockaine, or Cockayne. By the 17th and 18th centuries hunting and hawking literature became profuse, and were readily available to a wide readership.[9]

Drawing upon a Celtic context, however, there is an extant Welsh hunting treatise *Y Naw Helwriaeth*. Although traditionally attributed to Gruffudd ap Cynan (*c.* 1055–1137), it was evidently a compilation of the mid-16th century, probably by Gruffudd Hiraethog, which casts hunting practices into traditional Welsh form. It can hardly be described as unique for it contains a mixture of material from Welsh lawbooks, and French and English manuals on hunting practice, together with a partial literal translation of *The Boke of St. Albans* (reprinted more than any other text of its time, excluding the Bible) referred to previously.[10]

All English hunting manuals, excepting Turberville's treatise, are traceable to Gaston de Phébus's original work. Such works tend to emphasise the pleasure and profit of the sport, its nobility, primacy of technical excellence not to mention ceremony. Nevertheless, they offer only so much by way of techniques and best practice, and, instead, are full of hunting etiquette and arcane language which, no doubt, marks them out not only as a non-utilitarian activity, in which knowledge of the form and demonstration of that knowledge were of paramount importance, but

[9] Thiébaux, Marcelle, *The Stag of Love*, 26-28.

[10] Linnard, William, 'The Nine Huntings: A Re-examination of *Y Naw Helwriaeth*', *BBCS*, vol. XXXI (1984), 119-32, where a diplomatic transcript of the manuscript is given; see also Jenkins, Dafydd, 'Hawk and Hound: Hunting in the Laws of Court', in T. M. Charles-Edwards, Morfydd E. Owen & Paul Russell (eds.), *The Welsh King and His Court* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 2000), 255-80.

also as one of aristocratic exclusivity.[11] Emphasis is upon species identification, proper methodology, correct vocabulary, ritual and procedure. These hunting manuals were written for a literary (and primarily a sporting) minority, which indicates that there was an 'élite' form of hunting in contrast to 'humbler' methods. Hunting in many respects provides a microcosm for the distinct social strata that permeated medieval European society. This was apparent by at least the 13th century when these didactic texts came to be popularised and commissioned by the *literati*. The linguistic snobbery contained within these texts was an attempt to restrict and preserve the status quo of the nobility through the restriction of knowledge and literacy. In the words of Richard Almond: 'The privilege to hunt denoted status and was an expression of leisure, a mark of the ruling elite.'[12] After all, they were written by either great lords or monarchs or, at their bequest, by professional huntsmen usually in their employ. Rather, for the common man, hunting methodology and techniques were the preserve of oral tradition and were passed on by extended family and friends.[13]

The Tinchel in Medieval Scotland

An early Latin description (in 1128) of the tinchel, the indigenous method of hunting, is included in the foundation legend of Holyrood Abbey, as recorded in the Abbey's *Ritual Book* (written *c.* 1460). 'At that time Scotland was well wooded, and the large Forest of Drumselth lay close to the east side of Edinburgh, full of large numbers of red and fallow deer, roe, wolves and wild boar. After Mass on the day of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross[...]the young noblemen of the court asked King David I (1124–1153) to go hunting.' Despite the protestations of Alwin, an English Augustinian Canon, the king agreed, and:

> ...mounted his horse and rode eastward[...]where he thought the beasts would be most likely to flee from the hounds. The huntsmen went into the forest with their hounds, so as to drive out the beasts from the depths of the woods by their craft and the cry of the hounds, and soon the music of the hounds and the

[11] Cartmill, Matt, *A View to a Death in the Morning*, 61-67; Thiébaux, Marcelle, 'The Medieval Chase', *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies*, vol. XXIV (Apr., 1967), 267-68; *MH*, 23-24, 30-33, 72; *HHAMH*, 234.

[12] *MH*, 28.

[13] Henrick, Thomas S., 'Sport and Social Hierarchy in Medieval England', *Journal of Sport History*, vol. 9, no. 2 (Summer, 1982), 32; *MH*, 91-92; Birrell, Jean, 'Peasant Deer Poachers in the Medieval Forest', in Richard H. Britnell & John Hatcher (eds.), *Progress and Problems in Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Edward Miller* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 87.

> shouting of the huntsmen[...]filled the whole air[...]The King waited[...]not far from the foot of Salisbury Crags[...]under a leafy tree, with his nobles dispersed around with their dogs, hidden from the game after the manner of hunters. The King suddenly saw[...]a beautiful hart with huge antlers, rushing towards him.[14]

This account tells of how the stag threw the king from his horse, and then wounded him in his thigh. In self-defence the king attempted to grasp the stag's horns, by taking hold of a crucifix that appeared suddenly between its antlers. While the stag escaped, the crucifix remained in the king's grasp. That night King David heard a voice in a dream instructing him to 'make a house for Canons devoted to the Cross.' The king then ordained the erection of Holyrood and appointed Alwin as Abbot.[15]

Aside from the Lowlands, in 1529 the Earl of Atholl held a great hunt in the Forest of Atholl for the entertainment of King James V (1513–1542), accompanied by his mother, Queen Margaret (1489–1541), and the Pope's nuncio. Robert Lindsay of Pitscottie (*c.* 1500–1565) in *The Historie and Chronicles of Scotland, 1436–1565* provides a minute description, presaged by the king's activities in the Lowlands before he repaired to the Highlands when:

> The king past to Stirling[...]and thairefter maid ane conventioun at Edinburgh with all the lordis and barrounes, to consult how he might best stanch theiff and river within his realme[...]To this effect he gave chairge to all earles, lordis, barrones, frieholderis, and gentlmen, to compeir at Edinburgh[...]to pas with the king to daunton the theives of Tividaill and Annerdaill[...]also the king desired all gentlmen that had doggis that war guid, to bring thame with thame to hunt[...]quhilk the most pairt of the noblmen of the Highlandis did; sick as the earles of Huntlie, Argyle, and Atholl, who brought thair deir houndis with thame, and hunted with his majestie. Thir lordis, with many other lordis and gentlmen, to the number of tuelf thousand men, assemblit at Edinburgh, and thairfra went with the kingis grace to Meggat land, in the quhilk boundis war slaine at the tyme aughteine scoir of deir. Efter this hunting the king hanged Johne Armstrange...[16]

After the king had satisfied his bloodlust not only in hunting (slaying 360 head of deer in the forest of Selkirkshire and adjoining counties) but also in meting out summary justice, he retired to Edinburgh and wintered there. The proximity of these two events would not have been lost upon the populace to whom it would have been a very public

---

[14] Eeles, Francis C., *The Holyrood Ordinale: A Scottish Version of a Directory of English Augustinian Canons, with Manual and Other Liturgical Forms* (Edinburgh: T. & A. Constable, 1916), 64-66. Translation from the original Latin appears in *HHAMH*, 52.

[15] John Bellenden, Boece's translator, rewrote the story in Scots, see *CSHB*, ii, 169, bk. 12, c. 10.

[16] Lindsay, Robert (of Pitscottie) (auth.); Dalyell, John Graham (ed.), *The Chronicles of Scotland Published from Several Old Manuscripts*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: George Ramsay & Co., 1814), ii, 341-43;

display of royal authority. During a hunt in the Borders, an invitation would have been extended to the king from Atholl to go that next summer to hunt in Perthshire. It had, after all, been a favourite royal hunting ground for a number of centuries given its proximity to Edinburgh and its environs:

> ...the king, togidder with his mother, and ane ambassadour of the Paipis[...]went all togidder to Atholl to the huntis. The earle of Atholl heiring of his coming, maid great and gorgeous provisioun for him[...]For this noble earle of Atholl caused mak ane curious pallace to the king, his mother, and the ambassadour, quhairby they were als weill eased as if they had beine in ony palace[...]for the tyme of thair hunting; quhilk was biggit in the midle of and greine medow, and the wallis thairof was of greine timber, woven with birkis, and biggit in four quarteris[...]and in everie quarter ane round lyk ane blokhous, quhilkis war loftit and jeasted thrie hous hicht; the floore wes laid with grein earthe, and strowed with sick floures as grew in the meadow[...]The king was verrie weill intertained in this wilderness the space of thrie dayes, with all sick delicious and sumptuous meattis as was to be hade in Scotland, for fleschis, fischis, and all kindis of fyne wyne, and spyces, requisit for ane prince[...]It is said, by the space of thir thrie dayes that his grace was thair, the earle of Atholl was everie day ane thousand pundis of expenss. This Pope's ambassadour sieing so great ane triumph in ane wildernes, quhair thair was no toun neir be twentie myllis, he thought it a great marvell that sick ane thing sould be in Scotland: that is, so court lyk and delicious intertainment in the Highlandis of Scotland, quhair he saw nothing bot woodis and wildernes. Bot most of all, this ambassadour, when the king was cuming back from the huntis, marvelled to sie the Highlanderis sett all this pallace on fire, that the king and the ambassadour might sie it. Then the ambassadour said to the king, 'I marvell, Sir, yea latt burne yon pallace quherin yea war so weill eased.' The king answerit, 'It is the vse of our Highland men, that be they nevir so weill lodged all the night, they will burne the same on the morne.'[...]It is said, at this tyme, in Atholl and Stratherdaill boundis, thair was slaine threttie scoir of hart and hynd, with other small beastis, sick as roe and roebuck, woulff, fox and wyld cattis...[17]

The cull was substantial for one of the most remarkable descriptions of a late medieval tinchel. The power and prestige of royal entourage was apparent, especially the pageant and pomp of their temporary accommodation, and, together with its sumptuous fare, must have been an awe-inspiring spectacle of conspicuous consumption. Such elaborate feasting, prepared by the organisers of the hunt, was recognised and honoured, thus according them increased prestige and political influence. Political élites pursued game in the hills, forests and moorlands. Such a setting was more or less public. The tinchel with its drama, its pomp and circumstance, was clearly indicated as a public spectacle, and if properly staged,

[17] *Ibid.*, ii, 343-46; Pennant, Thomas, *A Tour in Scotland. MDCCLXIX* (Chester: John Monk, 1771), 99-101; *CATF*, i, 32-34; and *DDSSH*, 156-58.

helped to promote a sense of awe among subjects by reasserting political authority. It also allowed the king to reassert his authority over influential subordinates in various parts of his kingdom. Such political overtures were diplomatically significant such as on this occasion when it was used to seek papal influence. After returning to Rome, one wonders if the Papal nuncio ever mentioned this great hunt to the Vicar of Christ. In common with a general movement in 16th century Europe, the drive was in the process of becoming more a spectacle than an actual sport 'where the success of the drive was measured not by the quality of the hunt but by the number of kills.'[18] In short, there was a movement away from utility towards the spectacular or from the practical to the ceremonial. Within medieval society, the status of the drive was similar to that of other types of pageants and jousts.[19] Such events were extremely expensive and required an incredible amount of organisation as well as resource management.

The Isle of Rum as a Medieval Hunting Reserve

Such forests were not merely restricted to the central Highlands as there is evidence to strongly suggest that the Isle of Rum was maintained as a hunting reserve for medieval Highland chiefs. In a description of the Isles of Scotland (*c.* 1583), it is stated that 'Romb is ane Ile of small profit, except that it conteins mony deir...'[20] Perhaps the kenning for Rum best reveals its past status: *Rioghachd na Forraiste Fiadhaich*, 'Kingdom of the Wild Forest'; and, further, Rum has been poetically described as *Rum riabhach na sithne*, 'brindled Rum of the venison.'[21] Walter Macfarlane (*c.*1698–1767), reports that 'it hath great mountains and many dear',[22] indicating an abundance of venison to be found on the island. Dean Donald Monro (*fl.* 1550), writing in 1549, provides an early account of deer-hunting in the Isle of Rum:

---

[18] *HHRMS*, 74.

[19] Lynch, Michael, 'Court Ceremony and Ritual in the Personal Reign of James VI', in Julian Goodare & Michael Lynch (eds.), *The Reign of James VI* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 71-93

[20] Skene, William F., *Celtic Scotland: A History of Ancient Alba*, vol. 1: *History and Ethnology*; vol. II: *Church and Culture*; vol. III: *Land and People* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 2nd. ed., 1886–1890), iii, Appendix III, 434.

[21] Love, John A., *Rum: A Landscape Without Figures* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2001), 108.

[22] Macfarlane, Walter (comp.); Mitchell, (Sir) Arthur (ed.), *Geographical Collections Relating to Scotland Made by W. Macfarlane*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: SHS, 1906–08), ii, 528; 126.

> ...deiris will never be slane downwith but the principal settis man be in the heich of the hills, because the deir will be callit upwart, ay be tynchellis, or without tynchellis they will pass up a forte.[23]

Dean Monro further adds that a similar method was used in Jura (which may derive from the Norse *Dyr-ey* meaning 'deer isle'), famed for its deer where:

> ...twa lochis meittand utheris throw the mid-ile of salt water to the lenth of half myle. And all the deiris of the west part of the forest will be callit be tynchells to that narow entres, and the next day callit west again be tynchells throw the said narrow entres, and infinit deir slain there[...]This Ile, as the Ancients alledges sould be called Deray, taking the name from the deiris in norn leid...[24]

The Rev. Donald MacLean also detailed the traditional method of deer-hunting, and, most notably, the use of dykes to drive the deer into what can only be described as killing enclosures (figs. 5.2 and 5.3):

> In Rum there were formerly great numbers of deer; there were also a copse of wood[...]While the wood throve, the deer also throve[...]Before the use of fire arms, their method of killing deer was[...]On each side of a glen, formed by two mountains, stone dykes were begun pretty high in the mountains, and carried to the lower part of the valley, always drawing near, till within 3 or 4 feet of each other. From this narrow pass, a circular space was inclosed by a stone wall, of a height sufficient to confine the deer; to this place they were pursued and destroyed. The vestige of one of these inclosures is still to be seen in Rum.[25]

The same minister, it would seem, later contributed some fresh details:

> About the centre of the Isle of Rum, long dikes may still be traced, which, beginning at considerable distances from each other, gradually approach, until at last they draw pretty near to one another. These are said to have been intended as toils for deer[...]To these enclosures the inhabitants collected them, and, forcing them by degrees to their recesses, they were finally caught by their pursuers. The places where these enclosures were made still maintain the name of *Tigh'n Sealg*[...]the hunting houses; so that it is likely that at the termination of the dikes, houses were erected, into which the deer were constrained to enter, and in this manner a number of them would be at once secured.[26]

These various descriptions make it clear that the indigenous technique of the tinchel was the method favoured by the Gaelic élite.

---

[23] Monro, Dean Donald (auth.); Munro, R. W. (ed.), *Monro's Western Isles of Scotland and the Genealogies of the Clans 1549* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1961), 66.
[24] *Ibid.*, 50.
[25] *OSA*, vol. XX (Inverness-shire), 232-33.
[26] *NSA*, vol. XIV, 152.

Elricks: Artificial and Natural Deer Traps

Artificial enclosures used for entrapping game were used extensively in Europe as well as elsewhere. The use of hayes, or artificial enclosures, is known from Anglo-Saxon times in England. During the reign of King Henry VI (*r.* 1485–1509), a typical bow and stable method was used to flush out the deer using lymehounds or bloodhounds which were then pursued by greyhounds. The master of the hounds was responsible for driving the deer past a platform called a 'standing', where the hunting party stood and shot their bows. Sometimes the deer were driven into a 'hey', an artificial enclosure, erected with 'toils' or nets before the deer were slaughtered.[27] Thus, the similarity between the use of hayes and elricks can readily be seen:

> ...the natives hunted them, by surrounding them with men, or by making large inclosures of such a height that the deer could not overleap, fenced with stakes and intertwined with brush wood. Vast multitudes of men were collected on hunting days who, forming a ring around the deer, drove them into these inclosures, which were open on one side. From some eminence, which overlooked the inclosure, the principal personages[...]were spectators of the whole diversion. These inclosures were called in the language of the county *elerig*[...]One of the farms in Glenlochay of Breadalbane is called *Cragan an elerig*, a small rock which over-hangs a beautiful field resembling the arena of an amphitheatre...[28]

The first mention of 'elerig' is early as it occurs in *The Book of Deer*, the oldest extant manuscript to contain written Scottish Gaelic. An entry states 'Mal-Colum mac Moíl-Brigte do-rat ind Elerc', that is, 'Mal-Coluim son of Mal-Brigte gave Elrick',[29] which probably refers to one of two nearby Elricks—either Little Elrick around 3½ miles south-west of Old Deer or Meikle Elrick about 4½ miles south-south-west of it.[30] Alexander MacBain glosses elerig as '*Eileir*, a deer's walk, *eileirig,* where deer were driven to battue them.'[31] This gloss is unhappily a little pedestrian as elerc seems to stem from Old Irish *erelc*, 'an ambush',[32] which through metathesis later became in Gaelic either *eileirig* or *iolairig*, 'a deer-trap', i.e. a funnel shaped defile or V-shaped

---

[27] Manning, Roger B., *Hunters and Poachers*, 24, 198; *MH*, 82-84.
[28] Robertson, James, *General View of the Agriculture in the County of Perth* (Perth: Board of Agriculture, 1799), 328.
[29] Jackson, Kenneth H., *The Gaelic Notes in the Book of Deer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 31, ll. 11-12; translation appears, 34, 1. 12.
[30] *Ibid.*, 52.
[31] MacBain, Alexander, *An Etymological Dictionary of the Gaelic Language* (Stirling: Eneas MacKay, 1911), 154.

trap, either natural or artificial, into which deer were driven in order to be culled. The context of the entry 'ind Elerc' is clearly a grant of land to the monks of Deer, named after a piece of a valuable estate which presumably took its name from the functional activity of entrapping deer. Thus Elrick is a common enough place-name throughout Scotland, with concentrations in the Highlands in such places as Perthshire, Argyll, and, of course, Aberdeenshire. There is, for example, Càrn Eilrig in Rothiemurchus Forest.[33] The name also occurs in Forfarshire, and Galloway, and there is at least one instance in Roxburghshire.[34] In Atholl there is Eileirg an Tòisich, used by MacIntosh of Glen Tilt, and also Eileirg na Gobhach. Further to the north is Elrick, near Loch Ruthven in Strath Nairn and also Elrick, south of Loch Affric in Inverness-shire.[35] An excerpt from a Gaelic song may well contain an oblique mention to an elrick-type trap:

> 'N t-aisridh tha eadar an dà chàrn
> Far an tric 'n do leag mi 'n damh dearg is eilid.
> 'S far an robh Iain le bhalg,
> Làn shaighead nan colg geur.[36]
>
> The defile between the two cairns,
> Where often I felled the russet stag and hind,
> Where John had his quiver,
> Full of arrows with sharp barbs.

The Rev. James MacLagan describes how elricks were used, and his account is noteworthy for the method used to cull the deer:

> North-east of the fall of Bruir, is Elrig, i.e. Iaoth-leirg, or the inclosed field[...]Their situation is, a rising ground, the king, the chieftain, or principal person, with his friends[...]gathering the deer in flight, formed a circle round them. Then the hounds were let loose, the arrows let fly, and the men, who formed the circle, wounded and killed many of the deer, with their swords, when attempting to make their escape[...]John Robertson[...]and John Stewart in Blair-Atholl, cut each of them, a deer in two, by a single stroke of their broad swords.[37]

---

[32] Royal Irish Academy, *Dictionary of the Irish Language*, 4 vols. (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1913–75), ii, E, 167.
[33] Gordon, Seton, *The Cairngorm Hills of Scotland* (London: Cassell & Company, 1925), 208.
[34] Watson, William J., *History of the Celtic Place Names in Scotland* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1926), 489.
[35] Watson, William J., 'Deer and Boar in Gaelic Literature (Aoibhinn an Obair an t-Sealg)', in John Ross (ed.), *The Book of Red Deer* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1925), 90.
[36] MacDonald, Rev. Angus & MacDonald, Rev. Archibald (eds.), *The MacDonald Collection of Gaelic Poetry*, 18.
[37] *OSA*, vol. XII (North and West Perthshire), 113.

Further, William Scrope (1772–1852), in *Days of Deer Stalking in the Scottish Highlands*, described two methods of deer-hunting in Sutherland:

> ...one was the erection of an enclosure, called *Garruna-bhiu*[38] (the deer-dikes): it was formed of two opposite rough stone walls, about a quarter of a mile in length, and 100 yards apart at one end, this distance being gradually contracted to a narrow opening at the other. The deer having been driven in at the wide end in numbers, could not get into the moor at the narrow extremity[...]and thus became an easy prey for the sportsmen. The other method[...]was formerly practised at two extreme points of the Sutherland forests. A strong force of men collected them in herds near the sea-coast, urged them forwards, and[...]forced them down the cliffs and crags, and drove them into the water. Boats were concealed amid the rocks, which were put in motion at the proper time, and the deer were attacked[...]In this defenceless position of the deer, the slaughter must have been considerable[...]the rude mêlée must have exhibited a scene little inferior[...]to the Indian mode of hunting on the Red Lake.[39]

The driving of deer using these man-made walls is commented upon by W. J. Watson in connection with the place-name element *eileag*, stemming from Old Gaelic *ail*, 'stone.' He mentions Eileag Bad Challaidh which, according to tradition, had been used to trap deer. He then proceeds to make an observation about these stone walls:

> ...there are the remains of a number of old walls constructed of stones and earth running across moor, mountain and glen[...]One of these[...]begins at Ben Vraggie, runs up part of Dunrobin glen[...]and comes out at Altnaharra[...]In Ross similar walls occur. One runs between Loch Maree and Loch Torridon, another runs right through Coigach. Another runs east and west on the high ground between Loch Broom and Little Loch Broom; a burn which crosses it is called Altnaharrie, and the wall runs up to a hill called *Maoil na h-Eirbhe*.[40]

In the parish of Birse, Aberdeenshire, there is further evidence of enclosures used to trap deer:

> ...these lands bordering with Deer Hillock in one of the fields, is a fold or trap[...]for catching and holding the deer before their journey southwards. This enclosure is made in a circular form, and scooped out of the sloping side of a small hillock, a strong fence being made up on the lower side with stones and earth arising from the excavation. The diameter measures about fifty feet within the fence, and the depth appears to have been about ten feet[...]On one side, the adjoining ground is on a level with the top of the pit, on which side two fences of wood are said to have been formed in an angular direction, widening from each other as they extended outwards, and closing toward the mouth of the pit. Into this avenue the deer or other animals intended to be caught were hunted,

[38] Presumably what is meant here is *Garradh na bhfhiadh*, 'deer-dikes.'
[39] *DDSSH* 283-84.
[40] Watson, William J., 'Aobhinn an Obair an t-Sealg', *Celtic Review*, vol. IX (1913–14), 166.

> and pushing their way forward were led into the pit from which they could not escape...[41]

It is further added that a wall, formerly known as the 'Deer's Dyke', near the Castle of Fettercairn, was the remains of an artificial elrick.[42] The area of the park measured two miles wide and (if it originally extended to the castle) about three miles long. There is an internal division, and there are gaps in the pale where it crosses the valley bottom; these may have been closed off with a wooden fence which could be removed, either to use such a place as an elrick or to drive the wild deer into the park from the open forest for restocking.[43] In connection with this Raphael Holinshed mentions this park in the time of King Kenneth mac Alpin (843–883). 'It chaunced hereupon, that within a short time after hee had beene at Fordune[...]he turned a little out of the way to lodge at the Castel of Fethircarne, where as then there was a Forrest ful of al maner of wild beasts that were to be had in any part of Albion.'[44] Whether legendary or not, the area around Fettercairn was known for its good hunting.

It is clear that such walls were used for enclosing game as well as driving deer into a designated area. Another method, used in Am Parbh in Mackay country, and in Loth, Sutherland, was to drive the deer into the sea:

> ...ther is an excellent and delectable place for hunting, called the Parwe, wher they hunt the reid deir in abundance; and somtymes they dryve them into the ocean sea at the Pharo-head, wher they doe tak them in boats as they list. Ther is another pairt in Southerland[...]wher ther are reid deir; a pleasant place for hunting with grew hounds. Heir also somtymes they dryve the deir into the south sea, and so doe kill them.[45]

Despite references to large numbers involved in a hunt around Mackay country in a Gaelic song *Cumha nam Beinn*,[46] it is still difficult to determine whether it actually refers to a drive or not. This song has all the hallmarks of a Gaelic elegy:

> 'Nuair rachadh tu shealg
> Do bheannaibh a Phairbh,

---

[41] Dinnie, Robert, *An Account of the Parish of Birse, Historical, Statistical, & Antiquarian* (Aberdeen: Lewis Smith, 1865), 64-65.
[42] *Ibid.*, 65.
[43] *HHAMH*, 58-59; *HHRMS*, 82-87, 84, map 4, pls. 16 & 17.
[44] Holinshed, Raphael, *The Firste Volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande*, i, bk. 2, 221.
[45] Gordon, (Sir) Robert (of Gordonstoun) (auth.); Weber, Henry William & Gordon, Gilbert (of Sallagh) (eds.), *A Genealogical History of the Earldom of Sutherland from its Origin to the Year 1630*, 4.
[46] It is also difficult to date the song but it may belong to either the 17th or the 18th century.

Cha bu chuideachd leat a falbh cuig ceud.

Ceud cuilean air iall,
Ceud gunna as an deigh,
Ceud eile fo bhein an fheidh:

Bein fuilleach an fheidh
Air do ghillean ad dheigh
Air am milleadh le deud chon mora:

Tha fadaidheachd orm fein,
Tha fadaidheachd orm fein,
Tha fadaicheachd orm fein is bron,

B'e mo roghainn a chaoidh
Bhi siubhal na fridhe
Ad dheigh-s' Mhic Aoidh nam buaidh.[47]

When you went to hunt
In mountainous Cape Wrath,
Your company did not leave with five hundred.

A hundred leashed whelps,
A hundred guns in their wake,
A hundred others under the deer's hide:

The bloodied deer-hide –
With the ghillies in pursuit –
And torn by the great hounds' fangs.

I am so weary,
I am so weary,
I am so weary and sad,

As it was my wish always
To travel the deer-forest
In the wake of victorious Mackay.

Great Hunts in Atholl

It was a century, perhaps, after the hunt described from Mackay Country, that, in August 1564, Queen Mary and her court went on progress, and after being entertained by the Earl of Atholl for a fortnight[48] events culminated in a great hunt. As many as three hundred and sixty deer were slaughtered, and afterwards there were gourmet banquets of 'all kynd of delicattis that culd be gottin.' This royal visit is described by William Barclay (*c.* 1546–1608) in *Contra Monarchomachos* (1600):

[47] J. R., 'The Highland Hunt Long Ago', *The Highlander*, vol. IV, no. 183 (11 Nov 1876), 3. For a description of the hunt that took place in the Reay Country in 1625, see *Wardlaw*, 482-83.
[48] *CSPS*, vol. XIII, pt. 1, 276, pt. 2, 967.

> I had a sight of very extraordinary sport[...]the Earl of Athol[...]had, with much trouble, and vast expense, provided a hunting-match for the entertainment of our illustrious and most gracious Queen. Our people call this a royal hunting[...]Two thousand Highlanders were employed to drive to the hunting-ground all the deer from the woods and the hills of Atholl, Badenoch, Marr, Moray and the countries about. As these Highlanders use a light dress, and are very swift of foot, they went up and down so nimbly, that, in less than two months' time, they brought together two thousand red deer, besides roes and follow deer. The Queen, the great men, and a number of others were in a glen[...]where all these deer were brought before them; believe me, the whole body moved forward in something like battle order...[49]

Barclay reported that the Queen was delighted with the sight which she beheld, and she also bore witness to the dangers involved in the tinchel, when a stag beset by a hound followed by the herd rushed headlong at the tinchel-circuit. The men forming the hunt-ring only escaped by throwing themselves to the ground. Despite several Highlanders being wounded, along with a few fatalities, they still managed to drive the deer towards the hunting party that awaited them:

> It was of those that had been separated, that the Queen's dogs, and those of the nobility, made slaughter. There was killed that day three hundred and sixty deer, with five wolves, and some roes.[50]

Despite some discrepancies—the protracted time for the deer-drive and the fact that a stag does not lead a herd—Barclay's account retains a general ring of truth.[51] The royal connection to Atholl goes further back, as, according to tradition, *Càrn an Rìgh* is named after King Malcolm III (1058–1093), because he hunted frequently in this part of Perthshire.[52] King James II established a hunting lodge—'the Hunthall'—in Glenfinglas.[53] Perthshire, especially Glenartney, was a favourite hunting ground of King James III; and James IV resorted there and to Balquidder once or twice a year 'to the huntis.'[54] King James VI, in 1582, followed his ancestor's footsteps by frequently visiting Perthshire to indulge in his royal prerogative so that he could throw off the burden of kingship and government for a few days when he:

---

[49] *CATF*, i, 36-37; Gordon, Seton, *The Cairngorm Hills of Scotland*, 206.
[50] *Ibid.* According to Hart-Davis, Duff, *Monarchs of the Glen: A History of Deer-stalking in the Scottish Highlands*, 26, the event is said to have taken place on the western marches of what is now the forest of Fealar and, as the deer were driven up into a steep pass over shoulder of Ben-y-gloe, the Queen watched from a rocky outcrop above a loch known as *Tom na ban righ*, 'The Queen's Hillock'.
[51] Stewart, Alasdair M., 'Monarch of the Glen', *AUR*, vol. XLVIII, no. 163 (Spring, 1980), 308-12.
[52] *CATF*, i, Appendix, iii.
[53] *ER*, vi (1458–1459), 579, no. 229; *ER*, vii (1460–1469), 488, no. 257, *ER*, x (1488–1496), 401, no. 304; *TA*, iii (1506–1507), xx, 338.
[54] *TA*, i (1473–1498), ccxlviii; *TA*, iii (1506–1507), 156, 336.

> ...held another grand royal hunt amongst the hills of Athole and Strathardle. There was a great gathering of clansmen[...]to gather in the deer[...]from the surrounding districts. The great meet-place, to which all the deer was driven to, was at the hill of Elrick[...]which[...]had been for ages one of the[...]hunting-places of Athole. An elrig was an enclosure of trees[...]intertwined with brushwood[...]to enclose the hunted deer they had collected from a distance on all sides[...]This enclosure was always overlooked by an overhanging rock or hill, called Craggan-an-Elrig, from which ladies could see the sport in safety.[55]

'The Water Poet' and the Braes o' Mar

By far the most interesting account of a great hunt to have taken place in the Highlands was recounted by John 'The Water Poet' Taylor (1578–1653),[56] who, for a wager, in 1618, visited Scotland on foot without a coin in his pocket, under a pledge of 'neither begging, borrowing or asking meat, drinking or lodging'—a promise that he certainly did not keep to the letter. Shortly afterwards, *The Pennyles Pilgrimage, or the money-lesse perambulation, of John Taylor, alias the Kings Majesties Water-Poet* (1618), was published, and, as the prolix title suggests, he gave *a true report of the unmatchable hunting in the Brae of Marre and Badenoch in Scotland.* It is worth quoting at length for the sheer amount of interesting detail contained therein:

> ...I came at night to the place where I would be, in the Brea of Marr, which is a large countie[...]There I saw Mount Benawe with a furr'd mist upon his snowie head instead of a nightcap[...]There did I finde the truely Noble and Right Honourable Lords John Erskin, Earle of Marr, James Stuart Earle of Murray, George Gordon Earle of Engye, sonne and heire to the Marquesse of Huntley, James Erskin, Earle of Bughan, and John Lord Erskin, sonne and heire to the Earle of Marr, and their Countesses, with[...]my best assured and approoved friend, Sir William Murray[...]and hundred of other knights, esquires, and their followers; all and every man in generall in one habit...[57]

After listing all the nobles who had gathered for the hunt, Taylor then proceeds to describe this great spectacle:

> ...once in the yeare, which is the whole moneth of August, and sometimes part of September; many of the nobilitie and gentry of the kingdome (for their pleasure) doe come into these high-land countries to hunt, where they doe all conforme themselves to the habite of the high-landmen, who for the most part

---

[55] Fergusson, Charles, 'Sketches of the Early History, Legends, and Traditions of Strathardle and its Glens. Part IV.', *TGSI*, vol. XX (1894–96), 264-65.

[56] For more information on his life and words, see Taylor, John (auth.); Chandler, John (ed.), *Travels Through Stuart Britain: The Adventures of John Taylor, the Water Poet* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1999), v-xi; Chambers, Robert, *Domestic Annals of Scotland: From the Reformation to the Revolution*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: W. & R. Chambers, 1858–59), i, 489-94; and Brown, P. Hume, (ed.), *Early Travellers in Scotland* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1891), 104-31.

[57] Taylor, John (auth.); Chandler, John (ed.), *Travels Through Stuart Britain: The Adventures of John Taylor, the Water Poet*, 39-41.

> speake nothing but Irish; and in former time were those people which were called the Red-shankes: Their habite is shooes with but one sole apiece; stockings (which they call short hose) made of a warme stuffe of divers colours, whiche they call Tartane: as for breeches, many of them, nor their forefathers never wore any, but a jerkin of the same stuffe that their hose is of, their garters beeing bands or wrearthes of hay or straw, with a plaid about their shoulders, which is a mantle of divers colours, much finer and lighter stuffe then their hose, with blue caps on their heads, a handkerchiefe knit with two knots about their neckes; and thus are they attyred. Now their weapons are long bowes and forked arrowes, swords and targets, harquebusses, muskets, durks and Loquhabor Axes. With these armes I found many of them armed for hunting. As for their attire, any man of what degree soever that comes amongst them, must not disdaine to weare it: for if they doe they will disdaine to hunt or willingly to bring in their dogges: but if men bee kinde unto them, bee in their habit, then are they conquered with kindnesse, and the sport will be plentifull. This was the reason that I found so many noblemen and gentlemen in those shapes. But to proceed to the hunting.[58]

After describing the habits and attire of the Highlanders whom he met, Taylor goes on to describe the environs and the activities taking place in which he lays emphasis upon a sumptuous feast:

> My good Lord of Marr having put me into that shape, I rode with him from his house, where I saw[...]the Castle of Kindroghit. It was built by King Malcolm Canmore (for a hunting house)[...]I speake of it because it was the last house that I saw in those parts; for I was the space of twelve days after, before I saw either house, corne field, or habitation for any creature, but deere, wilde horses, wolves[...]which made mee doubt that I should never have scene a house againe[...]Thus the first day wee travelled eight miles, where there were small cottages built on purpose to lodge in, which they call Lonquhards, I thanke[...]Lord Erskin, he commanded that I should alwayes bee lodged in his lodging, the kitchin being always on the side of a banke, many kettles and pots boyling, and many spits turning and winding with great variety of cheere: as venson bak't, sodden, rost and stu'de beefe, mutton, goates, kid, hares, fresh salmon, pidgeons, hens, capons, chickens, partridge, moorecootes, heathcocks, caperkellies, and termagantes; good ale, sacke white, white and claret tent (or allegant) with most potent Aqua vitae.[59]

Once the small matter of travel and accommodation is narrated, the most important part of the narrative describing the actual tinchel is given:

> All these and more, then these wee had continually, in superfluous abundance, caught by faulconers, foulers, and fishers, and brought by my lords tenants and purveyers to victuall our campe, which consisted of fourteene or fifteene hundred men and horses; the manner of the hunting is this. Five or sixe hundred men doe rise early in the morning, and they doe disperse themselves divers wayes, and seven, eight, or tenne miles compasse, they doe bring in or chase in the deere in many heards (two, three, or foure hundred in a heard) to such or

[58] *Ibid.*, 39-41.
[59] *Ibid.*, 41-42.

such a place as the noblemen shall appoint them; then when the day is come, the lords and gentlemen of their companies, doe ride or goe to the said places, sometimes wading up to the middles through bournes and rivers: and then they being come to the place, doe lye downe on the ground, till those foursaid scouts which are called the Tinckhell, doe bring downe the deere: But as the proverb says, as bad cooke, so these Tinckhell doe lick their owne fingers; for besides their bowes and arrowes which they carry with them, we can heare now and then a harguebuse or a musquet goe off, which they doe seldome discharge in vaine: Then after wee had stayed three houres or thereabouts, wee might perceive the deere appeare on the hills round about us (there heads making a shew like a wood), which being followed the Tinckhell, are chased downe the valley where wee lay; then all the valley on each side being way-laid with a hundred couple of strong Irish grey-hounds, they are let loose as occasion serves upon the heard of deere, that with dogges, gunnes, arrowes, durks, and daggers in the space of two houres, fourescore fat deere were slaine, which afterwards are disposed of some one way and some another, twenty or thirty miles, and more than enough for us to make merry wit at our Rendevouze.[60]

The tinchel is so well described that no further commentary is required and such was its impact upon 'The Water Poet' that he was inspired to versify his experiences of the hunt:

Why should I wast invention to endite,
Ovidian fictions, or Olympian games?
My misty Muse enlightened with more light,
To a more noble pitch her ayme she frames.
I must relate to my great Master James,
The Calydonian annual peacefull warre;
How noble mindes doe eternize their fames,
By martiall meeting in the Brea of Marr:
How thousand gallant spirits came neere and farre,
With swords and targets, arrows, bowes, and gunnes,
That all the troope to men of judgement, are
The god of warres great never conquered sonnes.
The sport is manly, yet none bleed but beasts,
And last, the victor on the vanquisht feasts.

If sport like this can on the mountains be,
Where Phoebus flames can never melt the snow:
Then let who list delight in vales below,
Skie-kissing mountains pleasures are for me:
What braver object can mans eyesight see,
The noble, worshipfull, and worthy wights,
As if they were prepared for sundry fights,
Yet all in sweet society agree:
Through heather, mosse, 'mongst frogs, and bogs, and fogs,
Mongst crags cliffs, and thunder battered hills,
Hares, hindes, buckes, roes are chas'd by men and dogs,
Where two howres hunting fourescore fat deere killes.
Low lands, your sports are low as is your seate,

[60] *Ibid.*, 41-42.

The high-lands games and minds, are high and greate.[61]

At times it takes the viewpoint of an outsider, for it is apparent that 'The Water Poet' had the eye to see and the wit to understand, and was able to mark the cultural differences between the Lowlands and the Highlands at this time. The last two lines of his verse reveals the esteem in which hunting was held in the Highlands. Though hunting was indeed popular, judging by extant records, in the Lowlands, there are very few contemporary songs or verse devoted to the chase in Scots. This completely contrasts to Scottish Gaelic where, as has been amply shown, hunting was an influential source of inspiration. It seems, then, that the hunt did not take a great hold on the makars of Scots poetry (such as Barbour, Henryson, Dunbar and Douglas) because, it may be assumed, they were inspired by more intellectual tastes.[62] Both hunting and hawking were relegated to a position occupied by weightier subject-matter such as chronicle, romance, autobiography, spiritual journey, legend, fable, fabliau, myth and satire. When, and if, hunting registers within these genres, it is usually only by way of mention, and there is, unfortunately, no sustained treatment of the hunt in Scots literature. What makes this lacuna so prominent is that hunting themes featured not only in Celtic but also in English and Continental literature as evinced by works such as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*,[63] or indeed, the Arthurian romance of a boar hunt preserved in the Welsh story of Twrch Trwyth in *Kulhwch and Olwen*. Exceptions to this are Henryson's *The Swallow*, a fable centred upon a fowler who lures birds into a net using chaf,[64] the medieval *Book of the Howlett* (which uses birds of prey symbolically),[65] the ballad 'Chevy Chase',[66] and

---

[61] *Ibid.*, 42-43.

[62] See Owen, D. D. R., *William the Lion: Kingship and Culture, 1143–1214* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1997), 118, 122, 134-35, 144-45, 171.

[63] *HHAMH*, 53-56, 99-101, and 144-46; Savage, Henry L., 'The Significance of the Hunting Scenes in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, vol. 27 (1928), 1-15; and Burnley, J. D., 'The Hunting Scenes in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*', *Year Book of English Studies*, vol. 3 (1973), 1-9.

[64] Henryson, Robert (auth.); Wood H. Harvey (ed.), *The Poems and Fables of Robert Henryson* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1933), ll. 1741, 1843.

[65] *HHAMH*, 189.

[66] The Lowland ballad 'Chevy Chase' depicts a fictional poaching party, undertaken by Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, across the Borders into the Cheviot Hills, in which Percy vows to continue hunting for three days before returning. In the fictional ballad version, Earl Douglas, the chief ranger of all the parks and chases in Scotland, sends a herald to command Percy and his men to depart immediately or be prepared to forfeit their lives. Earl Percy was bound by honour to refuse, and so Douglas marched south to take up the challenge. The latter proposed a single combat between him and Percy, but their lieutenants refused to countenance this and insisted on fighting alongside their lords. The ballad and chapbook histories depict several thousand men, including Percy and Douglas, dying in

John Stewart (*c.* 1539–*c.* 1606) of Baldynneis who composed 'The Hunter' which may be quoted as it consists of only four pithy, if perfunctory, lines:

> The hunter, hart, and hound,
> Furth rides, fast rins, loud cries,
> With horse, with feet, with sound;
> He slays, he dies, he lies.[67]

'The Water Poet' took his leave of the Braes o' Mar by continuing his journey into the interior of the Highlands to Badenoch where he enjoyed similar 'amusements.'[68] Overall, he paints a bucolic idyll, with Highland chiefs in their unsophisticated homesteads, and yet these nobles have the ability to command many men, daily dispensing charity and offering hospitality to all ranks of society in their homes.

A far more important factor for this tinchel, however, was that the Earl of Mar, John Erskine (*c.* 1558–1634)—despite his youthful friendship with King James VI—was exiled (1583–85) for his leading part in the Raid of Ruthven of 1582 (itself executed under the subterfuge of hunting, when the young king was held captive for ten months by Ultra-Protestants). He later returned in triumph as Lord High Treasurer of Scotland (1616–30) to renew his connection as political aide and friend to the king and used this great occasion as a political overture to secure and enhance his claims to Gaelic lordship (fig. 5.4).[69] After currying favour with the king and fellow noblemen, the recovery of his right to the Earldom finally came to fruition in 1606.

Hostings and Huntings

The social cohesion of hunting was, at times, reinforced through legal obligations made upon vassal proprietors to their superiors. A hosting has been defined as 'a territorial obligation which involved the extensive mobilisation of able-bodied adult

---

the ensuing battle. See, *The Famous and Renowned History of the Memorable but Unhappy Hunting on Chevy Chase by the River Tweed in Scotland* (1710), unpaginated; and Hamer, Douglas, 'Towards Restoring *The Hunting of the Cheviot*', *Review of English Studies: A Quarterly Journal of English Literature and the English Language*, vol. XX, no. 77 (1969), 1-21.

[67] McCordick, David, *Scottish Literature: An Anthology*, 3 vols. (New York: Peter Lang; Dalkeith: Scottish Cultural Press, 1996–2002), i, 605; McDiarmid, Matthew P., 'John Stewart of Baldynneis', *SHR*, vol. XXIX, no. 107 (1950), 52-63.

[68] *Ibid.*, 44; Erskine, Stuart, *Braemar: An Unconventional Guide Book and Literary Souvenir* (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1898), 4-12 for the same account where modern orthography has been applied; Ross, A., 'Early Travellers in the Highlands', *TGSI*, vol. XXIII (1898–99), 104-07; and Pennant, Thomas, *A Tour in Scotland. MDCCLXIX*, 103-05.

[69] Brown, Keith M., *Noble Society in Scotland: Wealth, Family and Culture from Reformation to Revolution* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 213; Smith, John S., 'War and Peace in the Braes of Mar', *AUR*, vol. XLVIII, no. 161 (Spring, 1979), 36-43.

males.'[70] A mutual bond dated at Balloch on 16 October 1590, states that 'Donald Robertson of Strowan, finding that divers of the Clangregour occupied his lands and barony of Fernay[...]against his will, so that he could not well remove them, binds himself and his heirs, if, by the assistance of Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenurquhay, he can remove them orderly, to put in their stead tenants bound to serve the said Sir Duncane in hosting, hunting, and obedience, as the tenants of the said lands did previously...'[71] A similar bond, dated 8 August 1594, was signed by the Rev. Patrick MacQueen, guaranteeing previous agreements of manrent negociated by among others his father and uncle with Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy in which 'he could not enjoy without the assistance of Sir Duncan; and obliges himself and his heirs to give to Sir Duncan hosting, hunting, and all other due service, performed by his predecessors...'[72] The duties of hosting (military service) and hunting are mentioned fairly frequently in the tacks of the 16th and 17th centuries.[73] Hunting entailed attendance on the superior when he indulged in the favourite entertainment enjoyed by the chiefs and noblemen of the Highlands and Islands. In a tack granted by Glenorchy in 1629 of lands of Balliveolan in Lismore, Archibald MacGilleune's conditions of tenure included 'oisting [hosting], hunting, stenting, ariage, carriage and utheris dew services' which he was bound to perform for his landlord.[74] Another tack, granted by Glenorchy in 1617 for the lands of Killen, contains a similar list of services to be performed by the grantee, Duncan Stewart.[75] And from Barra, Neil 'Uistach'[76] MacNeil's tack from his brother specified 'custom belonging to horses,

---

[70] *CCHS*, 23.

[71] Campbell, Duncan, *The Lairds of Glenlyon: Historical Sketches relating to the Districts of Appin, Breadalbane* (Perth: S. Cowan & Co., 1886), 191-92.

[72] Campbell, Duncan, *The Book of Garth and Fortingall: Historical Sketches relating to the District of Garth, Fortingall, Athole, and Breadalbane*, 186-87; see also *BBT*, 423 for a similar tack contracted between Sir Colin Campbell of Glenorchy and Patrick Gow for the two merkland of Barrechastellan, dated 20 March 1632; 425, tack between John Campbell, fiar of Glenorchy and Nicoll M'Lefcunrick V'Nicoll for the merlkand of Arrivean in Glenlochy, dated 8 November 1651. See Appendix B for full transcriptions of these tacks.

[73] Shaw, Frances J., *The Northern and Western Islands of Scotland: Their Economy and Society in the Seventeenth Century* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1980), 33. For a later example, see MacGregor (of MacGregor), Amelia G. M., *History of The Clan Gregor*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: William Brown, 1898), ii, 479-81, for a feu charter of Glengyle made between Rob Roy MacGregor and the Marquis of Montrose, dated 1703; and also NAS, Papers of the Graham Family, Dukes of Montrose (Montrose Muniments), GD220/6/1605/13, for a similar agreement for Arichiebeg, dated 1705.

[74] NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/10/7, register of tacks, 1628–1717, f. 20. GD112/9/1/2/1-13 rental of Lorn, Lismore and Benderloch, 1675.

[75] NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/51/108/1-2, copy tack by Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy to Duncan Stewart of Innernahyle, 1 May 1617.

[76] Probably Uibhisteach.

houndis and halkis if any be (i.e. hunting, including hawking if birds were available), attendance at MacNeil's courts, and military support against all men, the king only being excepted.[77] Further, in 1623, Sir Rorie Mackenzie of Coigach, styled the Tutor of Kintail, purchased the land of (among others) Downielarne and Meikle Tarrell from George Munro to be held by the Earl of Ross for payment of £2 Scots, and two hunting dogs, and the keeping of them as often as the Earl hunted with the king in Ross-shire.[78] In the aftermath of the Battle of Mulroy (1688), Coll MacDonald, chief of Keppoch, received a long-lease tack from Torcastle in 1700 so long as he respected MacIntosh's propriety rights and his heritable jurisdiction in Lochaber, as well as having to attend the Clan Chattan chief in hostings and huntings.[79]

Such representative samples of evidence suggests that legislation became more of a concern for landowners. It also shows that there was a legal precedent to continue a tradition of hunting and hosting that was probably generations old. It also gave the nobility an opportunity to subjugate any recalcitrant kinsmen, as well as allowing an opportunity for inter-clan social intercourse to take place.

King James VI: 'He loves the chase above all the pleasures of this world'

The pursuit of hunting was mainly a noble pastime and it seems never to have been far from the mind of King James VI (1567–1625) who, in *Basilicon Doron*,[80] a protocol tract on kingship intended for his son, Prince Henry (1594–1612), stated:

> I cannot omit heere the hunting, namelie with running houndes; whiche is the most honourable and noblest sorte thereof: for it is a theeuishe forme of hunting to shoote with gunnes and bowes; and grey-hound hunting is not so martiall a / game. But becaus I would not be thoght a partaill praiser of this sport, I remit you to *Xenophon*, and old & famous writer who had not mind of flattering you or me in this purpose…[81]

The sustained claim that King James VI was an addict of the chase is not without foundation. As soon as he ascended the English throne in 1603, he lost no time at all in protecting and enforcing that most royal of prerogatives, hunting:

---

[77] NLS, Gregory's Collections, MS 2134, 275-79, copy registered tack to Neil 'Uistach' MacNeil, originally granted 30 May 1606. NAS, Register of Deeds, RD1/117.
[78] MacKenzie, Hector H., *The MacKenzies of Ballone* (Inverness: Northern Chronicle Office, 1941), 15-16.
[79] *CCHS*, 45.
[80] This small treatise was at first published privately in a run of only seven copies in 1599.
[81] King James VI (auth.); Craigie, James (ed.), *The Basilicon Doron of King James VI*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1944–50), i, 189-91.

> ...there be divers ancient and other good and necessary Lawes and statutes[...]which do inflict and impose divers grievous Corporall and pecuniary paines & punishments, extending in some cases to sentence of death[...]and in some cases to finall exile and banishment out of their natural Countrey for ever, upon such as unlawfully hunt or enter into any Forest, Parke, Chase, or Warren, to kill or destroy any Deere or Game with any Dogs, Nets, Gunnes, Crossebowes, Stonebowes or other Instruments, Engines, or means whatsoever, or by any such unlawfull meanes or devises to spoile or destroy the game[...]And also divers other good Lawes and Statutes, providing for the preventing of the said offences, and therefore doe prohibite upon great paines and penalties aswel the having or keeping, as the using of any Deere hayes, Buckstalles, Dogs, Gunnes, Crossebowes, Nettes and other Engines[...]And yet his Majestie understandth withall, that the same good Lawes have had[...]little or no effect, in respect there hath not been any due execution[...]of the same, by such to whom the care and charge thereof apperteined: by means whereof, such boldnesse and disobedience hath growen, specially in the vulgar sort, as that of late yeeres, the severall Games above mentioned, have bene more excessively and outragiously spoiled & destroyed, than hath bene attempted & practised in former ages. His Majestie intending a due and speedy reformation of the said abuses and offences, And that the said good Lawes and Statutes be hereafter put in due execution[...]doeth straightly charge and command all and every person and persons, of what estate and degree soever, not to Hunt, Kill, Take or destroy, by any of the wayes or meanes abovesayd, or by any other unlawfull meane, device, or invention whatsoever, any of the Games abovesaid[...]Nor that they have, keepe or use any of the sayd Deere hayes, Buckstalles, Dogges, Gunnes, Crossebowes, Nettes, and other things above mentioned[...]And that if any person or persons, shall, after this Proclamation made and published, offend in any of the premises, against any of the said Lawes and Statutes, that then he shall not onely undergo and suffer the severe sentence and punishment of the same...[82]

That King James VI often neglected the affairs of government for the pleasures of the chase was a perception shared by his contemporaries. A commentator noted thus of the precocious youth in 1584:

> Il ayme la chasse sur tous les plaisirs de ce monde[...]qu'il est trop paresseux et peu soucieux de ses affayres, trop volontaire et addonné à son plaisir, principalement de la chasse, laissant cepandant maneir toutes ses affayres par[...]Je scay bien que cela est excusable en son jeune aage, mais il est à craindre que la continue l'endurcisse en ceste habitude.[83]

> He loves the chase above all the pleasures of this world[...]He is too lazy and not too concerned with the affairs of government and very much addicted to his pleasure, principally that of the chase, leaving the conduct of business to others[...]I know very well this is pardonable in one of his youth but it is to be feared that it will become a habit.

---

[82] Larkin, James F. & Hughes, Paul L. (eds.), *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), i, 14-17, no. 7; see also, i, 227, no. 102 for a similar act passed later in 1609.

[83] HMC, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon., the Marquis of Salisbury...Preserved at Hatfield House, Part III* (London: HMSO, 1899), 60-61. M. de Fontenay in Edinburgh to Mary Stuart's Secretary, letter dated 15 August 1584.

This fear was well founded: why else, on hearing news of Queen Elizabeth's death and his own ascendancy to the English throne, would King James VI and I take the long and meandering road to London and his future, if he could not chase the deer on the way? Consequently, the protracted journey south gave him plenty opportunity to go a-hunting. Although King James was to return to his native land only once after the Union of the Crowns (1603), he still took an interest, if, at times, a lax one, in her affairs, boasting at that time 'here I sit and govern it with pen.'[84] Even in his dotage his lustre for hunting did not wane as a comment made by a Papal Ambassador reveals: 'He amuses himself with his usual pleasures of the chase, of which he seems never to be weary, increasing age by no means damping his ardour for them.'[85] Such was his 'ardour' that it led to the most unlikely of places: Rannoch Moor.

'This trublesum whyt hynd of yours': The White Hind of Corrichiba[86]

From Theobalds, a little north of London, King James wrote, on 18 January 1622, letters directed to the Earl of Mar and to Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy (fig. 5.5), known as Donnchadh Dubh a' Churraic.[87] In this fascinating series of correspondence, the plan hatched was none other than to capture the white hind of Corrichiba (Coiriche Bà), in the deer-haunted Black Mount on the heights Rannoch Moor. King James probably heard about her from Mar himself, as he had been hunting in Glenorchy that previous Autumn, and had sighted this wonderful creature. Such intelligence would have piqued the curiosity of such a keen huntsman as King James, and thus the scheme was conceived. However, Mar later came to regret letting the king know of the white

---

[84] Lee, Maurice, *Government by Pen: Scotland Under James VI & I* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1980), vii.

[85] Brown, Rawond, Bentinck, G. Cavendish, Brown, F. Horatio & Hinds, Allen B. (eds.), *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Relating to English Affairs, Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice and in other Libraries of Northern Italy*, 40 vols. (London: HMSO, 1864–1947), vol. XV (1617–1619), 306. Letter dated 7 September 1618. Frequent complaints were made of King James VI & I's excessive love of the hunt, see Manning, Roger B., *Hunters and Poachers*, 202-03.

[86] This section is based closely upon Fergusson, (Sir) James, *The White Hind and Other Discoveries* (London: Faber & Faber, 1963), 97-113.

[87] Despite his rather dark reputation in Gaelic tradition, which is not without foundation, it would seem that he was also an extremely cultured individual, for example, see Millar, Alastair D., *A Bit of Breadalbane* (Edinburgh: The Pentland Press, 1995), 61-65; Gillies, Rev. William A., *In Famed Breadalbane: The Story of the Antiquities, Lands, and People of a Highland District* (Perth: The Munro Press, 1938), 135-42; McOwan, Rennie, 'Black Duncan: [Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy as Conservationist]', *Scots Magazine*, vol. 131, no. 6 (Sep., 1989), 579-87. A classical bardic elegy was composed on his death in 1631, see Watson, William J., 'Marbhadh Dhonnchaidh Duibh', *An Deò-Gréine*, leabh. XII, earr. 9 (1917), 132-34; leabh. XII, earr. 10 (1917), 149-150. This elegy may have been composed by Neil MacEwen, a member of a bardic family associated with the Campbells of Argyll and Breadalbane.

hind's whereabouts as he knew that the enterprise would be extremely difficult, given not only the terrain but also the misplaced confidence of its participants. Nevertheless, the king's forester, John Scandover, together with two assistants, was despatched north, reaching Edinburgh by 6 February. The king's letter was presented to Mar at Holyroodhouse:

> Wee have sente[...]our servant John Scandover, for apprehending and transporting hether of that white hinde whereof yee your selfe gave us the first notice; and therefore have thoughte good by these presentes to require you to cause provide[...]such thinges as he shall thinke requiste eyther for taking or transporting the saide hinde, whether it be shippe, cartes or other things. And because the contrie whether our said servant is to go is wilde and waste, so as nothing is there to be had withoute acquaytance and speciall favour, it is requisite that yee write to Glenurquhay[...]to cause our said servant be furnished with companie and all thinges necessarie, as well for assisting him in his travelles...[88]

On hearing that Sir Duncan Campbell's son, Robert Campbell of Glenfalloch, was in town, Mar wrote a letter on 8 February entrusting its delivery by Robert to his father:

> I havine thocht good by this letter to aquentt you on that his Maiestie hes sentt heir a man quha says he will take your quhytt hynd with sum other deir...[89]

By this, Mar notified Glenorchy of the king's intentions, and probably expressed his doubts to Robert Campbell regarding its chances of success, though he was wise enough not to commit this to writing. On reflection, he decided that there should be no delay in the party's departure adding:

> I haeve resollved to send him direct with his berar quousoever things go I prey you lett the honest man be alls well treatt as the cuntrie will efford, I remitt all the rest of my mynd to the berar.[90]

The royal entourage travelled by way of Perth and arrived at the castle of Balloch[91] (subsequently rebuilt as Taymouth) in the heart of Breadalbane on 12 February, five days after they had set out from the capital.

On their arrival, the king's letter was delivered to Glenorchy in order for him to peruse the intent of the huntsmen and for any instructions contained therein:

---

[88] NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD124/10/216, royal letter to the Earl of Mar, dated 13 January 1622; also printed in HMC, *Report on the Manuscripts of Earl of Mar and Kellie* (London: HMSO, 1904), 106-7.

[89] NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/39/32/4, Earl of Mar to the Laird of Glenorchy, dated 8 February 1622, Holyroodhouse.

[90] *Ibid.*

[91] Built by Sir Duncan Campbell's father Cailean Liath by 1560.

> Hauing understood that ther is in your boundes a white hinde, wee haue sente this bearer[...]to take and transporte her hether unto us; and because that contrie is altogether unknowne to him[...]requiring yow to assiste him and cause him be furnished with all thinges necessarie, as well for taking of the said hinde as for his oune interteynment; and nothing doubting of your best endeuour for accomplishing of this our pleasour...[92]

Another letter was presented to Glenorchy from the pen of the Duke of Lennox, one of the king's chief courtiers as well as Mar's brother-in-law, entreating him 'to cause assist the man towards the asserting of the purpose he is sent for wherein you will doe his Maiestie a great pleasure.'[93] He received Mar's letter and Robert, his son, would have passed on whatever Mar had on his mind. Probably Glenorchy would have concurred with Mar's private doubts about such an enterprise—sending three huntsmen to Corrichiba in the dead of winter—as it was not only physically arduous but also foolhardy. Whatever misgivings there may have been to begin with, Glenorchy had little option but to show alacrity in trying to realise his Majesty's whim. Nevertheless, he later wrote to Mar on 18 March expressing such doubts.

The entourage set out for Corrichiba but without Sir Duncan Campbell who excused himself on grounds of infirmity stating 'be reassoun of my age and inhabilite of body I culde not travill my self wythout perrelling of my lyf.'[94] In his stead he sent Robert, his son, to act as guide and mentor to the Englishmen. Although Corrichiba, their ultimate destination, was only fifty miles from Taymouth, it was a difficult enough route even in good conditions. After a strenuous journey in the worst of weather, they arrived in Corriessan, a little above the spot where Mar was hunting, and, leaving the old man behind, the others descried the white hind with five or six score deer, and returned tired and weary:

> Robert being young he and the Englishman past ferwart bot the auld man came to the part that Mar sat in at the hunting got weyyrit and could go no further[...]the aither tua englishmen that were with him past ferwart with Robert and the forresters a myl up the hill and thaur they saw the quheit hynd with hir company to be number of five or six score of deir and fra they cam bak very tyrit & wewert. The tua englyhsmen that saw the hynd declairid that sche was all quheit as a quheit scheip and might easealy ken hir a far of by the rest of the deir. So bye interteimyment treuly that the best that could be gotten this

---

[92] *BBT*, 434-35; also printed in Innes, Cosmo, *Sketches of Early Scottish History and Social Progress* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1861), 516.
[93] NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/39/32/1, Duke of Lennox to the Laird of Glenorchy, dated 1 January 1622, Whitehall.
[94] *Ibid.* A draft answer written by Sir Duncan Campbell.

> tyme of yeir in the country for as I doubt they wantit not wyne and aquavitea—as I doubt bot they will declair tamselfis.[95]

Elated by a sight of the white hind and doubtless by the wine and whisky provided—a welcome stoup after such an arduous stalk—the English huntsmen, once they had recuperated enough, probably discussed the sighting of the white hind in some depth—something which came much to the relief of Mar, who stated, 'quhaiever the mater go I am glad thay have sein hir, so as I will nott be counted a lyar.'[96] And, more importantly, they would have debated the practicalities of carrying out their somewhat unreasonable remit:

> Bot the wather was so vehement and the way so evill and roch that it wes impossible[...]to travel any further aither on fute or horss being so weirit. Bot the uthir tuo Englishmen past ferward with Robert and the forresters they saw the quheit hynd and they say that scho is als quheit as quhiet scheip and glad your son Robert and to caus assist Johnne Sandover towards the effecting of the purpos he was sent for[...]Bot treuly I think it strang how the englyshman may get hir tane quick[...]how he may keip hir on alive & transport hir.[97]

Defeated by the bad weather and harsh terrain, they acceded to the task's impossibility, so that Sir Duncan Campbell was now confident to express his doubts openly to Mar:

> I perceive and Englishmen thinkis is ane impossibilitie to get her tane in theis countreyis quhair scho hantis and although scho wer takin in Corricheba they think it also ane impossibility to transport hir out living quhilk I believe to be trew. The englishman sayis gif his majestie hes concludit to haif hir thair dead or quick that the likeliest course is to mak a parok in sum wood quhair thair is deir that cairtis and horss may win neir and quhen that parok is maid to put in sum of the deir of the forest quhair the parok[...]and quhen the parok is maid to sie how it is possible to men to dryve the quheit hynd & hav company to that pairt and to get her in with the rest of the deir[...]The meittest pairt for this parok is Glenfinglass because cairtis may win it & Stirling and the sea is but ten mylis fra it.[98]

An alternative scheme was hatched whereby a park would be constructed, accessible to carts and horses, and then the white hind and her company would be driven to this place so that she would be induced to join the deer already enclosed. Glenorchy,

---

[95] NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/39/32/4, Earl of Mar to the Laird of Glenorchy, dated 8 February 1622, Holyroodhouse. Contains a scroll answer written by Sir Duncan Campbell.
[96] NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/39/32/8, Earl of Mar to the Laird of Glenorchy, late February 1622.
[97] NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/39/32/1, a draft answer written by Sir Duncan Campbell.
[98] NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/39/32/4, Earl of Mar to the Laird of Glenorchy, dated 8 February 1622, Holyroodhouse. Contains a scroll answer written by Sir Duncan Campbell.

though, had his doubts whether lowland deer, not to mention mountain deer, could be entrapped using such a method; nevertheless, he directed the English foresters to Glenfinglass deer-forest which, he thought, would be best suited for this enterprise. In the meantime, James McNockerd, the forester of Corrichiba, was consulted in order for his opinion to be elicted. He thought that though the white hind might be drawn out of Corrichiba, but it would need two or three thousand men 'for he sayis altho xxiiii or 30 men wald dryve hir yit he syis seing scho maun gang thro glens[...]that all theis pairitis that ar most perellus man[...]Bot to conclud he thinkis that scho sall never be takin quik to London[...]that aither in the chasses taking or carreing scho will die, and so I am of that opianioun.'[99] Acceding to his forester's advice, Glenorchy concurred with his line of argument and reached the same conclusion. After the failure of taking the white hind (either dead or alive), Sir Patrick Murray (later to be the Earl of Tullibardine) wrote to Glenorchy informing him of his Majesty's wishes and his future intentions regarding this 'trublesum whyt hynd':

> I haue reseaued[...]a paket of letters concerninge the takinge of this trublesum whyt hynd of yours and[...]His Maiestie is weill plesed with you for the caire you hawe hed to forder His Maiesties desyre in[...]this byssines of takinge theis deir and seing[...]that it is a harde mater ather to take hir or carey hir to the sea. By resone of the difficulttie and hardnes of the place and hard tyme of the year, and fyndinge also be his Maiesties owine experiencie that iff sche cane not be takine befoir May or June, being so laitte in the yeir that iff sche prowe with calf mey indenger hir owine lyff and hir calf also, his Maiesties plesour is that sche schall not be strude this yeir[...]and his Maiestie hes comanded me to wrytte unto the Earll of Mar to send unto all thois that bordors or marcheis with Corrachaba; that none presume to stire her under his Maiesties highest dysplesor and because his Maiestie will trye what Scandoner can do by his arte...[100]

Although the king was content with all the efforts that had been made thereto, clearly he was not used to failure, and was in the habit of getting his own way, so much so that the fanciful desire to capture the white hind was only put on hold until the following year. He was also eager, as was his wont, that no one should disturb the king's quarry and steps were taken in order that his wish should not be contravened by any poachers. None of these plans, however, came to fruition and Scandover was not given the opportunity to apply 'his arte' once again in order to capture the white hind

---

[99] *Ibid.*

[100] NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD 112/39/32/10. Sir Patrick Murray to the Laird of Glenorchy, dated 9 March 1622, Theobolds Park; see also *BBT*, 435-36; and also printed in Innes, Cosmo, *Sketches of Early Scottish History and Social Progress*, 516-17.

of Corrichiba, having instead to expend his efforts in Glenartney. The record does not say whether Scandover met with any success in Glenartney nor whether if it came as any kind of relief to the king's forester when he was recalled south; but doubtless, given his first time experience, he would have been more than happy to continue his occupation within the confines of the royal forests in southern England. King James, the following July, wrote to Glenorchy himself expressing thanks for his efforts and for the kind hospitality which he had shown to the king's servants:

> ...your carefull and earnest endeuouris for the performance of whatsoeuer yee can imagine to tende to our seruice, and likewise your speciall care and good enterteynment of Scandoner himself, which, as it hath gieun him occasioun to speake of that our kingdome in generall and of yow in particulare as of people deutifullie deuoted to their prince and well affected to strangers, so wee giue yow moste heartie thankes for the same. Wee haue also, by your letter to Sir Patrick Murray, understood your honest offer for bringing of deere into Glen Aumonde...[101]

If the oral accounts on the prohibition of hunting white hinds can be taken at face value, then it may suggest that King James had in mind 'The Legend of Caesar's Deer' when he sent Scandover northward on what can be regarded as one of the greatest hunts ever to have taken place in the Highlands. Limits of space prevent a more in-depth analysis of this legend. Briefly, it can be interpreted as a dynastic myth, associated with the idea of imperial *renovatio* or succession.[102] Although it is certain that he wished Scandover to capture the hind 'quick', it cannot be concluded with any degree of certainty that James VI & I had any intention of collaring the deer once it had been captured. Besides it was a hind and not a stag, a prerequisite for such a royal ritual.

The Curée Hunting Ritual

Judging from the various hunting manuals, popular from the medieval through to the early modern period, the killing and eating of deer were just as highly ritualised as the hunt itself. The ceremonies and rituals of hunting did not end with the kill itself as hunting manuals describe, sometimes in minute detail, the rites of 'undoing' a stag or

---

[101] *BBT*, 431; also printed in Innes, Cosmo, *Sketches of Early Scottish History and Social Progress*, 517-18. King James VI & I to Sir Duncan Campbell, dated 24 July 1622, Theobalds.

[102] Bath, Michael, 'The Legend of Caesar's Deer', *Medievalia et Humanistica: Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Culture,* vol. 9 (1979), 53-66; Bath, Michael, *The Image of the Stag: Iconographic Themes in Western Art* (Baden-Baden: Valentin Koerner, 1992), 23-60.

hart. A woodcut in Turberville's *The Noble Arte of Venerie or Hynting* (1575) depicts the royal huntsman handing Queen Elizabeth a knife to cut open the belly of a stag:[103]

> Next, the hounds are coupled up, and the hunters formed lines on either side of the carcass according to rank, while the master of the game eviscerated and dismembered the carcass. The carcass was divided according to a carefully prescribed formula acknowledging the feats of the hunter or master of the hounds who had made the kill. The 'quarry' as prepared by piling the entrails neatly on the deerskin in order to reward the hounds and to reinforce the discipline to which they were subjected. The climax came when the head of the deer was severed and carried before the king or lord and the nose of the deer made to touch the ground in an obeisance which appears to have symbolised a restoration of order and the triumph of man over the natural world. While this was going on, the hunters who had horns blew the *mort*, while others hallooed and the hounds were encouraged to bay. This must have been an emotionally satisfying release, which also served to reinforce communal bonds and, on a smaller scale, to elicit a sense of fraternity.[104]

Although rarely mentioned in Gaelic poetry or verse, it is probable that the Gaels held such a *curée*,[105] the ceremonial cutting up of a stag forming the climax of an organised hunt. There are references to the dividing of a carcass as an important ritual of the chase when each of the lead huntsmen were entitled to his portion along with his hounds. This ritual finds parallel in early Irish tales where heroes vie for the champion's portion such as in the tale *Scéla Muicce Meic Da Thó*. The division of the deer's carcass is referred to in an obscure passage from an early Irish law tract. It can be deduced that the "men who make the first striking/kill (get) the carcass" (*fir céd guinnid classach*); "those who flay (get) sides" (*fir fenta lethe*); "dog-men, dogs' owners (get) haunch (*fir con ces*); "men with the (butchering) implements (get) neck" (*fir iarn muinél*); "entrails (go to) chasers" (*inathar fir fá deoid*); and "liver goes to fían band" (*áei la fiallach*).[106] Occasionally, a *curée* was performed after only chasing a single quarry in order for the huntsman to pay his respects to the game as well as

---

[103] Reproduced in Blackmore, Howard L., *Hunting Weapons* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1971), 59.

[104] Manning, Roger B., *Hunters and Poachers*, 40; Edward (Second Duke of York) (auth.); Baillie-Grohman, William A. & Florence N. (eds.), *The Master of Game* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1909), 194-96; Savage, Henry L., 'Hunting in the Middle Ages', *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies*, vol. VIII (1933), 39; Thiébaux, Marcelle, 'The Medieval Chase', 271-72; *MH*, 78-79. This practice is described, invariably in exhaustive detail, in all the French and English hunting manuals.

[105] Probably from Old French *cuire*, skin/hide, see Thiébaux, Marcelle, 'The Medieval Chase', 271 where two etymologies of this word are offered: 1) Old French *curée* < *cuire*, the hide upon which the hounds' morsels were laid and 2) Old French *curée* < *courée*, signifying the viscera from the breast, especially the heart and lungs, < Latin, *cor*.

[106] Quoted in Carrington, Ann, *The Iconography of the Chase and the Equestrian Motifs of Eighth to Tenth Century Pictish and Irish Sculpture with Reference to Early Medieval Celtic Literature* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1995), 145-46.

rewarding his loyal hounds. Such was the impact of the indigenous method of the drive, and also a very public display of authority, that the hunt's culmination would have been celebrated by a *curée*. A description of a *curée* by Hector Boece states that 'quhais dog fist bait the dere, suld haif the hyde of the samyn; quhais dog nixt bit, shuld haif the hede and the hornis.'[107] The carcass, as Bellenden relates, was to be 'curit' at the 'plesour of the maister of the hunt' and the remainder was given to the hounds.[108] The *curée* was a ceremony of ritual importance and it is for this very reason that medieval hunting manuals go to extremes in providing such exhaustive detail. The *curée*, as a 'formal' ritual, encapsulates the very heart of the hunt as a celebration of the quarry's death and, of course, the hunt's success; and, more importantly, was bound up in the intricate details of etiquette and status.

A woodcut from a later edition of Turberville's *Noble Art of Venerie* (1611) shows King James VI & I 'taking the assaye' (fig. 6.1); and a contemporary account of 1618 tells of how the king, while hunting *par force*, undertook the ritual of 'blooding' his fellow huntsmen as well as rewarding his hounds with the deer's entrails:

> [The King] gives orders over night for one of the largest and fattest and strongest stags to be selected. On the following morning the hounds rouse him from his lair, pursuing him from natural instinct and never losing scent, even should he hide himself in a thousand woods or among as many other deer. The king accompanied by a number of cavaliers riding the quickest horses, follows the game over the country[...]On his Majesty coming up with the dead game, he dismounts, cuts its throat and opens it, sating the dogs with its blood, as the reward for their exertions. With his own umbrued hands, moreover, he is wont to regale some of his nobility by touching their faces. This blood it is unlawful to wash off, until fall of its own accord, and the favoured individual thus bedaubed is considered to be dubbed a keen sportsman and chief of the hunt...[109]

Organisation of the Tinchel

Martin Martin, writing *c.* 1695, in his brief description of a typical hunting party is strongly suggestive of a tinchel. 'The chieftain is usually attended with a numerous retinue when he goes a hunting the deer, this being his first specimen of manly exercise. All his clothes, arms, and hunting equipage are, upon his return from the hills, given to the forester, according to custom.'[110] Indeed, there is evidence to

---

[107] *CSHB*, i, 59, bk. 2, c. 2.
[108] *Ibid.*
[109] *CSP Venetian*, (1617-19), vol. XV, 259-60. The letter is dated 10 July 1618.
[110] *DWIS*, 170.

suggest that noble Gaelic families held hereditary hunting positions as foresters. It seems that some families would have been more or less connected to it through the generations, as skills would have been typically passed from father to son. A rental drawn up for Clanranald lands in South Uist, *c.* 1718, for example, states generally 'the lands possessed by heritable Falconers, Fowlers, Pipers and Foresters.'[111] It may also be mentioned that John Dow Crerar held a lease in 1663 of the merk land of Pitmakie and the shieling of Corriegoir, in Perthshire, for his service as a fowler to a local laird and for maintaining fowling nets and training dogs.[112] This, no doubt, reflects their social importance for skilled huntsmen and falconers were valued, and their generous remittance would have been commensurate with their experience and knowledge. For instance, 'a branch of the MacLachlans of MacLachlan, held at one time the small property of Conchra[...]because the Chiefs of Argyle had a con-chrò or kennel for their hounds[...]when they 'a-hunting did go' in Glendaruel.'[113]

The supply of good dogs (as well as beaters) was crucial to a successful hunt. Hounds (not to mention hawks) were prestige gifts. For instance, in 1473 the Laird of Luss was rewarded 10s. for two 'grew hundis' he gifted to King James III,[114] and in 1542 Lord Huntly was rewarded 24s. for gifting John Hamilton, Archbishop of St Andrews, 'his grace twa deir hundes.'[115] The Menzieses were so famous for breeding deerhounds that in the 16th century, their chief, John Menzies, was requested by the 'Lewetennant' of the King of Sweden for a leash of staghounds:

> Sir Archibald Ruthven of Forteviot, Knychte, Lewetenant vnto the King's M[aiestie] of Suadain, to James Mingeis, the laird of Weem. Edinburgh, 1 July 1573. He intends to embark about the 8th instant, and desires Menzies to obtain for him a leish of good deer-hounds as a present to the King of Sweeden.[116]

A glimpse of how dogs were assembled is provided by a 1632 grant of the lands of Camusnakiest in the Braes o' Mar. Each vassal was to give attendance to the Earl of Mar with eight followers for each davoch of land 'with their dogs and hounds of Mar', and they were to build 'lonckartis for the hunting, and sall make an put up further

---

[111] NAS, Forfeited Estates (Moidart: Rentals and related papers), E648/1/4, Abstract of the Real Estate of Ronald MacDonald holding of the Crown, South Uist.
[112] *BBT*, xxxii.
[113] MacInnes (of Argyll), John, *The Kyles of Bute and Glendaruel in History, Poetry and Folklore* (Oban: The Oban Times, 1904), 37.
[114] *TA*, i (1473–1498), 46.
[115] *TA*, x (1551–1559), 144.
[116] Menzies, David P., *The "Red and White" Book of Menzies* (Glasgow: Banks & Co., 1894), 206.

tinchellis.'[117] A year later, a charter with similar terms was granted by John, Earl of Mar, Lord of Erskine and Garioch, granting lands in Glengairn to Sir Alexander Irvine of Drum, where the tenants will 'big and putt wp lunkardis for the said hunting, and sall mak and putt furth tinschellis at the same according to wse and wont, and sall caus them carie furth the necessaries requyrit for the said hunting to the lunkardis[...]and tak up the slaine deir and raes to the lunkardis or to our house in Mar[...]as they have beine in use to doe in tyme bygaine.'[118]

The control of dogs, nevertheless, required some legal attention. In June 1707, the Duke of Atholl signed a warrant to his foresters, Alexander Stewart of Innerslaney and Thomas MacKenzie, that was pinned to the church door at Blair thereby:

> ...discharging any of our Tenants or others to bring any dogs to their sheallings that are within our Forrests under the pain of 20 shilling Scots, and in case they do, orders to our Forresters to kill them, beside paying of said fine, and this shall be their warrand.[119]

The sheer amount of resource management, mobilisation of men and equipment was akin to a clan being put on a war footing such as the great hunts that took place further north in the Highlands. At a hunting tryst which Lord Lovat held in Glenstrathfarrar in 1592 there was a 'vast row, accompanied with 2 lords and 6 barrons, with all their trains.'[120] Next year, he gave the Earl of Atholl 'hunting and sport fit for a King.'[121] In 1642, the Master of Lovat and his bride, Anna Leslie, and a large number of gentlemen, with around three hundred men in arms, had 'princly sport' in the forest of Killin when:

> ...the Master takes a progress to Stratharick to divert his young lady with hunting, and brings along[...]the Lairds of Strachin, Simon, Laird of Inveralochy; Sir James Fraser[...]Hugh Fraser of Struy; William Fraser, Culboky; Hugh Fraser of Belladrum; and Major Hugh Fraser, Culbokies brother[...]These and great many more off the young gentlemen of the country, a gallant, noble convoy[...]and 300 off the Stratharick and Abertarff men in armes[...]The first night they lodged at Farralin, and next morrow to the Forest of Killin, where they got fallow deer[...]and such princly sport as might alleviat the dullest spirit, and such as perhaps most of them had never seen before, and fed that night uppon fish and venison[...]After varieties of divertissements and recreations in the Forrest of Killin[...]the whole country contributing all manner

[117] Dodgshon, Robert, *The Age of the Clans: The Highlands from Somerled to the Clearances* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2002), 22-24.
[118] *RMS*, vol. IX (1634–1651), no. 99, 45. See Appendix B for full transcription.
[119] *CATF*, ii, 75.
[120] *Wardlaw*, 416-17.
[121] *Wardlaw*, 220.

> of necessaries for the family; and then[...]they go all up to Abertarfe, where the M'ranalds[...]welcolmed him and his court[...]to take sport in these fields, where deer and roe, hart and hare hunting, was now in prime and plently...[122]

A further great hunt took place some twenty years later in the forest of Monar in 1665. What makes the description from the *Wardlaw Manuscript* (begun in 1666), written by Rev. James Fraser of Phopachy (1634–1701), minister of Wardlaw or Kirkhill, most interesting is the mention of other sports (antecedent forms of the modern Highland games) that emphasises the social aspect of such great occasions:

> Seaforth procured a forloph this year [1655][...]and went to visit his friends the length of Kintail; and, resolving to keep a hunting[...]in the Forrest of Monnair, he prevailed with the Master and Tutor of Lovat to goe along with him, Captain Thomas Fraser his brother, Hugh Fraser of Belladrom, Alexander Fraser, barron off Moniak, Thomas Fraser, Eskidel, and with them the flower of the youth in our country, with a 100 pretty fellowes more. We traveled through Strathglaish and Glenstraffarar to Loch Monnair[...]Next day we got sight of 6 or 700 deere, and sportt off hunting fitter for kings then country gentlemen. The 4 days we tarried there, what is it that could cheere and recreat mens spirits but was gone about, jumping, arching, shooting, throwing the barr, the stone, and all manner of manly exercise imaginable, and every day new sport; and for entertainement our baggage was well furnished of beefe, mutton, foule, fishes, fat venison, a very princly camp, and all manner of liquors...[123]

The Rev. James Fraser was there, and so were two English gentlemen from the nearby Inverness garrison, who declared 'that in all their travels they never had such brave divertissement, and if they should relate it in England it would be concluded meer rants and incredible.'[124] It must have been, therefore, an event to behold.

The Rev. Robert Kirk and 'Tionoil na nslóigh chum na seilg'

The only piece of extant Gaelic poetry that gives a sustained account of an actual tinchel, or large-scale hunt, stems from the pen of a well-known Gaelic scholar and minister, the Rev. Robert Kirk, or Kirke (1644–1692), famous for his fascinating treatise on fairy belief and second sight, *The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies* (1690/1).[125] One of the more unusual aspects of the poem, perhaps, is that Kirk also composed an English poem in celebration of the tinchel, described from the preamble which introduces the piece: *A Description of the Marqŭess of Athol his*

---

[122] *Wardlaw*, 416-17.
[123] *Wardlaw*, 416.
[124] *Wardlaw*, 416.
[125] See Hunter, Michael (ed.), *The Occult Laboratory: Magic, Science and Second Sight in Late Seventeenth-Century Scotland* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2001), 38-41, 77-117.

solemn hŭnting on the spacioŭs Braes of Athol from Monday August 28th to Saturday Sepr 2nd 1682.[126] Indeed, his English composition about this hunt acts as a kind of a preamble to his Gaelic poem:

> No Deed when acted, then doth die:
> If ought of moment scrapt his verse
> When we have Leisure to make search
> A Galęc-Muse shall it Reherse.[127]

Kirk's Gaelic poem begins with the people gathering to form the hunting-party: *Tionoil na nslóigh chum na seilg*,[128] which may be taken as the title of the poem. It is written in a mock-heroic style in which he goes on to describe the leading members of the party (especially their lack of sartorial elegance) in some detail reflecting, no doubt, his wish, as a process of gentle chiding, to ingratiate himself into the élite of this particular social hierarchy. It can, though, be concluded that Kirk's poem was probably written for his own amusement and was certainly not intended for a public audience or airing. In any case, a contemporary portrait (formerly known as 'Highland Chieftain')[129] of Sir Mungo Murray (1668–1700) (fig. 5.6)—a possible participant in this tinchel though he is certainly not named and the fifth son of the Marquis of Atholl, shows him dressed for hunting. He wears a belted plaid, a double width of tartan cloth about five yards long and belted round the body to form a kilt below the waist and a mantle above. He also wears a fashionable doublet, holds a flintlock sporting gun and carries two scroll-butt pistols in his belt. In addition he bears a dirk and a ribbon-basket sword. It may be argued that it is a pictorial representation of warrior-hunter drawn from the imagery of the Panegyric Code.[130] The portrait is realistic and rather a splendid one of a Gaelic noble in all his finery. Indeed, hunting was undoubtedly one of the most visible and dramatic ways of communicating one's social (legitimate) pretensions because it allowed an effective public display of possessions, command of resources as well as an opportunity for showing off a noble demeanour.

---

[126] EUL, The Laing Collection, La.III.529, 84.
[127] *Ibid.*, 87.
[128] *Ibid.*, 88.
[129] Fenlon, Jane, 'John Michael Wright's 'Highland Laird' Identified', *Burlington Magazine*, vol. CXXX, no. 1027 (Oct., 1988), 767-69.
[130] *DG*, 40, 293.

After rehearsing a few customary compliments, Kirk provides an overall picture (with perhaps less exaggeration) of the hunt which is reminiscent of the descriptions given in earlier Ossianic literature, notably *Sliabh na mBan bhFhionn*:

> Neart is luas, saothair is sásdachd,
> 3 chéd cúth, is 6 céd sealgoir.
>
> Frith gan chiond gan chríoch, fiagh gan aireamh,
> 'Gach cir is coire nach innsd' gu márach.
>
> Tús greaghnach, is deireadh aoibhinn,
> Ceann mnaoi, is earra peucóig.
>
> Power and swiftness, toil and contentment,
> three hundred dogs and six hundred hunters.
>
> A boundless deer-forest full of countless deer,
> every ridge and corrie not told until tomorrow.
>
> Splendid beginning and joyful end,
> a woman's head and a peacock's tail.[131]

Examining the broader social context, this poem inverts as well as, at times, supports the display of almost crude Restoration obsessions with ritual pomp, ostentatious display and social order. The description of the hunt through the poetic medium here offers a glimpse not only of the hierarchical social order but also of the vicarious enjoyment of a spectator and participant (in this instance from the perspective of a man of the cloth) in an exclusive aristocratic pursuit. Only such noblemen as the Marquis of Atholl could, after all, command enough manpower to organise such a large-scale hunt using the customary method of the tinchel. Though many of the men who made up the tinchel were probably keen and experienced huntsmen, it would have been only at such annual events (before harvest time when their labour was necessary) as these that they received the call-up. Thus, in some respects, such great events offered a democracy of pleasure—an opportunity for all and sundry to partake in a communal event which no doubt reinforced social bonds, while, at the same time (and somewhat ironically), reiterating and consolidating their place within the social hierarchy. Doubtless localised tinchels occurred but were seldom if ever recorded. Only grand hunts at the periphery of the Highlands were deemed, it would seem, worthy of being mentioned and written about, usually by important visitors or royalty to the area.

A little after Kirk celebrated the tinchel in verse, there is some evidence for the method and rules of such gatherings. With regard to how such great social occasions were organised, on 1 August 1710, the Duke of Atholl issued instructions for a deer-hunt to take place in the Forest of Atholl when orders were sent:

> ...to John and Alexander Robertson, foresters in Glen Fernate, similar to that directed to John Reid, to advertise all the fencible men, belonging to us[...]in Glen Fernate and Glen Briarachan, to attend his Grace at the foot of Ben Vurich the following night, with a day's provision, for a deer-hunting the day after.[132]

On August 8, orders for another hunt party were issued to the office of Balquidder:

> ...to advertise all our Vassals and a fencible man out of every merk Land[...]within our Lordship of Balquidder to be at this place on Tuesday the 22^{d}[...]in their best arms and apparel, with 8 days provision, in order to attend us att a deer hunting in our Forest of Atholl; you are also to advertise them to bring as many dogs as possibly they can get.[133]

Later, on August 12, further orders were sent to the united parish of Blair and Struan, Kirkmichael, Moulin, Cluny, Glenalmond, Logierait, Weem, Dull, and Fortingall. And invitations were sent as far afield to Farquharson of Inverey and Mackenzie of Dalmore:

> I designe to have a deer hunting this year, which is to begin on Wednesday, the 23^{d} ins^{t} in Beaniglo. If you please to come there that day with some pretty men & as many dogs as you can provide, you shall be very welcome.
> BLAIR, *Aug.* 14th, 1710.[134]

On that date, vassals, tenants and fencible men[135] convened at the Green of Blair and then travelled to *Druim na h-Eachdra*, at the head of Glen Girnaig, where more orders were read out to all the officers before the tinchel was sent out:

> 1. That none shall offer to fire a gun or pistol in the time of the deer hunting.
>
> 2. That none shall offer to breack up the deer, or take out a grealloch except in His Grace's presence, where they are to be disposed on.
>
> 3. That none be drunk, or swear an oath.

---

[131] *Ibid.*, 91. See Appendix A for a transcription and a tentative translation of this difficult text.
[132] *CATF*, ii, 123; Ferguson, Charles, 'Sketches of the Early History, Legends, and Traditions of Strathardle and its Glens', *TGSI*, vol. XXIII (1898–99), 175.
[133] *CATF*, ii, 123-24.
[134] *CATF*, ii, 124; Ferguson, Charles, 'Sketches of the Early History, Legends, and Traditions of Strathardle and its Glens', 177.
[135] A list of the Duke of Atholl's fencible men survives, some of whom would have made up the numbers of the tinchel. See, *CATF*, ii, Appendix, iii-lxxxvi.

> Whoever shall transgress any of these rules shall be fyned and taken into custody, as His Grace shall aprove.[136]

A year later, another tinchel was organised in Perthshire where it is stated that after failing to kill any deer on the first day, the next day twenty-five were killed on Carn Righ and the day after that some thirty-two were killed on Ben Vurich.[137] Spalding of Ashintully, after excusing himself on grounds of ill health was able, nonetheless, to send a hundred men to the hunting tryst.[138] Such instructions show the sheer amount of effort that was needed to facilitate and organise a hunt. Also the number of rules, which is probably not unique, is perhaps an example of the formalisation of such events, something that was probably absent from earlier hunting trysts. Indeed, it may be added that such a 'social distinction was never so pronounced in Scotland as in England or France can be attributed to the less formal nature of hunting methods in Scotland.'[139] Thus, instead of hunting grounded in rules and regulations, ostensibly those recommended in medieval hunting manuals and their early modern equivalents, the Scots were guided by informal custom imbued by experience rather than book learning and, for this reason, the tinchel became *the* indigenous hunting method used in Scotland. This was probably influenced by the fact that the drive offered a far more communal—and thus democratic—method of hunting, which, in any case, may have precluded the formalities of aristocratic etiquette often demanded by the strictures of both English and Continental hunting methods. This is probably the reason why Scottish hunting and hawking methods can be distinguished from their European counterparts.[140]

Proclaiming a Hunting: Social and Political Context of the Great Hunts

James Logan (*c.* 1794–1872) writing in *The Scottish Gaël* provides a socio-political context for some of the major hunts which had taken place in the Highlands:

> But fond as the Highlanders were of the chase, and useful as it was to their subsistence, they did not pursue it to the neglect of more important avocations[...]The great hunting matches were the means of preserving a social intercourse between tribes who lived far distant from each other. It was a means

[136] *CATF*, ii, 124; Ferguson, Charles, 'Sketches of the Early History, Legends, and Traditions of Strathardle and its Glens', 178.
[137] *CATF*, ii, 133-34; *Ibid.*, 178.
[138] *CATF*, ii, 133; *Ibid.*, 178.
[139] *HHRMS*, 74.
[140] *HHRMS*, 76.

> also of bringing the chiefs and principal men of the country together, and enabled them to adjust differences, settle future proceedings…[141]

Logan then proceeds to give a description of these high-spirited occasions:

> …the chief gave a great entertainment after any successful expedition, to which all the country round was invited. On an occasion like this, the whole deer[…]were roasted, and laid on boards or hurdles of rods placed on the rough trunks of trees, so arranged as to form an extended table, and the *uisge-beatha* went round[…]The pipers played during the feast, after which the women danced, and, when they retired, the harpers were introduced.[142]

It is related that Sir Ewen Dubh Cameron allowed captured Cromwellian soldiers to hunt in order to relieve them of the boredom of captivity. Lochiel, along with his guests, were 'mett by some hundreds of his men, whom he ordered to be convened for that purpose', and formed a tinchel to drive the deer towards their 'captive' guests so that 'the gentlemen had the pleasure of killing them with broad-swords, which was a diversion new and uncommon to them.'[143] Using swords to tackle deer was dangerous but would have added to the spectacle's excitement. There is, however, nothing to indicate any fatalities or injuries incurred by the hunting party. Such a practice is not described explicitly in Gaelic song but an extract from *Tighearna Chluainidh*, praising MacPherson of Cluny, may indicate an oblique reference to such a practice:

> Le'n claidh'ean chinn Ilich, 's an cuilbhearan cinnteach,
> 'Cur naimhdean na 'n sineadh le dillseachd am bualaibh,
> Ga'n reubadh na'm mirean, mar leomhainn ro mhillteach,
> Measg bheathach na frith ann an strith Thighearna Chluainidh.[144]
>
> With Islay-hilted swords and with trusty calivers,
> Enemies were slain with constant blows
> And torn to bits by a great destroying lion
> Among the beasts of the deer-forest in Lord Cluny's strife.

The last great tinchel to take place in the Highlands presaged the 'Fifteen Jacobite Rebellion when the standard of King James VIII, or the 'Old Pretender', was raised on the Braes o' Mar on 6 September:

---

[141] Logan, James (auth.); Stewart, Rev. Alexander (ed.), *The Scottish Gaël; or, Celtic Manners as Preserved among the Highlanders*, 2 vols. (Inverness: Hugh MacKenzie; Edinburgh: MacLachlan & Stewart, 1876), ii, 46-47.
[142] *Ibid.*, ii, 142-43.
[143] Drummond, John (auth.); MacKnight, J. (ed.), *Memoirs of Sir Ewen Cameron of Locheill* (Edinburgh: Abottsford Club, 1842), 143-44.
[144] Mackenzie, William, 'Leaves from my Celtic Portfolio. V', 20.

> This proclaiming a Hunting, is a Custom among the Lords and Chiefs of Families in the Highlands, and on which Occasions they invite their Neighbouring Gentlemen and Vassals to a general Rendezvous, to hunt or chase the Deer upon the Mountains[...]The Usage on these Occasions, is, that all the People round the Country, being well arm'd, assemble upon the Day appointed; and after the Deversion is over, the Persons of Note are invited to an Entertaiment...[145]

Confusion arises, however, between the actual proclamation and the disguised hunting party known as the 'Hunting of Braemar', organised by John Erskine (1675–1722), 5th Earl of Mar, or Bobbin' Jock (fig. 5.7). All the disaffected Jacobites leaders met at Invercauld, including the Marquis of Tullibardine, Lord Seaforth, Marquis of Huntly, the Chief of Glengarry as well as around twenty-six Highland chiefs.[146] A few days before, on the banks of the River Tay, Mar on his way northward, stayed overnight. Next day, on 19 August, letters of invitation were sent to the principal Jacobite chiefs, as well as his supporters in the Lowlands, to Glen Quoich on 26/27 August:

> ...to join him in a great hunting party in his forest of Mar, and had personal interviews with those whose estates lay near his route[...]This rapid gathering together of many men[...]shows that his friends had been prepared[...]Crossing the Grampian range to his own "country"[...]went northwards to his chief fortalice of Kildrummie[...]Here he arranged for the great hunting match, or tinchel...[147]

At this 'Great Council' the plan for the Rebellion was hatched and the campaign logistics were put on a footing under the pretence of 'a Hunting in his own country.' The historian Burton then proceeds to describe the event and explains why it was such an ideal gathering place:

> ...the tinchel was the occasion of great assemblages in the Highlands, and years earlier the rumour of such a gathering had raised a suspicion[...]that the men of Athole should gather from all quarters, and, crossing the ridges of mountains[...]concentrate themselves in the valley of the Dee, where they met the men of the Braes of Angus[...]the Drummonds[...]the Breadalbane men[...]the Gordons and MacKenzies[...]Braemar was a spot well chosen to enable a large body of conspirators to conduct their operations[...]It was indeed separated by lofty mountain-ranges from the great Highland straths which, as containing the clans most distinguished by disaffection, had chiefly attracted the alarm and attention of the Revolution Government[...]A general council was

[145] Patten, Rev. Robert, *The History of the Late Rebellion* (London: J. Baker & T. Warner, 1717), 150.
[146] Michie, Rev. John G. (ed.), *The Records of Invercauld* (Aberdeen: Spalding Club, 1901), 297; see also Crawford, *A Compleat History of the Late Rebellion* (London: S. Cliffe & T. Cox, 1716), 13 and Rae, Rev. Peter, *History of the Late Rebellion* (London: A. Millar, 1746), 188.
[147] Burton, John Hill, *The History of Scotland: Form Agricola's Invasion to the Last Jacobite Insurrection* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, new ed., 1897), viii, 257.

> held on the 26th of August[...]the number thus assembled amounted to but 800 men.[148]

When all was settled, they returned home to raise their men; but many of them had not reached their distant glens when Mar re-summoned them to meet him at Aboyne on 3 September. Some sixty years later, Thomas Pennant wrote, in the safe knowledge that such a rising was unlikely ever to re-occur: 'But hunting meetings, among the great men, were often the preludes to rebellion; for under that pretence they collected great bodies of men without suspicion, which at length occasioned an act of parlement prohibiting such dangerous assemblies.'[149] In a *Memoir Regarding the State of the Highlands.—1716*, long attributed to Simon Fraser (1667–1747), Lord Lovat, the seditionary nature of hunting assemblages is made apparent:

> When any of these great men has any designe, either against the government or his neighbours, immediately he appoints a great deer-hunting[...]he invites a great many people of all ranks in the neighbourhood fittest for his purpose, and whom he thinks to hook into his measures, which invitation imports their bringing all their fenceable men under armes, where there is a great emulation betwixt every clan and family, he being esteemed the hero of the hunting and the great man's favourite, who appears most formidable[...]in his number, armes, and apparel. Thus these huntings are the pretext, when treason[...]may be the purpose, and where they have the opportunity not only to lay the plot and contrivance, but also to[...]see the materials fitt for putting the same in execution.[150]

The most significant aspect of these hunting trysts was their socio-political impact. Hunting as a cover for a military raid, or to incite rebellion, was an ancient subterfuge. Large scale hunts were a rehearsal for war, a realistic exercise in military logistics, and a way of communicating and concealing political and martial intentions. The success of the tinchel, like success in a military encounter, depended upon discipline, an effective chain of command, and the ability to deploy and control armed formations. Thus hunting trysts were clearly seen as hostile and rebellious acts by the government and had to be stamped out in order to impress greater control over disaffected Highland chiefs and their concomitant military powers. As well as this it is a well-understood phenomenon that many of the Highland élite went through an

---

[148] *Ibid.*, 258-59; Keith, James, *A Fragment of a Memoir of Field-Marshal James Keith written by himself, 1714–1734* (Edinburgh: Spalding Club, 1843), 11; Coull, Sam, *Nothing But My Sword: The Life of Field Marshal James Francis Edward Keith* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2000), 41.
[149] Pennant, Thomas, *A Tour in Scotland. MDCCLXIX*, 101.
[150] Drummond, John (auth.); MacKnight, J. (ed.), *Memoirs of Sir Ewen Cameron of Locheill, Chief of the Clan Cameron*, 379.

process of Anglicisation that steadily grew through the 17th century. This was partly through education, dislocation of the élite (many preferred the high-life of Edinburgh and elsewhere to their native glens and islands), commercial and cultural contacts with the Lowlands as well as further afield. By and large, then, many of the Highland élite (though there were notable exceptions) increasingly became more and more comfortable with English-speaking society. During this period there was a marked decline in the patronage of native Gaelic arts by the élite which in turn led to a destabilising of cultural norms and also to economic and social problems.[151] It would appear, then, that hunting trysts were but one of many indigenous practices that went into decline during this period until it was abruptly put to an end after the 'Fifteen.

Nevertheless, the custom of feasting after a hard day's hunt dies hard, and even late into the 17th century there is a description of sumptuous fare that parallels the one described by John Taylor:

> ...not far from the banks of the Spey[...]a large tent[...]was set up[...]the tables were covered, and all the rarities of the season spread upon them[...]the ladies in coaches, and some, like Diana, when she went a hunting, arrived in sight; and the gentlemen, with their servants[...]drew near the tents in neat hunting dresses, and brought with them sixty-five brace of birds, besides hares, partridges, and a large pole-cat[...]At half past four, dancing began on the short, soft heath[...]At five, dinner was announced. To the best of beef, mutton, fowls, and venison, there was added some braces of excellent muir-fowl. The fire with which they were dressed[...]was composed of oil and gunpowder. There was a porter, beer, brandy, cyder[...]with wines of the very best taste and flavour...[152]

This is a good example of the continuity of tradition whereby the hunt though, unfortunately, not described by the minister, is followed by a ritualised feast allowing for good companionship and entertainment. Clearly it was not as important as the great hunting trysts of bygone days but such an occasion suggests that it served, nonetheless, to act, in tandem with tradition, as a social ritual in order to reinforce social bonding and patronage.[153]

Conclusion

By and large, a Gaelic perspective of hunting is reflected in the indigenous hunting method of the tinchel. Taken together, these various testimonies of great hunts in the

---

[151] *HSGW*, 278-79.

[152] Hall, Rev. James, *Travels in Scotland*, 2 vols. (London: J. Johnson, 1807), ii, 405.

Highlands, from diverse, independent, and often eyewitness accounts, affirm that the tinchel was conducted on a monumental scale, and that such hunts were conducted primarily as military or political occasions designed to inculcate competence in governance and political authority. Thus, when the Scottish kings from very early times hunted in their royal forests, mainly on what would now be called the periphery of the Highlands (from the Braes of Angus to Darnaway Forest in Moray),[154] they adopted native methods to the exclusion of Anglo-Norman techniques which had been introduced from around the end of the 11th century. As John Gilbert has argued *par force* hunting was the most important method in medieval Europe, which leaves Scotland unique in that the native drive was adopted as the most popular method. This points to Gaelic custom as the main influence for this phenomenon.[155] The Anglo-Normans adopted, through a process of acculturation, the indigenous hunting customs and this can be seen clearly from the history of the drive, its currency before and after 1125, and the continuing use of elrick and tinchel from the medieval period through to the early modern era.

Large-scale deer-hunts such as the tinchel, organized by the Gaelic nobility, brought together the gentry and the commonalty as a community. This was even more so for royal hunts, with the splendour of pomp and ceremony, dramatising the power and mystique of monarchy. It was a potent symbol of privilege and one which reinforced the social hierarchy and yet paradoxically levelled out any social distinction through a democratic process in pursuit of a common endeavour, at least for the duration of the hunt. Doubtless, though, the hierarchy would be again re-asserted for the tremendous feasting which took place afterwards. Hunting trysts were used as political subterfuge for warfare thus sustaining a symbiotic connection between them.

Since medieval times great hunts in Highlands remained popular for a number of reasons: the main attraction was the sheer amount of game available together with enough experienced manpower to field such great events. Royal patronage was clearly something to be aimed for, and many of the great Highland magnates, who owned estates adjacent to the Lowlands, were only too willing to arrange such great tinchels. It allowed them to gain influence within the Scots royal court. It appears that the Isle

[153] The impact of the tinchel was also well used by Sir Water Scott in *Waverly, or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since* (1814) where a chapter is devoted to a fairly accurate (if romantised) historical description of a large scale deer-hunt.
[154] *HHRMS*, 33-34.

of Rum was a hunting reserve during the medieval period and was established solely for the privilege of the native Gaelic nobility. The greatest episode of hunting, though clearly not on the same scale as the royal hunts that took place earlier, must be in the chase for the white hind of Corrichiba, which, from a mere royal whim, set off a chain of events encapsulating the royal prerogative of the hunt—a complex matrix of power, patronage, politics and, ultimately, propaganda. The tinchel acted as a surrogate for war as it was a seasonal mobilising of the *sluagh*, or host, the followers who accompanied the *fine*, the Gaelic nobility. This maintained or enhanced their status, while reinforcing clan solidarity in a shared symbol of sporting endeavour, in chasing the noble quarry of the deer.[156] The changing role of the Gaelic élite, nevertheless, can been seen from a shifting perception of a 'classical' phase governed by the chief as hunter-protector, and recycler of resources, to a 'cockatoo' phase, through the 16th and 17th centuries, exemplified by Kirk's poem. This is complemented by both John Taylor's description of a tinchel in 1618 that took place in the Braes o' Mar and Barclay's earlier description of a royal tinchel that took place in Atholl in 1564. Towards the end of the 17th century, there was a gradual withdrawal of the tinchel, culminating in the last great hunt presaging the 'Fifteen, when stalking or small-scale hunting was becoming the preferred method of hunting. This finally led to the hunting song's mid-18th century swansong (in terms of the tinchel) exemplified by Duncan Bàn Macintyre's *Moladh Beinn Dòbhrain*. The main irony in Macintyre's hunting *tour de force* is that praise normally reserved for chiefs had been transferred to Ben Dorain: it was a praise for a mountain rather than a man. The shifting perspective and weakening of the Gaelic élite was caught by Macintyre and so his song managed to capture these contemporary events. To juxtapose these two poems that have hunting at their core: Kirk emphasised huntsmen whereas Macintyre emphasised hunting. After all, Macintyre was a professional stalker and Kirk was certainly not. There is a movement away from ceremony to utility. In a way the move was away from pomp and circumstance, from the ideal to the real. The tinchel displayed a ruler's ability to marshal and order men, military resources and individuals (both human and animals) with skill. Moreover, by the very nature of the hunt, these abilities were dramatically demonstrated through his domains for the edification of his subjects. A forceful

---

[155] *Ibid.*, 60s
[156] *CCHS*, 22.

demonstration in one sphere, such as the tinchel, strongly implies an equivalent in others. The tinchel, therefore, served as an effective re-affirmation of a chief's capacity to manage long-scale enterprises, that is, to govern. Once the bonds of such a kin-based society had began to loosen, and the status of some of the Gaelic nobility began to decline, so too, the status of the tinchel inevitably changed. In sum, then, the decline of the large-scale hunting was another casualty in the changing identity, and indeed location, of the Gaelic élite.

Chapter Six

Unlawful Hunting and The Romance of Poaching

Breac à linne, slat à coille 's fiadh à fireach—
mèirle nach do ghabh Gàidheal nàire riamh.

A fish from the pool, a wand from the wood, a deer from the mountain—thefts no Gael was ever ashamed of.

CHAPTER SIX

UNLAWFUL HUNTING AND THE ROMANCE OF POACHING

An old Gaelic saying goes 'breac à linne, slat à coille 's fiadh à fireach—mèirle nach do ghabh Gàidheal nàire riamh,'[1] which befits the romanticised image of the poacher using all his guile to outwit the hapless gamekeeper. Be this as it may, the Gael was a jealous preserver of game though not, perhaps, on the same administrative and zealous extent as evinced by the forest laws of, say, the Anglo-Norman kings,[2] or indeed, the Scots legal code for forest laws enshrined from the 12th and 13th centuries in *Leges Forestarum*.[3] After this period, nevertheless, there were various enactments passed by the Scots Parliament over the centuries specifically legislating against illegal hunting. Hunting rights have been an element in man's social organisation since at least the 7th century, when the hunting reserves of the Frankish Empire were first recorded. Such laws emphasised the protection of royal forest, owned directly by the king, who asserted his royal prerogative for the protection of 'vert and venison', that is to say, the preservation of beasts and game in the forest and the vegetation which gave them cover and sustenance.

The above saying, though fostered as an aphorism of the Gaels, is without historical foundation. For thefts they were considered to be notwithstanding, and from the earliest times efforts were made by the legislature and landowners to suppress such illegal activity. The Scottish enactments against illegal fishing, hunting and destruction of woods, fills no small portion of the statute book from the 12th century onwards, and what evidence exists tends to support the view that they were more or

---

[1] 'A fish from a pool, a wand from a wood and a deer from the mountain—thefts no Gael was ever ashamed of.' See Nicolson, (Sheriff) Alexander (ed.), *A Collection of Gaelic Proverbs and Familiar Phrases* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1996), 76; MacDonald, Alexander, *Story and Song from Loch Ness-side* (Inverness: Northern Counties Publishing Co., 1914), 94.

[2] Petit-Dutaillis, Charles, 'The Forest in Medieval England', in *Studies and Notes Supplementary to Stubbs' Constitutional History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1930), 166-78. Extreme penalties for offences against these laws were abolished by the Forest Charter of 1217. At least for England, The Code of Forest Laws (*Constitutiones de Foresta*), reputedly harking back to King Canute, imposed such penalties for poaching as imprisonment, outlawry, exile, amputation of hand or foot, even death for twice offering violence to the King's forester, or (being a bondman) for killing a royal hart. For the origins and development of the Royal Forests in England, see Grant, Raymond K. J., *The Royal Forests of England* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1991), 3-20; and Young, Charles R., *The Royal Forests of Medieval England* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1979), 1-32; Henrick, Thomas S., 'Sport and Social Hierarchy in Medieval England', 27.

[3] *HHRMS*, Appendix B, 271-328 for an edition of the Forest Laws complete with translation and detailed commentary.

less rigorously enforced (at least in theory) in the Highlands from a comparatively early period. It is difficult to say, nevertheless, whether such laws, whose sole purpose was to reserve and preserve game within a legally defined hunting ground—the earliest dating to the 14th century, while the majority belong to the 15th century—had any great impact on the Highlands as a whole. When these laws were first promulgated, their legal influence first impacted upon the south-eastern periphery of the Highlands. During the Middle Ages, at the south-eastern periphery of the Highlands, when incomers, and above all else the crown itself, chose to designate vast tracts of land as legal 'forest', many native magnates were left relatively undisturbed in the exercise of their lordly power over the forests and hunting tracts of their territories. Though royal proclamations held that no lord could hunt or grant hunting privileges within his lands without royal licence, records from both Strathearn and Lennox, for instance, attest that they had total independence from the crown in this respect.[4] Such Gaelic lords, nevertheless, did not look lightly upon any interference or incursions into the political autonomy that they enjoyed in their own local area. For other parts, the effect of these promulgations is lacking as, whatever records remain for the Highlands and Islands are rather meagre until around the beginning of the 16th century. In any case, these various statutes state how the law was supposed to work and not how it actually worked in practice, thus establishing a familiar gulf between theory and practice.

Medieval Enactments and Later Legislation against Illegal Hunting

Poaching, or unlawful hunting, is a persistent phenomenon dating back to the first endeavours of the aristocracy to assert their exclusive hunting rights over game reserves, commonly designated as royal deer-forests and chases. Many attempts by medieval and early modern kings and their parliaments declared that hunting was a royal and aristocratic privilege. Despite this (or perhaps because of this), hunting never lost its universal appeal and continued to be attractive to popular tastes. The unlawful hunting of game represented an attack on the aristocratic hunting preserve as a symbol of power, prerogative, and privilege. Hunting rights then, as now, were open

[4] Neville, Cynthia J., *Native Lordship in Medieval Scotland: The Earldoms of Strathearn and Lennox, c.1140–1365* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 84.

to contention, and may, in fact, represent one of the oldest and most consistent tensions that existed between social classes.

Before this era, Adomnán relates in *Vita Sancti Columbae*, written *c.* 697, that St Columba sent two monks, Luigbe and Silnán, from Iona to Coll, to seek out a thief, Erc moccu Druidi, for hunting seals from the monastery's own territory. The saint is said to have addressed him thus, 'To what end do you persistently offend against the Lord's commandment and steal what belongs to others? If you are in need, and come to us, you will receive the necessities you request.' Instead of seals, the thief was given some slaughtered sheep, and sent homewards. On later hearing that the thief was on his death bed, St Columba, through his Christian compassion, sent gifts that were used at the thief's funeral.[5] In addition, there is also a mention of how St Columba bestowed the gift of a miraculous deer-trap on a poor man in Lochaber.[6]

As noted earlier, the codification of Old Irish law texts originate during the 7th–8th centuries, but copies survive in 14th–16th century manuscripts. These early legal texts, together with those from Wales, give a practical insight into the legal status of the chase in both of these early societies. Though there is only fragmentary evidence for an extant ancient code of law for Scotland, it may well be that similar types of legal practices were in force and, further, that these may have been formed through the influence of her Celtic neighbours. Even so, traces of hunting restrictions surface within mythological Fenian lore. In a ballad, *How Fingal and Goll Cast Out Hunting the Leana*, Fionn was out in the hunting hill when an argument arose between himself and his arch-nemesis, Goll, over the ownership of a hart's carcase, which then caused the disputants to take arms.[7] This may have been a contemporary practice projected onto the past when the ballad was created, or, indeed, it may reflect a vestigial remnant of an ancient hunting law. Either way, it shows that hunting rights go further back than late-medieval times.

In medieval Scotland the status of hunting becomes far clearer, as it fell into three distinct categories. First, the king, nobility and gentry reserved game for their own enjoyment in hunting—exclusivity was the domain from which lordly power

---

[5] Adomnán (of Iona) (auth.); Sharpe, Richard (ed.), *The Life of St Columba* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 143-44. Sharpe adds an interesting note that it is known from the first Latin life of St Brigit, § 74, that in 7th century Ireland seals were hunted by boat using a spear attached to a line called *murga* 'sea-spear' or *róngai* 'seal-spear.'

[6] *Ibid.*, 185-87.

[7] *LF*, 145-46.

derived its authority. Second, rabbit stocks were managed in *cuninigars*, or warrens, as they were commercially valuable for their meat and skins. Third came all the rest, falling into the category of *res nullius*, i.e. nobody's property, and, as such, it was not the subject of private property until taken into possession by being either killed or captured.[8] This long-held popular belief is akin to a medieval legal doctrine that either denoted the exclusive right of hunting or taking certain beasts (*ferœ naturœ*) in a particular place, or the land over which such a right existed. The status of forest creatures as *res nullius*, as argued by Gilbert, echoes Gaelic notions operating in Scotland before the 12th century.[9]

Hunting and game preservation are inter-related: hunting must respect the intentions of game preservation, and game preservation must rely on hunting as one of the methods of achieving its intentions. There is an obvious symbiotic relationship.

From medieval times, Scottish kings and nobility jealousy guarded their right to exclusive hunting grounds. The first of these enactments can be traced to King Alexander's reign (*r.* 1107–1124) when it was ordained that no one was allowed to hunt hares outwith forests and warrens.[10] The ruling élite in attempting to restrict hunting privileges to maintain their status quo explicitly shows that hunting had a universal appeal, and also that there was a familiar tension between the élite, trying to enforce these very rights against the commonalty, who saw these rights of exclusivity in direct opposition to their very own right to hunt.

From a general point of view, nonetheless, the modes adopted by the Scots Parliament in protecting deer and other game range around several well-recognised expedients. In the first place, deer were not to be slain but by properly qualified persons: in the earliest days by the king and his court, or by persons to whom he had deputed or granted rights of forestry, as is the case in a statute that appeared in an act passed by King James I in 1424;[11] and, in later days, by the great landowners on whose ground the deer roamed, for no one dare slay 'der nor Rais in wthis closs or pkes[...]but special licence of the awnars, wnd the payne of dittay, ande to be punyst as thift' (1474).[12] The 'unlaw' or fine for such a crime, at first 'x li,' was raised in 1579 to 'ten pundes' for a first offence, 'twentie pundes' for a second, and 'fourtie

[8] *HHRMS*, 5.
[9] *HHRMS*, 8-10, 226.
[10] *APS*, i, (1124–1428), Quon. Att. c. 31, I. 652
[11] *LW*, 11.

pundes' for a third, but if the malefactor was 'not responsall in guddes,' he was to 'be put in the stokes, prison or irones for auct dayes on bread and water' for the first offence, 'fifteene dayes' for the second, and for the third was to suffer 'hanging to the death.'[13] A similar act was ordained two years later in 1581.[14]

In the second place, deer were preserved for hunting, and during medieval times this referred to the 'clamorous hunt' with trained deerhounds, and so all other methods were prohibited in an act framed in 1597. These included shooting or slaying with such noxious 'engines' as 'hagbuttis hand gunis croce boues and pistollatis and taking of thame with girnis and nettis' and, further, 'that it salbe lesum to every shereff steuart baillie and barroune within his awin boundis to slay all lying doggis qlke the foullaris usis for slauchter[...]and tak and apprehend the saidis foulleris thame selffis and put thame in stockis and detene thame thairin for the space of 48 houris als oft as thai be apprehendit.'[15]

In the third place, deer were not to be slain until they had matured, for it was provided in 1474, no to touch 'ony of thair kyddes quhill thay be a heir aulde under the paine of x li...'[16]

In the fourth place, a 'close season' was attempted, instituted by a law in 1400, and later confirmed by an act of 1474, as it was ordained 'that na man sla dais or rays nor deir in tyme of storm or snaw[...]under the paine of x li.'[17]

As a last resort a total prohibition was tried, for the Scots Parliament in the reign of King Charles II ruled that, from June 1682, venison was not to be bought or sold for the next seven years.[18] The context of this edict was a rather draconian Restoration measure which attempted to revive the manifold strictures of hunting laws previously enacted by Charles II's predecessors, though, it may be added, on the face of it, that such legislation was an attempt at game preservation as 'the manly exercises of hunting and hawking is like to be altogether neglected.'[19] It seems that Charles II (probably under his father's influence)[20] was determined to see that laws previously

---

[12] *APS*, ii, (1424–1567), 107, c. 16.
[13] *IMALS*, 209.
[14] *APS*, iii, (1567–1592), 225, c. 30.
[15] *APS*, iv, (1593–1625), 140, c. 37.
[16] *APS*, ii, (1424–1567), 107, c. 16.
[17] *APS*, ii, (1424–1567), 107, c. 16.
[18] *RPC, iii*, vol. VII (1681–1682), 467.
[19] *Ibid.*, 465.
[20] For the English context, see Hammersley, G., 'The Revival of the Forest Laws under Charles I', *History*, vol. 45 (1960), 85-102.

flouted which 'of late tymes have been less regarded these many years bygone to the enorm lesion of our people and contempt of our authority' were to be effectively enforced by the appointment of new commissioners who would, presumably, have been more zealous then their predecessors.[21]

The importance attached to the protection of games and the great efforts made to preserve them, may be judged by the fact that, during the 16th century alone, no fewer than eleven acts were passed concerning the penalties prescribed for illegal slaughter of deer. An early royal proclamation, relating to the Highlands, is found in King James IV's letter to William Edmonstone, keeper of Glenfinglas forest in 1507/8:

> ...we ar informit that divers oure liegis duelling about our saidis forrestis daily pastures[...]and destroys and frays oure dier with stalking rachis and utherwaiis, incontrar oure command and ordinance maid[...]Oure will is herefor[...]be oppyn proclamatioun at all the paroche kirkis[...]all and sindry our leigis, that name of thaim tak apon hand to stalk with bowis or rachis in ony place within the boundis[...]under the heist pane of escheting of the catall and gudis that beis apprehendit within oure saidis forrestis and punysing of thair personys that stalkis haldis rachis or makis gaitis[...]according to our lawis and statuis maid thairapon[...]beis apprehendit within our saidis forrestis, or ony personys usis halking, hunting, stalking, rynnand rachis or commone gaitis in the sammyn efter our said proclamatioun, that ye eschet the saidis catall and gudis, bowis, hundis and rachis[...]to our use, and send to us the namys of the personis that usis the sammyn, that we may mak thaim be callit and punist thairfor according to our lawis...[22]

A forester's status and duties are revealed in a letter whereby King James VI appointed Donald Farquharson as keeper of the king's forests of Braemar, Cromar, and Strathdee, dated 12 July 1584, as:

> ...forestar and keipar of oure soverane lordis forestis, wodis and mureis lying within the boundis of Braemar, Cromar, and Straithdee, for the space of ane yeir next eftir[...]and forder indureing his Hienes will with pouer to him, his deputis and servandis, for quhome he sal be haldin to ansuer, to caus hayne the saidis wodis, forestis and mureis and to serche, seik, tak and apprehend all and quhatsumevir personis hantand or repairand thairin with bowis, culveringis, nettis or ony uther instrument meit and convenient for the distructioun of the deir and murefowlis[...]and to present thair persoun to the Justice, schiref or ony uther ordinar juge to be punischeit conforme to the lawis of this realme...[23]

[21] *RPC*, *iii*, vol. VII (1681–1682), 465-69.
[22] *RSS*, i, 1637.
[23] *CRA*, 189; *RMS*, vol. VIII (1581–1584), 381, no. 2208.

The forester's role was one which carried a great deal of prestige and responsibility not to mention danger,[24] for he was the king's legal enforcer with regard to forest law. A forester's main duties were fourfold: first, to guard the ground assigned to him against any unauthorised access; second, to keep out other people's grazing animals; third, to kill vermin; and fourth, to shoot the deer for the landlord's larder. There is evidence for similar commissions for the forests in Corrichiba in 1687,[25] and Perthshire dating between 1707 and 1709.[26] An example of increased formalisation is seen by the strict instructions issued by John Murray, Duke of Atholl, to his foresters in 1706.[27]

'Wicked Clan Gregour' and the Death of a Royal Forester

In 1589, Balquidder was the scene of a heinous crime committed by a band of Glencoe MacDonalds, when John Drummond of Drummond-Ernoch, the king's forester in Glenartney, was murdered while out hunting in order to supply venison for King James VI's wedding feast. Earlier that year, the king's servant had cropped the ears from MacDonald poachers who had been caught red-handed stealing the king's deer.[28] Needless to say, they had not forgiven the king's forester, and when the opportunity arose they descended into Breadalbane, caught and summarily executed him and took away his head. They then, allegedly, headed to Glen Vorlich where they showed their gruesome trophy to Stewart of Ardvorlich's wife, the royal forester's sister, which, so the tale goes, broke her mind. The MacDonalds then made for Balquidder safe in the knowledge that they would get shelter and protection from the MacGregors. Led by their chief, Alasdair of Glenstrae, the MacGregors marched along with the fugitive MacDonalds to Balquidder kirk, where the head was set up and each one passed by laying their hands upon it and swore an oath to take the guilt of Drummond's murder upon themselves and to defend the Glencoe men from all comers.[29] The personal affront to King James earned the MacGregors, who, it would

---

[24] *CATF*, i, 171.
[25] *BBT*, 426-27. For a full transcription, see Appendix B.
[26] *CATF*, ii, 75; 103.
[27] *LW*, 23. For a transcription, see Appendix B.
[28] Campbell, John D. S. (Duke of Argyll), *Adventures in Legend*, 201; see also NAS, Drummond Castle Muniments, GD160/528/36, where, in letters of 1588, King James VI commands Patrick, Lord Drummond, heritable forester of Glenartney, to enrol and give up names of all persons found slaying deer and other wild beasts in said forest, so that such persons may be punished.
[29] Miles, Hamish, *Fair Perthshire* (London: Jane Lane The Bodley Head, 1930), 8-9; Shearer, John, *Antiquities of Perthshire, with Historical and Traditional Tales* (Perth: J. Taylor, *c.* 1860), 13-16;

seem, were found guilty by association—and on whom the blame for the murder was firmly pinned, despite the fact that they had not taken any part in it—the extreme displeasure of the Privy Council, as their proceedings, leaving but little to the imagination, relate:

> The Lordis of Secrete Counsaill being credibillie informeit of the cruell and mischievous procedings of the wicked Clan Gregour, sa lang continewing in blude, slauchtaris, heirshippis, manifest reiffis and stouthis, commit upoun his Hienes peceable and gude subjectis inhabiting the cuntreyis ewest the Brayis of the Hielandis[...]the cruell murthour of umquhile Johnne Drummond of Drummanerynoch, his Majesteis propir tennent and ane of his fosteris of Glenartnay[...]be certane of the said Clan, be the counsale and determinatioun of the haill, avowand to defend the authouris thairof quhaevir wald persew for revenge of the same, quhen the said Johnne wes occupiit in seiking vennysoun to his Hienes at command of Patrik, Lord Dummond, stewart of Stratharne and principall forrester of Glenartnay[...]eftir the murthour committit, the authouris thairof cuttit of the said umquhile Johnne Drummondis heid, and caryed the same to the Laird M^{c}Gregour; quha and the haill surename of M^{c}kgregour purposlie convenit, upoun the nixt Sonday thaireftir, at the kirk of Buchquhidder, quhair thay causit the said umquhile Johnis heid be presentit to thame, and thair, avowing the said murthour to haif bene committit be thair commoun counsale and determinatioun, layed thair handis upoun the pow, and, in eithnik and barbarous maner, sweir to defend the authouris of the said murthour, in maist proude contempt of oure Soveranne Lord and his authoritie, and in evill example to utheris wicked lymmaris to do the like, giff this salbe sufferit to remane unpunist.[30]

This episode reveals that the MacDonalds and MacGregors were prepared to protect one another in the face of a common enemy. Due to their contempt for central government, both clans were to suffer a series of proclamations made against them. The 'wicked Clan Gregour', following the Battle of Glenfruin, suffered a political disaster: not only were they outlawed, but their name very name was proscribed and under such conditions they became a broken clan, many of whom were reduced to being caterans.[31] Later, the MacDonalds of Glencoe became scapegoats in the infamous Massacre of Glencoe which the Williamite government saw as 'a proper vindication of the publick justice to extirpate that sept of thieves.'[32]

Watson, Frederick, *The Braes of Balquidder* (Edinburgh: W. Hodge, 1914), 30-31; *Rob Roy and the Clan MacGregor* (1812), 7-8; Anon., 'Culloden Papers', *The Quarterly Review* (Jan., 1816), 307-10.

[30] *RPC, i,* vol. IV (1585–1592), 453; MacGregor (of MacGregor), Ameila G. M., *History of The Clan Gregor*, i, 204-18.

[31] *CCHS*, 12, 61; *APS*, iv, (1593–1625), 550-51, c. 26; *RPC, i,* vol. VI (1599–1604), xlii-xliv, 558n; *RPC, i,* vol. X (1613–1616), xvii-xxv.

[32] For a description of the Glencoe MacDonalds used by Dalrymple in correspondence to Hill, governor, dated 16 January, 1692, see Hopkins, Paul, *Glencoe and the End of the Highland War* (Edinburgh: John Donald, revsd. ed., 1998), 328; Macinnes, Allan I., 'Slaughter under Trust: Clan

In 1594, a further enactment was put in the statute books during the reign of King James VI:

> ...his haill woiddis forrestis parikis hanīgis da ra hartis hyndis fallow deir phesance fowlis and utheris wyld bestis[...]ar greitlie distroyit and daile decressis be ressone the actis and statutis qlkis ar sett doun aganis the distroyaris of the saidis woddis forrestis parkis hanīgis and slayaris of the saidis wyld beistis hes not bene put to executioun Sua that all men has tane libertie to distroy and slay at thair awin appetites ffor remeid quhairof and better intteynement of his hienes royall pastyme in tyme cuming[...]quhatsumeuir persone or personis at ony tyme heirefter[...]salhappin to slay deir hartis phesanis foullis partrikis or uther wild foull quhatsumeuir ather with gun cross bow hand bow doggis halkis or girnis or be uther ingyne quhatsumeuir within the same or that beis fund schutting with ony gun therein without speciall licience and tolerance of his Majestie[...] or that slayis on of his hienes deir strayand in tyme of stormes to barne hardis[...]or beis fund tryit to haue schot with hagbute in the winter nicht within ony of the foirsaidis woddis or parkis or within the space of ane myle thairabout quhether thai be apprehendit slayand the deir or not that the haill guides and geir sable escheit and inbrought to his hienes use and thair personis punist at his hienes will[...]and the offendor to be criminallie accusit heiron in all tymes heireftir.[33]

The king was especially concerned over his royal deer-forests, and took special care to make sure that they were given the utmost protection:

> ...na persoun nor personis sall hunt nor halk within the boundis of sex myles to ony of his hienes woddis parkis castellis and palices and incaice ony do in the contrair that ilk persoun contravening sall pay the sowme of ane hundredth pundis[...]and als quhatsumeuir persoun salbe deprehendit or tryit till haue slayne hartis or ony kynd of wyld foullis in snaw or ony uther tyme with gunnis or girnis or hit beis fund to haue schot at duik drak or hair[...]with ane hagbute within ony part of this realme that thai salbe subject to the foirsaid penaltie of ane hundredth pundis...[34]

An act made in the reign of King James III (*r.* 1460–1488) in 1474 was later ratified by James VI & I in 1621:[35]

> ...that nae man sla dais nor rays nor deir in tyme of storm or snaw or sla ony thair kydds quhill thai be a her aulde wnd the payn of x li[...]and in likewise that nae man hunt schut nor sla der nor rais in whtis closs nor parks or take out cunnyngs out of wthis cunnyngarthis or tak ony foulis out of whtis dowcotts[...]but speciale licence of the awnars under the payne of dittay ande to be punyst as thift.[36]

Massacres and British State Formation', in Mark Levene & Penny Roberts (eds.), *The Massacre in History* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1999), 127-48.

[33] *APS*, iv, (1593–1625), 67, c. 20.

[34] *APS*, iv, (1593–1625), 67, c. 20.

[35] *APS*, iv, (1593–1625), 692, c. 12.

[36] *APS*, ii, (1424–1567), 107, c. 16.

Although deer were evidently still plentiful in 1528, by the middle of that century constant slaughter and, more drastically, the development of pasturing large flocks of sheep on Lowland hills, sometimes ten thousand in number, led to a rapid decrease in the red deer population.[37] By 1685, the scarcity of game in the Lowlands was remarked upon in a lengthy piece of hunting legislation (as it rehearsed and ratified previous enactments) introduced in the Parliament of King Charles II's reign.[38]

During Queen Mary's reign, a 1551 statute complains that 'all sic wylde beistis and wylde foulis are exilit and banist' and further enjoins 'that nane of oure Souerane Ladyis lieges of quhatsumever degree[...]be of tak vpone hand to schute at Deir, rae or vther wylde beistis or wylde foulis with half hag culuering or pistolate, at dere, ra, nor vyld foulis in ony tymes tocum vnder the pane of deid and confiscatioun of all thair gudis.'[39] Another act shortly followed in 1555.[40]

No measure, notwithstanding, could check the decline of Lowland red deer, and with the troubles and lawless years of the 17th century, compounded with steady agricultural growth, they were practically banished from the upland forests of the Lowlands so 'the Nobill men of the Realme can get na pastyme of halking and hunting.'[41] Another reason for the scarcity of game in the Lowlands, from the 15th through to the 17th century, was the depletion of their natural habitat. Demand for wood, used in a variety of ways for fuel, ship-building, house-building, and so on, had a major environmental impact on the areas in which red deer and other game had flourished. By the close of the 17th century, Lowland red deer had become very scarce, and thus the Highlands became more attractive for hunting.[42] Indeed, during and after this period, the nobility identified the Highlands more and more as the best hunting grounds.

The 'Highland problem' and Hunting Legislation

Earlier legislation, against shooting game and poaching, was once more put on the statute book. However, four years later, the topic was again up for discussion, and the

---

[37] By the later medieval period, the decimation made upon the natural habitat for red deer was already advanced in England, see *MH*, 64-65.
[38] *APS*, viii, (1670–1686), 474-77, c. 24.
[39] *APS*, ii, (1425–1567), 483, c. 3; *RPC*, *i*, vol. I (1545–1569), 95, 477.
[40] *LW*, 12.
[41] *APS*, ii, (1425–1567), 483, c. 3.
[42] For more analysis of this phenomenon, see *IMALS*, 315-38.

issue continued to eat Parliament's time in the following decades.[43] Previous to 1587, when the 'Highland problem' was 'reformulated' in the statute books, it is on record that the arm of the law was unable to reach across the Highland line. This was recognised in a 1425 statute (later re-enacted in 1450), in which Parliamentary impotence was all but admitted because it was applicable only 'in the low landis quhare the skaithis done may be kende.'[44] The Scots government could hardly be said to have had a consistent Highland policy up until after the Reformation.[45] By 1600, nevertheless, poaching in the Borders and the Highlands[46] was so rife that yet another act was ordained in an attempt to put a curb on this illegal practice once and for all:

> ...in spite of all the Acts of Parliament discharging the shooting and slaughter of deer, "divers undewtifull and unansuerabill subjects[...]verie frequentlie schuitis and slayis the deir not onlie in his Majesties awne forrestis and parkis, bot in all utheris parties quhair the occasioun thairunto presentis," and that, the offenders being for the most part "unansuerabill and broken men," it is difficult to put the laws in execuction against them, the order now is that all landlords and their pledges entered for good rule in the Highlands and Borders shall be answerable for the "haill deir quhilkis sal happin to be schoit and slane heireftir be ony of the personis for quhome the saidis landislordis ar haldin to ansuer, or for quhome the saidis plegeis entirit lyis," and that they shall be "haldin to mak payment of the soume of thrie hundredth merkis for every deir sau to be schoit and slane, the ane half to his Majesty and the uther half to the dilaitar and avowar," and that "the lyke executioun sall pas aganis landislordis and thair cautioners fund be thame, conforme to the generall band, and aganis the saidis plegeis, for payment of the said soume, as is usuallie grantit for redress of skaithis persewit upoun the generall band."[47]

By the 17th century, records of poaching activities in the Highlands become more frequent. Rannoch moor, whose main attraction was the famous white hind, seems to have been favoured by Lochaber poachers, as is revealed in a letter of June 1612 from Glenorchy to James Primrose, clerk of the Privy Council:

---

[43] *APS*, ii, (1425–1567), 541; *APS*, iii, (1567–1592), 26, 225-26, 453; *APS*, iv, (1593–1625), 629.

[44] *APS*, ii, (1425–1567), 8, c. 25; 34, c. 2. For discussion of these judicial and administrative measures regarding the Highlands, see Goodare, Julian, *State and Society in Early Modern Scotland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 267-69.

[45] Goodare, Julian, *The Government of Scotland, 1560–1625* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 300.

[46] References to legislation or illegal hunting activity in the Highlands form no small part of the Privy Council's Register: *RPC*, *i*, vol. II (1569–1578), 648; *RPC*, *i*, vol. III (1578–1585), 739; *RPC*, *i*, vol. V (1592–1599), 302; *RPC*, *i*, vol. VI (1599–1604), 90-91; *RPC*, *i*, vol. VIII (1607–1610), 109, 274, 409, 832; *RPC*, *i*, vol. IX (1610–1613), 29, 56-57, 457; *RPC*, *i*, vol. XI (1616–1619), 383, 415-16, 438, 600; *RPC*, *i*, vol. XII (1619–1622), 132-34, 240, 244, 691-92; *RPC*, *i*, vol. XIII (1622–1625), 233-34, 613, 693-94; *RPC*, *ii*, vol. I (1625–1627), 45, 257; *RPC*, *ii*, vol. III (1629–1630), 235-37; *RPC*, *ii*, vol. VI (1635–1637), 447-48; *RPC*, *ii*, vol. VIII (1644–1660), 444; *RPC*, *iii*, vol. II (1665–1669), 19-20. Such a list could be easily supplemented by other sources of information. These poaching activities appear on a regular basis, indicating that poaching was rife and lawlessness rather rampant.

> Johnne m^{c}ouilduy in Incherwie in Loquhabir, donald bane m^{c}onoquhie V^{c}Innes and donald moir hes brothers sones to duncane m^{c}Innes V^{c}mairtene in Tullie in Loquhabir and by fyve of the captives with thame all men tenants and servants to Allane Chamrone of Lochyeall tuike iijxx hairtis out of the forrest of Corrichiba to bennayves in Loquhabir quhare they wer all slane quilk wes ane filthy murther...[48]

Further poaching activity also took place the following summer when:

> ...upoun Sonday the aight day of august instant 1613 yeiris forsaid Allane m^{c}ouilduy v^{c}allaster v^{c}onile and[...]m^{c}eanduy v^{c}onile v^{c}neill sone to Johnne m^{c}onile v^{c}neill in Laynachan[...]came to the said forrest of Corrichaba with gunes and touke with thame away out of the said forest iijxx of deir and ane quhyt hynd...[49]

Glenorchy then entreats that letters of arrestment be drawn up so that these poachers would be put to the horn for 'without the quilk it will be verie hard and trubilsum to get any kynd of order with thame.'[50] Glenorchy signs off by reinforcing (or exaggerating) the amount of damage caused so that there 'will be none left in all the forrest and deir on slane and came away bot onlie daylie havoc maid of thame.'[51] Where Scandover was to fail a decade later, the Lochaber men had succeeded, though it is certain they had no intention of capturing her 'quick.' The evasive white hind that the royal forester was unsuccessful in capturing may well have been the actual mother caught by the Lochaber poachers. This also emphasises the importance of local knowledge of the area for it was used to advantage by these successful poachers.

In a signet letter written by John, Earl of Perth, heritable forester of Glenartney, Robert Lenie alias Buchanan of Lenie, Robert Watersoun alias Buchanan in Bochastell, Archibald Buchanan, his brother, Duncan McRobert alias Buchanan in Myltoun, William Buchanan, his brother, and Gilchrist McCartoune in Callendar in Monteith, 'came to our[...]forrest of glenartnay', and subsequently were charged with poaching. The method used is remarkable as they hounded the deer with 'greate dogis' forcing them out of the forest and making the panic-stricken 'deir to take the loche of lochinenachan and in boittis the saidis personis followit thame and within the

---

[47] *RPC, i*, vol. VI (1599–1604), 90-91.
[48] NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/39/23/9. Letter from Sir Duncan Campbell to James Prymrois, dated 24 August 1613, Finlarg. The use of 'murder' is interesting, which doubtless emphasises the heinousness of the crime, at least in the eyes of the pursuers.
[49] NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/39/23/9. Letter from Sir Duncan Campbell to James Prymrois, dated 24 August 1613, Finlarg.
[50] *Ibid.*
[51] *Ibid.*

loche with grate axes fellit and slew grate nombers of oure said deir.' Subsequently they were asked to compear for their crimes, but what punishment was meted out, if they ever appeared, the record does not tell.[52]

Some indication of the scale of poaching in Atholl and Strathardle may be gleaned from a long list of persons who were proceeded against for having (between 1618 and 1622) worn hagbuts and pistolets and shot wildfowl and venison.[53] What punishment, if any, was meted out on these occasions, the record again remains silent.

In 1620, commissions were issued by the Privy Council to Sir Lachlan MacIntosh in Lochaber[54] and the Marquis of Huntly in Badenoch, Strathdon and other Highland areas, to suppress 'the crymes of murthour, slaughter, thift and wilfull reset of thift, slaying of deir and blak fishe[...]ar of laite become to be verie frequent and commoun.' The Privy Council were not wont to mince their words when they came to describe the most hardened criminal Gaels 'who are disordourit and insolent heyland men, to persome of impuitie and thairupoun to tak libertie withoute controlment to offend at thair pleasour againis God, us, and our lawis.'[55]

The motivation leading men into unlawful or covert hunting was complex: chasing the deer in all its various cultural manifestations always contained elements of sport, adventure and danger. This was sometimes mixed with other activities as diverse as symbolic warfare and illegal trading in fur, hides, venison, and game. Hunting, whether legal or illegal, was usually pursued as a social activity. Before stalking came into fashion, there is little mention of solitary hunting (although this certainly occurred). Thus it would have been natural for hunters to form themselves into groups displaying fraternal loyalty and solidarity. Hunting was a dangerous activity and, whether the hunters were pursuing a feud or engaged in commercial poaching, they undoubtedly preferred to seek their sport and adventure in the company of those whom they knew and trusted. A complaint, for instance, was raised

---

[52] GD160/156, Drummond Castle Muniments, dated 16 February 1613. A similar method was witnessed by Henry, Prince of Wales, in the West Riding of Yorkshire in 1609 when the hunters pursued the deer which had taken to the water (in meres) in boats and cut their throats, see Manning, Roger B., *Hunters and Poachers*, 26.

[53] *CATF*, i, 94.

[54] *RPC*, *i*, vol. XII (1619–1622), 244; NAS, MacKintosh Muniments, GD176/290. Commission by King James the Sixth and the Privy Council, to Sir Lachlan McIntoshe [McIntosh] of Dunnachtane [Dunachton], and his bailies, within the bounds of his own proper lands of Lochaber, for arresting and dealing with any of his own removable tenants, guilty of the crimes of murder, slaughter, theft or reset of theft, killing deer and immature fish, or cutting green wood. Dated 30 March 1620.

[55] *RPC*, *i*, vol. XII (1619–1622), 240.

by James, Earl of Moray, heritable forester and keeper of Glenfinglas, and by Sir William Oliphant of Newtoun, King's Advocate to the Privy Council, regarding a band of notorious poachers, many of whom were related to one another,[56] who:

> ...have constantly and almost every day in all the months of the year 1611, and in all the past months of 1612[...]come to his Majesty's forest of Glenfinglas and there "with hagbuts, bowis and utheris ingynis" shot and destroyed great quantities of deer. Thus[...]the said Johnne Grahame "come to the said forrest, leading in his hand ane hound callit ane blood-hound, and thair set the same hound lous in his Majesties said forrest, and thairwith, upoun the sent the blood of the said deir as wes formerlie hurte by the saidis personis, the said hound, slew the same."[57]

John Stewart of Strongarvalt, together with his three brothers, and the rest of the poaching party, were outlawed for non-compearance.

In another example, a complaint made against Donald MacPherson of Ballachoane and others for the illegal carrying of pistols and hagbuts, there is evidence of poaching activity in relation to feuding:

> ...Verie seldome comes ony of thame abroad without a hagbute in his hand or a pair of pistolletis[...]and, however they pretend the caus of thair so publict brek of the law to be for thair recreatioun and pastyme and for schuiting of wyld foull and vennysoun, yit it is lyke aneugh that some of thame hes thair awne privat purpois of revenge.[58]

When Clanranald relinquished the Isle of Rum to the MacLeans of Coll probably indicates the decline of the island as an actual game reserve. Chiefs jealously guarded their prerogative to hunt by maintaining their reserves exclusively to themselves. Laws were, at times, enacted to restrict any trespassers or to protect areas from covert hunting. Laws could also be used as either an extension of clan feuding or through bonds of mutual friendship, whereby clan chiefs extended their protection to clients in return for military support.[59] In October 1633, during the long-running feud between Clan Donald and Clan Campbell, a series of criminal letters were issued

---

[56] Birrell, Jean, 'Peasant Deer Poachers in the Medieval Forest', in Richard H. Britnell & John Hatcher (eds.), *Progress and Problems in Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Edward Miller* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 68-88.

[57] *RPC, i*, vol. IX (1610–1613), 56-57.

[58] *RPC, i*, vol. XI (1616–1619), 383.

[59] For a more in-depth discussion of bonding within the Highlands, see Cathcart, Alison, *Patterns of Kinship and Clanship: the Mackintoshes and Clan Chattan from 1291 to 1609* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Aberdeen, 2001), ch. 6; and also Wormald, Jenny, *Lords and Men in Scotland: Bonds of Manrent, 1442–1603* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1985).

against Ranald MacDonald (Raghnall mac Ailein 'ic Iain) of Benbecula, son of Allan of Clanranald, accusing him, amongst other far more serious crimes, of being:

> ...a common 'slayer of deare' and in the months of August & September 1632 he with a gun slew '6 deare in the Yle of Rowme' and also in July and August last [1633] with a gun slew other 6 deare 'in the Yle of Rowme'[60]

Even seemingly innocuous parts of the landscape attracted legislation, for shielings were occasionally used as bases for poaching expeditions. A commission was granted to Campbell of Glenorchy to demolish shielings in Mamlorne forest as poachers came 'yerlie in the summer seasoun[...]repairis to the said forest, biggis sheillis within and aboute the same, and remanis the maist parte of the summer seasoun at the said forrest[...]and slaying grite nowmer of the deir and wylde beistis[...]and will not be stayed thairfra in tyme cumming, unles commissioun be given to the said complener to distroy, dimoleis and cast doun the saidis scheillis.'[61] Such measures taken to destroy temporary summer residences may have hindered poachers, but it seems unlikely to have put a stop to their practice altogether.

In 1610, Kenneth MacKenzie of Kintail was granted a three-year commission for preserving deer in his bounds. It appears that a 'nowmer of brokin hielandmen and utheris' in and around Wester Ross (including Lochbroom, Coigach and Strathconan), 'continually with hagbuts and pistolets shoot and slay[...]deer within the said bounds, and "hes maid ane verie grite spoyle an distructioun thairof," so that the said forests, parks, woods, and bounds, which of late years "wer most aboundantlie replenneist with the saidis deir," are now "become almost destitute of the same."'[62] The sheer scale of activities strongly suggests that this was a well-organised poaching operation. Although only circumstantial evidence exists, it strongly suggests that commercial exploitation of venison led these 'broking hielandmen' to unlawfully hunt which led to such dire environmental consequences.

Poaching, however, was not merely the preserve of 'broken men', as there is ample evidence of Highland gentry who took to covert hunting. Patrick Campbell, a natural son of the Laird of Glenorchy, together with his son, Patrick Campbell Beg, along with others, were prosecuted for illegally carrying weapons as 'they slew sum venniesoun to the Kingis Majesteis use at the command of the Laird of

[60] MacPhail, J. R. N. (ed.), *Highland Papers*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: SHS, 1914–34), iv, 227.
[61] *RPC*, *i*, vol. V (1592–1599), 556.

Glenurquhy...'[63] It is notable that their clan chief acquiesced in, if not openly encouraged, these poaching gangs. Among those who compeared were Patrik Campbell Beg, Donald M^{c}Faill V^{c}Aclerich, Angus M^{c}Gillephatrick V^{c}Nicoll, and Johne Grahame *alias* M^{c}Grigour who were all fined £10, and Donald M^{c}Phatrik V^{c}Nicoll who was fined 10 merks. Those that compeared denied the charges on oath but it was also put to the others not present 'except[...]Patrik Campbell and Johne Dow McKeandrik grantit and confest that at the tyme[...]they slew sum venniesoun.'[64] The absentee defenders were denounced rebels and put to the horn. It seems that Patrick Campbell and Johne Dow McKeandrik colluded beforehand so that they could take the blame for the rest of the poaching party. Poaching carried out by these gentry-led gangs, was tolerated if not actively encouraged by a chief, were bound up with violence along with a readiness to resort to arms in order to defend honour within a code of martial values. It was clearly a case of honour amongst thieves. Further, securities, each worth £100, were issued for the future good behaviour of those cited in the commission.[65]

It should be noted, however, that in a memorandum of a tack dated 19 April 1612, by the Laird of Glenorchy to Patrick Dow, his son, of the two merklands of Corriecharmick with grazing thereof, in Glenloquhay, for one year, 'sall be diligente to kepe the forrest of Mamlorne and sall not schute with gun nor hagbute at deir roe nor black coke nather him self nor nane of his companie.'[66] The exigencies of the situation influenced the type of policy to be followed at any given point.

In an action raised by the Earl Colquhoun of Luss, and a number of his kinsmen and neighbours, where many of his poor tenants had 'all herreit and put to beggerie be the Clangregour and thair associates,' complaining that a score or two of lawless vagabounds, all duly named, and all tenants of the Earl of Argyll, accompanying him at 'oisting and hunting,' and paying him 'thair calpis and heriyeildis,' were still at large in his domains, remained unpunished for their 'murthouris, slauchteris, thiftis, reiffis, and oppresionis.' Underlying this charge was the accusation that the Earl of Argyll, who, as the king's chief commissioner, would have supported the official extirpation of Clan Gregor, was actually resetting the outlawed MacGregors. This

[62] *RPC*, *i*, vol. VIII (1607–1610), 409.
[63] *RPC*, *i*, vol. XI (1616–1619), 415-16.
[64] *Ibid.*
[65] *Ibid.*; NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/43/3/13, dated 24 July 1618.

charge was later refuted when the Earl swore on oath that no such outlaws were his actual tenants.[67] As can be seen, hunting was then, as now, very much a political issue.

The Statutes of Iona (1609)

One of the clauses of the Statutes of Iona (1609), legislation brought in by the Scots Parliament in an attempt to coerce the Highland chiefs by anglicising the élite and their institutions at the very heart of Gaelic society, was a prohibition on hunting, or fowling, with firearms (amongst other far more invasive diktats):[68]

> ...it is expreslie inhibite, forbiddin and dischairgit that ony subject[...]beir hagbutis or pisolletis out of thair awne housis and dwelling places, or schuit thairwith at deiris, hairis, or foullis[...]in respect of the monstrous deidlie feidis heirtofoir intertenyit within the saidis Yllis[...]to the grite hurte of the maist pairt of the inhabitantis thairof; for remeid quhairof it is inactit[...]that na persone nor personis within the boundis of the saidis Iles beir hagbutis nor pistolletis furth of thair awne housis and dwelling places, nathir schuit thairwith deiris, hairis, foullis...[69]

This act against hunting was ostensibly a disarming proscription, subsequently renewed by successive laws, for, by 1616, all weapons were prohibited, so that certain chiefs were allowed to use guns only for fowling 'provyding that thay use the same for thair awne recreatioun and within a mile of thair awne housis onlie.'[70] These statutes were a concentrated attack upon the largesse of Highland chiefs, whose gift-giving ethos imbued Gaelic culture and perpetuated the notion, deeply engrained in Gaelic society, that game was *res nullius*, available to all free men.

Shortly after this, during the early part of the reign of King Charles I, there appear a number of legal documents with the signatories of Highland chiefs and gentlemen, solely intended to protect their hunting rights. This legislation was induced by the frequency of unlawful hunting taking place all over the Highlands and Islands. On 19 September, 1628, Sir Donald MacDonald of Sleat, Colin Earl of Seaforth, John Mòr MacLeod of Dunvegan, John MacRanald of Castle Tioram, Sir Lachlann

---

[66] NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/10/1/1/29.
[67] *RPC, i*, vol. X (1613–1616), 177-79.
[68] *CCHS*, 66-67, 72, 74. For the most thorough and up-to-date historical analysis, see MacGregor, Martin, 'The Statues of Iona: Text and Context', *The Innes Review*, vol. 57, no. 2 (Autumn, 2006), 111-81, which improves upon Goodare, Julian, 'The Statues of Iona in Context', *SHR*, vol. LXXVII (1998), 31-57
[69] *RPC, i*, vol. IX (1610–1613), 26-30; Donaldson, Gordon, *Scottish Historical Documents* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970), 174-75.

MacKinnon of Starthardale and Alexander MacLeod of Raasay, convened at Duntuilm, and signed an agreement for preserving deer on their respective estates. They decided that neither they, nor their kin, tenants or countrymen would kill game within the forests of any other of the signatories without a licence, and the penalty for doing so was to be, for gentlemen tenants, a fine of 100 merks for the first offence and, in the case of ordinary tenants, £40. Both classes of offenders were to forfeit their bows or hagbuts. Trespass in the forest was also forbidden and the signatories bound themselves to give up any of their people to the owner for punishment for infringing these rules.[71] An agreement signed on the very same day was also contracted, containing exactly the same terms, between the Earl of Seaforth, Lord Fraser of Lovat, Hector Monro of Clynes, John Chisholm of Comar, John Grant of Glenmoriston and John Bain of Tulloch.[72] Earlier, in 1621, a legal document was drawn up by Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy that none should shoot at deer, roe, or blackcocks without special licence under the penalty of £20;[73] and, in 1630, a similar legal document was drawn up offering a mutual obligation between the Marquis of Huntly and the Earls of Mar and Atholl for preserving deer and game in their respective forests which took up a fairly large swathe of the central Highlands.[74] A piece of correspondence exists where Mar replied to Atholl, in 1667, complaining about poaching activity on his estates.[75]

Of course, a certain amount of poaching did occur, but it was particularly severe in the early years of the 17th century, due, in the main, to years of violence, particularly in the western Highland and Isles, which resulted in roving bands of 'broken men', who were answerable to no one but themselves.[76] All of the above agreements 'did not, of course, put an end to poaching, but it was evidence of increasing confidence on the part of the northern chiefs in their ability to police their own lands effectively, and by the same token it must have become increasingly difficult to conceal or dispose of any number of illicitly taken deer carcasses.'[77]

---

[70] *RPC*, *i*, vol. X (1613–1616), 626.
[71] NAS, Register of Deeds, RD1/408, no. 389. Contract recorded 3rd November 1628. *CRA*, 190-93. For a full transcription of this legislation, see Appendix B.
[72] NAS, Register of Deeds, RD1/408, no. 388; *CRA*, 193-95. For a full transcription of this legislation, see Appendix B.
[73] *BBT*, 353.
[74] *CATF*, i, 99-100. For a full transcription of this legislation, see Appendix B.
[75] *CATF*, i, 160-61. For this piece of correspondence, see Appendix B.
[76] *APS*, iii, (1567–1592), 218-19, c. 16.
[77] Shaw, Frances J., *The Northern and Western Islands of Scotland*, 129.

A list drawn up by Perthshire heritors enumerates the weapons that men had to hand, and more frequently used, in all probability, for hunting rather than fighting.[78] A breakdown of the figures, taking into account the quantity and types of weapons, shows that bows, with only two exceptions and those by factors of one and three, outnumber guns and, surprisingly, there are only two mentions of hagbuts.[79]

In the first half of the 17th century there is an increase in legislation as is suggested by the Barony Court Records of the Estate of Belladrum of 1637 as 'no person tennents thair servands or utheris occupaires possession of any of the guidman's Landes sall sheet wi goun or hagbut at deir Raes or wild fowl not yet have doggs or raches to kill raes[...]under ye pain of tuentie pund...'[80] Once the Scots court moved to London after the Union of the Crowns (1603), the royal forests gradually became regarded as the property of local proprietors. An Act of 1617 empowered these proprietors to convene special Barony Courts to administer and enforce the laws relating to royal forests.[81]

Commercial Poaching and the Fur Trade

In the court records for Rannoch poaching, including deer and wildfowl, makes a regular appearance. One notable incident was a complaint made by William Jerden, procurator fiscal, against the 'haill tenentis' of Rannoch who 'most cruelly and execrably killed and murddered the number of ane hundred deer and more that cam out of the forest in tyme of the great storme...' As a consequence, on 20 March 1684, Donald McConechie vic Inise, a merchant from Killichonan, compeared at the Barony Court to plead guilty of buying 'sextie five deer hydes', seventeen supplied by Alexander Roy MacGregor vic Phatrickqunnie, also from Killichonan, thirteen supplied by Gregor Dubh mc phatrickquinne in Learon, and eleven from Patrick Roy McGregor in Camiserach Beag and nine from Donald his brother, two from Duncan Roy MacGregor in Ardlarrick, twelve or thirteen from Donald Dubh MacIain alias nalebrock, and from John Fleming in Camuserving beag, and from Gregor mc William in Ardlarig. A fine of £40 for resetting deer-hides and illegal poaching was

[78] *CATF*, i, Appendix, x-xx.
[79] *CATF*, i, Appendix, xx.
[80] MacDonald, Rev. Archibald, 'Old Highland Records: A Miscellany of', *TGSI*, vol. XLIII (1960–68), 8.
[81] Orr, Willies, *Deer Forests, Landlords, and Crofters: The Western Highlands in Victorian and Edwardian Times* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1982), 51-52.

recorded. Notably, the majority of the named culprits were MacGregors, and those that compeared before the court and confessed to their crimes were each fined £10.[82] Ironically, some two decades before, in 1667, a bond signed by a number of MacGregors, Camerons, and other indwellers, complained that Rannoch people were 'killers and daily destroyers of deer, roes, and wild fowl, and expressing the obligation of the subscribers that[...]they would not kill any deer or wild fowl in the forests or hills belonging to the Marquis of Huntly and the Earl of Atholl or Sir Alexander Menzies their master under the penalty of 100 marks...'[83]

This mercantile link reveals poachers were involved in commercial activities as venison and deer-hides were either sold or supplied for local markets. Or they may, indeed, have gone to the Lowlands, where the profits may have been higher. Black cattle, the staple of the region's export economy, was by no means the only element in the early commercialisation of the Highlands. I. F. Grant chronicles sales of herring, salmon, timber, skins and hides in the 16th century.

Skins were among the most important Scottish exports, some of which was probably sourced in the Highlands, though there is only fragmentary and circumstantial evidence to suggest this.[84] During the early 15th century, the custom charged on skin exports were 12 pence on every ten 'hert and hynde skyins', and of 4 pence on every 'dais and rais skynis.'[85] The very fact that it is recorded, however briefly, indicates some revenue was generated for the exchequer. An indication of the annual exports of skins and hides in 1614 is provided from a document preserved in the Earl of Mar and Kellie's papers:

Of hairt hyddis,[86] 91 daicker,[87] extending at £20 the daiker	 1,830
to	
Of rea skynnis,[88] 240, at 16s. the pece	 180
Of tod skynnis, 1012, at 40s. the pece	 2,024
Of otter skynnis, 44, at 40s. the pece	 88
Of cuneing skynnis,[89] 53,234, at £6 the hundredth	... ... 3,194[90]

[82] NAS, MacGregor Collection (Menzies Barony Court Book, 1622-1709), GD50/135/1; Gillies, Rev. William A., 'Extracts from the Baron Court Books of Menzies', *TGSI*, vol., XXXIX/XL (1942–50), 111-12. For a similar scale of deer poaching in Strathglass in 1691 where 77 people were convicted, see Mackay, William, 'Life in the Highlands in the Olden Times', *TGSI*, vol. XXIX (1914–19), 13.
[83] MacGregor (of MacGregor), Amelia G. M., *History of The Clan Gregor*, ii, 155.
[84] Grant, F., *The Social and Economic Development of Scotland before 1603* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1930), 543-50.
[85] *APS*, ii (1424–1567), 6, c. 23.
[86] Red deer-hides.
[87] A daicker or daker—Latin, decuria, from decem—comprised ten hides.
[88] Roe deer-hides.

The fact that export records remain practically silent on where such skins and furs originated may suggest that much was sourced by illegal hunting in the Highlands. To take but one example, in 1561, Thomas and Robert Meldrum were fined for selling goods in Chanonry and Rosemarkie, and for contravening the privileges of Inverness by selling victuals to unfree men.[91] It was, legally speaking, an exclusive privilege of burgesses to purchase hides and skins, which would then be manufactured into leather goods.[92] In timber and bark, wool and cloth, cattle and hides, and the skins of sheep, deer, roe, martens, weasels, and otters, which were brought into the burgh by Highlanders of all classes, from chiefs downwards, there was a large trade.[93] Hector Boece writes that the Highlands (specifically Inverness-shire) was a particularly good source of furs and hides:

> Ewyne[...]foundit ane nothir toun on the river Ness[...]namyt Inu*er*nes; quhair sum tyme wes grete repair of marchandis and strayngearis, cu*m*and owte of Almany[94] to seyk furringis; as m*er*trikis,[95] beveris, and vther riche skynnys, quhilkis aboundis in that regioun.[96]

Elsewhere, Boece adds more detail regarding these sought after creatures:

> Beside Lochnes[...]ar mony wild hors; amang thame, ar mony martrikis, bevers, quhitredis,[97] and toddis;[98] the furringis and skinnis of thaim are cost with gret price amang uncouth marchandis.[99]

As Inverness, and to a lesser extent Aberdeen, dominated the fur trade (mainly to Hamburg and the Low Countries), this would have made the Highlands the natural place in which to source skins. Trade in hide and, to a lesser extent, in fur was a major Scottish export and was fairly lucrative from at least the early 15th century.[100]

---

[89] Rabbit skins.
[90] HMC, *Report on the Manuscripts of Earl of Mar and Kellie* (London: HMSO, 1904), 71.
[91] Mackay, William & Boyd, Herbert C. (eds.), *Records of Inverness* (Aberdeen: Spalding Club, 1911), 61.
[92] *Ibid.*, lxxix.
[93] *Ibid.*, lxxiii-lxxiv, and for the mention of hides in the Burgh Records of Inverness, mainly concerning unlicensed trading, see lxxx, 38, 102, 115, 140, 151, 199, 232, 266-67, 272.
[94] Referring to Germany.
[95] Martens.
[96] *CSHB*, i, 88, bk. 2, c. 12.
[97] Stoats, ermines or possibly weasels.
[98] Foxes.
[99] Quoted in *IMALS*, 155; see also Aiken[?], 'The Beaver', *TISSFC*, vol. III (1883–1888), 196, for an alternative translation.
[100] Ditchburn, David (ed.), *Scotland and Europe: The Medieval Kingdom and its Contacts with Christendom, c. 1215–1545, Volume 1: Religion, Culture and Commerce* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 160-63; *ER*, vi (1455–1460), 392, 483; *CDS*, i-ii, *passim*; Stevenson, Alexander, 'Trade

At a domestic level, there is archaeological evidence for the preparation of hides and skins in skinners' and tanners' yards in Aberdeen, Perth, Elgin and Inverness; and excavations from these sites have produced scrap pieces of waste red deer antler.[101] The most valued exports were the furs of martens and polecats, as they were highly esteemed by aristocrats who promoted their status by wearing them.[102]

During the time of Cromwell, Thomas Tucker made an official report on the customs and excise of Scotland in 1656, in which he describes how the Islesmen went to Glasgow via the Mull of Kintyre during the summer (and dragging their boats from West Loch Tarbert to Loch Fyne during the winter) 'and soe passe up in the Cluyde with pladding, dry hides, gaote, kid, and deere skyns, which they sell, and purchase with theyr price such comodityes and provisions as they stand in neede...'[103] When writing of St Johnstone or Perth, Tucker describes the city as a walled citadel and, although it had a port, the Tay helped 'to prevent the carreing of wools, skyns, and hide, of which comodityes greate plenty is brought thither out of the Highlands, and there brought up and engrossed by Lowlandmen.'[104] Writing of the Isle of Skye, Walter Macfarlane, states that 'the commodities this Isle produces are wool, hides, tallow, goat, sheep calves fox and otter skins, as also butter and cheese which they transport to Glasgow, for which they receave in exchange sundrie other commoditeis.'[105] These extracts indicate that trade in deer skins and furs was active from an early period. It also suggests that one of the reasons that large-scale hunting was favoured by the Gaelic nobility, especially the chief as a recycler of resources, was economic. A tinchel, if successful, usually resulted in substantial culls, and any surplus of skins and furs would be useful for bartering or gaining a cash remittance.

---

with the South, 1070–1513', in Lynch, Michael, Spearman, Michael & Stell, Geoffrey (eds.), *The Scottish Medieval Town* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1988), 190-92, 194-95, 196, 197, 198, 199-201; Guy, Isabel, 'The Scottish Export Trade, 1460–1599', in T. C. Smout (ed.), *Scotland and Europe 1200–1850* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986), 64-65.

[101] Spearman, R. M., 'Workshops, Materials and Debris – Evidence of Early Industries', in Lynch, Michael, Spearman, Michael & Stell, Geoffrey (eds.), *The Scottish Medieval Town*, 139-41.

[102] *ER*, v (1437–1454), 149, 156, 186, 296, 311, 465, 501; *TA*, ii (1500–1504), 20, 198.

[103] Tucker, Thomas, 'Report by Thomas Tucker upon the Settlement of the Revenues of Excise and Customs in Scotland, A.D. MDCLVI', in James D. Marwick (ed.), *Miscellany of the Scottish Burgh Records Society* (Edinburgh: Printed for the Scottish Burgh Records Society, 1881), 26.

[104] Ross, A., 'Early Travellers in the Highlands', 112.

[105] Macfarlane, Walter (comp.); Mitchell, (Sir) Arthur (ed.), *Geographical Collections Relating to Scotland Made by W. Macfarlane*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: SHS, 1906–08), ii, 220.

Growth of Royal Forests in the Highlands from the 16th Century

In a letter dating from 1518, from King James V to John Drummond of Innverpeffrey, keeper of the forest of Glenartney, there is a list of punishments for the transgression of forest laws anent hunting deer and cutting woods:

> ...we charge you straitly and qmande that quhare qmon stalkaris may be tayntit within our saide forest Induellare in Stratherne, Miteich or Buchquhiddir, that the punicon there of salbe cutting of ane junct of ane fingar of the richt hand, And as for huntare that may be apprehendit huntand within our said forest, that thar hounde and rechis be takin far thame, and neuir to be gevin to thame.[106]

In some cases the death penalty (probably reverted to only in extreme cases) was used as an olive branch between disputing clans where the culprit was handed over for summary justice. Despite some extremely harsh laws and punishments it did not always act as a deterrent to some hardened elements of the poaching fraternity:

> ...for the old forest laws were exceedingly severe[...]mutilation, and even death, were resorted to. It is upon record, that Donald of Keppoch hanged one of his own clan, in order to appease Cluny Macpherson for depredations committed[...]and it is a known fact, that[...]John Our[...]had an eye put out, and his right arm amputated, for a similar offence; and it is also said, that he even killed deer afterwards, in that mutilated condition.[107]

Another reference refers to a notorious cateran, nicknamed Gamhainn Ceann-fhionn ('Halket Stirk'), but whose real name was Dòmhnall mac Raghnaill mhic Alasdair, or Donald MacDonald (alias Gavine Cuin). He was an active cattle reiver during the 1660s.[108] The punishment was severe, and, most notably, involved a woman who had been caught poaching:

> Margaret Bayn[...]was apprehended[...]especially for haunting with the Halkit Steir and[...]broken men and Keithren. To be brought to the Regality Cross at Grantown to-morrow[...]and bound thereto, and her bodie maid bear from the belt upward, and scourged by the hangman with thratie strypes and ane of her ears cutt off, and she to be then banished out of Strathspey for ever.[109]

Poaching was an endemic activity in the Highlands. Official records, fragmentary as they are, and more often than not prejudiced in favour of central government, show that covert hunting was the subject of many enactments throughout the various

---

[106] NAS, Castle Drummond Muniments, GD160/528/9. Letter from James V to John Drummond of Innerpeffry, keeper of the forest of Glenartney listing the punishments for hunting deer and cutting woods illegally, dated 21 May 1518.
[107] *DDSSH*, 101.
[108] Hopkins, Paul, *Glencoe and the End of the Highland War*, 37.

parliaments. The effect of this legalisation in the Highlands remains unclear, given that the Edinburgh parliament had little control over a vast swathe of the Highlands and Islands until after the forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles. Such external measures may have remained unnoticed by clan chiefs and, thus, control over hunting reserves would have fallen under their own judicial system.[110] Nevertheless, by 1587 James VI had turned his full attention towards the Highland 'problem'[111] which was reformulated a decade later as a coercive measure 'to open up the Highlands to economic development or exploitation.'[112] He wished to exert effective control over the region whose people he considered not only barbarous but whose language he thought was even worse. This policy has been summed up in three rather chilling words—'plantation, deracination, and extirpation.'[113] There were, however, less 'direct' government-led policies other than dispossession and settlement and military occupation, including commercial exploitation and co-option of legal élites.[114]

The latter policy helps to explain various legal documents with regard to hunting reserves signed by Highland chiefs.[115] Such legislative measures were probably influenced by the Statutes of Iona because, by the time they were ratified (in 1610, and recast in 1616), the clan chiefs were becoming more submissive to the decrees of a coercive central government. It also shows a concentrated effort on behalf of the Gaelic nobility to put into place precedents in order to assert their own authority on a stronger legal basis, and, perhaps more importantly, to protect their commercial interests.

The Scottish government's influence began to re-assert itself at the south-eastern periphery of the Highlands. The administration of deer-forests, beginning from the early medieval period, came to be modelled on a schema first introduced by the Anglo-Normans during the 12th century. Though only fragmentary records exist for

---

[109] Forsyth, Rev. William, *In the Shadow of Cairngorm*, 146.
[110] *CCHS*, 5.
[111] *APS*, iii, (1567–1592), 461, c. 59.
[112] Goodare, Julian, *The Government of Scotland, 1560–1625*, 225.
[113] Cowan, Edward J., 'The Discovery of the Gàidhealtachd in Sixteenth Century Scotland', *TGSI*, vol. LX (1997–98), 282. For a more detailed analysis of the Scots Parliament's response to the 'Highland Problem', see Cowan, Edward J., 'James VI, King of Scots and the Destruction of the Gaidhealtachd', in Bernard Sellin (ed.), *Écosse des Highlands Mythes et Réalité: Actes du Colloque International, Brest, 22–23 Mars 2002* (Brest: Le Centre de Recherche Bretonne et Celtqiue, Université de Bretagne Occidentale, 2003), 149-66 and also Lynch, Michael, 'James VI and the 'Highland problem'', in Julian Goodare & Michael Lynch (eds.), *The Reign of James VI* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 208-28.
[114] Goodare, Julian, *The Government of Scotland, 1560–1625*, 227.
[115] *Ibid*, 242-43, for the integration of the Highland élite into the Scottish polity.

the Highlands, its influence, nevertheless, seems to have been pervasive, but it was a process that took many generations to mature and, even then, it was not without a core Gaelic influence. Gilbert has argued that Continental influence concerning lordly rights may have exerted a powerful influence on the shaping of forest law in medieval Scotland. Nevertheless, in Strathearn and Lennox, despite several generations after the settlement of newcomers, Gaelic custom in respect of the forest and its resources remained largely unaffected by foreign influences. Yet, change did occur, slowly at first, during the 13th century with regard to forest administration—reflected in a more sophisticated economy which was increasing commutation into cash obligations once paid in kind—and this warranted a change in the ways in which Gaelic lords controlled, managed and exploited their woodland resources.[116] It is perhaps possible to trace later legislation in light of the changes that began to take place many centuries before.

At a far later point, in 1630, the Earldom of Atholl was granted by King Charles I to John, Earl of Atholl, with the free forest of Bynecromby, and all the other free forests of the Earldom, the office of forester, and all the privileges of the same. Elsewhere, a statute was ordained in 1662, when Parliament ratified a charter originally granted in 1617 by King James VI to Sir Duncan Campbell, constituting the Campbells of Glenorchy heritable keepers of the forests of Mamlorne, Berinakansauche *alias* Bendaskerlie, Finglenbeg and Finglenmor. In order to protect these forests more effectually, power was granted to escheat or forfeit all horses, mares, kyne, sheep, goats, swine, and other cattle and bestials found feeding within these woods and forests, 'considering that dureing the tyme of the late troubles with deer within the saids woods and forrests have been much destroyed by shooteing and killing thereof and by peoples passing throw the saids woods & forests[...]that Johne Campbell of Glenwrwhie who hes now right to the forsaid heretable office of fforresster and keeper.' Further, Colin Campbell, heir of Glenorchy, and his successors were permitted 'in all tyme comeing Inhibiteing & dischargeing heiriby all his Maiesties leidges & Subjects from all passing throw the[...]lands abovewritten lying thereabout belonging to the propertie to the said John Campbell of Glenwrwhie

[116] Neville, Cynthia J., *Native Lordship in Medieval Scotland*, 84.

and now layd waste for the vse of the said Deer, and from all killing shooteing[...]the said deer and raes.'[117]

The influence of the law can be clearly seen when the Marquis of Atholl expressed his legal right as proprietor to summon men from all parts of Perthshire. A hunting roll lists 400 men such as fiars, vassals, wadsetters and tenants in the Earldom of Atholl, and the Lordship of Balquidder, who were summoned by the then Earl of Atholl, for a hunting tryst in the Forest of Atholl on 2 September, 1667.[118] Legal strictures were put in place 'under the paines conteined in the Acts of Court therannent' for those who had the temerity not to attend.[119]

A case was dealt with by the Lords of Council and Session on 8 July 1680, whereby an objection was raised by the Marquis of Atholl with certain terms regarding forestry, against Alexander Robertson of Fascallie, who had recently obtained a re-grant of his lands and baronie of Fascallie. The Lords of the Exchequer referred the matter to the Lords of Council and Session in order 'to consider the import and priviledge of a forrestrie, and how far His Majesty's interest might be concerned.' A select body of the Lords was set up to 'prepare to the saids Lords of Exchequer, anent the import and priviledge of ane forrestrie', and having considered the debate between Robertson of Fascallie and the Marquis of Atholl, 'they fand' that:

> ...the priveledge and import of ane forrestrie is[...]a place appointed for deer, and for hunting; and that any deer or cattle, or other beasts that are found within the forrestrie, are confiscable to the proprietor and keeper of the forest; and[...]by the lawes and custom, of this kingdom, no man is obliged to herd his cattle or other beasts, except when the corns are upon the ground[...]And by the erecting of new forrestries, all the neighbouring heritors must either herd their goods through the whole year, and keep them off these forrestries; or suffer the loss of them, by being confiscate for pasturing upon these forrestries. And, it is represented, that, in this particular case, there is a forrestrie of the King's foresaid, in which ther is a considerable stock of deer...[120]

This reflects the complexity of rights, whether legal or traditional, with regard to the various aspects of forests, woods and trees, which was a minefield of contradiction,

---

[117] *APS*, vii, (1661–1669), 438-39; NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/59/3/1. For copies of the original charter in Latin, see NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/59/31/3-5. Printed copies of boundaries of the Forest of Mamlorne were agreed in two instruments, dated 1587 and later ratified in 1619, NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/59/3/2. See Appendix B for a transcript of the original Latin charter along with translation.

[118] Stewart, James, *Settlements of Western Perthshire: Land and Society North of the Highland Line 1480–1851* (Edinburgh: The Pentland Press, 1990), 67-68.

[119] *CATF*, i, Appendix, xxi-xxix.

not the least as this emphasised the seemingly perennial gap between theory and practice.

By these times the bureaucratic administration of forests (hunting reserves) and deer parks were being modelled more and more upon those that were first introduced to the Lowlands. Martin Martin notes that in Arran a forester was maintained to preserve the deer:

> The highest hills of this island are seen at a considerable distance[...]and they serve instead of a forest to maintain the deer[...]and they are carefully kept by a forester to give sport to the Duke of Hamilton[...]For if any of the natives happen to kill a deer without licence, which is not often granted, he is liable to a fine of £20 Scots for each deer...[121]

A special permit was required in Jura for anyone wishing to hunt deer on that island.[122] Evidence for granting exclusive rights to hunt in a particular place could be conferred by a warrant. For example, Lachlann MacIntosh granted permission to Alexander MacIntosh of Termet to kill deer.[123] A royal grant made to a particular person and his heirs thereby extinguished everyone else's right to hunt in that specified area, as in the case of Mamlorne Forest. In the latter case, there were even perfunctory records kept of deer slain.[124] Even so, after Culloden, the powers of the old Barony Courts were on the wane, when landowners and barons lost judicial power over the people on their estates, and, thus, legal control over game became far from clear. Such a legal 'loophole' was exploited by poachers. There was then confusion instead of clarity with regard to the ownership of game, despite many earlier historical legal precedents.[125]

Lesser game, such as hares, though not ignored in the statute book, were scarcely reckoned to be the sport of kings (at least in comparison to stag-hunting) although chasing the hare was still reckoned to be a worthy aristocratic pursuit.[126] In the reign of King Alexander, during the 12th century, there was no prohibition against

---

[120] *NSA*, vol. X (Perthshire), 562-63; Atholl Muniments, Court of Session, Alexander Robertson of Fascallie, NRAS234/Box 43/4/B/1.
[121] *DWIS*, 257-58.
[122] *DWIS*, 266-67.
[123] NAS, Warrand of Bught, GD23/4/95, dated 6 September 1720. Warrant by Lauchlan McIntosh [of that ilk] to kill a deer in his forest or other part of his ground for use of Alexander McIntosh of Termet.
[124] NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/59/4/7-9, 12. 1627, notes of deer slayers in Glenlyon and the forest, and of deer slain by the laird of Glenlyon and his man.
[125] *LW*, 26.
[126] *MH*, 67-68.

hunting hares except in forests and warrens, where they were deemed to be private property.[127]

During the 15th century, a close season of a kind was instituted, for hares might not be slain in time of snow under a monetary penalty. In 1567, a far more strict preservation was enforced under pain of forfeiture of all the offender's moveable goods, or if he had no goods, of imprisonment for forty days for a first offence, and, for a second, loss of his right hand. As hares, like deer, were to be reserved for the chase, shooting with 'hag buttes, hand gunnes, croce bowes and pistolettes' as well as snaring and netting were forbidden; in 1579 the 'slaying of Haires' was included in an act which threatened offenders for a third offence, with 'hanging to the death'; and in 1685, due to the decline of Lowland game, the shooting and selling of hares at any time was forbidden. In this context, Hector Boece mentions similar legislation brought in by the mythological King Ethodius, where the chronicler quips 'having no thing moir odious and in mar destacioun then defrauding of the honorabill gam of chace.'[128]

What effect the legislation had upon the hare population is difficult to say. Nevertheless, it would appear that they were not over plentiful, as a letter reveals, dated 22 January 1582, from John Guthrie in Castle Campbell to the Countess of Argyll, and relating a libel against Argyll made to the king by the Prior of Pluscarden, accusing him of 'the foulest and greatest slauchter of hares that ever he saw, felling them in thair setts and lowsing of 10 or 12 leish of dogs by[...]ane great number of raches at ane hare and so wald slay in ane day 12, 16, or 20,—'[129]

The bureaucratic measures periodically re-introduced and re-enacted by the Scots Parliament from the 16th century onwards in order to control both game and forests in the Highlands grew in tandem with the degree of government influence and could be brought to bear in an area that had become (albeit comparatively recently) both culturally and linguistically alien to Lowland mores and sensibilities. In direct relation to the decrease of game habitat in the Lowlands, stricter laws for the protection of royal forests in the Highlands became a greater concern for the Scots Parliament during the 16th century. The coercive policies of the Scots Parliament in the Highlands, with particular regard to the Gaelic élite, however, was one of the major factors which caused instability within Gaelic society, and thus, ironically, was

[127] *APS*, i, (1124–1428), Quon. Att. c. 31, I. 652.
[128] *CSHB*, i, 205, bk. 5, c. 10.

counterproductive, at least tangentially, in trying to stem illegal hunting, as well as other criminal, activities.[130] Even when the Gaelic élite themselves took legal measures, they were, more or less, as ineffectual as previous parliamentary acts. Indeed, game laws' increasing legal complexity and social restrictedness, especially after the accession of James I, seems to have had little impact in the Highlands.

Legislation on Hawking or Falconry

Hawking and wildfowling also came under the legal remit of the Scots Parliament from early times. The 13th century, for instance, saw hawking recognised as a special privilege of the court, and Alexander III kept falcons at Forres and at Dunipace in Stirlingshire. In 1263, as shown in treasury accounts, the king paid for eight and a half chalders of corn consumed by William de Hamyl during his twenty-nine weeks' stay at Forfar with the king's falcons. King Robert the Bruce had his falcon-house at his manor of Cardross in Dunbartonshire repaired shortly before his death,[131] and in 1343 his successor, King David II, granted to John of the Isles many islands and lands, amongst other privileges 'cum aucupationibus, piscationibus, et venacionibus venacum aeriss falconum.'[132] At this time the names of both goshawks and sparrowhawks appear in the public accounts, but from the 15th century onwards fashion tended to favour the peregrine falcon as the hawk *par excellence.*

During the reign of James II (*r.* 1437–1460), a law was made in 1474 for the protection of hawks, ordaining that no one should take trained or wild hawks or their eggs without leave of the landowner.

It may have been due to the careful protection enforced on account of hawking that birds of prey, including even the goshawk, were common in Scotland during the 16th century, for Hector Boece states that 'fowlis, sic as leiffis of reif ar sindry kindis in Scotland, as ernis, falconis, goishalkis, sparhalkis, merlyonis, and sik like fowlis.'[133] They appear to have been widely distributed, for in May 1496, Hannay, a falconer, was sent 'to seke halkis to the king in Athole', but he appears to have been

---

[129] *IMALS*, 214.
[130] *CCHS*, 46-51.
[131] *ER*, i (1264–1359), 123.
[132] Webster, Bruce (ed.), *The Acts of David II: King of Scots, 1329–1371*, Regesta Regum Scottorum, vol. VI (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1982), 114; Smith, G. Gregory (ed.), *The Book of Islay: Documents Illustrating the History of the Island* (Edinburgh: Privately printed, 1895), 14-16, no. vii; *ER*, i (1264–1359), 511.
[133] Quoted in *IMALS*, 200.

unsuccessful in this attempt, so he continued his search in the Isles.[134] Further, Dean Munro tells of falcons' or hawks' nests in Islay, Coll, Muck, Canna, Lingay, Greanamul, 'Scarpay na Mult', Orosay, Flodday, 'Buya moir' [?]Fuday, Uist, St Kilda, and Lewis and Harris.[135] Earlier King James IV, in a charter to MacLeod dated 1498, reserved the eyries and falcons' nests[136] and he sent his falconer to Lewis for hawks in 1508 and to the Isles in 1512.[137] Indeed, King James IV employed at least fifty-eight falconers between 1488 and 1513.[138]

The extraordinary value attached to well-trained birds must also have tended to keep the breeding-places under strict protection. It is on record that, in 1488, James IV paid 100 'royse nobillis' to the Earl of Angus for a hawk,[139] and in the reign of James VI a pair of falcons was valued at £1000.[140] The diplomatic exchange of gifts gave hawking an important international dimension. James IV received numerous gifts of hawks from his barons,[141] and in 1508, for instance, James IV was presented with hawks sent by the Irish warlord Hugh O'Donell of Ulster, and in 1540 James V sent two servants to the Continent to procure hawks.[142] Falcons from the eyries of Caithness were sent by James V as gifts to the King of France, to the Dauphin, and to the Duke of Guise, and also hawks from Orkney and Shetland were sent to King Henry VIII.[143] In 1536, James V on a visit to France took with him coursing horses, falcons and hunting dogs (*tum cursu tum volatu et vanatu equos falcones canesque*).[144] On another occasion (in 1548) payment was made 'to all the gret men of the northe for houndes and halkes to be send in France.'[145]

In 1551, in order to preserve the sport of hawking, the killing of game birds with guns was prohibited under the pain of death, and no one was allowed to kill game for three years, except gentlemen with hawks. In later years this extreme penalty was

---

[134] *TA*, iv (1507–1513), ccl.
[135] Monro, Dean Donald (auth.); Munro, R. W. (ed.), *Monro's Western Isles of Scotland and the Genealogies of the Clans 1549*, 131.
[136] MacLeod, Rev. Canon Roderick C., *The Island Clans during Six Centuries* (Inverness: Robert Carruthers & Sons, 1930), 60.
[137] *TA*, iv (1507–1513), 118, 346.
[138] *HHRMS*, 77-78.
[139] *TA*, i (1473–1498), 95.
[140] *IMALS*, 200.
[141] *TA*, iv (1507–1513), 78, 79, 81, 126, 135, 322, *passim*.
[142] *Ibid.*, 135; King James V (auth.); Hannay, Robert K. & Hay, Denys (eds.), *The Letters of James V* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1954), 397.
[143] *IMALS*, 200; *Ibid.*, 300.
[144] *Ibid.*, 326.
[145] *TA*, iv (1546–1551), 231.

modified, for, in 1567, the offender who slew, with gun or bow, herons or 'fowls of the revar' was to forfeit his moveable goods, and, if he were a vagabond, to be imprisoned for forty days for a first offence, and for a second to have his right hand cut off; although, at a later date, a third offence could be expiated only by hanging to death.[146]

A complete list of the 'wylde foulys' which hawking brought under protection appears in a 1660 statute passed by James VI, on the ground that 'pastymes of hunting and halking wer onlie means and Instrumentis to keip the haill lieges bodyes fra not becuming altogidder effeminat' which specifies the sale of the certain wildfowl: 'partrikis murefoulliss[147] blak cokkis aith hennis[148] Termigenis,[149] wyld duikis teillis[150] atteillis[151] goldynkis[152] mortynis[153] schiwerinis[154] skeldraikis[155] herroun butter[156] or any sic kynd of foullis commounlie vseit to be chaisit with halkis...'[157]

The attempt to afford protection to such birds was exceptionally thorough, for not only was the offender who shot at the birds liable to a fine of £100, but the buyer or seller of any of them was also held equal in guilt, and in case of those who could ill afford such a sum, the punishment of being scourged through the town or burgh in which they were apprehended.

The greater number of the sporting wildfowl of Scotland in the prohibition of 1600 was designed specifically to encourage the sport of hawking:

> ...as be the common consuetude of all cuntreyis speciall prohibitioun is maid to all sortis of persones to slay wyld foull hair or venessoun[...]in respect the samie alsweill hes bene creatit for the recreatioun of mankynd as for thair sustentatioun...[158]

It should be noted, nevertheless, that a consensus can be drawn, with reference to the protection of 'wylde foulys', by looking at the various acts promulgated between the preservation for royal sport and wildfowl protection in general. In the former case

---

146 Quoted in *IMALS*, 209.
147 Grouse.
148 Grey-hens.
149 Ptarmigan.
150 Teal.
151 Probably the widgeon.
152 Perhaps the golden-eyed duck.
153 Martins.
154 Probably referring to the shoveller or spoonbill duck.
155 Sheldrakes.
156 Bittern.
157 *APS*, iv, (1593–1625), 236, c. 34; *RPC*, *i*, vol. XI (1616–1619), 241.

enforcement was absolute and any infringement was punished by the severest penalties, while in the latter case less stringent measures were considered sufficient enough.

Illegal Hunting, Clan Feuding and Folk Heroes

Despite such legislation, and the commonsensical policy of preserving game whether for the nobility or not, the phenomenon of covert hunting, as well as other criminal activities, was far too entrenched in the Highlands to be simply swept away by pronouncements from Edinburgh. Further, the alienation of a different culture perceived by central government did not help to ameliorate matters either. Indeed, quite the reverse was true, as hunting could on occasion be the cause of inciting a feud, and, at times, could be perceived as an extension of clan feuding itself, or as a form of personal vendetta.

A traditional story relates that a hunting incident flared into a fully fledged feud between Kintail and Glengarry in 1580. A famous MacRae bowman, Fionnlagh Dubh nam Fiadh, was the forester of Glencannich, and while in this occupation, a fugitive MacDonald of Glengarry took refuge in the forest, as he had received permission from one of the leading men of the MacKenzies to have sanctuary there and also to help himself to whatever he needed. This, however, was unknown to Fionnlagh Dubh. One day, when Fionnlagh Dubh and another man went to the forest, they found MacDonald hunting there also. Fionnlagh Dubh asked MacDonald from whom he received permission to hunt in the forest, but MacDonald is said to have replied, rather haughtily, 'That's none of your business, I mean to kill as many deer as I please, and you shall not prevent me.' A heated quarrel erupted, and Fionnlagh Dubh shot MacDonald and threw his corpse into Lochan Uaine Gleannan nam Fiadh. On MacDonald's friends hearing of the rumour that he had been killed by Fionnlagh Dubh, a party of men were sent to exact revenge on the forester. Eleven of these men were poisoned by MacRae's wife and the surviving man fled to Glengarry to tell the tale. Another dozen were sent only to join the rest of their buried comrades. Yet another dozen men were sent and on their way to Glencannich fell into conversation with Fionnlagh Dubh's brother (Donnchadh mac Iain mhic Dhòmhnaill Mhòir) who unwittingly told them his identity and was summarily executed. They found that

---

[158] *Ibid.*

Fionnlagh Dubh was taking winter quarters at Achyaragan in Glenelchaig and the first man they met there was Fionnlagh Dubh himself. After interrogating him and not finding out anything suspicious, they went on their way, but at a safe distance Fionnlagh Dubh let fly his arrows killing them all. On MacKenzie of Kintail hearing of the murder of Fionnlagh Dubh's brother, he applied for a commission of fire and sword against Glengarry, who himself had been making similar preparations for the three dozen men who had been slaughtered by Fionnlagh Dubh. The feud came to a head when the rival clans joined battle at the Pass of Bealach Mhalagan, in the heights of Glensheil. During the battle, Fionnlagh took shelter behind a rock, while pouring his deadly arrows on the MacDonald host to such an effect that they took to flight. After the battle MacKenzie turned to Fionnlagh Dubh, and accused him of cowardice as he remained hidden during the fight, and said, 'You are very good at raising a quarrel, but your are a very poor hand at quelling it.' To which Fionnlagh replied, 'Don't say more until you have examined your dead foes.' After the slain MacDonalds had been counted, there were no fewer than twenty-four of the chief men among them felled by Fionnlagh Dubh's arrows.[159] In historical terms, however, the real reason behind the feud was more prosaic, and had to do with land acquisition. Nevertheless, the long-standing feud was continually reinforced by the theft of each other's cattle and the wasting of each other's lands.[160] No doubt pilfering of venison on either side was part of this aggressive policy.

The warrior-hunter's ethos also has a connection with outlaws. For instance, in Lochaber tradition not only is Dòmhnall mac Fhionnlaigh nan Dàn remembered for his famous song but also as an expert hunter. His various exploits, and probably legendary accounts, were not merely confined to Loch Treig but took him to farther-flung places such as Argyll:

> Dòmhnall Mac Fhionnlaigh nan Dàn, Dòmhnall Dòmhnallach. Dòmhnall nan Dàn a theireadh móran ris. Bha e a' fuireach an Loch Tréig, an ceann Loch Tréig. Agus bha e uamhasach math air a' bhogha-saighead. Cha robh móran anns an dùthaich ri linn a b' fheàrr na e air an t-saighead. Agus smaointich e gun gabhadh e cuairt sìos gu Earra-Ghàidheal a dh' fhaicinn dé sheòrsa

[159] MacRae, Rev. Alexander, *History of the Clan MacRae with Genealogies* (Dingwall: A. M. Ross & Co., 1899), 298-302; Mackenzie, Alexander, *History of the MacKenzies* (Inverness: A. & W. MacKenzie, rev. ed., 1894), 155-59.

[160] MacKenzie, Alexander, *History of Clan Mackenzie* (Inverness: A. & W. MacKenzie, rev. ed., 1894), 106; Dodgshon, Robert A., *From Chiefs to Landlords: Social and Economic Change in the Western Highlands and Islands, c. 1493–1820*, 87-88.

dùthaich a bha sin. Chaidh e sìos air a thuras. Dé chunnaic e ach damh-féidh cho brèagha 's a chunnaic riamh. Agus leis gun robh de mheas aige air an damh agus air a bhith a' marbhadh nam fiadh, cha b' urrainn dà leigeil ris. Ach dh'fheuch e an t-saighead is mharbh e am beothach. Có a bha a' gabhail beachd air ach na daoine aig Earra-Ghàidheal. Agus dh' innis iad do'n bhodach e, do dh'Earra-Ghàidheal. Agus duine sam bith a bha a' dol a mharbhadh fiadh an uair sin 's e' a' chroich a bha a' feitheamh air. Agus chaidh innseadh gun d'rinn e urchair uamhasach mhath leis an t-saighead is nach fhaca iad riamh a leithid. Is thubhairt am bodach ris-fhéin, Earra-Ghàidheal: "Bidh an duine 'ud math 'na mo chuideachda, ma thig na nàmhaidean teann orm. Agus feucha' mi ri bhreugadh cho math is b' urrainn domh, feuch an cum mi e dhomh-fhìn."
Thug iad an duine seo air beulaibh Earra-Ghàidheal:
"Cha chuala," thubhairt e, "gun robh thu feadh a' mhonaidh."
"Bha," thubhairt Dòmhnall.
"Mharbh thu fiadh is tha e glé fhada 'nad aghaidh. Ach bidh e maithte dhuit, ma dh' fhanas tu air an talamh agam-fhìn."
"Fanaidh," thubhairt Dòmhnall.
Dh'fhuirich e ann treis. Ach bha e a' fàs sgìth ann ma dheireadh. Is thubhairt e ris-fhéin: "Tha mi falbh. Chan eil mi a' dol a dh' fhuireach idir 'na do chuideachda na air an talamh agad."
"O! Tha mi glé dhuilich," thubhairt e. "Bheir mi dhuit an còrr talamh."
"B' fheàrr aon sgrìob. B' fheàrr taobh Loch Tréig na na bheil agad uile."
Is dhealaich iad. Chaidh e an àirde do Loch Tréig.[161]

Donald son of Finlay of the Lays, Donald MacDonald—Donald of the Songs as many would call him. He stayed at Loch Treig, the head of Loch Treig. He was very skilful with the bow. They were not many in the country of his day that were better at archery. He thought to himself that he would take a trip to Argyll to see what sort of country it was. He went down (there) on his journey. What did he see but the most beautiful deer he had ever seen. As he had such a love for the deer and killing them, he could not let this one go. He shot an arrow and killed the beast. Who saw this but Argyll's men, and they told this to Argyll. Anyone who killed deer at that time would be hanged. Argyll was told that he had made an amazingly good arrow-shot that they had never seen the like. Argyll thought to himself: "That man would be good in my company, especially if my enemies came close at hand. I will try to flatter him as best I can to make sure that I will have him for myself."
He was taken into the presence of Argyll:
"I have heard," he said, "that you were in the deer-forest."
"Yes, I was," said Donald.
"You killed a deer and that goes very much against you. But it will be good for you to stay on my own land."
"Yes, I will stay," said Donald.
He stayed a while. But, at last, he grew tired of it. He thought to himself:
"I am off. I am not going to stay in your company or on your land."
"O! I am very sorry," he said, "I will give you more land."
"I would prefer one strip of land; I would prefer Loch Treig side than all you have."
And they parted. He went back to Loch Treig.

[161] MacDonald, John (Highbridge, Brae Lochaber), *Dòmhnall MacFhionnlaigh nan Dàn*, CIM I.I.3, TSB III, 43-46; *LDF*, ii, 394-95.

Robert Rankin points out that the identity of Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy (1583–1631), the seventh Laird of Glenorchy, became Argyll in Lochaber tradition.[162] Another story, from Archibald MacInnes, fills in an important episode, missed out by John MacDonald, where Dòmhnall mac Fhionnlaigh nan Dàn manages to turn the deer's head with a sharp whistle, allowing him the opportunity to target the deer's eye, and thus to inflict an instant death:

> Thionn' an t-agh ma chuairt. Leig e ás e. Chuir e dìreach an t-saighead anns an t-sùil aice.[163]
>
> The calf turned round, and he released it and put the arrow right in her eye.

Donald C. MacPherson fills in some detail that adds to the story:

> ...chunnaic iad eilid 'na laidhe air fuaran, agus os iadsan ris 's iad a' fanaid air, "Bheir sinn do chead dhut ma chuireas tu an t-saighead 'an sùil dheis na h-eilde ud." Bu rud mi-choltach so leis mar a bha na eilid 'na laidhe, agus an rathad a bha a' ghaoth. Ach coma, chuir Dònull a bhogha air lugh, 'us gheàrr e gaoth 'us talamh air an eilid; ach cha dianadh calg dhi. An uair a dh' fhairtlich air tialadh oirre, rinn e seòrsa miabhail de dh-fhead 's thog an eilid a ceann. Rinn e rithist i 'us thionndaidh i 's thàinig i na 'choinnimh. A' sin ghabh e 'n cothrom, 's chum e an t-saighead ri 'sùil, 's "cha ro òirleach gun bhàthadh eadar corran a gàine 's a smeòirn." An uair a chunnaic an Ridire cho ro mhath 's a rinn e thug e a chead da; cha 'n e mhàin sin, ach thug e cuireadh dha gu fuireach còmhla ris fhéin 'fhad 's bu bheò e. Thug Dònull taing dha, 's thuirt e ged a bheireadh e dha Fionnlairig as a' ghrunnd nach b' urrainn da na féidh 's Loch-Tréig fhàgail.[164]
>
> ...they saw a hind lying near a spring, and mocking him they said, "We will set you free if you put an arrow into the yonder hind's right eye." This was highly unlikely given how the hind was lying and the direction of the wind. Undeterred, Donald strung his bow, and took stock of the wind and ground between himself and the hind but he couldn't take it. When he failed to attract her attention, he made a mewing type of whistle like a fawn, and the hind lifted her head. He did it again and she turned and came towards him. Then he took his chance, and aimed the arrow at her eye, and "not an inch of the shaft from pointed tip to notch but would bury itself in the mark."[165] When the Knight saw how excellently he performed he gave him his freedom. Not only that, he gave him an invitation to stay with himself for as long as he lived. Donald thanked him and said, that even if he gave him Finlarig Castle from its foundations, he could not leave the deer and Loch Treig.

---

[162] Rankin, Robert A., 'Òran na Comhachaig: Text and Tradition', 128.

[163] MacInnes, Archibald (Roybridge, Brae Lochaber), *Dòmhnall MacFhionnlaigh nan Dàn*, CIM I.I.3, TSB III, 236-38.

[164] MacPherson, Donald C. [Diarmad], 'Donull Mac Fhionnlaigh agus Oran na Comhachaig', *An Gàidheal*, leabh. V, air. 59 (Nov., 1876), 329; see also Fittis, Robert Scott, *Sports and Pastimes of Scotland* (East Ardsely: EP, 1975), 66; Logan, James (auth.); Stewart, Rev. Alexander (ed.), *The Scottish Gaël*, ii, 45; *LW*, 46.

[165] From a song composed by Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh, see *GSMM*, 24-25, ll. 268-269.

The Romance of Poaching in Gaelic Song Tradition

A Gaelic song, *Òran Fear Druim a' Chaoin* or *Tuireadh Beanntan Adhol*,[166] probably from before 1650 as firearms are not mentioned, seems to have been composed while the poet was imprisoned, judging by this reference:

> Ach mìle marbhasg air an Tùr seo,
> Mur dùbailt e o bhun gu bharr;
> A's ged a bheirinn clach idir as,
> Gu mòr a tartar gu làr.
>
> A thousand curses on this tower,
> Doubled wall from top to bottom;
> And if I could take a stone out
> There'd be a great crash to the ground.[167]

He had been dispossessed of his house and property, and had been imprisoned in Blair Castle. The poet wishes to be at liberty to hunt the hills and then goes on to proclaim his innocence and to apportion the blame for his capture on others:

> 'S e bu mhiannach leam bhi siubhal bheann,
> Le bogha sreang agus le coin;
> Dhol an ghleann am bi na fèidh,
> Ged tha mi-fhèin air 'n son.
>
> Ach mhic Dhonnacha nan lùb,
> Is mòr chùis seo th' agam ort,
> Thug thu 'm fhearann thar mo cheann,
> Sgrìobh thu bhann rinn mo lot.
>
> A's thusa mhic Theàrlaich nan teud,
> Is mòr am beud a rinn do làmh;
> Nuair ghlac thu an duine gun lochd,
> A's e ri taobh an loch na thàmh.[168]
>
> I wish I was traversing the hills,
> With a strung bow and hounds
> Going to the glen where the deer are
> Though it were just for my own sake.
>
> But son of Duncan of the young men,
> Great is my complaint against you—
> You have taken my land from me,
> When you signed the writ that wounded me.
>
> And you, son of Charles of the harp-strings,
> Great is the wound made by your hand;

---

[166] Dun Ailain, 'Freagairt do Dh' Allt-Mhada', *Northern Chronicle*, no. 114 (07 Mar., 1883), 3.
[167] MacKenzie, William, 'Leaves from my Celtic Portfolio. I', *TGSI*, vol. VII (1877–78), 73.
[168] *Ibid.*, 71.

When you caught the innocent man,
As he was resting by the lochside.

A roll-call of place names follows that can be described as a farewell to his hunting haunts situated in north Perthshire, specifically in the regions of Lochs Rannoch, Ericht and Garry:[169]

Soiridh gu Dubh Innis a' Chruidh,
A's gu Leitir Dubh nan sonn;
Is gu Coire Creagach a' Mhàim Bhàin,
Bu mhinig an d' rinn mo làmh toll.

Soiridh gu Bealach na Cloiche,
Far am faicinn bhos a's thall;
Gu slios Loch Ereachd an fhèidh,
A's bu mhiannach leam fhèin bhi ann.[170]

Farewell to Dubh Innis a' Chruidh,
And to Leitir Dubh of the stag-heroes,
And to Coire Creagach of Mam Ban
Often where my hand make a wound.

Farewell to Bealach na Cloiche,
That I would see here and there,
To the bank of Loch Ericht of the deer,
Where I would myself wish to be.

These hunting references occur within the larger context of a topographical passage and a feeling of nostalgia pervades. Several verses from *Òran na Comhachaig* have been uplifted and placed within this poem as well as others, such as *Òran Fear Druim a' Chaoin*, and *Òran nam Beann*.[171] Robert Rankin identifies the poet in question as Iain McKerracher, known as Lonavey, who lived around 1700, and was a noted poacher.[172] He was eventually caught and imprisoned in Perth. In the last verse he refers to a blackcock seen from his prison, stating that he would have shot it if only he had his gun from Càrn an Rìgh. This refers to a secret cave on Càrn an Rìgh where he used to keep his gun and dirk.[173]

---

[169] Rankin, Robert A., 'Place-names in the *Comhachag* and Other Similar Poems', 121-23.
[170] MacKenzie, William, 'Leaves from my Celtic Portfolio. I', 72. This verse is from Oran na Comhachaig.
[171] It may be that *Òran na Comhachaig* was so popular a song that it influenced other similar poems. Likelier, though, the stanzas in question may have been deliberately transposed during the process of editing. Robertson, James A., *Concise Historical Proofs Respecting the Gael of Alban* (Edinburgh: William P. Nimmo, 1865), 223-26.
[172] Smith, W. MacCombie, *The Romance of Poaching in The Highlands* (Stirling: Eneas Mackay, 1904), 34-50; and Hart-Davis, Duff, *Monarchs of the Glen: A History of Deer-stalking in the Scottish Highlands*, 43-57.
[173] Rankin, Robert A., 'Òran na Comhachaig: Text and Tradition', 137.

A song composed by Dòmhnall Gobha for Alasdair Òg, or Fair Chisholm of Strathglass, in 1793, contains hunting motifs, and strongly suggests that topographical passages are not used merely for rhetorical purposes, but rather, the poet is stating his patron's claim to these hunting grounds. In other words, the poet is consolidating his patron's proprietary hunting rights on his land, or *dùthchas*:

> Bu leat faghaid nan gleann,
> 'S fuaim nan gaothar na 'n deann,
> Fhir a leagadh
> Na maing le sgòrr.
>
> Leat a chinneadh an t-sealg,
> Ann am frith nan damh dearg,
> Eadar Finne-ghleann,
> Is Cioch an fheoir.
>
> Eadar Comunn-nan-allt,
> Agus garbh-shlios nam beann,
> Eadar Fairthir,
> 'S an Caorunn gorm.[174]
>
> You hunted in the glens,
> With the hounds at full pelt,
> O, man who killed
> Many a deer on a peak.
>
> The hunt belonged to you,
> In the deer-forest of red stags,
> Between Finne-ghleann,
> And Cioch an fheoir.
>
> Between Comunn-nan-allt,
> And the rough slopes of the bens,
> Between Faithir,
> And Caorunn gorm.

Notable poachers who plied their illegal 'trade' in the forests around Mar and Atholl were John Farquharson (*c.* 1830-1893), Iain McKerracher (*fl.* 1700), nicknamed Lonavey, and Alexander Davidson (1792-1843), to whom numerous 'romantic' tales have been attached. The latter was described as 'the Robin Hood of the freebooters of the forest and moorland. Poaching to him was not the effect of idle habits. It was part of the vocation of a simple but wild and untameable spirit, that scorned all restraint on

[174] Chisholm, Colin, 'Orain agus Sgeulachdan Shrath-Ghlais', *TGSI*, vol. X (1881–83), 221-23.

the natural liberty of man.'[175] Such outlaws as these were symbolic figures as they were seen to be fighting for justice against a coercive and unjust government, and ordinary people admired them because they could enjoy vicariously their brief victories.[176] The Highland outlaw embodies 'a sense of justice based upon kinship and community rather than one based upon impersonal, bureaucratic procedures of an established state.'[177] Given these so-called 'broken men' who lived outside the pale of a clan community, it is somewhat ironic that the socio-political implications of lawlessness identified the outlaw among his admirers as a hero rather than as a mere criminal; a hero through which they could imagine their dignity in the midst of perceived political subjugation and social injustice, which would have been attractive to many Gaels and, interestingly, may not have been circumscribed by clan leanings, thus giving many Highland outlaws a universal appeal. Such heroes have already been met with before in the guise of Fionn mac Cumhail and his band of warrior-hunters, which may have given a greater appeal to these 'real' heroes to be compared favourably with their semi-mythological antecedents.

Gaelic song celebrates this form of heroism in *'S gann gun dìreach mi chaoidh* inspired by an enforced exile when Tormad Scorrybreac (Norman Nicolson) had been caught poaching, where he 'bemoans the fact that he is debarred from going to the hill to poach Lord Macdonald's deer, and his gun is hanging inappropriately on the wall and unlikely to be used ever again in the hunt. He refers to a letter coming from the nobles, presumably to his uncle, Lord Kingsburgh, the Lord Justice Clerk, instructing him to put a stop to his illegal incursions into the hills:'[178]

> 'S gann gun dìrich mi chaoidh
> 'Dh' ionnsaidh frìthean a' mhonaidh,
> 'S gann gun dìrich mi 'chaoidh.
>
> Thàinig litir à Dùn Èideann
> Nach faodainn fhèin nis dol don mhonadh,
> 'S gann, &c.
>
> Pàdraig Mòr an Ceann Loch Aoinard,

[175] Smith, W. MacCombie, *The Romance of Poaching in The Highlands*, 190; see also Michie, Rev, John G., *Deeside Tales or Men and Manners on Highland Deeside since 1745* (Aberdeen: D. Wyllie & Son, 1908), 190-250.
[176] For a reliable historical biography of Rob Roy MacGregor, see Stevenson, David, *The Hunt for Rob Roy: The Man and the Myths* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2004)
[177] Kooistra, Paul, *Criminals As Heroes: Structure, Power and Identity* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1989), 11.
[178] MacLean, Alasdair, 'Some Nicolson Traditions', *TGSI*, vol. LVII (1990–92), 108.

Rinn e 'n fhoill 's cha d' rinn e buinneig.

Tha mo ghunna caol air meirgeadh
Chan fhaodar a dhearbhadh tuille.

Tha i 'n crochadh air an tairgnean—
Cha do thoill i h-àite fuirich.

'S ioma latha sgìth a bha mi,
Nam suidhe leath 's i làn, air tulaich.

'Gabhail sealladh air na slèibhtean,
Far am bi na fèidh a' fuireach.

Far am biodh an damh 's a chùl bruite,
Nuair rachainn-sa le m' rùn air m' uilinn.

'S tric a mharbh mi fiadh nan stùc-bheann
Air mo ghlùin 's mi lùbadh m' uilinn.

Mar a biodh bràthair mo mhàthar,
Bhiodh fiadh nan àrd-bheann a's fuil air.

Ach on dh' fhàs an lagh cho làidir,
'S fheàrr bhi sàbhailt' o gach cunnart.[179]

Never will I climb again,
Towards the moorland deer-forest,
Never will I climb again.

A letter arrived from Edinburgh
Saying that I could no longer go to the hill.

Big Patrick from Kinlochaineart,
Though he poached did not win.

My slender gun has rusted
It will no longer prove its worth.

It hangs by the nails
And it does not take to its resting place.

Many a day I have felt wearied,
Sitting with it primed and looking to the hills.

Taking a vista of the mountains
Where the deer are wont to be.

The stag would have a broken back
When I marked my aim leaning on my elbow.

[179] Mackenzie, William, 'Leaves from my Celtic Portfolio. V', 35-36; see also, MacKenzie, William, *Skye: Iochdar-Trotternish and District: Traditions, Reflections and Memories* (Glasgow: Alex. MacLaren & Sons, 1930), 83-85; Mac-na-Ceàrdadh, Gilleasbuig, *An t-Oranaiche*, 492; Anon., ''S gann gu'n dirich mi chaoidh', *The Highlander*, vol. I, no. 26 (08 Nov., 1873), 3; MacLean, Alasdair, 'Some Nicolson Traditions', *TGSI*, vol. LVII (1990–92), 108.

Often have I killed the deer of the high peaks
On my knee with bended elbow.

If it were not for my (maternal) uncle
The deer of the high hills would be killed.

But since the law has became so strict,
It is better to be safe from every danger.

In another example, William Smith seems to be having a hard time of it when hunting in the Grampians:

Mi mo shuidhe so nochd,
'An Coire Ruairidh nan cnoc,
Tha mi sgith agus rag 's mi 'g èiridh.

Trì latha dhomh 'n ceò,
A' siubhal nan sgòr,
'S cha d' fhàg mi fo leòn mac eild' ann.

Gu'm bheil fòrsairean Mhàrr,
Air gach coire 'n an geàrd,
'G am ruag' anns gach àit' an téid mi...[180]

I am sitting here tonight
In Coire Ruairidh of the hills,
On awaking I am tired and stiff.

I've been three days in these mists,
Roving the peaks,
And not even shot at a deer.

Mar's foresters are there
Guarding each corrie
And chasing me from every place I go...

This shows, of course, that the foresters could be as wily as the professional poachers. Indeed, it would seem that many who eventually became foresters probably learned their trade while poaching, hence the phrase poacher turned gamekeeper.

Rob Donn Mackay: Bàrd Dhùthaich Mhic Aoidh

Rob Donn Mackay (1714–1778) was born at Allt na Caillich in Durness.[181] He is sometimes called *Bàrd Dhùthaich Mhic Aoidh*, highlighting his Reay Country origin and, of course, his clan affinities. Though perhaps not on a par with either Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair or Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre in terms of technique, his

[180] Sinton, Rev. Thomas, 'Snatches of Song collected in Badenoch', 241; *PB*, 172-75, 457-59.
[181] *ORD*, ix.

greatest forte was his poetical commentary and satirical verse upon contemporary society. He had a sharp eye and a razor wit. Rob Donn was not averse to cocking a snook at the authorities and landed himself on the wrong side of the law on more than one occasion. An anecdote, related by one of his daughters, shows his bravado, the bard's ready wit, and his complete indifference to legal niceties, when he was compeared:

> ...he was more than once detected[...]and eventually summoned to be precognosed before the Sheriff-Substitute[...]and handed over[...]to the Public Prosecution[...]He set out to attend court[...]accompanied[...][by] one of his wonted hunting companions. The prospect of transportation pressed heavily on this neighbour's spirit; but the bard remained seemingly quite tranquil. No so his wife, who[...]could not be prevented from accompanying her husband part of the way. The bard would not even now part with his favourite gun[...]They had not proceeded beyond a mile[...]when they came full upon a small flock of deer. The bard was not to be restrained. He fired, and shot two of them dead upon the spot[...]The fact was, that though thus threatened by the authorities, there was scarcely one[...]who would not have gone any length to protect the bard from the violence of the law.[182]

The latter point was versified by Rob Donn in *Òran do dh'Uachdarain na Dùthcha* when the bard was asked to leave Bad na h-Achlais on account of his persistent poaching. Some of the men of substance in the district did not use their influence on the poet's behalf as he expected, being divided in opinion with regard to his conduct. These men, in turn, suffered a verbal lashing from Rob Donn's wit, and one in particular (Iain 'ic Aonghais 'ic Uilleim) who had himself once been a poacher of note, but who now had the temerity to be sitting as bailiff in judgement:

> Iain 'ic Aonghais 'ic Uilleim,
> A dhòirt iomadaidh fala,
> Cuime 'm biodh tu gam fhàsgadh,
> An-diugh aig beulaibh a' bharraidh?
> 'S e mo bharail gum b'fheàrr dhuit
> Sìneadh an argumaid eile,
> Oir bha thu gam marbhadh
> On là dh' fhalbhadh tu 'm baile.
>
> Ach mas obair mhì-dhiadhaidh
> Bhi marbhadh fhiadh anns na gleannaibh,
> 'S iomadh laoch dhe do theaglach
> A thuit gu trom anns a' mhealladh;
> Bu daoine fuilteach on d' fhàs thu,
> 'S cha b'fheàrr càirdean do leannain,
> 'S mas peacadh siud tha gun mhaitheanas,

[182] *ORD*, xix-xxi.

Bidh tus' gun mhaitheanas damaint'.[183]

Gu bheil tinneas na bliadhna
Dol nas piantaich' 's nas cràitich',
Ach nì sinn foighidinn chiallach—
Thig an righladh nas feàrr oirnn;
Thig an cumant gu socair
Nuair theid stopadh air Ahab,
'S bidh sinn a' feuchainn ar lotan
Air beulaibh Dhoctair Bohàbhairn.

John son of Angus son of William,
Who spilt plenty of blood,
Why are you persecuting me
This day in front of the bar?
In my opinion it would be better for you
To follow the other argument,
For you were killing them
Since the day you could get around.

But if this is ungodly work
To kill the deer in the glens,
Many a worthy member of your own family,
Have fallen heavily into grievous error.
You are descended from men who shed blood
And the kinsfolk of your spouse are no better,
And if that be an unforgivable sin,
You yourself will be damned without forgiveness.

This year's distemper
Is becoming more painful and grievous
But if we exercise a sensible restraint
We will get an improvement in the administration.
The settlement will come quietly
When Ahab is restrained
And we shall be displaying our wounds
In the presence of Dr Boerhaave.[184]

Rob Donn even defended his brother, Dòmhnallan Donn, on one occasion when he was accused of poaching. Dòmhnallan Donn is mentioned in a deed of sasine of 17 December 1737, by George Lord Reay to his son George, as one of the tenants of Islandryre, with Angus Mackay, forester, and William Mackay, *alias* M'Ean Vic Angus. Rob Donn, who then resided in Islandryre, was constituted bailie for the occasion whilst Angus Mackay, the forester, acted in Lord Reay's interest:

Bha fuil am broilleach do lèine,
'S cha b'e fuil na gaibhre cèire,
Ach fuil an fhèidh a bha san dàmhair,

[183] *ORD*, 30.
[184] *WRD*, 161-62; see also *SPRD*, 30.

'S cha bu mhèirleach Dòmhnallan dubh.
Hogaidh ho, mo Dhòmhnallan dubh,
Sealgair sìthne Dòmhnallan dubh,
'S fear neo-bhruidhneach Dòmhnallan dubh,
'S gheibh e nì a chionn a bhith ruith.

There was blood on the front of your shirt
And it wasn't the blood of the dark goat
But the blood of a stag at rutting time
And he was no thief, my Donald Dubh,
Heigh ho, my Donald Dubh,
Hunter of venison, Donald Dubh,
Not a talkative man is Donald Dubh
And he will have a reward for the chase.[185]

In the interests of social justice, Rob Donn comments upon the oppressiveness of poaching laws in a dialogue poem in which his neighbour, Hugh Mac Dho'll Mhic Iain, had been evicted as a punishment for poaching. After setting the scene in an opening stanza, he gives the first word to the prosecution counsel:

Am bi sinn tlàth ri fear a ghnàths,
Nach caisg a làmh le bùiteach,
'S a liuthad cothrom thug sinn da,
Ged phàigh e 'm màl ud dùbailt?
Cha chreidinn càil a chaoidh gu bràth
Air fear a nàdair ùigeant'—
Ged gheibhinn làir, cha tèid mi 'n ràthan
Cupall tràth air Hùisdean.

Shall we be merciful to such a man,
Who does not stay his hand at a threat?
Considering all the chances we gave him—
Though he has paid that fine twice over—
Never would I believe a word
From one of his anti-social nature.
Though I were given a haunch, I would not go surety
A couple of times for Hugh.[186]

The defence is then allowed its say and rejoins with:

Tha Hùisdean feumail anns an fhrìth,
Ged 's tric MacAoidh ga thionndadh;
Gheibht' e treun le òrdugh fèin
A' marbhadh fhèidh san t-samhradh.
Ged chuir sibh 'm bliadhn' e dhe na crìochan,
Ghabh sibh rian bha meallt' air,
Le cluich nan cealg chur às an t-sealg
Air fichead marg de Mhalldaidh.

[185] *WRD*, 170; *SPRD*, 412-13; *ORD*, 254-55.
[186] *WRD*, 165-66.

Hugh is useful in the deer-forest,
Though the Chief of Mackay often turns on him.
He is a stalwart with arrangements of his own
For killing deer in the summer.
Though you deprived him this year of deer-hunting,
You have done so in a deceitful manner,
By treacherous tricks, putting him away from hunting
On the twenty merklands of Maldie.[187]

Rob Donn then allows the prosecution to have the last word but this has nothing to do with his sympathy for their case:

Cha b' adhbhar diombaidh bh' againn ris,
Mur biodh e tric gar sàradh
Agus spùilleadh dhinn nam fiadh
Bha tadhal riamh 'nar bràighibh...

It was not a source of indignation to us,
Where he not often arresting
And robbing us of the deer
That always frequented our braes...[188]

Deer-poaching was to sustain his invective even further, especially when his ire was raised by those whose duty it was to protect the chief's deer-forest. John Mackay, the bailiff, son of Angus the forester, earned this stinging reproof:

An taobh staigh de thìm geàrr,
'S mi nach creideadh an sgeul
Gur tu thogadh, ged bhiodh bàs fèidh orm;
Nam biodh barrant air mo chùl
No caraid agam anns a' chùirt,
B'i mo bharail gum bu tu fèin e.
Ach dh' fhàs an comann sin cho searbh
'S nach robh fhios a'm e a dh' fhalbh;
Tha mi cinnteach gun d'rinn sealbh feum dhomh—
Freasdal fradharcach, teann,
A dh' fhàg goirid agus gann
H-uile h-adharc air gach ceann beumnach.

Within the span of a brief lifetime
I would never have believed that the report
Was circulated by you, even if I had killed the deer.
If I had support behind me
Of if I had a friend at court,
I should have expected you to be he.
But that company has grown so disagreeable
That I was not aware it had gone.
I am certain that fortune aided me—

[187] *WRD*, 166; *ORD*, 59-60.
[188] *WRD*, 167.

Firm, all-seeing Providence
Brought shortness and scarceness
Of antlers on stricken heads.[189]

Rob Donn then turns the screws even further when he proclaims that every single huntsman (or poacher) will miscall him for everything:

...Is chan eil mionnan mun bheinn
Nach tig mallachd ort don cinn...

...And there are no oaths concerning the mountains
That will not bring down curses on your head...[190]

He signs off with a fine flourish comparing the bailiff to Haman, the wicked servant in the Book of Esther, remarking on his hypocritical character:

...'S ann as coslach e ri cèill Hàmain;
Bi-s' gu saoithreach rè seal
Ri bhith saor is an t-sail—
Sin nuair chì thu gur smal caimean.

...Your wisdom resembles that of Haman.
Try for a brief spell
To escape from the beam,
Then you will see that a mote is a blemish.[191]

His mature judgement was reflected in the position he later adopted 'that the law which forbade general access to the deer forest was an unjust one, and those who enforced it were the enemies of society.'[192] This sentiment is encapsulated by another Gaelic proverb: *Is ionraic a' mhèirle na féidh*—'To steal the deer is a righteous act',[193] something that Rob Donn was only too willing to put into practice, though he was caught more than once for illegal hunting.

Despite the felicitous phrases of Rob Donn's satires and barbed social commentary, he was also able to compose traditional 'nature' poetry, judging by *Soraidh na Frìthe*, a song that has the hunt at its very core:

Beir mo shoraidh a-rithis
Gu pàighear na dibhe,
'S làmh dhèanamh na sìthinn,
'S gu cridhe gun fhiamh—

[189] *WRD*, 168.
[190] *WRD*, 169.
[191] *WRD*, 169.
[192] *WRD*, 170.
[193] *SPRD*, xix.

Far a bheil Iain mac Eachainn,
'S mi tamall gun fhaicinn,
Mo dheagh chòmhlan deas, duineil—
Bu tu eascaraid fhiadh;

'N àm nan cuilean a' chasgadh,
Gan cumail 's gan glacadh,
Na b'fheàrr a thoirt facail
Chan fhaca mi riamh.
Bu shealbhach ar tadhal
Air sealgach nan aighean—
Bu tu sgaoileadh an fhaghaid,
'S a chuireadh gadhair gu gnìomh.[194]

Take my farewell once more,
To him who pays for the dram
And the hand that provides venison,
And the heart without fear—
To where Iain mac Eachainn is,
And I a while without seeing him,
My good companion, accomplished, manly—
You were the deer's enemy.

At the moment for restraining the whelps,
For restraining and catching them,
Anyone better at giving the word
I never saw.
Our expeditions were fortunate,
For hunting the hinds.
You would deploy the hunting party
And put the hounds into action.

Rob Donn was not the only bard who hated the unjust control levied by exploitative landlords. A song by Iain mac Mhur' 'ic Fhearchair 'ic Rath, for instance, extols the freedom to hunt, though not in his native Scotland, but rather as an exile in America:

Far am faigh sinn de gach seorsa
'N t-sealg a's bòidhche 'tha ri 'fhaicinn.

Geibh sinn fiadh, is boc, is maoisleach,
'S comas na dh' fhaodar 'thoirt asda.

Gheibh sinn coileach-dubh is liath-chearc,
Lachan, sioltaidhean, is glas-gheoidh.

Gheibh sinn bradan agus bàn-iasg,
'S glas-iasg ma 's e 's fhearr a thaitneas.

'S fhearr dhuinn sin na bhith fo uach'rain,
'S nach fuilingeadh iad tuath bhith aca...[195]

[194] *WRD*, 70-71. See Appendix A for the full poem and translation.

Where we'll get each kind of beast
In the hunt most beautiful to behold.

We'll get deer, buck and hind,
Only our ability will temper what can be got.

We'll get black-cock, and grey-hen,
Drakes, goosanders and grey geese.

We'll get salmon and white-fish,
And grey-fish if that is a preferable delight.

We prefer that than to be under the landlords' yoke,
But they'll not suffer the tenantry to have them...

Despite these sentiments, interpreted by some as vestigial 'romantic' elements remaining after the collapse of a kin-based society, there seems to be a general tendency to perceive deer and other game as free-for-all. It can be seen that the bard held an idealistic notion urging his fellow countrymen to emigrate along with him to North Carolina.[196]

It is even on record that Aonghas Bàn Cameron, on being called to answer for his transgressions of the games laws in front of a committee of Startherrick proprietors, instead of being fined, was rewarded £5 for reciting a song![197]

Conclusion

Despite many regulations regarding unlawful hunting introduced by the Scots Parliament over many centuries, their effect seems to have been rather minimal, especially in the Highlands, where there was hardly any 'sustained' policy towards the area until King James VI's intervention in the late 16th century. Judging by the fragmentary evidence available, poaching was an endemic activity within all ranks of Highland society. The complex deer-hunting culture prevailed because it drew together bands of men in a fraternal enterprise, and deer-poaching, on large scale (and most likely on a commercial basis) was similar to the ritualised ceremony of cattle-lifting, in that poaching was intertwined with the clan ethos of violence and protection, and was thus an honour-bound activity. At times, it could also enter the

[195] Sinclair, Rev. Alexander MacLean, *Mactalla nan Tur* (Sydney, Cape Breton: Mac-Talla Publishing Co., 1901), 53-54. This bard emigrated to America in 1774; see also MacKenzie, Alexander, 'John MacRae—Ian MacMhuirich—The Kintail Bard III', *CMag*, vol. VII, no. LXXX (Jun., 1882), 389.
[196] MacKenzie, Alexander, 'John MacRae—Ian MacMhuirich—The Kintail Bard II', *CMag*, vol. VII, no. LXXIX (May, 1882), 322-23.
[197] Macdonald, Alexander [Gleannach], 'Unpublished Gaelic Poetry', 335-43.

realm of personal vendetta and could cause, at least according to legend, clan feuds. Poaching was seen (at times) as an affront to the rights (and probably the sensibilities) of the Gaelic aristocracy, and led them to introduce their own legislation perhaps in response to pressure from the Scots Parliament; and as an internal measure protecting their own commercial activities. The romantic notion of the poacher, carefully fostered in Gaelic tradition and poetry, is not reflected in the historical record in which it was seen as a criminal activity, thus exposing the familiar tension in the exploitation of natural resources by the many against the few who always tried to implement their inherited right to hunt. Indeed, many Gaelic songs and verse reflect a tension between the rule of law and that of the 'common' man who wished to hunt. Nevertheless, through the process of time, the Highlands eventually took to the rule of the law. But despite such legislation and the threat of severe punishments, the activity of poaching continued, as it was difficult to control, due not only with regard to its covert nature but also to the lack of administrative infrastructure to enforce laws; in other words, there was simply not enough political will or resources to oversee such laws, which were flouted not only by the common man but also the gentry. To that extent, it had a universal and somewhat permissive appeal, and so the repeated measures of legislation were (more or less) all but made redundant in trying to oppose such inherently romantic notions of poaching, grounded in the notion of *res nullius*, very much a Gaelic concept in evidence throughout Scotland before the close of the 12th century with regard to hunting rights.

Chapter Seven

Hunting and the Otherworld

SOIRIDH A BHEAN-SHITH AGUS AN SEALGAIR
Soiridh slàn a shealgair dhuinn, soiridh slàn gu bràtha leat an taobh a tha ann a shruth nam beann agus an taobh tha thall an abhuinn, an là a chì agus nach fhaic, an là shealgas tu fiadh nam fireach agus an là, a chiall, nach iomair gin.

Alasdair MacGilleMhìcheil (1832–1912)

FAREWELL THE FAIRY AND THE HUNTER
Fare thee well, brown hunter of the hill, farewell to thee for ever on this side the mountain stream and the side beyond the river, the day I see thee and the day I see thee not, the day thou huntest the forest deer and the day, beloved one, thou huntest not.

Alexander Carmichael (1832–1912)

CHAPTER SEVEN

HUNTING AND THE OTHERWORLD

In common with other pre-modern societies, the Gaels had a close relationship with nature. Deeply embedded concepts, contained mainly within language, provided a key by which the Gaels perceived their environment. Such concepts were applied not only to the 'real' world but also to the Otherworld. Indeed, 'primitive' societies believed in the existence of an Otherworld, where powerful beings, usually identified as ancestors, had influence over the mortal world. One of the methods of communicating with the Otherworld was through poetry and song, especially within a 'religious' or 'magical' context.[1] The purpose of this chapter is to examine the supernatural elements and beliefs within the context of hunting.

As happens with many other rites of passage (such as birth, marriage and death), hunting attracts many supernatural beliefs.[2] According to Alexander Carmichael (1832–1912),[3] one gains an image of a hunter, while on his way to hunt in the hill, stopping by a burn to cleanse his face and hands, muttering under his breath a strange, yet appealing, fusion of pagan and Christian belief in a prayer known as *Coisrigeadh na Seilg*:

> An ainm na Trianailt, mar aon,
> Ann am briathar, an gniomh 's an smaon,
> Ta mi 'g ionn mo lamha fein,
> Ann an sionn 's an sian nan speur.
>
> A dubhradh nach till mi ri m' bheo
> Gun iasgach, gun ianach na 's mo,
> Gun seing, gun sithinn nuas a beinn,

---

[1] *HSGW*, 78, 80; see also, Thompson, Frank G., 'The Folklore Elements in 'Carmina Gadelica'', *TGSI*, vol. XLIV (1964–66), 226-29.

[2] Campbell, Rev. John G. (auth); Black, Ronald (ed.), *The Gaelic Otherworld* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2005) , xix-lxxxii, where the editor provides a contextual introduction to the Gaelic Otherworld with special regard to the Rev. John Gregorson Campbell's writings.

[3] A controversial source that has on occasion been called into question, especially regarding Carmichael's editorial methodology. See Robertson, Hamish, 'Studies in Carmichael's *Carmina Gadelica*', *SGS*, vol. XII, pt., II (1976), 220-65 and a reply made by Campbell, John Lorne, 'Notes on Hamish Robertson's "Studies in Carmichael's *Carmina Gadelica*"', *SGS*, vol. XIII, pt. I (1978), 1-17. However, the most recent introductions written by John MacInnes and Dòmhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart respectively gives the most balanced views regarding this controversy, see Carmichael, Alexander (ed.), *Carmina Gadelica: Hymns and Incantations: Collected in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland in the Last Century* (Edinburgh: Floris Books, 1992), 7-18; and, Carmichael, Alexander (ed.) *Ortha nan Gàidheal: Carmina Gadelica in English and Gaelic*, 6 vols. (Edinburgh: Floris Books, 2006) xlv-liii.

Gun sul, gun saill, a muigh a coill.
O Mhoire mhaoth-gheal, chaomh-gheal, ghràdh-gheal,
Seachainn orm-s' am bradan tarra-gheal marbh air sala,
Lach le h-alach nam b'e b'aill leat,
Nead ri beul an uisge far nach traigh e.

An liath-chearc air bharr nan stuc,
Is coileach-dhubh an tuchain truim,
An deigh laighe luth na greine,
Seachainn, o seachainn orm fein an eisdeachd.

O Mhoire, mhathair chubhr mo Righ,
Crun-sa mi le crun do shith,
Cuir do bhrat riogach oir dha m' dhion,
Is comhnuich mi le comhnadh Chriosd,
Comhnuich mi le comhnadh Chriosd.

In the name of the Holy Three-fold as one,
In word, deed, and in thought,
I am bathing mine own hands,
In the light and in the elements of the sky.

Vowing that I shall never return in my life,
Without fishing, without fowling either,
Without game, without venison down from the hill,
Without fat, without blubber from out the copse.

O Mary tender-fair, gentle-fair, loving-fair,
Avoid thou to me the silvery salmon dead on the salt sea,
A duck with her brood an it please thee to show me,
A nest by the edge of the water were it does not dry.

The grey-hen on the crown of the knoll,
The black-cock of the hoarse croon,
After the strength of the sun has gone down,
Avoid, oh, avoid thou to me the hearing of them.

O Mary, fragrant mother of my King,
Crown thou me with the crown of thy peace,
Place thine own regal robe of gold around me,
And save me with the saving of Christ,
Save me with the saving of Christ.[4]

Carmichael also provides *Beannachadh Seilg* where he says that:

> a young man was consecrated before he went out to hunt. Oil was put on his head, a bow was placed on his hand, and he was required to stand with bare feet on the bare grassless ground. The dedication of the young hunter was akin to those of the 'maor,' the judge, the chief, and the king, on installation. Many conditions were imposed on the young man, which he was required to observe throughout his life. He was not to take life wantonly. He was not to kill a bird sitting, nor a beast lying down, and he was not to kill the mother of a brood, nor

[4] *CG*, i, 318-19.

> the mother of a suckling. Nor was he to kill an unfledged bird nor a suckling beast, unless it might be the young of a bird, or of a beast, of prey. It was at all times permissible and laudable to destroy certain clearly defined birds and beasts of prey and evil reptiles, with their young.[5]

One is here reminded not only of a reverence for nature, but also of the ceremonial inauguration of the Lord of the Isles on Islay, long attributed to the Sleat seanchaidh, Hugh MacDonald, written between 1660 and 1685, which is full of such like symbolism.[6] Though not directly comparable with such an important event, a blessing the hunter is given amplifies these sentiments:

An tratha a dhuineas tu do shuil,
Cha lub thu go ghlun 's cha ghluais,
Cha leon thu lach bhios air an t-snamh,
Chaoidh cha chreach thu h-alach uaip.

Eala bhan a ghlugaid bhinn,
Odhra sgaireach nan ciabh donn,
Cha ghear thu it as an druim,
Gu la-bhrath, air bharr nan tonn.

. . . . .

Cha 'n ith thu farasg no blianach
No aon ian nach leag do lamh
Bi-sa taingeil leis an aon-fhear
Ge do robh a naodh air snamh.

Eala shith Bhridge nan ni,
Lacha shith Mhoire na sith.

The time thou shalt have closed your eye,
Thou shalt not bend thy knee nor move,
Thou shalt not wound the duck that is swimming,
Never shalt thou harry her of her young.

The white swan of the sweet gurgle,
The speckled dun of the brown tuft,
Thou shalt not cut a feather from their backs,
Till the doom-day, on the crest of the wave.

. . . . .

You will not eat fallen fish or fallen flesh
Nor one bird that your own hand does not fell
Be thankful for the one
Even though nine may be swimming.

The fairy swan of Bride of flocks,

---

[5] *CG*, i, 314-15.
[6] MacPhail, J. R. N. (ed.), *Highland Papers*, i, 23-24.

The fairy duck of Mary of peace.[7]

With regard to such blessings, Frank Thompson writes that these and 'expressions of a similar nature uttered before sowing, reaping fishing, hunting, travelling, and so on, as invoking the good influence of God the Father on the projects in progress or being considered which affected life itself. The blessing of God[...]was always regarded as being absolutely essential to the success of a particular adventure and the subsequent well-being of the folk concerned.'[8] Such sentiments are difficult to reconcile with other perceptions of the quarry from other previous examples of Gaelic verse. It may be taken as the ability to subscribe simultaneously to contradictory views within any given belief system. Be this as it may, according to tradition, a type of *Eòlas*, or charm, is said to have been used by hunters, who, by its aid, would come down from the hill laden with game, and yet no one could see that they actually had anything:

Fàth fithe[9] cuiream ort
Bho chù, bho chat,
Bho bhò, bho each,
Bho dhuine, bho bhean,
Bho ghille, bho nighean,
'S bho leanabh beag
Gus an tig mise rithisd.
An ainm an Athar, a' Mhic, 's an Spioraid Naoimh.

A magic could I put on thee,
From dog, from cat,
From cow, from horse,
From man, from woman,
From young man, from maiden,
From a little child,
Till I again return.
In the name of the Father, his Son, and the Holy Ghost.[10]

Though clearly a useful hunting aid, it would be more practical to be made invisible (or undetectable) to quarry. In effect, though, such a charm has an obvious advantage

---

[7] *CG*, i, 314-17.

[8] Thompson, Frank G., 'The Folklore Elements in 'Carmina Gadelica'', 231-32.

[9] *CG*, ii, 24, where Alexander Carmichael states that ''Fāth-fīth'and 'fīth-fāth'are interchangeable and indiscriminately used. They are applied to the occult power which rendered a person invisible to moral eyes and which transformed into horses, bulls, or stags, while women were transformed into cats, hares, or hinds. These transmutations were sometimes voluntary, sometimes involuntary. The 'fith-fath' was especially serviceable to hunters, warriors, and travellers, rendering them invisible or unrecognisable to enemies and to animals.'

[10] Mackenzie, William, 'Gaelic Incantations, Charms, and Blessings of the Hebrides', *TGSI*, vol. XVIII (1891–92), 145, and also, 144-49, where fath-fithe is discussed with other examples; Mackenzie,

by keeping prying eyes away, especially if the game had been poached. This very wish was allegedly granted to Dòmhnall mac Fhionnlaigh nan Dàn.[11]

An extract from a 17th century document, *A Collection of Highland Rites and Customs*, probably penned by the Rev. Robert Kirk,[12] mentions hunting:

> When ⟨one⟩ goeth a hunting, any who hate him take a Bone of some Beast which he had taken formerly putting it into a Tree, thinking that so long as it sticks there he'll never come speed.
> When they go a hunting if a woman passe by on their left hand they think they'l not luch.
> If one go out to hunt Venison for the use of any man in particular, & easily find it They say that such a person is Fey & will not live long; but if it be found with difficulty he'l live long.

Such superstitious beliefs and also, it would seem, sympathetic magic may well have been commonly held during, and well before, this period. It is interesting to note the belief that a hunter who gained an easy quarry was doomed to a short life, and, the reverse was maintained for those who had a more difficult time. It is certainly striking that such beliefs should also chime with a belief in the prolonged life of a deer.

Longevity of Deer

Another area in which supernatural belief is prevalent concerns the longevity of deer. John MacDonald of Highbridge supplies a tradition of a hind in the vicinity of Loch Treig:

> Bha eilid ann an Coire Mhiodhein an Loch Tréig agus bha eòlas leth-chiad bliadhn' ac' oirre agus 's iomadh duine a dh' fhiach urchair oirre agus cha d' fhuair 'ad i.
> Agus chaidh a leòn[...]an Loch Tréig aig Coire Mhiodhein agus chan fhac 'ad i air son bliadhnachan na deaghaidh sin 's cha robh forbhais oirre 's cha robh fios ac' cà' 'n robh i.
> Ach an ceann gràinne bhliadhnachan an deaghaidh sin chunnaic 'ad i ann am Beinn Allair agus bha i air a comhtharrachadh a mach – bha pìos dhi soilleir; 's ann mar sin a bha 'ad 'ga faineachdainn. Agus chaidh a tilgeil air Beinn Allair

---

William, 'Leaves from my Celtic Portfolio. III', *TGSI*, vol. VIII (1878–79), 127; see also *CD*, ii, 22-25.

[11] MacLeod, John (Glenfinnan), *Dòmhnall MacFhionnlaigh nan Dàn*, CIM I.I.3, TSB VIII, 770-71.

[12] Hunter, Michael (ed.), *The Occult Laboratory*, 66, where the editor has tentatively suggested that William Houston authored the document. However, John Lorne Campbell argued that the Rev. James Kirkwood (1650–1709), a personal friend of the Rev. Robert Kirk, authored the text, Campbell, John L. (ed.), *A Collection of Highland Rites and Customs* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1975), 4-7. On the other hand, Ronald Black argues persuasively that the Rev. Robert Kirk wrote the text, but that it was later supplemented by the Rev. James Kirkwood; see Campbell, Rev. John G. (auth); Black, Ronald (ed.), *The Gaelic Otherworld*, xxiii-xxxiv.

agus dar a thug 'ad dhith an t-seiche agus a choimhead 'ad fhuair 'ad am peileir a staigh 's a' ghualainn aice chaidh a chur anns innte dar a bha i aig Loch Tréig. Nach uamhasach fhéi' an aois a dh' fheumas na féidh fhaotainn? Mar a tha 'n rann a' dol:

Trì aois cù aois each
Trì aois each aois duine
Trì aois duine aois fiadh
Trì aois fiadh aois fir-eìn
Trì aois fir-eoìn aois craobh dharaich.[13]

There was a hind in Coire Mheodhain in Loch Treig and they had known about her for fifty years and many a man tried to shoot her but they never got her.
And she was injured[...]at Loch Treig at Coire Mheodhain and they did not see her for many years after that and there was no knowledge of her and nobody knew where she was.
But many years after that they saw here at Ben Alder as she could be readily seen by a mark – a piece of her was clear; that was how they recognised her.
And she was killed on Ben Alder and when they had skinned her and after they had taken a look what did they find but a bullet inside her shoulder which had been put there when she was at Loch Treig.
Is it not a great age which the deer must get? As the verse goes:

Thrice dog's age, age of man
Thrice horse's, age of man
Thrice man's age, age of deer
Thrice deer's age, age of eagle
Thrice eagle's age, age of oak.[14]

Other traditions are fairly commonly with regard to the longevity of the deer, and such stories are given credence by offering evidence of either a mark found on the deer or identifying a bullet wound which proves that the deer had gained a great age.[15] Such beliefs have an ancient foundation and were commonly accepted in the classical world. Many modern variants (on the same theme) can probably be traced to similar classical origins that have subsequently appeared in European culture.[16]

[13] MacDonald, John (Highbridge, Brae Lochaber), *An t-Seann Eilid*, SA 1952/126/5.
[14] Nicolson, (Sheriff) Alexander (ed.), *A Collection of Gaelic Proverbs and Familiar Phrases* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1996), 414.
[15] *LDF*, ii, 148-50.
[16] Blaxter, (Sir) Kenneth, 'Cervinus Annos Vivere: An Account of Opinion about the Length of Life of the Deer', *British Veterinary Journal: A Monthly Review of Veterinary Science*, vol. 135 (1979), 591-99; Bath, Michael, 'Some Ancient Traditions of Longevity in Animals', *Journal of the Society for the Bibliography of Natural History*, vol. 8, no. 3 (1977), 249-58; Bath, Michael, *The Image of the Stag*, 131-73; Brown, Michael B., 'White Red Deer: Legend, Myth and Fact', *DJBDS*, vol. 9, no. 6 (Mar., 1995), 370-72.

Deer as Portents

Deer could also be perceived as a death portent. A traditional story is related of a great hunter, Iain Ruadh mac Dhùghaill, who, along with his brother Sgàire, went on a hunting expedition. They apparently saw a large stag on Eilean Dubh, in the middle of Loch Langabhat, and stripping off, fixed their guns to their backs and swam to the island. On searching the islet from end to end, however, no sign of the creature was found. In disappointment they returned, but no sooner did they reach the far shore than they again saw the stag on Eilean Dubh. A second time they swam to the island, but the stag had disappeared again, and so they returned to the mainland only to spot the stag again for a third time! Vexed, and not a little annoyed, they returned for a third time to the island only to find absolutely no sign of any living creature. They then left the island for the third and last time. The fatigue of so many repeated journeys had an accumulative effect, and Iain Ruadh is said to have turned to his brother mid-channel and called out, 'I am sick—I can go no further', and with that he slipped below and drowned. His mother is said to have gone to Clach Bheis (named after her), where Iain Ruadh's corpse was laid out before burial, every succeeding Wednesday (the day on which he is said to have drowned) to sing his praises or lament his death:

'S daor a cheannaich mi 'm fiadhach
A rinn Iain Diciadain,
Rinn an t-Eilean Dubh riabhach mo leòn,—
'S daor, &c.

Bu domhainn an linne
'S an robh na fir gad shireadh,
'S an d' fhuair iad mo chion 's e gun deò,
Bu domhainn, &c...[17]

I paid dearly for the hunting
That John did on Wednesay,
The brindled Black Isle has wounded me.

Deep was the pool
In which the men searched for you,
In which they found my love lifeless...

[17] MacIain, 'Iain Ruadh Mac Dhughail (John Roy MacAulay, The Famous Hunter)', *CMag*, vol. II, no. XXIV (Oct., 1877), 484-85; for other traditional stories, see Morrison, Donald (auth.); MacDonald, Norman (ed.), *The Morrison Manuscript: Traditions of the Western Isles* (Stornoway: Public Library, 1975), 92-93; MacDonald, Donald, *Tales and Traditions of the Lews* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, new ed., 2000), 34-35; MacPhail, Malcolm, 'Folklore from the Hebrides.—II', *Folk-lore*, vol. VIII (1897), 383.

A tradition recounted by Martin Martin concerns a connection between the death of a deer on Finchra, a mountain on Rum, and the MacLeans of Coll:

> The mountains have some hundred of deer grazing in them. The natives gave me an account of a strange observation, which they say proves fatal to the posterity of Lachlin, a Cadet of MacLean of Coll's family; that if any of them shoot a deer on the mountain Finchra, he dies suddenly, or contracts some violent distemper, which soon puts a period to his life[...]there is none of the tribe above-named will ever offer to shoot the deer in that mountain.[18]

Such traditions die hard, as, for example, John MacInnes recounts an episode from his own youth when he saw a wild hind grazing within the *baile*. Those who saw that the natural order was being inverted said, *'S e comhtharra cogaidh a tha seo* [this is an omen of war]. Not long afterwards the Second World War began. These people had recognised that order had been invaded by the wild, which helped them to understand their experience.[19] This relates to the idea of liminality as the deer has been seen outwith its usual environment, thus inverting the natural order of things and presaging an important event that was about to unfold. Whether or not it was mere coincidence was not actually important, as the observers rationalised the sighting by understanding the situation in their own terms. This superstition has been long held, and it is part of the folklore of the Gaels, as witnessed by Malcolm MacPhail who says that to see a deer under such circumstances, as described in the above legend regarding Iain Ruadh MacDhùghaill, was called one's *manadh* (sign),[20] i.e. a death omen. He then goes on to relate an old pagan belief that 'if deer were seen, or met, in a place unfrequented by deer and separated from the herd, such an event was considered[...]a certain forerunner of some catastrophe that was shortly to overtake an individual who had seen the deer, or to take place in that locality.'[21]

Traditions of the Hunter-Bard, Dòmhnall mac Fhionnlaigh nan Dàn

Regarding Dòmhnall mac Fhionnlaigh nan Dàn's origins, the tradition is divided. According to D. C. MacPherson (Abrach) he may have belonged to different localities: Braemar (favoured by the Sobieski Stuarts), Glencoe or to Brae Lochaber itself. The late Robert Rankin pointed out that local tradition maintained that he was a MacDonald of Glencoe who returned to Brae Lochaber after quarrelling with

[18] *DWIS*, 299.
[19] *DG*, 476.
[20] *GG*, vi, 103.

MacIain.[22] Elsewhere, D. C. MacPherson further adds that Donald's father was a bannerman to MacIain, the chief of the Glencoe MacDonalds (Clann Iain Abrach). When Dòmhnall mac Fhionnlaigh nan Dàn reached maturity he is said to have returned to his grandfather's residence, who had been Keppoch's bard and hunter. He then wintered at Fersit, An Fhearsaid Riabhach, at the north end of Loch Treig, and summered at Creag Guanach at the south end of Loch Treig.[23] There he passed his time in pursuit of both the muse and his beloved deer. This is one of the major themes of the poem and the descriptive elements of places, given almost like a litany, suggests that the weight of tradition must be correct in stating that he was a Braerian. In addition, local tradition avers that he was actually a MacKillop.

According to tradition, Dòmhnall mac Fhionnlaigh nan Dàn is supposed to have encountered Cailleach Beinn a' Bhric during his hunting career. This story was recited by John MacLeod, Glenfinnan, who originally heard it from John MacDonald of Highbridge:

> Thuit do Dhòmhnall Fhionnlaigh gun robh e an latha seo ann am Beinne Bhric anns a' Choire Odhar. Agus aig an ám sin, bha a' bhana-bhuidseach, Cailleach Bhó a' Bheinne Bhric agus gràinn aighean aice còmhla. Bha a' seann-fhacal ag ràdhainn gun robh i a' bleoghan nan aighean is a' dèanadh gruth is ìm is càise is 'ga chreic. Agus a-measg nan aighean, bha agh sònraichte aice ris an abradh iad agh bàn. Chunnaic ise Dòmhnall Fhionnlaigh a' tighinn a-staigh air na h-aighean agus chuir i stad air:
> "Dé tha a dhìth ort?"
> "Tha té dhe na h-aighean," thubhairt Dòmhnall Fhionnlaigh, "agus gu sònraichte an té bhàn."
> "Chan fhaigh thu an té bhàn."
> "Gheibh mi an té bhàn," thubhairt esan.
> "Chan fhaigh thu an té bhàn," thubhairt ise.
> "Gheibh mi an té bhàn," thubhairt e.
> "Fàg an té bhàn," thubhairt ise, "is bheir mi dhuit guidhe sam bith a tha a dhìth ort."
> Choimhead e orra agus smaointich e:
> "An toir thu an t-sròn dith?" thubhairt e.
> "Bheir mi sin, a Dhòmhnaill," thubhairt a' Chailleach—na Beinne Bhric.
> "Fàgaidh mi i agad leis, bheir mi-fhìn an t-sùil dhùil dhith."
> Tha an sean-fhacail ag ràdhainn nach d' fhuair agh na fiadh riamh o'n latha sin gaoth air Dòmhnall MacFhionnlaigh.[24]
>
> It fell upon Donald Finlay that he was one day at Ben Breck in Corrour. At that time there was the Cailleach of Ben Breck who had her herd of hinds

[21] MacPhail, Malcolm, 'Folklore from the Hebrides.—II', *Folk-lore*, vol. VIII (1897), 382.
[22] Rankin, Robert A., 'Òran na Comhachaig: Text and Tradition', 157.
[23] MacPherson, Donald C. [Diarmad], 'Donull Mac Fhionnlaigh agus Oran na Comhachaig', 328-29.
[24] MacLeod, John (Glenfinnan), *Dòmhnall MacFhionnlaigh nan Dàn*, CIM I.I.3, TSB VIII, 770-71.

along with her. The old saw says that she milked the hinds and she made crowdie, butter and cheese and then sold it. Among the hinds she had an exceptional one which they called the white hind. She saw Donald Finlay coming near the hinds and she stopped him:
"What do you want?"
"One of the hinds," said Donald Finlay, "and especially the white one."
"You can't have the white one."
"I will have the white one," he said.
"You can't have the white one," she said.
"I will have the white one," he said.
"Leave the white one," she said, "and I will grant you anything you wish."
He looked at them and thought:
"Will you take away their sense of smell?" he said.
"I'll do that, Donald," said the old woman of Ben Breck.
"I will leave her with you, and I will take her right[?] eye."
The old saw goes that neither hind nor deer from that day hence ever got wind of Donald Finlay.

This story however far-fetched, indicates that it may have been this supernatural gift, the taking away of the deers' sense of smell, that gave Dòmhnall mac Fhionnlaigh nan Dàn his legendary status as a hunter. Even within this supernatural tale there is some rationalisation which may have helped an audience in order to suspend their disbelief.

The last tradition concerning Dòmhnall mac Fhionnlaigh nan Dàn is the killing of his last deer when he was bed-ridden:

Bha e a' fàs sean agus glé shean. Ged a bha a bhean na b'òige na e, chaochail i air thoiseach air. Agus bha e gu h-àrd taobh Loch Tréig 'na shuidhe ann am bothan agus e a' coimhead a-mach air an uinneig. Bhitheadh e an uair sin ceithir fichead bliadhna is a h-ochd. Agus bha nighean ag obair air aran a dhèanamh, air fuineadaireachd taobh an teine. Leig an duine osna:
"Dé th' ort, a dhuine," thubhairt i.
"Tha mi a' faicinn ùdlaiche a' tighinn a-nuas ann an sin agus cho brèagha is a chunna riamh. Agus 's e a bha a' cur caimir-inntinn orm agus dragh nach urrainn domh a chumail leis an t-saighead."
"Och, na bithibh a' coimhead air rudan mar sin," thubhairt i.
"Thoir thusa an t-saighead a-nuas bharr an fharadh. Tha i treis ann a-nise agus am bogh'. Faic am bheil an taifeid fallain. Agus faigh an t-saighead is fhèarr smeòir. Agus ma tha i garbh anns an roinn, suath i ri clach an teinntein."
Rinn a' nighean seo. Leig e a thaice ris an uinneig. Agus tharrainn e an t-saighead agus leig e air falbh i. Agus thuit a' fiadh. Agus cho mhór nach do thuit am bodach taobh an teine leis am briosgadh a thug e air.
"Agus seo agad m' iarrtas," thubhairt e. "Sin agad an damh mu dheireadh a thilgeas mise. Agus 's e seo e. Feannaibh e agus cuiribh an t-seiche aige air dòigh agus théid mo thiodhlaiceadh an seichidh an daimh sin ann an Cille Choirill. Is na cuiribh air mo dhruim idir mi. Ach cuiridh mi m' aghaidh air Loch Tréig is air na monaidhean air am bheil m' inntinn a' siùbhail a h-uile latha.[25]

[25] MacDonald, John (Highbridge, Brae Lochaber), *Dòmhnall MacFhionnlaigh nan Dàn*, CIM I.I.3, TSB III, 43-46; see also MacPherson, Donald C. [Diarmad], 'Donull Mac Fhionnlaigh agus Oran na

He was growing old, very old. Though his wife was younger than he was, she died before him. He was up beside Loch Treig sitting in a bothy and looking out of the window. He would have been about eighty-eight years of age. His daughter was kneading some bread, baking beside the fire.
The man sighed:
"What's wrong, man," she said.
"I see a stag coming down and it's as beautiful as any that I have ever seen. And what's making me anxious and troubling me is that I can't shoot at it.
"Och, don't pay any attention to such things," she said.
"Take down the arrow from the bier. It's been there a while as well as the bow. See if the bowstring is supple. Get the arrow with the best shaft. And if it is rough in the cleft then rub it on the hearthstone."
The daughter did this. He supported himself on the window, drew back the bow and let it go. The deer fell as did the old man who nearly fell beside the fire with the aftershock it gave him.
"And here is my wish," he said. "That is the last stag which I will fell. Skin it and put the hide in such a way as I will be buried in the deerskin in Cill Choirill. And do not put me on my back at all but put me facing Loch Treig and the moors with which my mind will travel every day."

This is probably fanciful and would appear to be a legend that was later attached to the hunter-bard as folklore motifs and legends have a tendency to attach themselves, as in this case, to famous individuals.[26] It should also be noted that the story hinges upon a liminal aspect of the bard as he is on the threshold of death. Nevertheless, it must be said that it befits the romantised image of the Loch Treig hunter-bard.

A' Cailleach Bheurr as Deer-Goddess

In an article, 'Comh-Abartachd Eadar Cas-Shiubhal-an-t-Sléibhe agus a' Chailleach Bheurr', John G. McKay deals with the significance of a duel between these named contenders. Elsewhere, McKay has referred to the Cailleach Bheurr[27] as 'the most tremendous figure in Gaelic myth today.'[28] One of Cailleach Bheurr's many manifestations occurs as Cailleach Beinne Bric or Cailleach na Beinne Brice in

---

Comhachaig', 329; MacPherson, Alexander, *Glimpses of Church and Social Life in the Highlands in Olden Times* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1893), 128-30; *LDF*, ii, 396-97.

[26] For an example of this with reference to the great warrior and general, Alasdair MacColla, see Matheson, Angus, 'Traditions of Alasdair Mac Colla', *TGSG*, vol. 5 (1958), 9-93; and, with regard to the MacMhuirich bards, see, Gillies, William, 'Alexander Carmichael and Clann Mhuirich', *SGS*, vol. XX (2000), 1-66, esp. 2-3, 11.

[27] 'Cailleach' has been traced to a non-Celtic etymology from the Latin 'pallium' meaning 'veil' which became 'cailleach' in Gaelic thus giving 'a veiled woman' in the sense of a nun. A better etymological derivation, however, of 'cailleach' stems from the old Gaelic 'caille' meaning a wood or forest thus giving 'forest dweller' or 'woman of the forest.' Thus, a common name for the owl, 'cailleach na h-oidhche' would be 'forest dweller of the night' rather than 'old woman of the night', for which, see MacilleDhuibh, Raghnall, 'The Quern Dust-Calendar: The Earth Mother and the Cailleach', *WHFP*, no. 1002 (12 Jul., 1991), 13.

[28] Campbell, John F. (coll.); McKay, John G. (transc. & transl.), Watson, William J., Maclean, D. & Rose, H. J. (eds.), *More West Highland Tales Vol. I* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1994), xvii.

Lochaber tradition. She also occurs in other Highland localities: Cailleach a' Bheinn Mhòir, the witch of Jura, and Cailleach Chlì-Bhric in Sutherland, and also as far east in the Highlands as Braemar. The Sutherland tradition is briefly mentioned in *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*,[29] as indeed is Cailleach Beinne Bric herself.

McKay suggests that survivals of tales relating to a duel, though fragmentary, are 'the merest skeleton of a one-time masterpiece.'[30] In almost all the versions she is referred to as the Cailleach Dhoicheallach, meaning 'the surly hag.' The import of the name identifies the hag as Cailleach Bheurr who is usually described as extremely mean despite her many riches. There are many variations of this tale:

> ...of a tale of a man, who disguised as a beggar, visits a witch in her own den, nominally to cure her of stinginess, but really in order to ridicule her pretensions to the supernatural and of proving her a sham. She tries to persuade him that she is unearthly, but tries in vain. There is an undercurrent of good-humoured fun in these tales, and he plays one or two practical jokes upon her; they have certain competitions also, but he wins all or almost all. It is impossible to tell whether these tales are old or recent. But they show hard-headed common-sense in the very act of conquering magic and superstition. However, the point about them that chiefly concerns us is that in one version the witch bears the name of a gigantic deer-goddess[...]The fact that the man selected a deer-priestess as his objective when attacking magic and feminine supremacy, suggests that he thought that, in making an example of her, his action would be equivalent to capturing the very citadel of superstition.[31]

It would appear, then, that the Cailleach Bheurr is of some antiquity. Doubtless she is an import from Ireland to Scotland during the medieval period and with her introduction she may have superseded some of the tales that once may have belonged to other localised divinities. References to the Cailleach Bheurr in medieval Irish texts are quite common, and traditions surrounding her, in Irish and Scottish Gaelic tradition, have continued well into last century.[32]

It may be noted that pagan customs, whereby people dressed themselves in deer skins as part of a continuation of pagan fertility cults, excited the censure of medieval

---

[29] *PTWH*, ii, 56.

[30] McKay, John G., 'A' Chailleach Bheurr', *SGS*, vol. III, pt. I (1930), 10. Other fragmentary versions are: MacDonald, John (Highbridge, Brae Lochaber), *Uilleam bi'd Shuidhe*, SA 255/A.14; Bruford, Alan & MacDonald, Donald Archie (eds.), *Scottish Traditional Tales* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1994), 205-07.

[31] McKay, John G., 'The Deer-Cult and the Deer-Goddess of the Ancient Caledonians', *Folklore*, vol. XLIII (1932), 158.

[32] In general, see Ó Crualaoich, Gearóid, *The Book of the Cailleach: Stories of the Wise-Woman Healer* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2003)

clerics (going as far back as 685 AD).[33] Indeed, the existence of stag rites at the Kalends of January was particularly prominent:

> But what is strikingly apparent in all these pagan celebrations that regularly come under ecclesiastical denunciation[...]involved the survival of ancient cultic rites whereby men put on the guise of the stag, dressing themselves in animal skins (*vestiuntur pellibus pecudum*), putting on the heads of beasts (*assumnunt capita bestiarum*), and transforming themselves into the appearance of wild animals (*in ferinas species se transformant*).[34]

It may well be that a vestigial remnant of the Celtic hunting deity Cernunnos (The Horned One) was reverenced, and that it may be that a connection was made with the Cailleach Bheurr, who, as will be seen, is a complex and composite figure. She has been given considerable treatment in Irish tradition (which also takes into consideration Scottish Gaelic material). The forms and functions of the Cailleach Bheurr have become rather obscured through the process of oral transition. She can be interpreted at different levels: as a type of Mater Mundi, or Mother or Earth Goddess, originating in Indo-European cosmology; as a Divine Hag of the Pagan Celts which has a close analogy to the Sovereignty Queen tradition; and as a supernatural female wilderness figure.[35]

Many references to this model of the Cailleach Bheurr recur in Lochaber tradition not only in the oral tradition itself, but also in the literature, as Cailleach Beinn Bric or Cailleach na Beinne Brice. When considering the Scottish material, Gearóid Ó Crualaoich writes 'the supernatural female bearing the names Cailleach Bhéarra/Bheurr reveals a multitude of association between her and the forces of wild nature, especially the storms of the winter, the storm clouds and boiling winter sea. She is also[...]very much the spirit of high ground, of mountain and moor and is seen frequently to personify, for instance, the life and well-being and fertility of the deer herd.'[36]

All of these characteristics are applicable to Cailleach Beinne Bric. Allan MacDonell, for example, relates a tradition that Cailleach Beinne Bric came after a great storm, which, no doubt, emphasises her otherworldly, or chthonic, origin. He goes on to describe her, which re-echo Ó Crualaoich's definition:

---

[33] Nicholson, Lewis E., 'Beowulf and the Pagan Cult of the Stag', *Studi Medievali*, vol. 27 (1986), 649.
[34] *Ibid.*, 641.
[35] Ó Crualaoich, Gearóid, 'Continuity and Adaptions in Legends of Cailleach Bhéarra', *Béaloideas*, vol. 56 (1988), 154.

> Bhiodh i aig Ceann Loch Tréig a' beireachd air an iasg le làimh is iad 'ga faicinn. Chaidh a faicinn uair neo dhà aig Bràigh Eas Bhàin, Bràigh Ghlinn Nibheis. Chaidh a faicinn a' bleoghan nan agh uair neo dhà. Nam faiceadh poitsear i, bha e tilleachd dhachaidh. Chan fhaigheadh e beothach nam faiceadh ise e. Bha fiaclan innte is cha robh mac-samhail ann dhaibh ach fiaclan cliath-chliait, an fheadhainn a chunna i.[37]
>
> She would be at the head of Loch Treig catching fish by hand when they used to see her. She was seen once or twice at Bràigh Eas Bhàin, at the Brae of Glen Nevis. She was seen milking hinds once or twice. If a poacher saw her, he would go back home. He would not get a beast if she saw him. She had teeth and there was only one way in which to describe them other than harrow-like to those few who saw her.

A fuller version collected by Donald C. MacPherson fleshes out the tradition behind the song, and shows that it may have been composed as a type of 'duel' between the hunter and the *cailleach*. Having gone to hunt the deer, he returns to a bothy situated at Ruighe Mór Féithe Chiarain, and, while kindling a fire, disparagingly sings a song. Interrupting him, the *cailleach* continues the song in which she later intimates to him that when he sees her the next day milking her herd of deer, he is to take note and afterwards pursue whichever hind she strikes with the *buarach*. The *cailleach* is punishing the deer for being refractory at milking time, and thus the hind so struck is doomed to become the hunter's prey:[38]

Sealgair
Cailleach mhór nan ciabhag glas,
Nan ciabhag glas, nan ciabhag glas;
Cailleach mhór nan ciabhag glas,
'S acfhuinneach i shiubhal chàrn.

Cailleach Beann-a'-Bhric, ho-ró,
Bhric ho-ró, bhric ho-ró;
Cailleach Beinn-a'-Bhric, ho-ró,
Cailleach mhór an fhuarain àird.

Cailleach mhór nam mogan liath,
Nam mogan liath, nam mogan liath;
Cailleach mhór nam mogan liath,
Cha 'n fhaca sinne 'leithid riabh.
Cailleach Beinn-a'-Bhric, etc.

Cailleach mhór nam osan fad',
Nan osan fad', nan osan fad';
Cailleach mhór nan osan fad',

[36] *Ibid.*, 154.
[37] MacDonell, Allan (Roybridge, Brae Lochaber), *Cailleach Beinn Bric*, CIM I.I.1, TSB I, 17.
[38] MacPherson, Donald C. [Abrach], 'Cailleach Beinn a' Bhric', *An Gàidheal*, leabh. II, air. 26 (Apr., 1874), 370.

'S astarrach 'i 'n talamh gàrbh.
Cailleach Beinn-a'-Bhric, etc.

Dé a thug thu 'n diugh do 'n bhéinn,
N diugh do 'n bheinn, 'n diugh do 'n bheinn?
Dé a thug thu 'n diugh do 'n bhéinn?
Chum thu mi gun bhéin, gun sealg.
Cailleach Beinn-a'-Bhric, etc.

Bhà thu fhéin 's do bhuidheann fhiadh,
Do bhuidheann fhiadh, do bhuidheann fhiadh;
Bhà thu fhéin 's do bhuidheann fhiadh,
Air an tràigh ud shios an dé.
Cailleach Beinn-a'-Bhric, etc.

A' Chailleach
Cha leiginn mo bhuidheann fhiadh,
Mo bhuidheann fhiadh, mo bhuidheann fhiadh,
Cha leiginn mo bhuidheann fhiadh,
Dh' imlich shligean dubh an tràigh.

Ochan! is 'n dòirinn mhór,
An dòirinn mhór, an dòirinn mhór,
Ochan! is 'n dòirinn mhór,
A chuir mis' an choill ud thall.

Cha do ghoid mi cliabhan duilisg,
Cliaban duilisg, cliabhan duilisg,
Cha do ghoid mi cliabhan duilisg,
'S cha mhò ghoid mi ribeag chàil.
Ochan! etc.

'S mór gu 'n b' annsa bhiolair uain',
A' bhiolair uain', a' bhiolair uain';
'S mor gu 'm b' annsa bhiolair uain'
Bhios air bruaich an fhuarain àird.
Ochan! etc.

Cha 'n ioghnadh mi bhi dubh, ho-ró,
Dubh, ho-ró, dubh, ho-ró,
Cha 'n ioghnadh mi bhi dubh, ho-ró,
H-uile là a muigh, o h-ì.
Ochan! etc.

Cha 'n ioghnadh mi bhi fliuch, fuar,
Fliuch, fuar, fliuch fuar;
Cha 'n ioghnadh mi bhi fliuch, fuar,
H-uile h-uair a muigh gu bràth.
Ochan! etc.

'S ann an siod tha bhuidheann fhiadh;
Bhuidheann fhiadh, bhuidheann fhiadh;
'S ann an siod tha bhuidheann fhiadh,
Seachad an sliabh dubh ud thall.

Ochan! etc.[39]

Hunter
The tall carlin of the grey locks,
The grey locks, the grey locks,
The tall carlin of the grey locks,
Equipped to travel the hills.

The carlin of Ben Breck, ho ro,
Breck ho ro, Breck ho ro;
The carlin of Ben Breck ho ro,
The tall carlin of the mountain spring.

The tall carlin of the grey hose,
The grew hose, the grey hose,
The tall carlin of the grey hose,
We have never seen the like before.
Carlin of Ben Breck, etc.

The tall carlin of the long socks,
The long socks, the long socks,
The tall carlin of the long socks,
Fast she travels on rough ground.
Carlin of Ben Breck, etc.

What made you today go to the hill,
Today to the hill, today to the hill?
What made you today go to the hill
You kept me from fur and the hunt.
Carlin of Ben Breck, etc.

Yourself and your herd of deer,
Your herd of deer, your herd of deer;
Yourself and your herd of deer,
Where yesterday on thon strand below.
Carlin of Ben Breck, etc.

The Carlin
I would not let my herd of deer,
My herd of deer, my herd of deer,
I would not let my herd of deer
Go lick the grey shells of the shore.

O dear! There's the great storm,
The great storm, the great storm,
O dear! There's the great storm,
That sent me to thon wood yonder.

I did not steal the dulse creels,
The dulse creels, the dulse creels,
I did not steal the dulse creels,

[39] *Ibid.*, 369-70; see also Campbell, Donald, *A Treatise on the Language, Poetry and Music of the Highland Clans* (Edinburgh: D. R. Collie & Son, 1862), 137-43 for similar type of dialogue song from Lochaber tradition 'A' Mhaighdeann-shìth 's an Sealgair'.

Not did I steal a shred of kale.
O dear! etc.

They'd much prefer their own green cress,
Their green cress, their green cress,
They'd much prefer their own green cress,
On the slope of the mountain spring.
O dear! etc.

No wonder I have a blackened hue, ho ro
A blackened hue ho ro, a blackened hue ho ro
No wonder I have a blackened hue ho ro,
Weather beat all the day, o hi.
O dear! etc.

No wonder I am wet and cold,
Wet and cold, wet and cold;
No wonder I am wet and cold,
All the time outside for ever.
O dear! etc.

Yonder are the herd of deer,
The herd of deer, the herd of deer;
Yonder are the herd of deer,
Passed yonder black mountain.
O dear! etc.

As can be seen the hunter accuses the *cailleach* not only of being responsible for his failure in hunting but for stealing the kail and dulse from the women-folk. Presumably this happened during the winter when snow on the heights forces the deer lower down to forage for food. The *cailleach* denies such calumny and ends the song somewhat self-pityingly by lamenting her own wandering existence exposed to the elements. Another version of this song appears in *Carmina Gadelica*,[40] containing a number of quite different verses. The song's origin, however, has been typically rationalised as the mere ranting of a deranged woman (Màiri Bhochd) who roamed the hills, until a lone hunter startled her back into some sort of reality. This is quite a different version of that from Lochaber tradition. Though they both contain similar motifs, the Lochaber version has attracted more supernatural elements to it.

In Lochaber tradition, Cailleach Beinn Bric transformed herself into a grey deer or a white hind. The Rev. John G. Campbell writes that the 'association of the fairies with deer is one of the most prominent features of that superstition. Deer were looked upon in the Highlands as fairy cattle; and the common form into which a fairy woman

[40] *CG*, v, 168-73.

transformed herself was that of a red-deer...'[41] Elsewhere, he notes that witches transform themselves into hare, mice, cats and so forth,[42] whereas the witch never actually transforms herself into a deer. This tale occurs fairly frequently in Lochaber tradition, two examples occur in John MacDonald's repertoire: 'Fear a Mharbh Fiadh Iongantach'[43] and 'An t-Seann Eilid.'[44] Another comes indirectly from John MacDonald, via John MacLeod, Glenfinnan, who originally heard it from John MacDonald: 'Dòmhnall MacFhionnlaigh nan Dàn.'[45] The other two references occur in the literature: 'A' Bhean-Shìdhe agus an Sealgair' in *Carmina Gadelica*[46] told by John Fraser, a gamekeeper. The hunter in this instance is Dòmhnall Mòr Òg. The other occurs in *Folk Tales and Fairy Lore*[47] where the hunter's name is given as Dòmhnall MacIain. It is instructive to look at the first tale mentioned:

> Chaidh duine 'mach ri monadh le ghunna agus le chuilein agus e 'dol a dh' fhaotainn fiadh. Agus bha ceum togarrach, aoigheil aige 'falbh agus e ann a' sunnd math.
> Cha deach e fad' air adhart an àird a' monadh 'n uair a chunnaic e feadhainn a' gearradh mòna.
> "Thig a-nall òganaich," thubhairt iad ris. "Tha sinn a' dol a ghabhail 'nar biadh agus gheibh thu share de na biadh ann."
> "Och," thubhairt e, "taing dhuibh-se. Chan eil móran feum agam air biadh."
> "O, faodaidh tu bhi feumach gu leòr air mu'n till thu. Faodaidh alaban a bhith agad mu faigh thu fiadh."
> Is dh'aontaich e ri seo 's thàinig e nall.
> Chaidh na h-ioclaidean a chuir go taobh agus shuidh iad mu'n cuairt do'n bhòrd a bh' aca agus bha 'm pailteas a sin de dh'im is de chàise Ghàidhealach agus de dh'aran coirce agus de bhainne is ghabh e a leòr dheth.
> "Nist bidh mi air falbh," thubhairt e, "agus móran taing dhuibh airson 'ur biadh." Agus dh' fhalbh e.
> Cha deach e fad' an àird an t-aonach 'n 'ar a chunnaic e ùdlach cho breàgha 's a chunnaic e riamh.
> "'N dà," thubhairt e, "cha deach mi fada airson mo shealg."
> Agus dar a thog e an gunna airson a thilgeil 's e bh' aige boireannach.
> "Dhia, dé tha seo?" thubhairt e.
> Leig e sìos an gunna agus thog e rithist i agus 'n uair a thog e 'n gunna rithist, bha i ann a sin boireannach brèagha agus falt, fada ruadh oirre agus i 'cìreadh a cinn agus na b'e dé bha 'tuiteam ás a cheann air clach bha farachan aic' agus bha i 'ga bhualadh.

---

[41] Campbell, Rev. John G., 'MacPhee's Black Dog', *The Scottish Celtic Review*, vol. IV (1885), 262.
[42] Campbell, Rev. John G., *Superstitions of the West Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (Glasgow: James MacLehose & Sons, 1900), 304-05.
[43] MacDonald, John (Highbridge, Brae Lochaber), *Fear a Mharbh Fiadh Iongantach*, SA 1952/126/4.
[44] MacDonald, John (Highbridge, Brae Lochaber), *An t-Seann Eilid*, SA 1952/126/5.
[45] MacLeod, John (Glenfinnan), *Dòmhnall MacFhionnlaigh nan Dàn*, CIM I.I.8. TSB VIII, 770-771.
[46] *CG*, v, 174-75.
[47] MacDougall, Rev. James (auth.); Calder, Rev. George (ed.), *Folk Tales and Fairy Lore* (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1910), 236-39.

"O, 's e gnothach tha seo!" thubhairt e, "ach chuala mi le sia-sgillinean a chur 's a' ghunna gun dèanadh e feum." Chuir e sia-sgillin anns a' ghunna agus chuir e 'n àirde ri shùil i agus dé bh' aig' ach a a' fiadh agus dh' fheuch e air agus thuit a' fiadh. Chaidh e 'n àirde far an robh a' fiadh agus bha e 'dol 'ga ghreallachach—'dol a thoirt a mhionaich ás—agus 's e sin a rinn e agus mar a bha e teannadh air an fhiadh dh' fhàs e uamhasach fhéin fann—uamhasach, thubhairt e ris-fhéi': "Nach math gun do ghabh mi biadh air neo dh' fhannaichinn," agus 'n uair a dh' fhosgail e 'fiadh 's dar a choimhead e staigh, dé fhuair e 'na bhroinn ach an t-aran 's an càise a dh'ith e shìos aig a' bhlàr mhòine agus chuir e mór-iongantas air. Phàisg e 'n gunna 'na achlais agus dh' fhalbh e dhachaidh agus cha d' fhuair e fiadh an latha sin.[48]

A man went out to the moor with a gun and his dogs and he was going to get a deer. His step was cheerful and joyful as he was feeling in a good mood.
He had not gone far forward to the heights of the moor when he saw a few people cutting peat.
"Come over here, young fellow," they said to him. "We are going to take our food and you can have a share."
"Oh," he said, "Thank you. But I don't need any food."
"Oh, you may be needy enough for it before you return. You might have a long stalk before you get a deer."
He agreed to this and went over.
Their implements were put to one side and they all sat around the table they had and there was plenty butter, cheese, oatcakes and milk and he had his share.
"Now I will be off," he said, "and many thanks to you for your food." And he went off.
He had not gone far on the heights of the moor when he saw a stag as beautiful as he had ever seen before.
"Well, well," he said, "I haven't gone far to hunt."
And he went to take aim with his gun to shoot and what did he see but a woman [in his sight].
"O God, what's this?" he said.
He lowered the gun and lifted it again and when he aimed the gun again there was a beautiful woman with red-hair and she was combing her hair and whatever was falling from her head but lice and she was striking them.
"O, what a business this is!" he said, "but I have heard that by putting a sixpence in the gun it might well useful. He put a sixpence in the gun and then took aim and he there appeared a deer and when he fired the deer fell dead. He went up to where the deer was and he was going to gralloch it—going to take its guts out—and when he had done this and as he turned towards the deer he grew very weak. He said to himself: "It's just as well I had some food or I would faint," and when he opened the deer and looked inside he saw the bread and cheese he had eaten at the peat bank and this dumbfounded him greatly. He folded his gun under his oxter and went home but he did not get a deer that day.

On the surface this may look like a very simple tale. Nevertheless, if the surface is scratched then it can be seen that it may contain traditions of some antiquity. Although Cailleach Beinn Bric is not mentioned, it can be assumed that the woman in

[48] MacDonald, John (Highbridge, Brae Lochaber), *Naidheachd mu Fhear a chaidh a shealg*, SA 1952/126/4. There is also a shorter version of this, see MacDonald, John (Highbridge, Brae Lochaber), *Naidheachd Seilge*, CIM I.I.4, TSB IV, 324-26.

question can be interpreted as a deer-priestess. In the tale, each time the hunter takes aim with his gun, the deer transforms into a woman. McKay suggests that this is a folk-memory survival of a pagan practice for in 'these tales of a deer becoming a woman, and reverting again to deer-shape, and doing this the customary three times, I see a folk-memory of pagan ritual, during the course of which, the deer-priestess would donn and doff her official canonicals and vestments, the hide of a deer with antlers and hoofs attached.'[49] In the process of transition storytellers, mostly conservative, as John MacDonald was in this instance, understood this metaphor as shape-changing rather than that of a ceremonial change of deer-hide. A similar tale entitled 'Mac na Bantraich' is told in J. F. Campbell's *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, where the hunter falls in love with the deer-woman, and, after many adventures, they eventually marry.[50] Campbell of Islay believed this not to be an uncommon tale of the west Highlands. It would seem that the woman who had the ability to change shape is possessed of some supernatural power. In reality, however, if it is understood as a ceremonial practice, then it can be seen that she was indeed a mortal woman. Also the introduction of the silver sixpence enhances the supernatural aspect of the story as a means of neutralising enchantment, which is understandable in the way in which the story had developed through the confusion of the *cailleach* with the deer-priestess.

The relation of the hunter to Cailleach Beinn Bric also deserves attention. From Allan MacDonell's account, it can be seen that it was unlucky to meet with the *Cailleach*. The hunters would invariably return home in such circumstances as any hope of catching game would have been in vain. According to McKay, the 'Lochaber Deer-Goddess was of a bad omen to hunters, but protected outlaws.'[51] And, doubtless, this is why Dòmhnall MacFhionnlaigh nan Dàn and Dòmhnall Mòr Òg have been associated with her. In the former case (and Dòmhnall MacIain) it can be seen that if the animals in any way become refractory, she then permits them to be hunted. One may ask why or how such a situation arose between the hunter and Cailleach Beinn Bric. Clearly, she doted on her herd of deer and took a dislike to any hunters who killed them as game. McKay suggests that this may be a modern development as deer-forests began to dwindle around this time as a result of forests being burnt. A Brae

[49] McKay, John G., 'The Deer-Cult and the Deer-Goddess of the Ancient Caledonians', 156.
[50] *PTWH,* ii, 307-17, 'The Widow's Son'.

Lochaber tradition of how this is said to have affected the *cailleach* appears in *Folk Tales and Fairy Lore*, entitled 'An Sealgair agus Glaistig na Beinne Brice':

> Bha sealgair latha a' tilleadh o'n Bheinne Bhric, agus an uair a ràinig e bun na beinne, bha leis gun cuala e fuaim coltach ri cnacail dà chloiche 'gam bualadh ri chéile, no ri greadhnaich adhaircean an daimh, an uair a bhitheas e 'gan tachas ri creig. Chum e air a cheum gus an d' thàinig e an sealladh cloiche móire, a bha 'na laighe ri taobh an rathaid, agus an sin chunnaic e coltas boirionnach 'na gurrach aig bun na cloiche, le tonnaig uaine m'a guailnibh, agus 'na làmhan dà lurgainn fhéidh, a bha i a' bualadh gun sgur r'a chéile. Ged thuig e gum bi a' Ghlaistig a bh' innte, ghabh e da dhànachd a ràdh rithe: "Gu dé a tha thu a' dèanamh an sin, a bhean bhochd?" Ach b'e an aon fheagairt a fhuair e: "O'n loisgeadh a' choille, o'n loisgeadh a' choille;" agus chum i air a' cheileir so cho fhada is a bha e an astar chluinntinn dhi.[52]
>
> A hunter was one day returning from Ben Breck, and when he arrived at the foot of the mountain, he thought he heard a sound like the cracking of two stones striking together, or the rattling of a stag's horns when he rubs them against a rock. He held on his way, until he came in sight of a large stone that lay beside the path, and the he saw, crouching at the foot of the stone, the semblance of a woman, with a green shawl about her shoulders and in her hands a pair of deer-shanks, which she kept striking against one another without ceasing. Though he understood that she was the Glaistig, he made bold enough to say to her: "What are you doing there, poor woman?" But the only reply he got was: "Since the wood was burnt, since the wood was burnt," and she kept repeating this refrain as long as he was within hearing distance of her.[53]

It seems that the deer-goddess approved, or at least tolerated, the hunter who 'could not have thought that his divinities disapproved of his hunting, for that would have implied he made his living in defiance.'[54]

The development of this relationship, however, may have been brought about by a change in perception of the *Cailleach*'s role. No longer was she seen as a deer-goddess but as a witch, i.e. the survivor of the previous pagan priestess. This change may have been symptomatic of a decline in pagan belief. It is said that a common custom in the Highlands at this time was to entreat the blessings of a witch in order to make sure that the hunt would be a successful one. The riposte with which Gormshùil is said to have reproached Lochiel, before he met the Duke of Atholl, who resented her curiosity, was ''S minic nach bu mhisde iasgair no sealgair mo bheannachd agus co dh'an duraichdinn e'[55]—*Often would a fisherman or hunter be no worse off for my*

---

[51] McKay, John G., 'The Deer-Cult and the Deer-Goddess of the Ancient Caledonians', 159.
[52] MacDougall, Rev. James (auth), Calder, Rev. George (ed.), *Folk Tales and Fairy Lore*, 248.
[53] *Ibid.*, 249.
[54] McKay, John G., 'The Deer-Cult and the Deer-Goddess of the Ancient Caledonians', 149.
[55] Mackellar, Mary, 'Traditions of Lochaber', *TGSI*, vol. XVI (1889–90), 273.

blessing and any others who wished for it. The share of the catch would then be divided proportionately. McKay is of the opinion that the witch became so greedy that she would take all game, only to send out the hunter again for more. The hunter could not tolerate such a state of affairs and began to question his own (supposedly then) inferior position in relation to the witch. It is argued that not only the decline of faith in the old pagan belief system can be seen here, but also the establishment of patriarchy over matriarchy as women in old pagan Celtic society were, it is alleged, in a superior position.[56] This again is supposed to echo the antiquity of the *Cailleach* in Scottish Gaelic tradition. The *Cailleach* in Lochaber tradition seems to have been particularly robust. 'A Gamekeeper[57] at Corrour Lodge[...]told my friend Mr. Ronald Burn, in 1917, that the Cailleach of Ben Breck, Lochaber, had cleaned out a certain well of hers, and had afterwards washed herself therein, in the same year! And in 1927 the late Dr Miller of Fort William[...]informed me that the old Cailleach is still well-known there.'[58]

John MacDonald states that talk of Cailleach Beinne Bric was a common topic of the traditional cèilidh. It pervades much of the lore connected with supernatural belief and also with hunting tradition. For example:

> Bha Domhall Camshron 'na shealgair ainmeil an Loch Abar, far an robh sealgairean san am sin. Is e Domhall Mór Òg a theirte ris an dune a measg a dhàimhich agus a chairdean. Bha Domhall Mór Òg 'na làn ghaisgeach agus 'na deagh làmh-fheuma am beinn agus am baile. Bha e là mach a' sealg nam fiadh, agus le bhith sgìth a' siubhal bheann is ghleann is choire shuidh e shuas air bràigh a' ghlinne agus thuit e 'na chadal. Chual e guth caoin ciùin r'a thaobh, agus thubhairt an guth, 'Am bheil thu ad chadal, Dhomhaill Òig?' 'Chan 'eil a nis,' arsa Domhall Òg agus e leum air a bharr-bonn. Chunna Domhall Òg ann a sin thall m'a choinneamh an aon bhean a b' àlainne cruth agus dealbh air an do laigh sùil mic màthar riamh,—ciabhan donna donna-ruadh a' snàmh a sìos m'a crios àlainn cana-ghil, agus a cìochan geal a' snàmh air a h-uchd mar an fhaoileag bhàn air bharr nan tonn. Labhair am boireannach agus thubhairt i, 'Is dubh dona liom fhéin, a Dhomhaill Òig, thu bhith cho tur trom air tilgeil nan aighean.' 'Cha do loisg mi fhéin air agh riamh far am faighinn damh, arsa Domhall Òg. 'Is math a chuir sin riut, a Domhaill Òig; ach tha do smeòirne bhiorach am bun mo shléisne bho Chiadaoin seo chaidh, agus is beag a bha mi an dùil gum bu tu a dhèanadh orm e, Dhomhaill Òig, agus a liù là thug thu fhéin agus mi fhéin ag itheadh meille agus a' deoghal meala am bràigh na coille,

[56] Ross, Ann, 'The Devine Hag of the Pagan Celts', in Venetian Newall (ed.), *The Witch Figure: Folklore Essays by a Group of Scholars in England Honouring the 75th Birthday of Katharine M. Briggs* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 139-64.
[57] McKay, John G., 'The Deer-Cult and the Deer-Goddess of the Ancient Caledonians', 144-74. John G. McKay writes that the informant was Duncan Robertson.
[58] *Ibid.*, 166.

> Dhomhaill Òig.' Cha robh fhios aig Domhall Òg 'd é mu'n iadh a' ghrian mo mu chiaradh an t-saoghail a theireadh no a shaoileadh e de chainnt na rìoghainn. Shìolaidh a sin ceò nam beann a nuas dha'n ghleann, agus cha bu léir do Domhall Òg fad a' bhogha bha 'na dhorn gun do thog an ceò; agus dar a thog, cha robh sealladh aig Domhall Òg ri fhaicinn air an rìoghainn,—aon sealladh fhéin, agus chan fhac e riamh tuilleadh i.[59]
>
> Donald Cameron was a famous hunter in Lochaber, where there were hunters at that time. Big young Donald the man was called among his kindred and friends. He was a right stalwart fellow and a good hand at need in hill and in townland. He was out one day hunting the deer, and being tired with traversing bens and glens and corries, he sat down on the breast of the glen and fell asleep. He heard a soft gentle voice at his side, and the voice said, 'Art thou asleep, young Donald,' 'Not now,' said young Donald, leaping to his toes. Then young Donald beheld there before him the one woman fairest of mien and mound on whom eye of mother's son every lay—brown russet locks floating down about her beauteous girdle white as the cotton of the moor, and her white breasts floating upon her bosom as the white seagull on the crest of the waves. The woman spoke and said, 'It grieves me sorely, young Donald, that thou art so wholly bent on shooting the hinds.' 'I have never fired at a hind where I could find a stag,' said young Donald. 'Well has that served thee,' young Donald; but thy sharp-pointed shaft is in my haunch since Wednesday last, and little did I expect it would be thou who wouldst do it to me, O young Donald, considering how many a day thou and I have spent together, eating dainty and sucking honey in the breast of the wood, O young Donald!' Young Donald knew not in the sun's circuit or the darkling of the world what to say or to think of the maiden's talk. Then the mist of the mountains sank down upon the glen, and young Donald could not see so far as the length of the bow in his hand until the mist lifted; and when it did, he could see not a glimpse of the maiden,—not so much as a glimpse, and he never saw her more.[60]

The liminal aspect of the hunting environment may be reflected in the dream-like quality described in the narrative where the hunter encounters supernatural creatures. There is an erotic element present, bordering on the sexual, as noted previously when discussing Fenian literature.[61] It may be that there is some symbolism, or even allegory, at work here, but it is difficult to determine the relationship between the hunter and the deer-woman unless, of course, it is simply making a basic ecological point that it was bad practice to kill hinds, rather than stags, as this would obviously endanger the deer-stock.

A common motif of the *leannan-sìth*, or fairy-lover, is made explicit in a lament *Cumha do dh' Fhorsair Choire-'n-t-Sìth*,[62] said to have been composed by his widow.

---

[59] *CG*, v, 174.

[60] *CG*, v, 175; see also MacDougall, Rev. James (auth.); Calder, Rev. George (ed.), *Folk Tales and Fairy Lore*, 254-57.

[61] Cartmill, Matt, *A View to a Death in the Morning*, 70-75.

[62] MacDonald, Alasdair [Alasdair an Ridge], 'Cumha do dh' Fhorsair Choire-'n-t-Sith', *MT*, vol. VI, no. 27 (31 Dec., 1897), 216. See also Whyte, Henry [Fionn], 'Marbhrann Forsair Choire-an-t-Sith', *An*

Tradition relates that Gilleasbaig Dòmhnallach of Raasay stock (Clann Mhic 'ille Chaluim Ratharsaigh) who, in his role as forester, was charged to protect the deer from MacCailein and his retinue when they were hunting around Coire an t-Sìth.[63] Despite the inclusion of the *leannan-sìth*, there appears to be a good deal of historical accuracy contained within this particular tradition.

The Gaelic Otherworld mirrors human society in such a way that it appears to be both familiar and alien: where the two worlds are intertwined, especially when liminal periods are to the fore (prevalent at particular times of the year), the portals open between them and thus make them more accessible to one another. Thus, there are surviving traditions concerning the fairy host which affirm that they enjoyed the same pursuits as mortals. A tradition concerning Clanranald relates that while two men were tending cattle in a long house at Nunton, Benbecula, when they were interrupted by two bejewelled fairy-dogs. A voice calling the hounds was then heard:

> Sitheach-seang, sitheach-seang!
> Siubhal-bheann, siubhal-bheann!
> Duth-sith, dubh-sith!
> Cuile-rath, cuile-rath!
> Cu-gorm, cu-gorm!
> Sireadh-thall, sireadh thall!
>
> Slender-fay, slender-fay!
> Mountain-traveller, mountain-traveller!
> Black-fairy, black-fairy!
> Lucky-treasure, lucky-treasure!
> Grey-hound, grey-hound!
> Seek-beyond, seek-beyond![64]

The dogs hearing the call rushed out with the rather stunned men in pursuit—

> And there in the bright blue sky they beheld a multitudinous host of spirits, with hounds on leash and hawks on hand. The air was filled with music like the tinkling of innumerable silver bells, mingled with the voices of the 'sluagh', hosts, calling their hounds. The men were so astonished that they could only remember a few of the names they heard.
> These were the spirits of the departed on a hunting expedition, travelling westwards beyond the 'Isle of the nuns', beyond the 'Isle of the monks,' beyond the Isle of 'Hirt', beyond the Isle of 'Rockal', and away and away towards 'Tir fo thuinn,' the Land under the waves; 'Tir na h-oige,' the Land of youth; and 'Tir na h-aoise,' the Land of age, beneath the great western sea.

Gàidheal, leabh. VI, air. 70 (Oct., 1877), 307-08; Mac-na-Ceàrdadh, Gilleasbuig, *An t-Oranaiche*, 515-16.

[63] MacThòmais, Ruaraidh (deas.), 'Forsair Choir-an-t-sìth', *Gairm*, air. 159 (An Samhradh, 1992), 259-60.

[64] *CG*, ii, 266-67.

> 'Turas math dhaibh agus deagh shealg—'s O Righ na gile 's na grèine 's nan corracha reula cubhra! is iad fein a chuir an gniomh 's an giamh, 's barrachd 's ni leoir, air fir 's air laoigh ChlannRaghail.'—Fortune follow them and luck of the game—and oh, King of the sun, and of the moon, and of the bright effulgent stars! it was they who put fear and fright, and more than enough, on the men and the calves of Clanranald.[65]

It seems that fairy society was not totally averse to mimicking human society and that they also took great delight in hunting. Nevertheless, the supernatural, at least allegedly, could also lead to more tragic events.

Call Ghàdhaig: A Hunting Catastrophe

One of the most infamous incidents to involve hunting is remembered as Call Ghàdhaig (1800). Such was the notoriety of this disaster that it became a mark of Highland chronology and the enormity of such a tragedy was well put by Donnchadh Gobha MacAoidh (*d.* 1820) in an elegy *Call Ghàdhaig*:

> Ach bruidhnidh 'n linn a thig an àird,
> Am mìle bliadhna seo slàn,
> Air a' bhreitheanas so bh' ann,
> 'S an sgrios a bh' anns a' chathadh ud.[66]
>
> But the generation that shall rise will speak,
> This full thousand years,
> About this judgement that came,
> Of the devastation in that blizzard.

It may not be well remembered as it should be but the impact of the tragedy affected the Badenoch area (as well as elsewhere). Te accident was documented in the newspapers of the day as, for example, a report from *The Scots Magazine* states:

> ...Major Macpherson of Lorick, and other four gentlemen who were out along with him shooting wild-fowl[...]have unfortunately perished in the violent storm of snow[...]They had retired for shelter to an old cot house[...]which was blown down upon them by the fury of the wind. The bodies of Major Macpherson and other three of them were found under the ruins; that of the fifth gentleman was found on the outside of the cottage. [67]

---

[65] *Ibid.*

[66] *PB*, 286. The earliest printing appears in Mac-an-Tuairneir, Paruig, *Comhchruinneacha do dh'òrain taghta, Ghàidhealach, nach robh riamh roimhe clò-bhuailte gus a nis, air an tional o mheodhair, air feadh gaidhealtachd a's eileine na h-Alba* (Duneidionn: T. Stiubhard, 1813), 'Oran air a chall mhor thachair ann an Gadhaig, fridh na 'm fiadh aig Diuc Gordan, am Baideineach, ann am bliadhna, 1800', 271-75.

[67] *The Scots Magazine*, vol. LXII (Jan., 1800), 71. The same report was published in *The Caledonian Mercury*, no. 12225 (24 Jan., 1800), 3; and in *The Edinburgh Evening Courant*, no. 13739 (23 January 1800), 3, and doubtless in other newspapers.

Although the report is fairly short, there are three mistakes. They were not fowling but rather hunting deer (in order to get venison for a festive feast), and John MacPherson, or Iain Dubh mac Alasdair (1724–1800), was a captain not a major. Perhaps, however, the greatest inaccuracy occurs when the wind is described as causing the bothy to collapse when it was in actual fact due to an avalanche.

A better contemporary account stems from the pen of Anne Grant of Laggan, who was familiar with the Black Officer:

> I have not the leisure to describe to you the dreadful fate of Captain Macpherson of Ballachroan, who, with four others, set out before Christmas to hunt for deer in a chase of the Duke of Gordon's, between this country and Athol. There was a shooting-lodge, built in that place to shelter the Duke on his summer excursions. There the hunters repaired every night to sleep, having provided fire and food to keep them comfortable for the three days they were to remain. But on the third evening, December 2d, there came on a stormy night; next morning, the father of one of the young men of the Captain's party, went up to see how they fared, but could not see even the house, the roof, timber, and every stone of which had been carried more then two hundred yards distance. The whole country was summoned out to discover and bring home the mortal remains and the Captain and his associates were found dead, covered with snow, where the house had stood. The story is almost miraculous, and every one hereabout was filled with superstitious horror. We account for it from a whirlwind or avalanche. You can have no-idea what a gloom has overspread us; Mr. Grant was always partial to him. There are so many tender, as well as strange circumstances involved in this dismal tale, that the mind cannot shake off the impression.[68]

The remark that the accident 'was filled with superstitious horror' refers, no doubt, to the circumstances in which Captain John MacPherson's character, or, as he was better known in Gaelic tradition, An t-Othaichear Dubh, was vilified. Briefly, this rather litigious individual had attracted an unsavoury reputation due, in the main, it is said, to his reckless recruitment tactics.[69] Stories and rumours soon began to spread relating the real reasons behind the accident which was not caused by a natural event but rather, it was said, by supernatural agency. The catastrophe is also remembered in three Gaelic songs: *Call Ghàdhaig* by Donnchadh Gobha MacAoidh, a local Badenoch poet; another of the same name, *Call Ghàdhaig*, and *Cumha Iain Òig Mhic*

---

[68] Grant (of Laggan), (Mrs.) Anne, *Letters from the Mountains*, 2 vols. (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longman, 6th ed., 1845), ii, 149-50.

[69] The extant correspondence of Captain John MacPherson is contained in NAS, Charles Fraser-Mackintosh Collection, GD128/31/10/1-74, GD128/31/10a/1-4 and NAS, Gordon Castle Muniments, GD 44/27/18, GD 44/43/249/15-18, GD 44/43/129/29-30, GD 44/43/158/7, GD 44/43/184/24, GD 44/43/206/19-21, which, in the main, deals with legal issues.

a' Phearsain both by Calum Dubh (nam Protaigean) Mac an t-Saoir,[70] who hailed from Badenoch. There is some evidence from Mackay's song that it was indeed the case that his black reputation was not without some foundation:

> Recruitigeagh dubh gun àgh,
> Cha robh riamh leis ach 'na spàirn,
> 'S chuir e saltraigeadh dhe ainm,
> A bhios luchd-anacainnt 'g aithris air.[71]
>
> Black recruiting without blessing,
> He never reckoned aught but an effort,
> Yet it has trampled his own good name,
> That detractors love to relate about him.

Although Mackay states in his song that he was not only trying to honour the memory of Captain John MacPherson, as well as the others who perished in the tragic accident, but also to defend his reputation, it seems, nevertheless, that his composition was met with some hostility from the Ballachroan family itself:

> A' chasg mi-rùin 'us droch sgéil,
> Tha trian m' òrain-sa gu léir;
> 'S tha teaghlach Baile-Chrodhain fhéin
> A' cur mo spéis 'an amharas.[72]
>
> To stem ill will and bad repute,
> A third of my song is devoted—
> For the family of Ballachroan itself
> Finds my loyalty suspect.

Indeed, Charles Fraser-Mackintosh (1828–1901) summed up John MacPherson's career and character:

> He was a man of great ability, actively engaged in diverse business—constantly striving in the pursuit of gain. All came to nought, and years before his death he had become bankrupt. I have many of his letters, showing him servile to superiors, agreeable to equals when he chose, tyrannic to his inferiors. In the year 1767 he was living at Phoness[...]His chief home military work was recruiting, carried on with extreme rigour and arbitrariness.[73]

---

[70] MacBain, Alexander, 'Calum Dubh nam Protaigean', *The Highlander*, vol. II, no. 83 (12 Dec., 1874), 3.
[71] *PB*, 284.
[72] *PB*, 284.
[73] Fraser-Mackintosh, Charles, *Letters of Two Centuries: Chiefly Connected with Inverness and the Highlands, from 1616 to 1815* (Inverness: A. & W. MacKenzie, 1890), 280-81. This letter is still preserved in his papers, NAS, Charles Fraser-Mackintosh Collection, GD 128/31/10a/4.

It seems that stories preserved in oral tradition concur with the general view that John MacPherson was involved with a diabolical agency. For instance, stories say that the Black Captain had a tryst with the Devil a year to the very night before the actual disaster. By way of a fulfilling his contract he had to meet the Devil a year forthwith, which, so the storytellers maintained, foretold his doom.[74] Folktales also tell of how the Black Officer tricked the Devil on numerous occasions. It is further claimed that he used some very underhand methods in recruiting the youth of Badenoch to join the British army.[75] Even on his way to be buried, it is said that he was visited with unusual supernatural occurrences.[76] And as Calum Maclean put it, somewhat forcibly, 'came home the soulless body of the Captain of Ballachroan, a faithful servant of two principalities, the British Empire and the Powers of Darkness.'[77]

Such was the impact of the tragedy that it was not long until it was taken up by both Sir Walter Scott (1770–1832) and James Hogg (1770–1835), the Ettrick Shepherd. They were both inspired to write fictional accounts based upon the Catastrophe of Gaick.[78] Scott's account was, nevertheless, so far from the truth that it provoked a reply from John MacPherson's daughter, Mrs. Helen MacBarnet.[79]

---

[74] Campbell, John, (Kingussie, Badenoch), *Call Ghàdhaig*, CIM I.III.3, 1278-83; *Legends of Badenoch: A Collection of Traditional Tales* (Kingussie: Jas. Johnstone & Son, 5th ed., 1965), 14-17. This, of course, is a motif popularised by both Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) in his *Faust* (1790) and earlier by the Elizabethan playwright Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593) in his *Tragicall History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* (*c.* 1588/92). Both these authors were influenced by folk traditions preserved in chapbooks. It would appear that Marlowe based his play upon *The Historie of the Damnable Life, and Deserved Death of Doctor John Faustus*, which appeared in this chapbook *c.* 1588. Goethe, on the other hand, who was probably aware of Marlowe's play, and had read traditions of the real-life Georg Faust (1480–1540) which had also been preserved in chapbooks and broadsheets.

[75] Cameron, John, (Inch, Badenoch), *Call Ghàdhaig*, CIM I.III.3, 1241-44; *Legends of Badenoch: A Collection of Traditional Tales*, 23-24.

[76] MacDonald, John, (Highbridge, Brae Lochaber), *Captain Dubh Bhaile Chròbhain*, CIM I.III.2, 144-46.

[77] Maclean, Calum I., *The Highlands* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1959), 120.

[78] Hogg, James, 'Dreadful Narrative of the Death of Major Macpherson', *The Spy*, vol. XIII (Nov., 1810), 101-3; Scott, Walter (Sir), 'On the Supernatural in Fictitious Composition: Works of Hoffman', *The Foreign Quarterly Review*, vol. I (Jul., 1827), 68-69.

[79] Scott, Walter (Sir), 'Notice to Correspondents–An Authentic Account of the Melancholy End of (Captain) Macpherson', *The Foreign Quarterly Review*, vol. II (1828), 352-53. Anderson, W. E. K. (ed.), *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 1998), 506, where Anderson writes, 'Scott illustrated his review of Hoffman's works in the first number of the *Foreign Quarterly* with the tale (told him by the Revd. McIntosh Mackay) of a certain Captain Macpherson who was swept away by an avalanche along with five or six attendants and the entire shooting-lodge in which they were staying during a Christmas deer-hunt – a disaster attributed by the local people to diabolical agency. In her first very unreasonable letter, Mrs. MacBarnet hints that only her brother's absence saves Scott from an immediate challenge to a duel; the second professes to find the apology printed in the second number of the *Review* 'so far short of what I expected that my sister and myself are anything but satisfied by it.'

Although Scott later wrote a retraction,[80] 'for telling a rawhead and bloody bones story about him', it did not appear to satisfy, so that the clearly irritated Scott wrote in his journal that 'I almost wish they would turn out a clansman to be free of the cumber. The vexation of having to do with ladies who on such a point must be unreasonable is very great. With a man it would be soon ended or mended. It really hurt my sleep.'[81]

Calum Maclean expounded his philosophy regarding historical traditions and oral tradition in his book *The Highlands* (1959):

> There are two histories of every land and people, the written history that tells what it is considered politic to tell and the unwritten history which tells everything.[82]

This is perhaps too forceful, in that Maclean rhetorically exaggerates his point in order to make his argument clear. In reality, as probably Maclean knew full well, the situation is more grey and complex. In all likelihood, the real reason behind the Catastrophe of Gaick is far more mundane—it was simply through an unforeseen natural disaster and not through supernatural agency. A contemporary account from an actual eye-witness was written by the Rev. Mackintosh Mackay (1793–1873), a famous Gaelic scholar of his day. Although the name of the witness is not forthcoming, the beginning of the narrative describes the hunting-party setting out for the Forest of Gaick:

> Towards the end of December 1799, Captain MacP[herson] having a young greyhound that he was anxious to give blood to, determined on an excursion to the forest of Gawick. The foxhunter of the district was arranged with, to accompany the Captain with his hounds, so as to initiate the young hound in the chase. Beside the foxhunter, Donald McGillivray[...]the Captain also arranged with Duncan Macfarlane & John Macpherson[...]This John Macpherson[...]was the planner of the unfortunate expedition. Some days before, he came to the Captain's house to inform him that there were deer on certain grounds of Gàig[...]On receiving this information the Captain planned the expedition, and sent for the Foxhunter, Donald MacGillivray[...]They resolved to set out on Monday last of December.[83]

The witness continues the narrative by relating the circumstances in which Captain John MacPherson came to fetch the eye-witness but only to tell him that he could not

---

[80] Scott, Walter (Sir), 'Notice to Correspondents–An Authentic Account of the Melancholy End of (Captain) Macpherson', 352-54.
[81] Anderson, W. E. K. (ed.), *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, 506.
[82] Maclean, Calum I., *The Highlands*, 117.

go hunting for he had to attend a drill at the Bridge of Spey.[84] The narration proceeds by describing a great storm that lasted for a whole three days and did not abate until Thursday when on that:

> ...morning, I called at Captain Macpherson's, when his family appeared not much alarmed, but expressed a general anxiety about the comfort of the party at Gàig. On Friday evening, continuing anxious myself[...]I again called at the Captain's—when the family seemed to have taken alarm: and I endeavoured to persuade them that the Captain and his party, instead of returning straight home, must have crossed Gàig to Dalnacardoch[...]and would return home by the Highland Road[...]This kept their hopes alive, till Saturday evening, when their anxiety increased to alarm[...]Quite alarmed myself, I took aside Duncan Campbell[...]and told him, that unless the Captain arrived in course of the night, I was certain all could not be right, and that he and I must set out for Gàig before daylight...
> ...We accordingly set out before daylight[...]After crossing the Spey[...]and ascending the heights on the opposite side, it came on a severe and continued fall of snow, with a gale of wind. The gale and snow continued to increase greatly, as we advanced on our progress to the hills...
> After this, on our way, the snow lay so heavy, that it was with difficulty we walked. On entering what is properly called the plain of Gàig, the storm increased to a perfect hurricane[...]we had the utmost difficulty[...]to hold ourselves by the ground, encumbered as we were, and sinking in snow to the waists. The scene was tremendous—the drift continued...
> The bothy was situated at the south-west end of the lake[...]Here a considerable valley opens—the bothy was built at the entrance of the valley, on a rising ground close to the base of the hill[...]After we had gained the end of the lake[...]we were met by a nephew of Captain Macpherson's, Alex. McPherson, and Alexr. McPherson[...]
> As we came near enough to discern the site of the bothy[...]there was no appearance of it[...]This was sufficient to confirm our fears—and our impressions at that moment may be more easily conceived[...]On the drift ceasing for a moment, we clearly saw the marks and the cause of the deadly ravages committed. The mountain rises to a great height above the house, and very steep—almost perpendicular. Tho' the subsequent snow and drift had partly filled up the chasm made in the mountain side, by the snow that had fallen, in so indescribably prodigious quantity, we could clearly trace its destructive progress. It was manifest[...]that the snow[...]accumulated on the brow of the hill, to such a depth and quantity, that its own weight tore it from its roof[...]and after having rolled to the plain, its broken masses[...]lay scattered over the plain, diminishing in size as they extended forward on the plain...[85]

The full enormity of the tragedy takes its course upon the witness as he proceeds to narrate the scene of the devastation:

> ...Stepping forward from the spot we supposed (and rightly) to be the size of the house, and looking in mournful silence to the marks of devastation on the

[83] NLS, Adv.Ms.73.1.14, f. 129.
[84] *Ibid.*, 129.
[85] *Ibid.*, 131-32.

> plain[...]when the drift cleared, that we could make any remarks on the scene before us[...]The catastrophe in its full horror was now made known to our minds–and never can I cease to remember and feel, the frantic grief of the father of John Macpherson. He paced and ran, backwards and forwards thro' the snow, as if not encumbered a moment by its great depth...
> As to any attempt at a further search in the snow, it was out of the question[...]the day continued so fearfully stormy that it would have been impossible—we therefore set off for home.[86]

And yet, such was the calumny heaped upon the Black Officer's character that it provoked his kinsman, Alexander Macpherson, to write a more accurate account entitled *Captain John MacPherson of Ballachroan: The Gaick Catastrophe of the Christmas of 1799 (O.S.): A Counter-blast.*[87]

The truth regarding the Black Officer lies between the two extremes of the sensational accounts recorded both in oral tradition, and in printed material, and those recorded by his contemporaries who knew him personally.[88] For instance, Lachlan MacPherson, or *Old Biallaid*, knew Captain John MacPherson intimately, and who left a eulogistic testimony:

> ...he is esteemed as a man who, in mental and bodily qualities, had few equals, and no superior, in the Highlands; kind, generous, brave, and charitable, full of noble patriotism for his clan, and if a formidable opponent, none ever sought his aid, or conciliated his enmity, without receiving prompt assistance and immediate reconciliation. His purse, as well as his talents, was ever at the service of the poor, the oppressed, and all who stood in need of assistance[...]Active, intelligent, and superior in all things, he was a dangerous enemy, but an unshaken ally, and the most bitter foe had only to seek his amity, and he immediately became his friend. His mind was full of generosity, kindness, and sensibility; and if he had faults, they were errors of his age, and not of his own heart. In his latter days, his liberality in assisting others embarrassed his own affairs; but in every trial, his conduct was distinguished by honour and integrity. Amidst his misfortunes he was deprived of his wife, after

---

[86] *Ibid.*, 132.

[87] This pamphlet, and summaries thereof, have been re-printed on numerous occasions: MacPherson, Alexander, *The Gaick Catastrophe and Capt. John Macpherson, Ballachroan a Memorable Incident of the Year* 1800 (Kingussie: Archibald Cameron, 1881); 'Captain John MacPherson of Ballachroan: A Counter-Blast', *Inverness Chronicle*, no. 2 (12 Jan., 1881), 3; *Glimpses of Church and Social Life in the Highlands of Scotland in Olden Times*, 144-55; *Captain John Macpherson of Ballachroan and the Gaick Catastrophe of the Christmas of 1799 (O.S.): A Counter-blast* (Kingussie: George A. Crerar, 1900); 'Captain John Macpherson of Ballachroan and the Gaick Catastrophe of the Christmas of 1799 (O.S.): A Counter-blast', *The Scots Magazine*, vol. XXV (1900), 215-28; 'The Black Officer and the Gaick Catastrophe of the Christmas of 1799 (O.S.)', *Inverness Courier*, vol. 83, no. 5630 (24 Jul., 1900), 3; 'The Black Officer', *Chamber's Journal*, vol. XI, no. 541 (May, 1908), 301-04. A little over a century after the catastrophe, profits from the pamphlet's sales helped to finance the monument erected to the victims of the tragedy, see Mackenzie, Alison, 'The Gaick Memorial: [commemorating the "Loss of Gaick"]', *Clan Chattan*, vol. IX, no. 6 (1994), 325; Anon., 'Gaick Forest—Memorial to the "Black Officer" of Badenoch', *Inverness Courier*, vol. 85, no. 5847 (22 Aug., 1902), 4.

[88] In general, see Wiseman, Anndra E. M., 'Call Ghàdhaig ann am Ficsean is ann am Fìrinn', *TGSI*, vol. LXII (2000–02), 298-346.

> which, he went little into society, but in his old age, spent many of his days, like the ancient hunters, alone in the hills of Gàic or the corries of Beann-Alder, with no other companion than his 'cuilbheir' and 'his grey dogs.' Such was one of the last true deer-stalkers of the old race of gentlemen—a man who, if we lived a hundred years, we should not see again.[89]

As with these 'ancient hunters', conventional use of hunting motifs are employed in Calum Macintyre's lament when he acted as ghillie for Captain John MacPherson:

> 'N uair bhiodh tu ri fiadhach beinne,
> 'S tric a bha mise na m' ghille
> Ri d' lodhainn, beagan air dheireadh,
> A' feitheamh ri fuaim do theine;
> 'N uair 'stiùradh tu ris an eilid,
> Bhiodh toll air a bian le do pheileir,—
> 'Mharbhaich' na h-earba 's a' choilich,
> An dóbhrain, na liath-chearc, 's an t-sionnaich.[90]
>
> When you would hunt in the hills,
> Often I was a ghillie with your leash,
> With your hounds, a little behind,
> Awaiting the report of your fire.
> When you'd steer them towards the hind,
> A bullet-hole would be made in her hide,
> Slayer of the little roe, the black-cock,
> The otter, the greyhen, and fox.

Further, a letter written by Captain Alexander Clerk (who was related to James '*Ossian*' Macpherson) shortly after the tragedy (on the 8 January 1800 to be precise) to the Duke of Gordon's baillie and estate commissioner, William Tod, accords with the eye-witness testimony and thus, reveals the real truth behind the Catastrophe of Gaick:

> ...You well know the honest Captain's passion and propensity of being in the hill, and at his favourite sport after the deer. This led him to go to Gaick[...]with a party of four men and three greyhounds. That day and the next were tolerably good days but in the course of Wednesday night it came on to blow very hard, with snow and drift[...]But as there was a most sufficient house there, and they had provisions, their friends had hopes of their being safe until the weather became moderate on Saturday, and they did not come home, nor any word from them. On Sunday a few men went up to Gaick, who returned that night and reported that no vestige of the house remained[...]This report left no doubt as to the melancholy fate of the poor Captain and his unfortunate companions[...]a pretty large number of men went on Monday to the hill, and after long labour in exploring the stance of the house, they at last made it out, and[...]they that night dug the body of the Captain and three of his companions out of the snow[...]The Captain was found in bed with his shoes of [*sic*] and

[89] *LDF*, ii, 426.
[90] *PB*, 278.

> night-cap on, in a kneeling position, with both his hands under his forehead. Two men in another bed in one another's arms, with the three greyhounds lying above them, and the third as if he had been sitting by the fire-side. The fourth is not found yet[...]The bodies are this day to be carried from Gaick, which will be a very serious trial for men, and the Captain's corpse is to be in some sort of state for this night at his own house, and to be interred to-morrow. I will not dwell much longer on this melancholy subject, only mention to you the names of the people who accompanied the Captain on his fatal excursion—Donald Macgillivray, fox-hunter—a Strathdearn lad, with his servant, one Grant, from Duthil; John Macpherson, a fine stripling from Phones; and Duncan Macfarlane, from Kingussie[...]and whose body is still unfound. The cruel accident was occasioned by a circumstance which could neither be expected nor foreseen, and which, I suppose, brought on their death before they were aware of any danger. It appears to have been done by an immense bank of snow having fallen from near the top of the hill behind the house, and afterwards carried down by the hurricane with great force and velocity, and sweeping the house along with it to the very foundation stones...[91]

Hunting usually takes place in liminal areas and it would seem that the Forest of Gaick has always had a dark reputation. For instance, there is a story of how Walter Comyn (of a family that once held powerful sway in Badenoch) was ripped apart by a two witches who had transmogrified themselves into eagles.[92] Further, there is a tradition in which Muirdeach mac Iain, while hunting in Gaick, killed a woman who had taken deer-form.[93] There is also a story that the 'spirit' of Gaick itself would appear. And to make matters worse, the tragedy of Gaick occurred at one of the most liminal of periods between the Old and the New Year, when it was unlucky to carry anything out according to tradition, as this was a time when otherworldly creatures would be abroad. In this respect it is little wonder that The Black Captain was seen to invite his own doom when he set forth with his hunting party to chase the deer into the alluring heart of darkness that was:

> Gàdhaig dhubh nam feadan fiar,
> Nach robh ach 'na strìopaich riamh,
> 'Na ban-bhuidseach 'toirt' na lion,
> Gach fear le 'm b' mhiannach laighe leath'.[94]
>
> Dark Gaick of the winding runnels

---

[91] MacPherson, Alexander, 'The Black Officer and the Gaick Catastrophe of the Christmas of 1799 (O.S.)', *Inverness Courier*, vol. 83, no. 5630 (24 Jul., 1900), 3. It appears that the eye-witness substantially gave the same account to Captain Macpherson as it is related in the narration that the eye-witness was the first to give Captain Alexander Clerk the bad tidings of the tragedy.
[92] *DDSSH*, 109.
[93] Anon., 'Murdoch MacIain and the Green Fairy of Gaick Forest', *CMon*, vol. XVI, no. 12 (Sep., 1908), 236; see also, MacPherson, Alexander, *Glimpses of Church and Social Life in the Highlands of Scotland in Olden Times*, 403-04; *DDSSH* 110.
[94] *PB*, 286.

She has always been a whore—
A witch ensnaring her net,
Each one who desires to lie with her.

Conclusion

Over time, and on many levels, superstition has been intertwined with a Gaelic worldview. Many other contemporary societies, of course, also had their own cultural viewpoints that were not too dissimilar to the Gaelic one. Hunting, with especial regard to its liminal status, therefore, was ripe to attract many superstitious traditions. Such a sport as hunting, as has been manifestly shown, had a universal appeal within Gaelic society, and supernatural elements with their belief systems, customs, habits, and so on, impinged upon such commonplace and important activities. It should also be borne in mind that hunting took place in liminal environments where supernatural dangers were to the fore, not to mention geographic or physical boundaries. This not only captured the imagination of storytellers, but also helped to feed the adventurous image that the hunter gained, especially in romance narratives. The hunter fought the elements by using his cunning and guile, matched with a sure gun and steady aim, beset by unknown dangers that can be readily traced back to Fenian traditions, where the use of a hunting episode was used to set off an adventure into the realm of the supernatural. Whether a hunter was cognisant of this fact is rather a moot point, but it would be fair to say that he was following in a well-trodden path. Given that hunting was the sport *par excellence* in Gaelic society, there is little doubt, especially given the ample evidence available, that supernatural customs, beliefs and superstitions should also be reflected in what might be described (at least by some of them) as one of their all-consuming passions.

CONCLUSIONS

From the various sources which have been surveyed and discussed with regard to the cultural history of hunting in the Scottish Highlands, ranging from the late-medieval period through to the early modern era, it can be concluded that one of the main reasons that Gaels hunted to such a degree, and that the hunt was an integral part of pre-modern Gaelic society, was cultural self-identity. Hunting (and, to a lesser extent, hawking) played a crucial part in a literature of encomium, both verse and song, and in narrative storytelling, as well as in visual media, i.e. sculpted stones.

Deer-hunting scenes on late-medieval west Highland sculpture are strikingly conservative, and were strongly panegyric in nature. They were commissioned memorials, portraying sculpted images, especially of the chase, which clearly identified subjects as warrior-hunters and, thus, reinforced noble status. The hunting scenes wrought on the Tomb of Alasdair Crotach and on the MacMillan Cross are the best visual extant examples of the Gaelic aristocracy portrayed as warrior-hunters. Such panegyric imagery is reinforced in contemporary classical Gaelic poetry, as well as heroic ballads and narrative stories from Fenian tradition.

The main pastime of the *Fianna* was hunting and this is one of the reasons that their popularity was maintained throughout the medieval period, and up until modern times. The heroic function of the *Fianna* was attractive because they embodied idealistic and semi-divine characteristics, which could be identified easily and absorbed into a culture which extolled the warrior-hunter. In like manner, the hunting motifs drawn from the Panegyric Code played a pivotal role, as these commonly identified a subject as a nobleman, and by extension, a warrior-hunter, one who represented dominion over nature and nurture. By supporting (and, at times, subverting) the conventional areas of a subject's virtues, whether he was a chief or a nobleman, poets could use familiar images to conform (or otherwise) to a standard that was expected within the social milieu which supported and patronised them. Martial and hunting skills were, therefore, areas emphasised when poets eulogised their patrons, and this could be used for purposes of propaganda and aggrandisement. The Gaelic perception of an ideal leader was that of a warrior-hunter, and this image of a clan chief was carefully cultivated and fixed in the minds of the populace, through the mediation (or, indeed, propaganda) of the professional and vernacular poets alike. Hunting themes and motifs are also prevalent within Gaelic song tradition

because they had an evocative force. Although there is clear overlapping, in terms of content, with the bardic imagery of professional poets, these vernacular songs offer a more emotive and direct response to moments of crisis or celebration. This is especially significant within the corpus of waulking songs, created by women primarily for a feminine audience, where images portray the hunter as a nobleman, comely and handsome, dressed in plaid, well-armed for chasing the deer. Despite such imagery being strikingly conservative, their impact, was, nonetheless, powerful. In short, a song that drew upon hunting motifs, whether composed by a professional or a vernacular bard, was one that reflected, or boasted about, the nobility of the person so described. This became an *idée fixe* of an honour-bound society.

By and large, a Gaelic perspective on hunting is reflected in the indigenous hunting method of the tinchel. Such large-scale ring-hunts were monumental in scale, and were conducted primarily as military or political occasions designed to inculcate competence in governance and political authority. Indigenous hunting customs prevailed despite Anglo-Norman cultural intrusions, and this can be seen clearly from the history of the drive and the use of the elrick and tinchel until around 1715. Since medieval times great hunts in Highlands remained popular for a variety of reasons: the main attraction was the sheer amount of game available together with enough experienced manpower to field such great events. The tinchel was a heady mixture of power, patronage, politics and, ultimately, propaganda. The tinchel acted as a surrogate for war which was a seasonal mobilising of the *sluagh*, or host, the followers who accompanied the *fine*, the Gaelic nobility. This maintained or enhanced their status, while reinforcing clan solidarity and social-bonding in a shared symbol of sporting endeavour, in chasing the noble quarry of the deer.

Despite many regulations regarding unlawful hunting introduced by the Scots Parliament over many centuries, poaching was an endemic activity within all ranks of Highland society. The complex deer-hunting culture prevailed because it drew together bands of men in a fraternal enterprise, and deer-poaching on a large scale (and most likely on a commercial basis) was similar to the ritualised 'ceremony' of cattle-lifting, in that poaching was intertwined with the clan ethos of violence and protection, and was thus an honour-bound activity. At times, it could also enter the realm of personal vendetta, and could cause, at least according to legend, clan feuds. Poaching was seen (at times) as an affront to the rights (and probably the sensibilities) of the Gaelic aristocracy, and led them to introduce their own legislation (probably in

order to protect their own commercial enterprises), perhaps in response to external pressure from the Scots legislative system. Hunting rights may, in fact, represent one of the oldest and most consistent tensions, through exploitation of natural resources by the many against the few, that existed between social classes. Even though the Highlands eventually took to the rule of law, poaching activity continued because of its covert nature, as well as a lack of political will and resources to make legislation practically ineffective. Gaelic bards emphasised the inherently 'romantic' notion of poaching by perceiving game as *res nullius*, a Gaelic concept in evidence throughout Scotland before the close of the 12th century with regard to hunting rights.

Over time, and on many levels, superstition has been intertwined with a Gaelic worldview. Such a sport as hunting had a universal appeal in Gaelic society and, of course, supernatural elements, with their belief systems, customs, habits, and so on, impinged upon such commonplace and important activities. It should also be borne in mind that hunting took place in liminal environments, or geographic or physical boundaries, where supernatural dangers were to the fore. This not only captured the imagination of storytellers but also helped to feed the adventurous image that the hunter gained, especially in romance narratives. The hunter fought the elements by using his cunning and guile, matched with a sure gun and steady aim, beset by unknown dangers that can be traced back to Fenian traditions (as well as others), where a hunting episode was used to frame an adventure into the realm of the supernatural.

The hunt did not satisfy merely the basic need to fill the larder nor, indeed, did it satisfy merely a deeply felt atavistic urge. The hunt meant far more to Gaels than other comparable contemporaneous European societies, because it fulfilled cultural functions. For the Gaels, hunting went beyond merely chasing the quarry to its final end, as the hunt was a crucial element of a larger cultural whole reflected in a society that shared accepted values, beliefs, customs and practices. Indeed, the theme of the hunt was elevated by appearing in some of the most outstanding works within the corpus of Gaelic literature, namely, *Òran na Comhachaig* and *Moladh Beinn Dòbhrain*, which have the hunt at, or near, their very core. Yet in both songs, there are distinct voices giving alternate expressions to the same theme. Such songs are testimony to the native genius of Gaelic song tradition, and stand as cultural jewels with artistic elements of which any society would be proud.

The stock motifs of the Panegyric Code contain frequent episodes of the hunt and, most importantly, they identify with the chiefly ideal, the paragon of pre-modern Gaelic society, which was always seen as a hunter-warrior. Ideologically, it was axiomatic that a chief was a skilled hunter as well as an expert warrior, and was a powerful ideal to which to aspire. Gaelic society engaged in a literature of encomium, both in poetry and in traditional narrative, and, with a late manifestation of martial-aristocratic idealism within a kin-based clan society acting as its creative backdrop, exalted moral virtues, and manly behaviour including the hunt both in itself and as a symbol of surrogate warfare. The various failed Jacobite Rebellions led to the collapse of the clan 'system' in Gaelic society, and one of its first casualties was that large-scale hunts could no longer be sustained. These had already undergone a process of change, and the fact that hunting trysts invited political intrigue and sedition meant that their days were numbered after the ascendancy of the Hanoverian government. Although sustained by the rise in popularity of stalking at the beginning of the 19th century (though this hunting technique was clearly practised long before), hunting subsequently lost its 'social' prestige and diminished in significance. It may well be argued that the Gaelic élite were replaced by the nouveau riche, through the popularity of hunting estates during the Victorian era.

Although many Gaels were very familiar with hunting motifs and the theme of the hunt in general, their approach to its depiction was, nonetheless, rather narrow, at least in comparison to the use of hunting motifs within the corpus of comparative medieval literature, where the allegorical use of the hunt was fairly prominent in courtly love and romance. This comparison may, however, be misleading for during the medieval period Gaelic culture was quite insulated from wider European influence. Until the end of this period, the Gaels showed remarkable self-confidence in their own culture as they had little requirement to look elsewhere for inspiration, apart from Ireland which had always been seen as a cultural homeland. Gaelic culture reached its apogee during the tenure of the Lordship of the Isles until its forfeiture in 1493 by the Scottish crown. Thereafter Gaeldom became more politically and culturally open to influence from the Lowlands. Nevertheless, there is a clear continuity (at least in cultural terms), even though the collapse of the Lordship brought about political decline and an inevitable destabilisation within Gaelic society, especially in areas where the Lordship's influence had held most sway. Gaelic arts relied upon their own native inventiveness and ingenuity. The continuum of their

artistic output, which is conservative in retrospective terms, and perhaps, at times, bereft of creativity was, nonetheless, influential upon Gaelic clan society as a whole.

The poetry created by the professional and vernacular bards from the 15th century through to the 18th century mirrored by a Gaelic *weltanschauung*. This reflected their concerns, interests, and ultimately their own cultural identity. An essential corner-stone for any kin-based society in general is an effective and wise ruler. For the Gael this was the warrior-hunter, the paragon of virtue and this is why the hunting motif was accepted as a universal type and explains its ubiquitous role of shaping (and even, at times, stereotyping) the leaders of society. By continual and close association, the symbiotic relationship between the worldly leader and his poetic counterpart has become inextricably linked. This is, perhaps, one of the main reasons for the popularity of Fenian traditions, which provided a semi-mythological background of heroes having idealised characteristics which established a paradigm for a culture.

The significance of the hunt can be seen in carvings represented on late-medieval west Highland monumental sculpture and in panegyric portrayal in Gaelic song, poetry, tradition and custom. The theme of the hunt continued to be referred to and imagined in different contexts, which is a testament not only to its ability to conjure a noble ideal but also to its wide-ranging appeal. Such was its fascination that the hunt as a theme was used on a frequent basis and had a strong hold on the creators of Gaelic verse, song and storytelling.

W. J. Watson commented upon the Highlanders and the hunt that 'while the Gaels were not singular in these respects, it is probably true that of all the western peoples they took most joy in this pastime and that their literature, ancient and modern, has been strongly affected by it'.[1] This, it is hoped, has been manifestly shown in this study, and Watson's comment has been expanded to include other important areas such as iconography and traditional material, in order to give a more holistic view of hunting from a Gaelic perspective. Of course, hunting, albeit in a far more commercialised fashion which was perhaps a mere shadow of its former glory, continued to inspire the muse of Gaelic bards and storytellers alike. There are many hunting songs from the 19th century such as *Òran Seilge ann an Coire Dhodha*[2]

[1] Watson, William J., 'Deer and Boar in Gaelic Literature (Aoibhinn an Obair an t-Sealg)', 75.
[2] See the Appendix A for this poem with translation.

composed by Archibald Grant (*c.* 1785–1870) and another, slightly later example, *Òran Bhràigh Rùsgaich* by John MacDougall of Glenurquhart.[3] In the early 20th century, examples of the hunt are Dòmhnall Ruadh Chorùna's *Òran na Seilge*[4] and *Dhan t-Sealgaireachd.*[5] The theme continues in our own day. Witness, for example, Somhairle MacGill-Eain's fine poem *Coin is Madaidhean-allaidh*,[6] using the theme of the chase metaphorically for the Muse, or *an eilid bhàn*[7] by Aonghas 'Dubh' MacNeacail, or, indeed, in Somhairle MacGill-Eain's *Hallaig*,[8] a triumph of his mature muse, where love is presented as a hunter and time as an apparitional deer. These more recent and modern-day examples, which are beyond the time-frame of this thesis, show that the hunt could expand into the realms of allegory and include even more novel concepts.

Although the main topics of the hunt are discussed as they appear from the late-medieval period until the modern period, this thesis has not embraced the hunt within the cultural history of the Victorian period and also of the 20th century. Questions for future research remain: How did the perception of the hunt change over this period of great change, or, indeed, was there any continuity? Of course, the question of land use in the making of deer-forests raises its head here. This area of social contention became even more politically charged during the time of the Clearances, and deer-forests had their part to play in the voluntary and involuntary removal of tenants in all parts of the Highland and Islands. As indicated in the introduction, the topic of hunting has of recent years attracted the interest of academics, and articles have been appearing steadily over the years. There are, however, many themes which remain under-researched. These include a more in-depth analysis of the royal forests established in the Highlands during the medieval period; the study of individual forests, such as Mamlorne or Glenartney; the study of the administration of deer parks in the Highlands; an onomastic study of place-names connected with hunting, or

---

[3] Mackay, William, *Urquhart and Glenmoriston: Olden Times in a Highland Parish* (Inverness: Northern Counties Publishing Co., 1893), 532-54. The bard composed this song in Edinburgh.
[4] Dòmhnallach, Dòmhnall (ùghd.); MacAmhlaigh, Fred (deas.), *Dòmhnall Ruadh Chorùna: Òrain is Dain le Dòmhnall Dòmhnallach à Uibhist a Tuath* (Loch nam Madadh: Comann Eachdraidh Uibhist a Tuath, 1995), 54-57.
[5] *Ibid.*, 78-79.
[6] Mac Ghill Eathain, Somhairle, *Dàin do Eimhir agus Dàin Eile: Poems to Eimhir and Other Poems* (Glaschu: William MacLennan, 1943), 30; 93; MacGill-Eain, Somhairle, *O Choille gu Bearradh: From Wood to Ridge* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1989), 134-35.
[7] macneacail, aonghas, *an seachnadh agus dàin eile* (Loanhead, Midlothian: Macdonald, 1986), 90-91.
[8] MacGille-Eain, Somhairle, *O Choille gu Bearradh: From Wood to Ridge*, 226-31.

sport, in general; a deeper study of the bow and arrow, as well as the use of firearms, in the Highlands; material culture and the hunt; the place of falconry as a noble sport during the medieval period in Scotland as a whole. This thesis, however, is aimed at advancing our understanding of the cultural history of the hunt in the Highlands in the period until 1800.

Hunting was an integral part of European cultural heritage and for the Gaels, or Scottish Highlanders, it was a theme reflected in their literature and lore, perhaps, more prominently than many other European cultures of a comparable period. The exaltation of the hunt as represented in iconography, continuing within Fenian traditions, and reaching its apogee in panegyric poetry, together with its concomitant appeal as evinced in traditional lore and its clear importance for the nobility in grand symbolic tinchels that took place in the Highlands from the medieval period onwards, offers clear evidence that it was a central and important part of Gaelic cultural history and identity. The hunt was one of the fundamental markers of status and identity. It was the Gaels' pastime *par excellence*, and defined, mainly through the medium of poetry, an heroic ideal, which had a universal appeal as a construct that resonated within a Gaelic cultural context.

In sum, although hunting techniques changed slowly over time within the Highlands, the essential organisational functions of hunting, especially those of the élite, were fairly stable until the beginning of the 18th century. The following characteristics of the hunt can be discerned readily in the substance of this thesis:

- Hunting topoi on late-medieval West Highland sculpture emphasised the powerful iconography of nobility;
- Hunting expressed noble status, and acted as one of the essential strands of cultural self-identity during the late-medieval and modern periods of Gaeldom;
- Hunting was viewed as a test of a chief's, or a retainer's, courage and skill;
- Hunting was as a major rite of passage, akin to cattle lifting, that was crucial within an honour-bound society;
- Hunting was one of the essential motifs within panegyric verse and narrative storytelling and propagated an iconic chiefly ideal;

- Hunting, especially the tinchel, had an integral political dimension intended to legitimise control, authority, governance and social bonding;
- Hunting, especially in terms of poaching, had a universal appeal regardless of social status, and could also represent a class tension regarding the exploitation of natural resources for economic gain;
- Conspicuous consumption in feasting and entertainment was an integral part of chiefly largesse;
- Large-scale hunting was a surrogate for war, allowing the mobilisation of large units and command by a hierarchy, and was used as a means of political sedition; it also its place in brokering inter-clan relationships.

In conclusion, it would not be inappropriate to give the last word to Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre, one of the archetypal hunter-bards. A stanza from his *Òran Dùthcha* sums up the quintessence of a Gaelic perception of chasing the deer:

> Gu fiadhach a' mhonaidh,
> No dh' iasgach air buinne,
> Anns gach gnìomh a nì duine
> 'S mòr urram nan Gàidheal.
>
> For all manly attainments,
> Whether fishing in torrents
> Or hunting in the mountains
> The Gael wins great honour.[9]

[9] Thomson, Derick S. (ed.), *Gaelic Poetry in the Eighteenth Century*, 94-95, ll. 772-775; see also *ÒDB*, 232-33, ll. 3424-3427.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: MAJOR GAELIC HUNTING SONGS

The following is a selection of major Gaelic hunting songs, or a selection that could just as aptly be described as major Gaelic songs which happen to contain the theme of the hunt as their major subject. In either case some of these are great Gaelic songs—the types of songs that would endure in any language as long as it was still spoken or sung. A common theme in these great hunting songs is nostalgia for a bygone age and all these songs lend different voices to this same theme. The most striking feature, to more or less a similar degree, is close observation of nature, the symbiotic relationship with man and his environment and joy tempered (or tainted) by a sadness in chasing the deer. Perhaps this is best exemplified by a mature Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre, who, in a more reflective and expansive mood, composed *Cead Deireannach nam Beann,* which contrasts (and, at times, complements) his earlier *Moladh Beinn Dòbhrain.*

Òran na Comhachaig is taken from the Rev. John Mackechnie's edition.[1] The poem has, thus far, not attracted a definitive scholarly published edition.[2] I have, in the main, followed Mackechnie's Gaelic text but I have silently edited what appear to be some misunderstandings in the text. The Rev. William Matheson's annotated pamphlet of Mackechnie's edition was extremely useful for this purpose. I hope that by doing so I have not managed to create any further mistakes in the Gaelic text. For the translation, I have, in the main, followed Meg Bateman's version given in Wilson McLeod's and Meg Bateman's *Duanaire na Sracaire/Songbook of the Pillagers: Anthology of Medieval Gaelic Poetry* (2007).[3]

A poem that should be included in this appendix, given that it would complement *Òran na Comhachaig*, but of which I have managed to find only one stray surviving verse, is *Moladh na Frìthe* by Alasdair mac Dhonnchaidh, a celebrated forester to Cameron of Lochiel, which can be dated to around the mid-17th century. The bard is said to have died around 1675. It is of interest as it mentions jackets, or rather doublets, made out of roe-deer hide. The surviving stanza is:

'S taitneach leam-féin trusgan an t-sléibh,
Peiteag o bhian, an ruadh bhuic, shlìm,
'S am breacan, 's an tric, a rinn mi fòs,
Mo leaba chlùmhach air monadh nan damh:
An cùran buidh, a gheàrr mi thall
O lùirg an ois, gu molach, tiugh;
Air taobh Loch Arcaig, grianach, blàth;
An t-àit 's an d'rinn mi iomadh lot.

Pleasant to me are the garments of the hill,
The *doublet of slim smooth roe*,
The plaid in which I often couched,

---

[1] *OS*, 2-19.

[2] It is hoped that Patricia M. Menzies's doctoral study, *Òran na Comhachaig: A Study of Text and Content* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2001), will result in a definitive published study.

[3] *DS*, 392-405, 519.

My downy bed upon the hill of stags;
The yellow, tough, and hairy curan
Which I cut from the leg of the deer,
On the warm sunny side of Loch Arkaig,
The place where I made many wounds.[4]

At the risk of extrapolating too much from this fragment, it would seem that the rest of the piece might have contained further information about the hunt. It may also be added that it would appear to be a fairly substantial work, perhaps in the region of at least a dozen verses.

The Rev. Robert Kirk (or Kirke), sometime minister of Balquidder from 1664 till 1685, who was transferred to his father's previous charge of Aberfoyle, composed *Tionoil na nslóigh chum na seilg* which is taken from EUL Laing Collection, La.III.529, pp. 88-92. The poem is contained in a small notebook (8°v, 183pp.) which bears a title page: 'Ane Account / of some occasional meditationes, / Resolutiones, & practices: / Which concern a public & private / statione' (followed in a different hand) 'By Mr. Robert Kirk, Minister at / Balquidder (& Aberfoyle)', which is then followed by (where an attempt has been made to erase the entry but it remains legible) 'M. Ro. Kirke / Begun, in August 9 at Balquidder— / 1681.' The Gaelic poem (presaged by an English composition inspired by the same event) makes its sudden appearance among detailed commonplace notes made by Kirk on religious matters, and, once the poem ends, the sequence of divine meditations is resumed, in conformity with the rest of his notebooks. Kirk was a man of many parts: a conscientious Gaelic and Biblical scholar, folklorist, translator and, of course, chaplain. His Latin epitaph at Aberfoyle Kirk (which is not contemporary) simply reads: *Hic Sepultus / Ille Evangelii / Promulgator / Accuratus / et / Linguæ Hiberniæ / Lumen / M.Robertus Kirk / Aberfoile Pastor / Obiit 14 Maii 1692 / Aetat 48.* ('Here lies the accurate promulgator of the Gospels and luminary of the Hibernian tongue, Mr. Robert Kirk, pastor of Aberfoyle, who died 14 May 1692, aged 48').[5] It would appear that Kirk sought sanctuary from scholarly theological speculations by indulging in his own occasional poetic effusions, which, by all appearances, were written up soon after the events they describe. The Gaelic poem given here celebrates a tinchel organised by the Marquis of Atholl (to whom Kirk was later to dedicate his Gaelic translation of the Scottish metrical Psalms *Psalma Dhaibhidh an Meadrachd* in 1684) which took place between Monday, August 28th, and Saturday, September 2nd, 1682. Some ten days later, the Marquis of Atholl, John Murray (1660–1724), later to be elevated to the title of the 1st Duke of Atholl (in 1703), eldest son of the 1st Marquis, wrote to Lord Murray from Benniglo (Beinn a' Ghlo)[6] on 12 September 1682 (ostensibly to seek news regarding his marriage proposal to Lady Katherine Hamilton) while he was still hunting—'I haue hed uerie goud sport this day, I wish you hed sine it.'[7] The original orthography is given here together with a tentative translation. I would like to acknowledge my debt to Professors Colm Ó Baoill and Dòmhnall E. Meek for their expert help in translating this difficult text.

---

[4] Stuart, John Sobieski Stolberg & Stuart, Charles Edward, *The Costume of the Clans*, 61-62.

[5] For a brief biographical account of Kirk, see Stott, Louis, 'Kirk, Robert (1644–1692)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 60 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), xxxi, 777-78.

[6] *LW*, 50 for a Map of the Atholl Deer Forests including Fealar, Seven Shielings, Lude, Glenfernate, Tarf, Tilt and Beinn a' Ghlo.

[7] *CATF*, i, 181. For a portrait of the 1st Duke of Atholl, see *CATF*, ii, frontispiece.

It is a unique poem in that, as far as I am aware, it appears to be the only extant piece of sustained Gaelic poetry to celebrate a large-scale hunt using the traditional method of the tinchel. Unusually, perhaps, for a ministerial poet of this period, it is a written in a mock-heroic style based loosely on *deibhidhe*, 'a metre in which the quatrain is composed of two rimed couplets, the riming words being of equal or unequal length according to convenience, and internal rimes optional,'[8] as used, for instance, by his near-contemporary Geoffrey Keating. In Kirk's case he employs couplets, rather than quatrains, which, for the most part, rime. Throughout the poem, Kirk employs word play, puns and in-jokes which reflects not only his own ability at self-promotion (after all, he claims at one point that he actually headed the hunting host) but also his disarming self-deprecation. Throughout the poem Kirk acts as a kind of social commentator, picking up on brief overheard conversations and overseen scenarios both preceding and during the hunt. These various parts provide a platform in order for Kirk to express poetically his creative whim in a manner which has a rather pleasant result by producing a work that is more than just a mere sum of its vignettes. Indeed, Kirk's willingness to lay bear his inside knowledge of social mores is another unusual aspect of the poem as this occurs rarely, if at all, in Gaelic poems of this particular period. These qualities clearly add to the enjoyment of the poem; however, they also make it a difficult process to interpret the historical context of the work from the remove of Kirk's own day. Indeed, there is an ambiguity present, not only with regard to its social context but also more pertinently with regard to the poem's syntax. Kirk allows himself the luxury of expressing his thoughts without being overly concerned with the somewhat rigid rules of the composition style of his choice. This, it seems, was a deliberate choice, as it allowed Kirk to play upon words that, at times, make it a difficult, though not unrewarding, task, to unravel his poem. As well as this, it also reflects the badinage that existed among the huntsmen—they were, after all, taking part in an activity in which they intended to enjoy themselves first and foremost. Not only so; another unique aspect is that this is one of the earliest examples of an event that has been celebrated bilingually. Kirk's Gaelic composition on the tinchel bears little resemblance to his English composition. It is almost as if they were written by two different people—or, at least—they may have been composed at times wide apart. This is a guess as the poems are undated though the date of the tinchel is certain. Chronologically, though, the English one came first, irrespective of any difference in times of composition. In addition, it is also a very unusual poem, probably best explained by Kirk's eccentric character, not to mention his erudition. Kirk was also a learner of Gaelic, which probably helps to explain some of the poem's more unusual aspects. Both of his parents hailed from Edinburgh, which, in any case, gives a strong indication that Kirk was not a native speaker. Nonetheless, his father, the Rev. James Kirk (1609–1658), would have had to learn Gaelic in order to administer the Gospel to his parishioners in Aberfoyle. Though clearly he would have been exposed to the language from an early age along with his siblings, it would seem unlikely that Gaelic would have been the language of the Kirk household and thus of Kirk's upbringing. Kirk states in an interesting autobiographical passage from one of his notebooks that in 1664 (on being asked whether he had Irish required of a prospective minister in the Highlands) he 'had yet but Littl of that Language. For this also, let me improve that language & thank god for all.'[9] Perhaps, with regard to his competence in Gaelic, this may have been a case of

[8] Knott, Eleanor, *Irish Classical Poetry Commonly Called Bardic Poetry* (Dublin: Colm O Lochlainn, 1957), 18.

[9] EUL, Laing.III.549, f. 69.

false modesty, but it proves beyond any reasonable doubt that he was not a native speaker, which, in many ways, makes his achievements even more extraordinary.
The Gaelic text of *Moladh Beinn Dòbhrain* is taken from Angus MacLeod's edition of the song, where I have attempted a compromise between MacLeod's rather literal translation[10] and Derick Thomson's more free-flowing translation[11] which, it can be argued, is the better of the two. Unfortunately, Thomson provides a translation for only a selection of this song in his edition. For the remainder of the poem, I have therefore endeavoured to follow the spirit of Thomson's translation with reference to MacLeod's original and with an eye firmly kept on both Ronald Black's translation,[12] and Iain Crichton Smith's free verse translation.[13]

The Blind Piper's *Cumha Choire an Easain* stems from the most recent edition in Colm Ó Baoill's and Meg Bateman's *Gàir nan Clàrsach—The Harps' Cry: An Anthology of 17th Century Gaelic Poetry* (1994).[14] A translation of the work also appears in Bridget Mackenzie's *Piping Traditions of the North of Scotland* (1998), from a version of the song given in the McLagan Collection at GUL (dating from around 1770).

Rob Donn Mackay's *Soraidh na Frìthe* has been edited on three previous occasions, firstly by the Rev. Dr Mackintosh Mackay,[15] then by Dr Hew Morrison,[16] and then by Ian Grimble with a translation by John MacInnes.[17] The latter has not provided a full text. Therefore, I have endeavoured to edit the remainder of the text and to provide an accompanying translation based upon their editorial methods. It was composed by Rob Donn Mackay around 1744, when the bard was aged around thirty and arguably at the peak of his powers, after he had left his father's residence to go to Strath Halladale, where the hunting was clearly not as good. The Bighouse referred to in the poem was Hugh Mackay (*d.* 1771), second son of George Mackay of Bighouse.

Another of Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre's songs, *Cead Deireannach nam Beann*, is again taken from the most recent edition of the song in Donald Meek's book *Caran an t-Saoghail—The Wiles of the World: Anthology of 19th Century Scottish Gaelic Verse* (2003).[18] This song was composed when Macintyre bade a fond farewell for the very last time to the bens he knew in his youth. Unusually, the actual date of the song is known: 19 September, 1802. Arguably, this was Macintyre's last great composition as he produced nothing of the same quality once he and his family were removed to Edinburgh in 1767. In effect, his retiral to the capital left him without the scenery and landscape which inspired his great songs.

For *Òran Seilge do Choire Dhodha*, so far as I am aware, there are only two sources.[19] Inclusion of this piece is merited on the grounds that it shows the continuity

---

[10] *ÒDB*, 196-225, ll. 2766-3319.
[11] Thomson, Derick S. (ed.), *Gaelic Poetry in the Eighteenth Century*, 65-71, ll. 485-582.
[12] *L*, 266-79, 490-93.
[13] Smith, Iain Crichton, *Ben Dorain: Translated from the Gaelic of Duncan Ban Macintyre*, 9-27
[14] *GC*, 206-13, 236.
[15] *ORD*, 13-18.
[16] *SPRD*, 87-93
[17] *WRD*, 68-73.
[18] Meek, Donald E. (ed.), *Caran an t-Saoghail*, 6-11, 395.
[19] Grannda, Gilleasbuig, *Dain agus Orain* (Inbhirnis: Mac Illeathan & Paterson, 1863), 46-53; and Sinclair, Rev. A., *The Grants of Glenmoriston* (Edinburgh: MacLachlan & Stewart; Inverness: A. & W. MacKenzie, 1887), 85-93

of the hunting theme in Gaelic traditional song. I have attempted to translate the poem in the same manner as the others. Coire Dhodha is situated between Glenmoriston and Kintail and was part of Glenmoriston's deer-forest. The poem was composed by Archibald Grant (*c.* 1785–1870), Gilleasbaig Tàillear, from Aonach, in Glenmoriston, who accompanied his patron James Murray Grant, Esq., to Coire Dhodha on a hunting expedition and, as a result, was inspired to commemorate the day's events in verse. Due to unforeseen circumstances the greyhounds and pointers had been forgotten and thus the hunting party had to resort to an older method of stalking by crawling through bog and heather until they got in sight of the deer. Compared with Robert Kirk's earlier poem, a remarkable similarity appears for this song also contains episodes in which the hunters are engaged in a type of socially coded behaviour peculiar, it would seem, to the hunting fraternity.

It should be noted that, with all the Gaelic songs given in this selection, the English translations aim for accuracy without contortion and therefore occasional paraphrasing has been found necessary. It should also be noted that the poetic device of zero copula as used in English poetry has been retained as far as possible in translation.

Òran na Comhachaig	*The Owl of Strone*
A Chomhachag bhochd na Sròine,	O forlorn owl of Strone,
A-nochd is brònach do leaba:	tonight your bed is mournful,
Ma bha thu ann ri linn Donnghail	if you were alive in the time of Donnghal,
Chan iongnadh ge trom leat t' aigne.	no wonder you feel your spirit heavy.
Gur comhaois mise don daraig	I am ages with the oak-tree
Bha na faillein anns a' mhòintich:	since its sapling was small in the moss;
Is iomadh linn a chuir mi romham,	many a brood have I begotten,
Is gur mi comhachag bhochd na Sròine.	yet I am the forlorn owl of Strone.
A-nis on a tha thu aosda,	But now that you are aged,
Dean-sa t' fhaosaid ris an t-sagart,	to the priest make confession,
Agus innis dha gun euradh	and tell him without omission
Gach aon sgeula d' a bheil agad.	every one of your stories.
Is furasda dhomhsa sin innseadh	The telling for me is easy,
Gach là millteach a rinneas	every punishing day I went through,
Cha robh mi mionnach no breugach	I was prone neither to cursing or lying
Ged a bha mo bheul gun bhinneas.	though my mouth lacked sweetness.
Cha do rinn mi braid no breugan,	I have never robbed or lied,
Cladh no tearmann a bhriseadh;	nor violated tomb nor sanctuary;
Air m' fhear fhèin cha do rinn mi iomluas—	to my husband I was never faithless,
Gur cailleach bhochd ionraic mise.	I'm a poor, honest old woman.
Chunnacas mac a' Bhreitheimh chalma	I saw the valiant Judge's son,
Agus Fearghus Mòr an gaisgeach	and mighty Fergus, the hero,
Is Torradan Liath na Sròine—	and grey-haired Torradan of Strone;
Sin na laoich bha dòmhail taiceil!	warriors who were sturdy and strong.
On a thòisich thu ri seanchas	Since you've started on genealogy,
Is èiginn do leanmhainn nas fhaide:	you must be followed further,
Gu robh an triùir sin air fògradh	those three men have done their bit
Mun robh Donnghail anns an Fhearsaid.	even before Donnghal was in Fersit.
Chunnaic mi Alasdair Carrach,	I saw Alasdair Carrach,
An duine as allaile bha an Albainn;	the most eminent man in Scotland,
Is minig a bha mi ga èisdeachd,	often I spent a while listening
Is e a' rèiteach nan tom-sealga.	as he arranged the hunting hills.
Chunnaic mi Aonghas na dheaghaidh,	I saw Angus who followed,
Cha b' e sin rogha bu tàire:	no shame in that choice;
Is ann anns an Fhearsaid bha thuineadh,	his dwelling was in Fersit,
Is rinn e muileann air Allt Làire.	and he built a mill on Allt Làire.
Is ann a bha chuid mhòr de m' shinnsir	Some of my forebears were living
Eadar an Innse is an Fhearsaid,	between Inch and Fersit,
Bha chuid eile dhiubh mun Déabhadh—	and some others around Déabhadh,
A' seinn gu h-aoibhinn anns an fheasgar.	singing joyfully at evening.

Bu lìonmhor cogadh is creachadh
Bha an Loch Abar anns an uair sin:
Càite am biodh tusa gad fhalach,
A eòin bhig na mala gruamaich?

An uair a chìthinn-sa na creacha
Ag gabhail seachad le fuathas
Bheirinn ruathar bhàrr an rathaid
Is bhithinn grathann an Creig Guanach.

Creag mo chridh-sa Creag Guanach,
Creag an d' fhuair mi greis de m' àrach,
Creag nan aighean is nan damh siùbhlach,
A' chreag ùrail, aighearach, fheurach.

A' chreag mun iathadh an fhaghaid,
Leam-sa bu mhiann bhith ga thadhal
An uair bu bhinn guth galain gadhair
A' cur greigh gu gabhail chumhaing.

Is binn na h-iolairean mu bruachaibh:
Is binn a cuachan, is binn a h-eala:
Is binne na sin am blaoghan
Ni laoghan meanbh-bhreac ballach.

Gur binn leam torman nan dos
Ri uilinn nan còrrbheann cas:
Is an eilid bhiorach as caol cas
Nì fois fo dhuilleach ri teas

Gun de chèile aice ach an damh:
Is e as muime dhi feur is creamh:
Màthair an laoigh mheanbh-bhric mhìr—
Bean an fhir mhall-rosgaich ghlain.

Is aigneach a dh' fhalbhas i raon
Cadal cha dèan i anns an smùir:
B' annsa leatha na plàide ri taobh
Bàrr an fhraoich ghaganaich ùir.

Is àlainn sgèimh an daimh dhuinn
Thèarnas o shireadh nam beann:
Mac na h-eilde ris an t-sonn
Nach do chrom le spìd a cheann.

Eilid bhinneach, mheargant, bhallach,
Odhar, eangach, uchd ri h-àrd:
Trogbhoileach thu, biorach, sgiamhach,
Crònanach, ceann-riabhach, dearg.

Gur gasda ruitheadh tu suas
Ri leacainn chruaidh is i cas:

Much warfare and raiding
happened at that time in Lochaber:
where were you in hiding,
little bird of the surly brow?

When I used to see the forays
passing by in panic
I would make a dash over the way
and was a while in Creag Guanach.

Crag of my very heart is Creag Guanach
the crag of part of my childhood,
crag of the hinds and stags roaming,
fresh, joyful, grassy crag.

The crag the hunt would wheel around,
to join in would be delightful,
sweet was the sturdy hound's baying
driving a herd to a narrow defile.

Round her slopes, sweet the eagles
sweet the swan, sweet the cuckoo,
but sweeter still is the bleating
of the little fawn, dappled and speckled.

Sweet the sound of the hunting-horns
in the crook of the steep peaked hills,
a sharp-muzzled hind with slender limbs,
finding rest from the heat under foliage.

No spouse has she but the stag,
her sustenance is the garlic and grass,
mother of the dappled, agile fawn,
wife of the noble one of stately gaze.

The spirited one who roves the uplands,
she seeks no slumber in the dust;
better than a blanket at her side,
is a bed on the fresh tufted heather.

Glorious is the beauty of the brown stag,
that sweeps down from seeking the peaks,
son of the hind to that of the warrior
that never bent his head in shame.

A spotted hind, white-bellied, dappled,
dusky, fleet-footed, high-breasted,
you're quarrelsome, beautiful prick-eared
bellowing, brindled, red-headed.

Splendidly running upwards,
on a hillside hard and steep,

Moladh gach aon neach an cù,
Molaim-sa an trù tha dol as.

Creag mo chridhe-sa a' Chreag Mhòr;
Is ionmhainn an lòn tha fo a cheann:
Is annsa an lag tha air a cùl
Na machair is mùir nan Gall.

M' annsachd Beinn Sheasgach nam fuaran,
An riasgach on dèan an damh ránan:
Chuireadh gadhar as glan nuallan
Fèidh nan ruaig gu Inbhir Mhearan.

B' annsa leam na dùrdan bodaich
Os cionn lice ag eararadh sìl,
Bùirein an daimh am bi gnè dhuinnid
Air leacainn beinne is e ri sìn.

An uair a bhùireas damh Beinne Bige
Is a bhèiceas damh Beinn na Craige,
Freagraidh na daimh ud d' a chèile,
Is thig fèidh à Coire na Snaige.

Bha mi bhon rugadh mi riamh
An caidreabh fhiadh is earb;
Chan fhaca mi dath air bian
Ach buidhe riabhach is dearg.

Cha mhi fhèin a sgaoil an comann
A bha eadar mi is Creag Guanach,
Ach an aois gar toirt o chèile—
Gur goirid an fhèill a fhuaras.

Is i creag mo chridh-sa Creag Guanach,
Chreag dhuilleach, bhiolaireach, bhraonach,
Nan tulach àrd, àlainn, fiarach—
Gur cian a ghabh i on mhaorach.

Cha mhinig a bha mi ag èisdeachd
Ri sèitrich na muice mara:
Ach is tric a chuala mi mòran
De chrònanaich an daimh allaidh.

Cha do chuir mi dùil anns an iasgach,
Bhi ga iarraidh leis a' mhaghar:
Is mòr gum b' annsa leam am fiadhach,
Siubhal nan sliabh anns an fhoghar.

Aoibhinn an obair an t-sealg,
Aoibhinn a meanmna is a bheachd:
Is mòr gum b' annsa leam am fonn
Na long is i dol fo bheairt.

each and every man praised the dog,
but let me praise the hapless fleeing one.

Crag of my very heart is Creag Mhòr,
dear is the meadow below its summit,
dearer is the hollow behind it
than the Lowlanders' plain and ramparts.

My dearest is Beinn Sheasgach of the springs,
the moorland where the stag bellows,
a hound at full cry would drive
deer in flight towards Invermearan.

Dearer to me than a mumbling peasant
graddaning seed corn over a flagstone,
is the roar of the dun-coloured stag
on the mountainside facing a storm.

The stag of Beinn Bheag bellows
and the stag of Beinn na Craig roars,
those stags will call to one other,
as the deer emerge from Coire na Snaig.

Since birth I have always been
in the company of deer and roe,
no other colour on hide have I seen
beside brindled dun and red.

It was not I who broke the fellowship
between myself and Creag Guanach,
but age took us from one another,
it was only for a while that I had cheer.

Crag of my very heart is Creag Guanach,
sylvan one, leafy, grassy, dewy,
high hillocks, beautiful, grassy,
a far cry from shore of shellfish.

Not often did I listen
to the spouting of a whale,
often though did I hear much
of the bellowing of the wild stag.

I never cared much for trying
to catch saithe by fishing
far dearer to me was the deer-chase,
roving the hills in autumn.

Joyful is the work of the hunt,
pleasant its spirit and its design,
far dearer to me its mood
than a ship setting under sail.

Fad a bhithinn beò no maireann,
Deò den anail ann am chorp,
Dh' fhanainn am fochair an fhèidh—
Sin an sprèidh an robh mo thoirt.

Ceòl as binne de gach ceòl
Guth a' ghabhair mhòir is e teachd:
Damh na shìomanaich le gleann,
Mìolchoin a bhith ann is às.

Is truagh an-diugh nach beò an fheadhainn,
Gun ann ach an ceò den bhuidhinn
Leis am bu mhiannach glòir nan gadhar,
Gun mheadhair, gun òl, gun bhruidhinn.

Bratach Alasdair nan Gleann,
A sròl faramach ri crann:
Suaicheantas soilleir shìol Chuinn
Nach do chuir suim an clannaibh Ghall.

Is ann an Cinn-ghiùthsaich na laighe
Tha nàmhaid na greighe deirge:
Làmh dheas a mharbhadh am bradan—
Bu mhaith e an sabaid na feirge

Dh' fhàg mi anns an ruaimhe seo shìos
Am fear a b' olc dhomh-sa a bhàs:
Is tric chuir e thagradh an cruas
An cluais an daimh chabraich an sàs.

Raghnall mac Dhòmhnaill Ghlais,
Fear a fhuair foghlam gu deas;
Deagh mhac Dhòmhnaill a' chùil chais—
Cha bheò nach a chòmhraig leis.

Alasdair cridhe nan gleann,
Gun e bhith ann mòr a' chreach:
Is tric a leag thu air an tom
Mac nan sonn leis a' chù ghlas.

Alasdair mac Ailein Mhòir
Is tric a mharbh anns a' bheinn na fèidh,
Is a leanadh fada air an tòir:
Mo dhòigh gur Dòmhnallach treun.

Is Dòmhnallach thu gun mhearachd,
Gur tu boinne geal na cruadhach:
Is càirdeach thu do Chlann Chatain,
Gur dalta thu do Chreig Guanach.

Ma dh' fhàghadh Dòmhnall a-muigh
Na aonar aig Taigh nam Fleadh

As long as I will live or last,
while a breath remains in my body,
I shall stay in the company of deer,
that is the herd that held my esteem.

Music sweeter than any sound
the mastiff's baying on approach,
a stag weaving down a glen
greyhounds rushing back and forth.

It's sad today that the people are not alive,
with only a mist of the company left,
who loved the music of the hounds,
no merriment, no drinking, no fighting.

Alasdair of the Glens' banner,
rustling silk against the staff,
the bright badge of Conn's progeny,
that paid no regard to Lowlanders.

In Kingussie I left reposing
the red herd's foe
a ready hand for killing salmon,
powerful was he in the raging conflict.

I have left in the grave down here,
one whose death was hard to bear,
often did he put his claim firmly
fixed in the ear of the antlered stag.

Ronald son of Donald Glas,
a man who got learning readily,
a curly-haired, good MacDonald,
no one lived who fought him.

Beloved Alasdair of the Glens
the lack of your life brings great woe,
often on the hunting knoll you felled
the stag-hero's son with a greyhound.

Alasdair, son of great Allan,
who often killed deer on the hill,
and would follow far in their chase,
by my faith he is a mighty MacDonald.

Without doubt you were a MacDonald,
you were the shining steely offshoot,
you were related to the Clan Chattan
your were the fosterling of Creag Guanach.

If they left Donald outside
on his own away from the House of Feasts,

Is gèarr a bhios gucag air bhuil—
Luchd a' chruidh, bidh iad a-staigh.

it's briefly the bumper froths over,
the cattlemen will be inside.

Bu mhaith mo bhuachaille cruidh,
B' e siud uasal nam fear:
Bu deacair dhomh tàrmas air t' fhuil;
Cha bu dubh, ach adhbharrach glan.

My cattle-herd was good,
he was a very noble man,
strange it would be if I hated your kin,
he was not black, but promising fair.

Bu mhaith mo bharanta-cogaidh,
Ged a thogair mi tighinn uaithe,
Gur h-e Eòin à Taigh na Creige,
On a bhagair e mo bhualadh.

My support in battle was good,
although I chose to leave
John of Taigh na Creige,
since he threatened to strike me.

Is on a bhagair e mi gu teann,
Cho fad' is a mhaireas crann no clach
Cha tog mi chuige mo thriall,
Ni mò iarraim dol na theach.

Since he threatened me severely,
as long as tree or stone shall last,
I will not turn my path towards him,
nor shall I seek to enter his homestead.

Mi 'm shuidhe air sìothbhrugh nam beann
A' coimhead air ceann Locha Trèig
Creag Guanach mun iadh an t-sealg,
Grianan àrd am biodh na fèidh.

I am sitting on the fairy knoll of the mountains,
looking to the head of Loch Treig,
Creag Guanach where the hunt wheels,
the high, sunny abode of deer.

Chì mi Coire Ratha uam,
Chì mi a' Chruach is a' Bheinn Bhreac,
Chì mi Srath Oisein nam Fiann,
Chì mi a' ghrian air Meall nan Leac.

I see Coire Ratha over there,
Cruachan and Beinn Bhreac,
I see Strath Ossian of the Fianna,
I see the sun on Meall nan Leac.

Chì mi Beinn Nibheis gu h-àrd
Agus an Càrn Dearg r' a bun
Agus coire beag eile r' a taobh—
Chìte is monadh faoin is muir.

I see Ben Nevis on high,
and Carn Dearg near her foot,
the little corrie beside her,
the sloping moor and sea.

Gur rìomhach an Coire Dearg
Far am bu mhiannach leam bhith sealg:
Coire nan tulchannan fraoich,
Innis nan laogh is nan damh garbh.

Lovely is the Coire Dearg,
where I would like to go and hunt,
Corrie of the heathery hummocks,
meadow of the calves and sturdy stags.

Chì mi bràigh Bhidein nan Dos
An taobh seo bhos de Sgùrra Lìth,
Sgùrra a' Chòinnich nan damh seang:
Is ionmhainn leam an-diugh na chì.

I see the brae of Bidean nan Dos,
on this side of Sgurra Lith,
Sgurr Choinnich of the slender stags;
fond I am of all I see today.

Chì mi srath farsainn a' chruidh
Far an labhar guth nan sonn,
Is coire creagach a' Mhàim Bhàin
Am minig a thug mo làmh toll.

I see the broad strath of cattle,
where the stag-heroes roaring sounds
and Coire Creagach of Mam Bàn
where often my hand make a wound.

Chì mi Garbhbheinn nan damh donn
Agus Lapbheinn nan tom sìth,
Mar sin is an Leitir Dhubh—
Is tric a rinn mi fuil na frìth.

I see Garbh-bheinn of brown stags
and Lapbheinn of fairy knolls,
likewise Leitir Dhubh,
in whose deer-forest I often shed blood.

Soraidh gu Beinn Allair uam,
On is i fhuair urram nam beann,
Gu slios Loch Eireachd an fhèidh—
Gum b' iomhainn leam fhèin bhith ann.

Farewell to Ben Alder from me,
since she gained the honour of the mountains,
to the slope of Loch Ericht of the deer,
where I would love to be.

Thoir soraidh uam thun an loch
Far am faicte bhos is thall,
Gu uisge Leamhna nan lach,
Muime nan laogh breac is nam meann.

Take my greeting from me to the loch,
where is seen both this and the other side
as far as Leven Water of the ducks,
nurse of the dappled calves and kids.

Is e loch mo chridhe-sa an loch,
An loch air am biodh an lach,
Agus iomadh eala bhàn,
Is bhiodh iad a' snàmh mu seach.

The loch of my very heart is this loch,
a loch on which many a duck,
and many a white swan
swam one after the other.

Òlaidh mi à Trèig mo theann shàth,
Na dhèidh cha bhi mi fo mhulad:
Uisge glan nam fuaran fallain
On seang am fiadh a nì an langan.

I will drink my fill from Loch Treig,
after which I will not be sorrowful,
pure water of fresh springs
judging from the vitality of the belling deer.

Soraidh uam gu Coire na Cloiche,
An coire bu toigh leam bhith tàmh;
Is gu Uisge Labhar nam faobh—
Cuilidh nan agh maol is nam mang.

Farewell to Coire na Cloiche from me,
the corrie where I would take rest;
and to Uisge Labhar of the spoils,
storehouse of hornless hinds and kids.

Soraidh eile gu Bac nan Craobh,
Gu dà thaobh Bealach nan Sgùrr,
Is gus an Eadar-bhealach mòr
Far nach cluinnear glòir nan Gall.

Another farewell to Bac nan Craobh,
to both sides of Bealach nan Sgurr,
and to the great Eadar-bhealach,
where the Lowlanders' glamour is not heard.

Is buan an comann gun bhristeadh
Bha eadar mise is an t-uisge
Sùgh nam mòr bheann gun mhisge,
Mise 'ga òl gun trasgadh.

It's long the unbroken friendship
that was between me and the water,
the sap of the great hills with no drunkedness
and I drinking it without fasting.

Is ann a bha an comann bristeach
Eadar mise is a' Chreag Sheilich:
Mise gu bràth cha dìrich,
Ise gu dìlinn cha teirinn.

Indeed the friendship was broken,
between me and Creag Sheilich,
I shall never ever ascend,
nor will she ever descend.

O labhair mi umaibh gu lèir,
Gabhaidh mi fhèin duibh mo chead:
Dearmad cha dèan mi anns an àm
Air fiadhadh ghleann nam Beann Beag.

Since I have spoken my fill of you,
I will make my own fairly to you,
I will not now forget
hunting the glens of Beinn Bheag.

Cead as truaighe ghabhas riamh;
Don fhiadhach bu mhòr mo thoil:
Chan fhalbh mi le bogha fo m' sgèith,
Is gu là bhràth cha leig mi coin.

The saddest farewell I have ever made
was to hunting for which I greatly loved,
I will not set off with bow under my wing,
nor till Doomsday let slip the hounds.

Mise is tusa, ghabhair bhàin,
Is tùirseach ar turas don eilean:

You and I, O white hound,
sad our journey to the island,

Chaill sinn an tabhann is an dàn,
Ged bha sinn grathann ri ceanal.

Thug a' choille dhìot-sa an earb
Thug an t-àrd dhìom-sa na fèidh:
Chan eil nàire dhuinn, a laoich,
On laigh an aois oirnn le chèil'.

An uair bha mi air an dà chois,
Is moch a shiùbhlainn bhos is thall:
Ach a-nis on fhuair mi trì,
Cha ghluais mi ach gu mìn, mall.

A aois, chan eil thu dhuinn meachair,
Ge nach fheudar leinn do sheachnadh:
Cromaidh tu an duine dìreach
A dh' fhàs gu mìleanta, gasda.

Giorraichidh tu air a shaoghal,
Is caolaichidh tu a chasan:
Fàgaidh tu a cheann gun deudach,
Is nì thu eudann a chasadh.

A shine chas-aodannach, pheallach,
A shream-shùileach, odhar, èitigh,
Cuime leiginn leat, a lobhair,
Mo bhogha thoirt dhìom air èiginn

On is mi fhèin a b' fhèarr an airidh
Air mo bhogha ro-mhaith, iubhair,
Na thusa, aois bhodhar sgallach,
Bhios aig an teallach ad shuidhe?

Labhair an aois rium a-rithist,
"Is mò is righinn tha thu leantainn
Ris a' bhogha sin a ghiùlan,
Is gur mòr bu chubhaidh dhut bata."

"Gabh thus uamsa am bata,
Aois ghrànda, chairidh na plèide:
Cha leiginn mo bhogha leatsa
De do mhaitheas no air èiginn."

"Is iomadh laoch a b' fhèarr na thusa
Dh' fhàg mise gu tuisleach, anfhann,
An dèidh fhaobhachadh as a sheasamh,
Bha roimhe na fhleasgach meanmnach."

we have lost the hunting and poetry,
yet for a while we were happy.

The wood has robbed you of the roe
the heights have robbed me of the deer;
for neither of us is it a disgrace, o little hero,
since age lies on us both.

When I was steadfast on my two feet,
early I would rove here and there:
now since I have three,
I can only move smooth and slow.

O, Age, you are not kindly to us,
though we cannot avoid you;
you bend down the man who was upright,
who grew up stately and handsome.

You shorten his lifespan,
and you shrivel his legs,
and you leave his head toothless,
and make his face wrinkly.

O, Age, crumple-faced and shaggy,
rheumy-eyed one, sallow and dreadful,
why whould I let you, o leper,
deprive me of my bow by force?

Since I deserve better,
my excellent yew-bow,
than you do, o deaf, bald old-age
sitting beside the hearth.

Age spoke to me again,
"tenaciously do you cling
to that bow you carry
when a stick would serve you better."

"Take the stick from me then
old age ugly and swarthy with spite,
I would not give you my bow,
willingly or by force."

"Many a warrior who was your better
I have left stumbling and weak,
and have deprived of his stature
after being a stalwart hero."

Tionoil na nslóigh chum na seilg[20] ***Gathering the hosts to the hunt***

[88]

Tionoil na nslóig*h* c*h*um na se*i*lg
súd cu*i*rfam síos gan f*h*uad*h* gan c*h*e*i*lg.[21]

Gathering the hosts to the hunt,
I'll set that down without enmity or guile:

An drip[22] d*h*o t*h*arlad*h*[23] d*h*o gac*h* ne*i*ch,
'sa niomc*h*ar[24] gac*h* tí[25] fase*i*ch.[26]

Of the bustling which came over everybody,
and with the carry-on of each one in turn.

Ba g*h*asda an Marcu*i*s [27] sa nf*h*iag*h*c*h*osgar[28]
Mun' b*h*e*i*th na me*i*rce[29] b*h*i diongm*h*ail c*h*ossaib*h*.[30]

The Marquis would have been skilled in deer-slaughte
were it not for the troop being steadfast on their feet.

An Mord*h*ar óg, 'smai*th* sge*i*ghead*h* c*h*ossag,[31]
'sle se*i*ngcu*i*s[32] síoda caom*h*naid*h* ossann.

Well became the coat on the young Lord
with slender straps supporting silky smooth hose.

An Rut*h*bh*h*an*n*ac*h*[33] ge tana a g*h*ruaid*h*
An am na cat*h* se nsdálinn c*h*ruaid*h*.[34]

Ruthven, though his cheek is slim,
in the time of battle he's hard steel.

---

[20] This is a first attempt to understand this particularly enigmatic text. At a future date, I hope to publish a full edition of this poem where I also hope to provide further historical information and analysis.

[21] The opening verse sets the scene of the grand hunt on the understanding that the Rev. Robert Kirk is giving a truthful account of all that happened during its course. This, however, invites the sceptic to question what follows as the poet during the composition may have been aware that it would come across as mere exaggeration. However, such a phrase is something of a convention (for instance, Iain Lom MacDonald uses something similar in *Latha Inbhir Lòchaidh*, *cf. ÒIL*, 22-23, ll. 238-240), and, if so, then perhaps there is no real need to question it, or, in other words, Kirk is using poetic license.

[22] *Dw* s.v. *drip*, 'bustle, hurry, haste, confusion.'

[23] *Dw* s.v. *tàrladh*, 'happen, befall, meet.'

[24] *Dw* s.v. *iomchar*, 'carriage, comportment.'

[25] *Dw* s.v. *tì*, 'design, intention, purpose.'

[26] Describes the hustle and bustle of the hunting party gathering, especially the movement of the various groups, or camps, into, I suppose, the tinchel, or circuit.

[27] John Murray, 2nd Duke and 1st Marquis of Atholl, K.T. (1631–1703), a portrait appears *CATF*, i, facing 112. See Stevenson, David, 'Murray, John, first marquess of Atholl (1631–1703)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 60 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), xxxix, 343-46; a portrait of the Marquis of Atholl in allegorical costume by Jabob de Witt is reproduced from the original oil painting at Blair Castle, 343; Leneman, Leah, *Living in Atholl: A Social History of the Estates 1685-1785* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1986), 2-4. On 7 February, 1676, John Murray was created 'Marquess of Atholl, Earl of Tullibardine, Viscount Balquidder and Lord Murray, Balvenie and Gask.' Paul (Lord Lyon of Arms), (Sir) James Balfour, *The Scots Peerage*, 9 vols. (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1904–1914), i, 474; *CATF*, i, 169.

[28] Reading *fiadh* 'deer' and *Dw* s.v. *casgair* 'slay, slaughter, butcher, massacre.'

[29] Reading *Dw* s.v. *meirghe*, 'band, troop, company.' This is probably a reference to a false start made by the men making up the tinchel forming a large circuit in order to drive the deer or game towards a narrow defile. It would seem, perhaps, that Kirk is making a reference to the fact that they had a bit too much to drink in order to carry out their task effectively.

[30] The following two verses are partially obscure, but they are obviously complimentary to Lord James. Kirk was probably trying his best to ingratiate himself into high society which indicates that he was socially ambitious.

[31] Reading *'s maith 's thigeadh a chosag.*

[32] Reading *seingcris*, 'slender straps.'

[33] The gentleman referred to here is named after Ruthven, near Auchterarder, Perthshire. This might be a reference to David Ruthven (*d.* 1701), second Lord Ruthven who succeeded to the title in 1673, the son of Sir Thomas Ruthven, the first Lord Ruthven (*d.* 1671). See Paul (Lord Lyon of Arms), (Sir) James Balfour, *The Scots Peerage*, vii, 385-387; Fraser, (Sir) William, *Memorial as to the Ruthven*

Treu*i*s dealgnac*h*[35] Rod*h*asac*h*[36] Mhord*h*ar Se*i*mas Is glan a d*h*f*h*an, ge clisd' a lémf*h*as.[37]	Lord James has rosy-patterned trews, well he stayed, yet briskly he'll jump.
A b*h*urri 'nann a Heirinn 'ndiug*h* led b*h*re*i*can bu*i*d*h* 'sle tatan dub*h*.[38]	O, blockhead, have (you come) from Ireland today, with your yellow plaid and black bonnet.
S*h*aoil o b*h*eul b*h*eusac*h* Uac*h*dart*h*ír[39] Sagart Mhiconil b*h*eit*h* dom réir.	I thought (it came) from Ochtertyre's mannered mouth MacDonald's priest was agreeable to me.
T*h*airg airgiod aisig Garintuloc*h*[40] Aig tác*h*ran be*i*g léud leim a t*h*oilic*h*.[41]	Who offered money for the Grandtully ferry, a little sprite could jump as far over a hummock.
G*h*le*i*nnegois óig,[42] d*h*an dual bi fial Híor s*h*arig*h* brandi ar do c*h*iall.	O, young Gleneagles, used to being generous, brandy has always overcome your sensibleness.
Is Sbainneach Sdrúan mar a gcédne O a c*h*em c*h*om*h*nurt c*h*o g*h*luais céd é.[43]	(Robertson of) Struan is likewise a Spaniard, not a hundred will move him from his steady path.
[89] Bále*i*chan,[44] coróin[45] na se*i*lg annam*h* t*h*u*i*t uait an ganem*h* le ro t*h*eannad*h*.[46]	O, Ballechin, rare crown of the hunt that fell (from you) into the sand by your qui approach.

Peerage (Edinburgh: Privately printed, 1870), 5-6. Around 1643 Patrick Murray, Earl of Tullibardine (who died the following year), purchased the estate of Huntingtower (formerly Ruthven) from the Stormont family, who had previously acquired it after the Earl of Gowrie's forfeiture in 1600 for the pivotal part he took in the Ruthven Raid. By the death of Patrick Murray's son and successor, James Murray, 4th Earl of Tullibardine, in 1670, the Earl of Atholl inherited Ruthven. *CATF*, i, 115-16.

[34] A back-handed compliment is made here by contrasting Ruthven's soft features with his battle hardiness. The connection of war and hunting is well attested in Gaelic poetry over the centuries.

[35] Reading *dealgnach*, 'prickly,' probably used to emphasise the rather comic description of the pattern of Lord James's trousers.

[36] Reading, *ròsach*, 'rosy, rose coloured.'

[37] This probably refers to Lord James having to be patient until such time as the deer go by at which point he'd be ready to be in the thick of the action. Lord James Murray (1663–1726) was the third eldest son of the 1st Marquis of Atholl, *CATF*, i, 115.

[38] Given the reference to Ireland here, it is intriguing to note that Sir Mungo Murray (fig. 5.6) was a first cousin to William Richard Stanley, 9th Earl of Derby, who married Elizabeth Butler, sister of James Butler 2nd Duke of Ormond. It is not implausible that Kirk might be making a reference to these Irish relations who may have been visiting at the time that the tinchel took place. See Fenlon, Jane, 'John Michael Wright's 'Highland Laird' Identified', *Burlington Magazine*, vol. CXXX, no. 1027 (Oct., 1988), 767-69.

[39] Perthshire, near Crieff. This probably refers to Sir Patrick Murray, *CATF*, i, 325-28, 371.

[40] Lies in Strathtay, quite close to Aberfeldy.

[41] An interesting supernatural, if comical, allusion given that Kirk was later to write *The Secret Commonwealth*.

[42] Lies in Perthshire, quite near Auchterarder. This probably refers to Sir John Haldane (1660–1721), 14th of Gleneagles, who succeeded to the title in 1685 after his father's death, Mungo Haldane. It may be noted that John Haldane's sister, Margaret, was married to Sir Patrick Murray of Ochtertyre in 1681, mentioned previously in the poem. Haldane, (Sir) J. Aylmer L., *The Haldanes of Gleneagles* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1929), 98, 101-27; *CATF*, i, 173.

[43] I can find no reference to any of the Struan Robertsons being exiled to Spain immediately prior to the time of the poem's composition, so this would presumably be continuing with the theme of the verse before in that Struan Robertson liked his drink. Perhaps the Spaniard reference made here is to brandy.

[44] Lies near Grandtully, in Strathtay, Perthshire. This probably refers to Patrick Stewart (who was later to play a leading role at Killiecrankie in 1689) whose son, Charles Stewart, was granted in 1711 a

B*h*ale*ich*áin óig,[47] re rad*h*a na firinn do c*h*eann on g*h*all, 'sdo c*h*orp a Heirinn.[48]	O, young Ballechin, to the tell the truth, your head's from the Lowlands and body from Irelanc
Minisdeir Bafu*i*dier[49] ar an f*h*eac*h*d Ba sgarti m*h*ot*h*u*igh* do gac*h* ne*ich*.[50]	Minister of Balquidder heading the host, he quickly took stock of everybody.
D*hí* brandi, nGcoimísseoir re bás, dub*h*'rt, Miuri,[51] dearb*h* mo t*h*iomna 'ndrásd'.	For the lack of brandy the commissar is near to death, Murray said: test my will by probate now.
Deir Miuri, is e dol ar sge Chaill me cloc*h* íd*h*[52] on trathsa ndae.	Murray said, as he took to flight, I've lost a stone of fat since this time yesterday.
A Raibeart donn, dhan dual Dunédin[53] Ta uair t*h*ig d*h*u*i*t breacan 'ne*i*le.	O, brown-haired Robert from Edinburgh, occasionally the pleated kilt suits you.
Lu*idh* Le*ith*eanti,[54] 'sa t*h*reu*i*r [55] ma c*h*eann Tri c*h*orra spart*h*a na b*h*onaid teann.[56]	Beloved Lethendy with three men at his head, three barbs thrust tightly in his bonnet.
Foss óg[57] do lab*h*air re Atair caom*h* Ni meisi an tse*i*lg, is biosa naom*h*.[58]	Young Foss spoke to his gentle father: I'll hunt and you'll be holy.

warrant to hunt deer, *CATF*, i, 173; *CATF*, ii, 135. Alexander Stewart, Patrick Stewart of Ballechin's brother, was chamberlain to the Marquis of Atholl.

[45] This might also possibly refer to a coin, or medallion, that was rewarded to the best hunter of the day.

[46] This line is partially obscure. Could it possibly be that Ballechin fell over in the sand of the riverbank in his clamour to get to the hunt when he approached the ferry? It is possible that he might have been on horseback.

[47] Presumably Ballechin's eldest son and heir, Charles Stewart, is being referred to here, *CATF*, i, 436.

[48] Perhaps an oblique reference to fashion is being made here judging by the earlier reference to plaids and black bonnets or hats. See fig 5.6 for a contemporary portrait of Sir Mungo Murray, dressed for hunting. It may well be that Sir Mungo 'sat' for the portrait while he was in Ireland (specifically at Kilkenny Castle, Co. Kilkenny) as his mother's relations resided there. The Duke of Ormond owned two versions of this portrait previously known as 'Highland Laird.' Perhaps young Ballechin was likewise wearing such fashionable garb. In any case, Kirk was not making a compliment here.

[49] Kirk was the minister of Balquidder, Perthshire, for a number of years.

[50] Perhaps a piece of self-aggrandisement from the somewhat self-seeking minister. It is doubtful that Kirk actually headed the hunting host as this position would have naturally been taken by the Marquis himself.

[51] Reference to John Murray, 1st Marquis of Atholl, mentioned previously. Here Kirk is referring to him as *Murray* rather than (the expected) *Moireach*.

[52] Reading 'clach ìth.' Murray was complaining that there is no drink left which gave him no respite as he must have been rushing around trying to organise the tinchel, or, perhaps, more likely, chasing the deer.

[53] I cannot identify the gentleman to whom Kirk refers to here but he was obviously a Lowlander who took to wearing the Highland garb while he was taking part in this hunting tryst.

[54] The gentleman referred to here is named after Lethendy in Glenalmond near Blairgowrie, Perthshire. There is a discharge, dated 9 April, 1681, granted by Neill Stewart in Glenalmond, son and heir to George Stewart to John, Marquis of Atholl. Kirk might be referring to either of these two men named, the likelier of the two being Neill Stewart. Atholl Muniments, NRAS234/Box 62/2/190.

[55] Reading *triùir*, three men.

[56] A description of a fine, sporting fellow with three of his companions. The three barbs in his bonnet may refer to a clan badge or some sort of rank rather than being merely decorative.

[57] Foss, Loch Tummel, Perthshire. These Stewarts, a cadet branch of the Stewarts of Garth, had been proprietors of Foss during this time. *CATF*, i, 280. John Stewart was proprietor of Foss in 1667 and the reference might be to his son and heir. *CATF*, i, Appendix, xxv.

Assentuloc*h*[59] 'sa che*i*tharna d*h*aoine Mar c*h*eannc*h*naip óir ar p*h*aidrean sdaóin.[60]	Ashintully and his band of men were like gold beads on a tin-made rosary.
Dollari is sollari re bua*i*r teann Mo rúnn 'smo rog*h*ainn a nsrat*h* 'sa mbeann.[61]	Darkness and brightness are nearing the herd, my dear beloved one is in strath and hill.
Alasdoir M^{c}Ráibeard[62] 'sa c*h*ut*h* bu*i*d*h*e Ma c*h*reac*h* me slán, 'smo c*h*ut*h* na lu*i*de.[63]	Alasdair Robertson and his golden hound, alas that I'm well and my own hound prone.
[90] T*h*aitin Alasdoir gald riom gac*h* ac*h*d (Peann-sgriob*h*aid*h* rinn na peann tobac.)[64]	Alasdair Galt pleased me in every way (he turned a writing pen into a tobacco quill).
Do t*h*u*i*teoir g*h*arb*h*gh*h*ot*h*ac*h* Leóid,[65] 'sa nald, Brandi no carbad, tugaib*h* nall.[66]	Your hoarse-voiced tutor, Lude, in the burn, brandy or litter take over (to him).

[58] Referring, I think, to the possibility of a good (secular) hunt. This probably indicates a play on words by Kirk.

[59] This refers to Spalding of Ashintully which lies near Kirkmichael, in Highland Perthshire.

[60] Reading *stàin*, tin, and if is correct then, perhaps, a reference is being made here to the fact that Ashintully's men may have been wearing or carrying arms that were rather ostentatious compared to the rest of the company. It may be added that the son of this Spalding of Ashintully who, despite being in poor health, sent a party of one hundred men to a tinchel organised by the Marquis of Atholl in 1710. See *CATF*, ii, 133; and Ferguson, Charles, 'Sketches of the Early History, Legends, and Traditions of Strathardle and its Glens', *TGSI*, vol. XXIII (1898–99), 178.

[61] This is probably a reference to Ashintully and his men as presumably 'darkness' and 'brightness' refer respectively to gold and tin from the previous verse, although there is some ambiguity here which may mean that it could be a reference to deer or game; also the cliché of *rùn* and *roghainn* here is noticeable.

[62] This could be a reference to a young Alexander Robertson of Struan (1670–1749), a poet chief of the Clann Donnchaidh, or Robertsons, who was later to take part in the Jacobite uprisings of 1689, 1715 and 1745. Bearing this in mind, it is also interesting to note that a medal of Alexander Robertson of Struan was struck (in Edinburgh) in 1687 where he is portrayed in profile as an archer. For a fuller description, see Brook, J. S., 'An Account of the Archery Medals Belonging to the University of St Andrews and the Grammar School of Aberdeen', *PSAS*, vol. XXVIII (1893–95), 386-87. See also Gomme-Duncan, (Col.), Alan, 'The Poet Chief: Alexander Robertson, 13th Chief of Clan Donnachaidh', *The Clan Donnachaidh Annual* (1953), 14-15; Anon., 'New Light on the Poet Chief', *The Clan Donnachaidh Annual* (1955), 38-48. A portrait of this poet chief appears in *The Clan Donnachaidh Annual* (1968), 37.

[63] This is possibly a reference to his own rather tired or even injured hunting hound.

[64] *Concise Scots Dictionary* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), s.v. *pen* (in Orkney and Banffshire) 'a small spoon or similar object for taking snuff, *orig.* one made from a quill.' It would appear that Alasdair Galt offered Kirk some snuff and the minister reciprocated by mentioning it in his poem. After this line (which has been omitted here) an obtrusive stray sentence in Latin appears: *(Aio te Æarida Romanos vincere posse)* which may stem from William Shakespeare's *King Henry IV, Part II*, Act I, Scene IV, which is originally taken from a classical example said to be the words which Pythia, the Delphic oracle, addressed Pyrrhus. 'Pyrrhus, being about to make war against Rome, was told by the oracle: *Credo te, Aeacide, Romanos vincere posse*, which can mean either 'I believe that you, Pyrrhus, can conquer the Romans' or else 'I believe, Pyrrhus, that the Romans can conquer you.' The accusative and infinitive construction results in an ambiguity of object.' *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase & Fable: Millennium Edition* (London: Cassell, 1999), s.v. *oracle.*

[65] This probably refers to John Robertson of Lude, Blair Atholl, Perthshire, see Robertson, James A., *Comitatus de Atholia, The Earldom of Atholl erected prior to 1114* (Edinburgh: Murray & Gibb, 1860), 51-53. For a general background, see also NAS, The Lude Manuscript compiled *c.* 1890 by William McInroy of Lude (1830–1916), GD132/859.

[66] Here Kirk, I think, is referring to Lude in the vocative case. If reading *carbad*, which gives litter, or stretcher, then it would appear that Lude's tutor, John Robertson of Foules (NAS, Papers of the Robertson Family of Lude, Perthshire, GD132/78) had been injured and needed brandy in order to be

Sean tu*i*teoir Ardoc*h* [67] 'sa s*h*eabhac mall	The old tutor of Ardoch and his slow hawk,
a c*hui*d c*ho* solat*h*ar, an eallt muna dall.	his portion so clear yet obscured by a flock of birds.
Hach[68] bé a ngcuraid*h* tug an ruar [69]	Was he not the hero who made the desperate rush,
pait*h*ir chusboir rit*h*, 'sa c*h*ruac*h* re lár.	A pair of marks to it then his heap on the ground.
C*h*aru*igh* a mbarun ruag*h*[70] le briosgad*h*	Though the Red Baron moved with a swift jerk,
cia s*h*nait*h* a mbf*h*iag*h* gu hard ma mosgaid.[71]	who carved the deer on high around his musket.
Teann-c*h*at ma nc*h*aólann, deir Leoid óg[72]	A hot dispute over the entrails, said young Lude:
Greallac*h*[73] an Mhat*h*aic*h* d*h*' f*h*ear a c*h*oin ód.[74]	gralloch the hare for the man of yon dog.
Fear b*h*onaid c*h*uac*h*aid*h* f*h*reagair grad	A cock-bonneted man readily answered:
greall' úd na natrac*h* cia g*h*eib*h* ar g*h*ad.[75]	who can get those snake-entrails onto a withe.
Siad fir Bafu*i*dier c*h*oim*h*dead*h* rém	The Balquidder men would look to me

revived; or, if reading, *carbhaidh*, then it would give caraway, an attested borrowing from Scots. See Gillies, Anne L. (ed.), *Songs of Gaelic Scotland* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2005), 80. This is plant of the parsley family apparently a tasty luxury enjoyed by Scots at this time. Why was Lude's tutor in the burn though? Through an accident hence his rough-voice as he was calling for help? Or was he simply demanding brandy and caraway? If, indeed, the word caraway is intended then the closeness of it being mentioned next to brandy (both luxury items) strengthens its case. However, on the whole, I think, *carbad*, litter, or stretcher, is more probable. It may be added that this tutor of Lude was later in trouble, some two years after this tinchel took place, where he is described as John Robertsone, sometime tutor of Lude, when he was summoned to the regality court of Atholl at Blair on 30 October 1684 for illegally assembling 'the leidges and armes to the number of sixteen or eighteen, violently throwing down a shieling built by John Robertson of Balnacraig, and thereby causing a riot.' (GD132/89, dated 16 October, 1684).

[67] There are many Ardochs, but presumably this gentleman was named after the place near Braco, Strathallan, in southwest Perthshire, nearest to where the hunt ranged. This estate was owned for centuries by the Stirlings of Ardoch, a branch of the Stirlings of Keir. See Fraser, (Sir) William, *The Stirlings of Keir, and their Family Papers* (Edinburgh: Privately printed, 1858). I can find no reference to identity this man's name but, again, it is obvious that Kirk is not paying a compliment here.

[68] Reading *nach*.

[69] *Dw* s.v. *ruathar*, 'violent onset, fierce attack, force produced by motion.'

[70] A branch of the Clann Donnchaidh, which settled in Strathardle, was known as the Red Robertsons, the head of the Robertsons of Straloch was called Baron Ruadh or the Red Baron. See Reid (of Balnaskilly), A. G., *Strathardle: Its History and its Peoples, Facts, History and Legends together with Personal Reminiscences* (Blairgowrie: A. G. Reid, 1986), 9-10. For the Robertsons of Straloch, see Robertson, James A., *Comitatus de Atholia*, 56-60; McNaughton, Duncan, 'The Last Baron Reid-Robertson of Straloch', *The Clan Donnachaidh Annual* (1962), 19-31; Robertson, Rev. James, *The Barons Reid-Robertson of Straloch* (Blairgowrie: Advertiser Officer, 1887) and NAS, Some short memoirs of the Family of Straloch in Strathardle, commonly called Baron Reid, GD1/90/9.

[71] This may refer to an aiming or decorative device on the Red Baron's musket.

[72] This presumably refers to Robertson of Lude's eldest son and heir.

[73] One of the few Gaelic words to have entered Scots meaning to disembowel the entrails (usually of animals).

[74] Possibly a reference to rewarding the hare's entrails to the hunting hounds.

[75] This indicates a level of ceremony of performing the *curée* whereby morsels from the deer's carcass were arranged on sticks. Sometimes morsels were laid on the freshly skinned deer-hide to reward the hounds. See, for instance, Manning, Roger B., *Hunters and Poachers*, 40; Edward (Second Duke of York) (auth.); Baillie-Grohman, William A. & Florence N. (eds.), *The Master of Game* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1909), 194-96; Savage, Henry L., 'Hunting in the Middle Ages', *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies*, vol. VIII (1933), 39; Thiébaux, Marcelle, 'The Medieval Chase', 271-72; *MH*, 78-79. This practice is described, invariably in exhaustive detail, in all the French and English hunting manuals.

Ródhan gan chead cho bhlais a mbeul.[76]

without leave to taste choice portions in their mouths.

Blárphetti,[77] 'mforsair buidh, 'sdalbhini[78]
A fhorsair úd Húnduí,[79] ar do bhéinne.[80]

O, Blairfettie, the fair-haired forester and Dal-na-mine
you, forester of Huntly, (get on with) your hide.

Dar mo chubhois,[81] ar M^{c}ouil dream
Cíora no comhrac is áill leam.[82]

By my conscience, said MacDougall of the Ridge,
I want to be in the fight or fray.

'Sleat, Lamh-Mhic-suain, a mbfiaghnais marin
'sna tárr ar dubhshuíleach, gan fhios orm.[83]

By MacSween's hand of lasting witness,
do not go away with our black-eyes without letting r
know.

[91]
Ma fhear na triussa sdiomnach gald,
comhmut có nfhaigh, ta ainm ar chall.[84]

If you're better or stronger than a Lowland lord,
[ ] will be got, his name is lost.

Mhion-bharoinn,[85] duibhs' nior bhean mo sgoil
Dhí aithne, is ní budh dioghbhail toil.

O, gentle Baron, my erudition is lost on you
for the lack of knowledge, though not of will.

Tu hathchumair[86] súd bhí sinn ann
Cuid do gach neith sa chruinne chomhlán.

Yon was north of Comrie where we were,
a portion for everyone in this whole gathering.

Aon ní ba tearc leam na budh léir
Boghann is builg na ngcorrann géur.[87]

One rare thing that is clear to me:
bows and quivers of sharp barbs.

---

[76] A reference, it would seem, to the hounds who could not wait to get their teeth into the morsels that were left on offer as their reward.

[77] Blairfettie's proprietor is recorded as Patrick Robertson in 1649 and his eldest son and heir, Alexander Robertson, is probably referred to here, see Robertson, James A., *Comitatus de Atholia,* 32, 72.

[78] This may refer to Dalwhinnie, Speyside, rather than the nearer Dal-na-mine, near Dalnacardoch, situated near Blair Atholl, Perthshire, but as the vast majority of place-names mentioned in the poem are local then it is more likely to be the latter.

[79] Reading *Huntly*, normally *Hunndaidh* in Gaelic, referring, it seems, to Huntly in Aberdeenshire. It should be noted that there is also a Huntly in nearer Kinross-shire. Lord Huntly owned the estate of Balvenie, Perthshire, and just before the time of the poem's composition, the 1st Marquis of Atholl entertained the idea of re-purchasing it in 1676 as it had once been in the family's possession but this venture came to nothing. *CATF*, i, 173.

[80] This probably refers to the fact Huntly's forester is busy skinning the carcase of one of the caught animals which might refer to a hare or it may in fact in all probability refer to a deer-hide.

[81] An asseveration as in *Dw* s.v. *dar*, *dar mo làimh*, 'by my hand', and as such, *dar mo chubhais*, is similar to the phrases 'upon my conscience,' or 'by my honour' attested in the work of Kirk's near-contemporary Geoffrey Keating, see Royal Irish Academy, *Dictionary of the Irish Language* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1913-75), s.v. *cubus*, where (C:581.14-15) the expression is cited as *dar mo chubhas*. See also Ó Maolchonaire, Flaithrí (auth.); O'Rahilly, Thomas F. (ed.), *Desiderius otherwise called Sgáthán an Chrábhaidh* (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1941), 12, l. 336; 63, l. 1824; O'Rahilly, Cecile (ed.), *Cath Finntrágha* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1962), 35, l. 1091; 97, where the phrase is glossed as 'I vow, I swear.'

[82] I think MacDougall is here expressing his frustration at not being in the thick of things.

[83] Although this is slightly obscure, this verse probably refers to some sort of threat made by MacDougall of the Ridge as it seems that someone wishes to take away a prize portion of the carcase. Indeed, it may well refer to a deer's head. Perhaps Lamh-Mhic-Suain is a reference to some sort of weapon, either a hunting dagger, sword or even an axe.

[84] Obscure.

[85] Referring presumably to the Red Baron, or Reid, previously mentioned.

[86] This probably refers to the place-name Comrie, lying eight miles west of Crieff, Perthshire.

[87] It would seem that there was a lack proper equipment and Kirk is chastising this fact in contrast, it would seem, when the hunting tryst was in Comrie.

B*h*i Lag*h* is léig*h*ionn, gaisge is gleúsa smac*h*d is géille, crab*h*aid*h* is céille.[88]	There was law and erudition, heroism and action, control and conform, devotion and sense.
Cu*i*rim is seim*h*e, ciu*i*l is daim*h*e[89] ua*i*sle is airgiod, maise is margad*h*.	Feasting and civility, music and friendship, nobility and wealth, beauty and assembly.
Brandi gan m*h*eisge, coman*n* gan m*h*iosgu*i*s pailteas gan sgreattas, cu*i*b*h*d*h*eas gan airce.	Brandy without drunkenness, company without malic plenty without complaint, moderation without want.
Neart is luas, saot*h*air is sásdac*h*d 3 c*h*éd cúth, is 6 céd sealgoir.	Power and swiftness, toil and contentment, three hundred dogs and six hundred hunters.
Frit*h* gan c*h*iond gan c*h*ríoc*h*, fiag*h* gan aiream*h*, Gach cir[90] is coire nac*h* innsd' gu márac*h*.[91]	A boundless deer-forest full of countless deer, every ridge and corrie not told until tomorrow.
Tús greag*h*nac*h*, is deiread*h* aoib*h*inn, Ceann mnaoi, is earra peucóig.[92]	Splendid beginning and joyful end, a woman's head and a peacock's tail.
Ag gab*h*ail mo c*h*ead re ham sgoilei*d*h.[93] Hois[94] buag*h*ac*h* do t*h*urus, beandac*h*d ort a Mharcu*i*s nach bí gu*i*neac*h* gort.	Taking my leave at the time of parting, since your journey is fortunate, a blessing on you, O, Marquis don't be wounding and hurtful.
[92] Laoic*h*-lán gu raib*h* d*h*u*i*t m*h*ád thalla B*h*ias lud*h*m*h*ar leidm*h*art*h*ac*h* [95] lán-ealam*h*.	May you have true heroes in your hall who'll be dexterous, musical and fully nimble.
Slioc*h*d ór-arm, 'sna sgiat*h*a dearg Ar t*h*easgar nim*h*neach c*h*u*i*reas fearg.	Gold-armoured tribe with red shields, who'll cut poisonous wounds in anger.
D*h*o b*h*antig*h*earn c*h*iu*i*n,[96] 'sdo c*h*aislein tréun Síor-sgaoilidar do c*h*lu a gcéin.	Your gentle lady and your strong castles, have always spread your fame in foreign lands.
Do Mhacaom*h* alu*i*nn oc*h*dsolu*i*s[97] Díon on uaine[98] an ceannfine sona.[99]	Your young man, handsome, bright-breasted, protect from Death this happy chief.

[88] This would seem to be referring to the better organised hunting tryst held previously at Comrie.

[89] It may be noted in passing that John Robertson of Lude (*d.* 1731) was a famous performer on the harp. See Munro, Jean, 'The Famous Robertson Harps', *The Clan Donnachaidh Annual* (1968), 15-17.

[90] *Dw* s.v. *cìr*, 'comb, etc.' Here, I presume, Kirk is using the word for ridges shaped presumably as a comb's teeth.

[91] Presumably, referring to a great many of these.

[92] *Cf. ÒIL*, 194-95, l. 2495, Ge ceann nathrach bidh earball peucaig air, 'it has a serpent's head, it will have a peacock's tail', an obscure metaphor meaning that though war begins in danger it could end in brilliance. Kirk, if he knew Iain Lom's composition may have written this with that in mind, giving it, of course, his own twist. *Cf.* Nicolson, (Sheriff) Alexander (ed.), *A Collection of Gaelic Proverbs and Familiar Phrases*, 86, Ceann nathrach is earball peucaig air an Earrach—*Spring with a serpent's head and a peacock's tail*, a piece of weather lore referring presumably to the change of seasons.

[93] Here Kirk is following a well-attested convention of finishing his piece with a string of complimentary epithets no doubt with the intention of ingratiating himself into the local Gaelic aristocracy.

[94] Reading *Os*.

[95] Reading *leadarrach*, *Dw* s.v. *leadarra*, 'harmonious, melodious, musical…'

[96] This probably refers to Lady Amelia Stanley, 4th daughter of James, 7th Earl of Derby, whom the Marquis of Atholl married in 1659. *CATF*, i, 153.

'S on bhanriog*h* S*h*eba g*h*eib*h*tas lúd*h*[100]
Do g*h*níom*h* o s*h*aru*igh* ar do *ch*lú.[101]

An f*h*óirciond.

And from the Queen of Sheba you'll get mention
since your deed exceeds your fame.

[97] Reading *uchd-solais*, 'bright-breasted.' This probably refers to John Murray, the Marquis of Atholl's eldest son and heir, mentioned earlier, who was only twenty-one years of age at the time of the tinchel.
[98] Reading as possibly a dialectical variant of *Dw* s.v. *oin*, 'death-agony.' This could possibly be interpreted as 'on uaine', 'from the Pallid One', i.e. Death. Although something of this nature would be expected given the context it is, nevertheless, slightly obscure.
[99] Referring to John Murray, 1st Marquis of Atholl, mentioned at the opening.
[100] The line following has been deleted and is only partially legible (which is omitted here), indicating a level of revision or at least an afterthought by Kirk.
[101] The Queen of Sheba, Makeda, had her scepticism removed when she saw the glory of King Solomon's kingdom: 2 Chronicles 9:6 'Howbeit I believed not their words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: for thou exceedest the fame that I heard.'

Moladh Beinn Dòbhrain

Ùrlar

An t-urram thar gach beinn;
Aig Beinn Dòbhrain;
De na chunnaic mi fon ghrèin,
'S i bu bhòidhche leam:
Munadh fada rèidh,
Cuilidh 'm faighte fèidh,
Soillearachd an t-slèibh
Bha mi sònrachadh;
Doireachdan nan geug,
Coill' anns am bi feur,
'S foinneasach an sprèidh
Bhios a chòmhnaidh ann;
Greadhain bu gheal cèir,
Faghaid air an dèidh,
'S laghach leam an sreud
A bha sròineiseach.
'S aigeannach feur eutrom
Gun mhòrchuis,
Thèid fasanta na èideadh
Neo-spòrsail:
Tha mhanntal uime fèin,
Caithiche nach trèig,
Bratach dhearg mar chèir
Bhios mar chòmhdach air.
'S culaidh ga chur eug—
Duine dhèanadh teuchd,
Gunna bu mhath gleus
An glaic òganaich;
Spor anns am biodh beàrn,
Tarrann air a ceann,
Snap a bhuaileadh teann
Ris na h-òrdaibh i;
Ochdshlisneach gun fheall,
Stoc den fhiodh gun mheang,
Lotadh an damh seang
Is e leònadh e;
'S fear a bhiodh mar cheàird
Riutha sònraichte,
Dh' fhòghnadh dhaibh gun taing
Le chuid seòlainean;
Gheibhte siud ri àm,
Pàdraig anns a' ghleann,
Gillean is coin sheang,
'S e toirt òrdugh dhaibh;
Peilearean nan deann,
Teine gan cur ann;

In Praise of Ben Dorain

Ground/Theme

Honour over every ben
has Ben Dorain;
of all I have seen beneath the sun,
I adore her:
long, unbroken moor,
storehouse of deer.
Upland that is clearly
worth talking of
coppices of boughs,
woodland where grass grows,
elegant are those
whose abode it is:
white-rumped frolicsome band
with hunt pursuing,
much I love the herd
of keen noses' scent.
Spirited and sprightly
and diffident,
in fashionable coat
not foppish:
in mantle well arrayed,
attire that is well made,
dress of waxen-red
that covers him over.
With weapon of destruction
a man capable of action
with a gun in proper order
in a youth's hand
a flint in a cleft
and a screw-fixed head
a cock striking tight
on the hammers
eight sided, without flaw
gun-stalk of true wood
that wounds a slender stag
and lays him low
and one, whose craft held dear—
mastering them—
would despite them, outwit them
with guile and tricks.
One would find such men—
Patrick in the glen—
lads and slender hounds
and he ordering them,
bullets in full flight
firing into them

Eilid nam beann àrd'
Thèid a leònadh leò.

Siubhal

'S i 'n eilid bheag bhinneach
Bu ghuiniche sraonadh,
Le cuinnean geur biorach
A' sireadh na gaoithe:
Gasganach speireach,
Feadh chreachainn na beinne,
Le eagal roimh teine
Cha teirinn i h-aonach;
Ged thèid i na cabhaig,
Cha ghearain i maothan:
Bha sinnsireachd fallain;
Nuair shìneadh i h-anail,
'S toil-inntinn leam tannasg
Dh' a langan a chluinntinn,
'S i 'g iarraidh a leannain
'N àm daraidh le coibhneas.
'S e damh a' chinn allaidh
Bu ghealcheireach feaman,
Gu cabarach ceannard,
A b' fharamach raoiceadh;
'S e chòmhnaidh 'm Beinn Dòbhrain,
'S e eòlach m' a fraoinibh.
'S ann am Beinn Dòbhrain,
Bu mhòr dhomh r' a ìnnseadh
A liuthad damh ceannard
Tha fantainn san fhrìth ud;
Eilid chaol-eangach,
'S a laoighean ga leantainn,
Le 'n gasgana geala,
Ri bealach a' dìreadh,
Ri fraigh Choire Chruiteir,
A' chuideachda phìceach.
Nuair a shìneas i h-eangan
'S a thèid i na deannaibh,
Cha saltradh air thalamh
Ach barra nan ìngnean:
Cò b' urrainn ga leantainn
A dh' fhearaibh na rìoghachd?
'S arraideach faramach
Carach air grìne,
A' chòisridh nach fhanadh
Gnè smal air an inntinn;
Ach caochlaideach curaideach
Caolchasach ullamh,
An aois cha chuir truim' orra,
Mulad no mìghean.

the hind on mountain height
gets its wound from them.

Variation 1

The hind with the taper-
head sniffing so keenly,
with sensitive sharp nostril
exploring the wind:
short-tailed and long-shanked
on mountainous summit
she stays in her fastness
lest gun-fire deceive her;
although when she hurries
she utters no wheezes:
her forebears were healthy;
when she takes a deep breath there,
how I loved to hear the wraith-like
sound of her calling,
she seeking her sweetheart
when mating's in season.
The wild-headed stag
with the white waxy rump,
antlered and high-headed,
roaring lustily;
O, they are in Ben Dorain
knowing well all its crannies.
O, in Ben Dorain,
hard I'd find it to tell
how many high-headed stags
dwell in that hunting-ground.
Hind, slim-footed and slender
with her calves strung behind
with their little white scuts,
ascending a hill-pass,
Up the scarp of Coire Chruiteir
wends the spiky-horned band.
When she stretches her limbs
and goes at a gallop,
only the tips of her hooves
would trample the ground:
of all the men in this kingdom
who could possibly follow her?
Erratic, noisy
circling on greensward
is the troupe who won't tarry
to mope or malinger;
they change, are coquettish,
slim-legged and ready,
age doesn't fret them,
nor sorrow, nor whinging.

'S e shlànaich an culaidh,
Feòil mhàis agus mhuineil,
Bhith tàmhachd am bunailt
An cuilidh na frìthe;
Le àilgheas a' fuireach
Air fàsach nan grunnaibh;
'S i 'n àsainn a' mhuime
Tha cumail na cìche
Ris na laoigh bhreaca bhallach
Nach meathlaich na sianta,
Len cridheacha meara
Le bainne na cìoba;
Gnoiseanach eangach,
Len girteaga geala,
Len corpanna glana
Le faillaineachd fioruisg;
Le faram gun ghearan
Feadh ghleannan na mìltich.
Ged thigeadh an sneachda
Chan iarradh iad aitreabh,
'S e lag a' Choir' Altram
Bhios aca gan dìdean;
Feadh stacan is bhacan
Is ghlacaga dìomhair,
Len leapaichean fasgach
An taic Ais an t-Sìthein.

What brought health to their hides,
fore-quarters, back-sides,
was their constant abiding
in the deer-forest's store,
all choosing to muster
in groups on the pasture;
the source was the nurse-maid
who suckled their calves
all speckled and dappled
not numbed by the tempest,
with hearts that are sappy
with milk of deer-grass;
small-snouted, of foot fleet,
with neat haunches all white
and bodies alight
with the health of spring waters
as they rush through the bright
grass of glens without moaning.
And should the snow come
they'd want not for shelter,
hollow of Coire Altram
they have to protect them
amid rock-stacks and pits,
and secluded clefts,
with their sheltered beds
Up against Ais an t-Sithein.

Ùrlar

Ground/Theme

B' ionmhainn leam, ag èirigh
San òghmhadainn,
Timcheall air na slèibhtean
'M bu chòir dhaibh bhith,
Cupall chunntas cheud
Luchd nan ceann gun chèill,
Mosgladh gu neo-bheudar
Mòr-shòlasach.
Is osgarra o 'm beul
Torman socair rèidh,
'S glan na corp 's an crè
Seinn an dreòcaim ud.
Broc liath-chorrach èild'
An lod ga loireadh thèid,
Cuid dh' a h-arraid fhèin
Nuair bu deònach leath'.
'S annsa leam 'n uair thèid
Iad air chrònanaich,
Na na th' ann an Èirinn
De cheòlmhoireachd:
'S binne na gach beus
Anail mhic an fhèidh

I loved to rise early
in the dawn's young morning,
to circuit the slopes
where they ought to be—
are a couple of hundred
of the idiotic tribe
waking innocently
full of joy.
Mouthing boldly
a steady, gentle drone.
Pure of body and frame,
Is the tone of that lowing.
A skittish grey brock of a hind
wallowing in a pool—
a part of her own craving
when she felt like it.
I love even more
their crooning sound
to all there is in Ireland
of melodious music.
Sweeter than every bass
is the deer's son's breathy voice

A' langanaich air eudann
Beinn Dòbhrain;
An damh le bhùireadh fèin
Tighinn à grunnd a chlèibh
'S fada chluinnt' a bheuc
An am tòiseachaidh;
An t-agh as binne geum,
'S an laogh beag na dèidh,
Freagraidh iad a chèile
Gu deòthasach.
Plosg-shùil mheallach gheur
Gun bhonn glòinin innt',
Rosg fo mhala lèith
Cumail seòil oirre:
Coisiche math treun
Bu bheothaile a thèid
Air thoiseach an treud
A bha dòchasach.
Cha robh coir' ad cheum,
Cha robh moill' ad leum,
Cha robh deireadh rèis
Air an t-seòrsa sin;
Nuair bheireadh tu steud
'S nach sealladh tu 'd dhèidh,
Cha b' aithne dhomh fèin
Cò bhiodh còmhla riut.
Tha 'n eilid anns an fhrìth
Mar bu chòir dhi bhith,
Far am faigh i mìlteach
Glan-feòirneanach;
Bruchorachd is cìob,
Lusan am bi brìgh,
Chuireadh sult is ìth
Air a lòineanaibh;
Fuaran ann am bì
Biolaire gun dìth
'S mìlse leath' na 'm fìon,
'S e gun òladh i.
Cuiseagan is riasg,
Chinneas air an t-sliabh,
B' annsa leath' mar bhiadh
Na na fòlaichean.
'S ann den teachd-an-tìr
A bha sòghar leath'
Sòbhrach 's eala-bhì
'S barra neònagan;
Dòbhrach bhallach mhìn
Ghòbhlach bharrach shlìom,
Lòintean far an cinn
I na mòthraichean.
Siud am pòrsan bìdh

belling on the face
of Ben Dorain:
the stag's own roar
arises from the depth of his chest,
his bellow heard afar,
in time of starting,
young hind of sweetest mew,
with her little calf following,
they answer one another
yearningly.
Flashing, soft, sharp eye
without a hint of a cast in it,
eye below grey eyebrow
keeping track of her:
walker, fine and brave
the liveliest to lead
from the front of the drove
who were confident.
No fault was in your step,
no slowness in your bound,
to come last in the race
wasn't your way;
when you took a stride
without looking behind,
I do not know
who could keep up with you.
The hind's in the forest
as she ought to be,
where she grazes on sweet grass,
clean, fine-bladed,
heath-rush and deer-grass,
herbs full of substance
to put fat and tallow
upon her loins;
a spring where there is
plenty water-cress,
she deems sweeter than wine
and she'd take a sup.
Sorrel grass and sedge,
that grow on the moor,
she prefers as food
to rank field grass.
Of her fare she deemed
these the delicacies:
were primrose, St John's wort
and tormentil flowers;
tender, dappled orchis,
forked, spiky, glossy,
on meadows where, in clusters,
it flourishes.
Such was the regimen

Mheudaicheadh an clì,
Bheireadh iad a-nìos
Ri am dòililchean;
Chuireadh air an druim
Brata saille cruinn,
Air an carcais luim
Nach bu lòdail.
B' e sin an caidreabh grinn
Mu thràth nòine,
Nuair a thionaladh iad cruinn
Anns a' ghlòmainn:
Air fhad 's gum biodh an oidhch',
Dad cha tigeadh ribh,
Fasgadh bhun an tuim
B' àite còmhnaidh dhuibh.
Leapaichean nam fiadh,
Far an robh iad riamh,
An aonach farsaing fial
'S ann am mòrmhonadh.
'S iad bu taitneach fiamh
'N uair bu daitht' am bian;
'S cha b' i 'n airc am miann
Ach Beinn Dòbhrain.

to build up their strength,
it would build them up
in time of hard weather
and put on their backs
rounded cloaks of fat
which on their gaunt carcasses
wouldn't be a burden.
Such was the elegant assembly
in the evening
when they'd gather around
in the gloaming:
however long the night,
you'd be safe and sound,
the knoll's lee base
being your domicile,
the beds for the deer
where they've always been,
on a wide, open moor
and great mountain ranges.
Their appearance was attractive
when their hide was most colourful
and they desired not poverty
only Ben Dorain.

Siubhal

A' bheinn luiseanach fhailleanach
Mheallanach lìontach,
Gun choimeas dh' a fallaing
Air thalamh na Crìosdachd:
'S ro-neònach tha mise,
Le bòidheachd a sliosa,
Nach 'eil coir aic' an ciste
Air tiotal na rìoghachd;
'S i air dùbladh le gibhtibh,
'S air lùirsreadh le miosaibh
Nach eil bitheant' a' bristeadh
Air phriseanaibh tìre.
Làn-trusgan gun deireas,
Le usgraichean coille,
Bàrr-guc air gach doire,
Gun choir' ort r' a ìnnseadh;
Far an uchdardach coileach,
Le shriutaichibh loinneil,
'S eòin bhuchallach bheag' eile
Le 'n ceileiribh lìonmhor.
'S am buicean beag sgiolta
Bu sgiobalt' air grìne,
Gun sgriorradh gun tubaist
Gun tuisleadh gun dìobradh;
Crodhanach biorach,

Variation 2

Ben of herbs and of shoots
where clusters expand;
no cloak to compare
in Christendom's land:
unless I'm in error
its beauty of terrain
has won it for ever
a title most grand;
blest doubly with favours
and fruits full of flavours
that seldom emblazon
bushes at hand.
Full mantle that's floral,
with gems of the forest,
and bloom on each coppice,
with no fault to be found;
where the high-breasted cock
gives his elegant speech
and other small song-birds
let their carols expand.
A little, trim buck,
so fleet on greensward,
with no slip or mishap,
or stumble or fall;
cloven-hoofed, horny,

Feadh coire ga shireadh,	ranging through corrie,
Feadh fraoich agus firich,	heather and uplands,
Air mhireadh ga dhìreadh;	ascending madly;
Feadh rainich is barraich	through bracken and brushwood,
Gum b' arraideach inntinn;	capricious his fancy;
Ann an ìosal gach feadain,	in each gully's floor,
'S air àirde gach creagain,	on each hummock's height,
Gu mireanach beiceasach	sportive and bobbing,
Easgannach sìnteach.	elusive, long-striding.
Nuair a thèid e na bhoile	When, startled in the wood,
Le clisge sa choille,	he goes berserk,
'S e ruith feadh gach doire,	running through each spinney,
Air dheireadh cha bhì e;	not at the hindmost;
Leis an eangaig bu chaoile	with slender small hoof,
'S e b' aotruime sìnteag,	striding lightly,
Mu chnochanaibh donna,	over brown knolls,
Le ruith dara-tomain,	skipping every other mound,
'S e togairt an coinneamh	longing for a tryst
Bean-chomainn os n-ìosal.	with his love in secret.
Tha mhaoisleach bheag bhrangach	Little snarling doe
Sa ghleannan a chòmhnaidh	abiding in the glen,
'S i fuireach san fhireach	staying on the uplands,
Le minneanan òga:	with her little young fawns:
Cluas bhiorach gu claisteachd,	sharp ears cocked for hearing,
Sùil chorrach gu faicinn,	roving eye peeled for seeing,
'S i earbsach na casaibh	and sure of feet
Chur seachad na mòintich.	to sweep through the moor.
Ged thig Caoilte 's Cù Chulainn,	Though Caoilte and Cuchullain
'S gach duine den t-seòrs' ud,	and the rest of them came,
Na tha dhaoine 's a dh' eachaibh	all the men and horses
Air fasdadh Rìgh Deòrsa,	in King George's service,
Nan tèarnadh a craiceann	if her hide escapes,
O luaidhe 's o lasair	from lead and flame,
Cha chual' is chan fhac' i	she neither heard or saw one
Na ghlachadh r' a beò i;	that could capture her alive;
'S i gradcharach fadchasach	spry and long-legged,
Aigeannach neònach	sprightly, eccentric,
Gealcheireach gasganach,	white-rumped, stump-tailed;
Gealtach roimh mhadadh,	wary of hounds,
Air chaisead na leacainn	steep though the hill-face
Cha saltradh i còmhnard;	she'll not tread a plain,
'S i noigeanach gnoigeasach	haughty, sullen,
Gogcheannach sòrnach,	head-tossing, long-snouted,
Biorshuileach sgurshuileach	sharp-sighted, blink-eyed,
Frionsanach furachair,	excitable, watchful;
A' fuireach sa mhunadh	abiding on the moor
An do thuinich a seòrsa.	where her kind belong.

Ùrlar	Ground/Theme
3' i sin a' mhaoisleach luaineach	She was the wondering doe

Feadh òganan;
Bilichean nam bruach
'S àite còmhnaidh dhi;
Duilleagan nan craobh,
Bileagan an fhraoich,
Criomagan a gaoil,
Cha b' e 'm fòrtas.
A h-aigneadh aotrom suairc
Aobhach ait, gun ghruaim,
Ceann bu bhraise ghuanaiche
Ghòraiche;
A' chrè bu cheanalt' stuaim,
Chalaich i gu buan
An gleann a' bharraich uaine
Bu nòsaire.
'S tric a ghabh i cluain
Sa Chreig Mhòir
On as miosail leath' bhith Luan
Is a Dhòmhnach ann;
Pris an dèan i suain
Bitheanta mun cuairt,
A bhristeas a' ghaoth tuath,
'S nach leig deò oirre;
Am fasgadh Doire Chrò,
An taice ris an t-Sròin,
A measg nam faillean òg'
Is nan còsgan.
Masgadh 'n Fhuarain Mhòir,
'S e pailte gu leòr,
'S blasda leath' na bheòir,
Gu bhith pòit oirre.
Deoch den t-sruthan uasal
R' a òl aice,
Dh' fhàgas fallain fuasgailteach
Ògail i;
Gradcharach ri uair,
'S ealamh bheir i cuairt
Nuair thachaireadh i 'n ruaig
'S a bhiodh tòir oirre.
'S maothbhuidh' daitht' a snuadh,
Dearg a dreach 's a tuar,
'S gura h-iomadh buaidh
Tha mar chòmhla oirr';
Fulangach air fuachd,
'S i gun chum' air luaths,
Urram claisteachd cluas
Na Roinn Eòrpa dhi.

in the undergrowth;
herbage of banks
were her abode;
foliage of trees,
heather sprouts,
tit-bits of choice,
never mere scraps
her mien airy and mild,
joyous, glad, and devil-may-care;
her head the rashest, daftest
and silliest.
Creature sweet and shy,
she ever found a haven
in the green copsed glen
more luscious.
Often she browsed
on Creig Mhor,
for she loves being there
on Mondays and Sundays:
bushes where she sleeps
are common all around,
the north wind breaking
does not disturb her
in the lee of Doire Chro,
sheltered by the Strone,
among tender roots
and in hollow nooks.
Brew of Fuaran Mor—
plentiful enough—
tastier, she deems, than beer
as her potage.
Draught of noble stream
is hers to drink,
leaving her lithe and healthy
and ever young;
swift-moving in flight,
wheeling round nimbly,
when she is in the chase
as the quarry seek her;
smooth-yellowed her hue,
red is her form and aspect,
she has so many virtues
in her make up,
she can suffer the cold
and has no equal for speed;
for hearing faculty
she is revered in Europe.

Siubhal

Variation 3

3u ghrinn leam am pannal

I thought the troupe graceful

A' tarraing an òrdugh,
A' dìreadh le faram
Ri carraig na Sròine:
Eadar sliabh Craobh na h-Ainnis
Is beul Choire Dhaingein,
Bu bhiadhchar greigh cheannard
Nach ceannaich am pòrsan;
Dà thaobh Choire Rainich,
Mu sgèith sin a' Bhealaich,
Coire Rèidh Beinn Ach-Chaladair,
'S thairis mun Chònnlon,
Air Lurgainn na Laoidhre
Bu ghreadhnach a' chòisridh;
Mu Làrach na Fèinne,
Sa Chraig Sheilich na dhèidh sin,
Far an cruinnich na h-eildean
Bu neo-spèiseil mun fhòlach.
'S gum b' e 'n aighear 's an èibhneas
Bhith faicheachd air rèidhlean
A' comh-mhacnas ri chèile
'S a' leumnaich feadh mòintich;
Ann am pollachaibh daimseir,
Le sodradh gu meamnadh,
Gu togarrach mearcasach
Aintheasach gòrach.
Cha bhiodh ìot' air an teangaidh
Taobh sìos a' Mhill Teanail,
Le fion Uillt na h-Annaid,
Blas meala r' a òl air:
Sruth brìoghmhor geal tana,
'S e sìothladh tron ghaineamh
'S e 'mìlse na 'n caineal,
Cha b' ainealoch òirnn e.
Siud an ìocshlainte mhaireann
Thig a ìochdar an talaimh
Gheibhte lìonmhorachd mhaith dhith
Gun a cheannach le stòras,
Air fàrainn na beinne
As dàicheile sealladh
A dh' fhàs anns a' cheithreamh
A bheil mi 'n Roinn Eòrpa:
Le glainead a h-uisge,
Gu maothbhlasda brisggheal,
Caoin caomhail glan miosail,
Neo-mhisgeach ri pòit air:
Le fuaranaibh grinne
Am bun gruamach na biolair,
Còinneach uaine mun imeall
As iomadach seòrsa.
Bu ghlan uachdar na linne,
Gu neo-bhuaireasach milis,

drawing into array,
boisterously ascending
up the cliff of Strone;
between Craobh na h-Ainnis' moor
and Corrie Dhaingein's mouth,
the high-headed herd was lusty
that pays not for its portion;
both sides of Corrie Rannoch,
round the flank of the Bealach,
in Corrie Reidh of Ben Achallader,
then over by Connlon;
on Lurgainn na Laoidhre,
the party frolicsome;
by Larach na Feinne,
on Craig Seileach thereafter,
where the hinds gather,
heeding not the rank field grass.
Joyful and delighted
to parade on a plain
sporting fondly with one another,
bounding through moorland;
in miry bogs prancing
to rouse excitement,
appetent, riotous,
hot-blooded, crazy.
Down below Meall Teanail
their tongues would not be parched,
with Annat Burn full of wine,
honey-flavoured to drink:
a potent, bright, limpid stream,
filtering through sand;
sweeter than cinnamon,
nor was it unknown to us.
A never-failing tonic
arising from below ground
abundant good derived from it
no need to buy its riches,
within the ben's precincts,
a vista that is fair,
is found in this quarter
of Europe where I belong:
purity of water,
delicate-flavoured, clear-bubbling,
soft, kindly, clean, precious,
not heady to quaff;
with elegant springs,
in the dim roots of cress,
green moss of many species,
fringing their edges.
Clear the pool's surface,
untroubled and sweet,

Tighinn na chuairteig on ghrinneal
Air slinnean Beinn Dóbhrain.
Tha lethtaobh na Leacainn
Le mais' air a còmhdach,
'S am Frìth Choirean creagach
Na sheasamh ga choir sin:
Gu stobanach stacanach
Slocanach laganach
Cnocanach cnapanach
Caiteanach ròmach,
Pasganach badanach
Bachlagach bòidheach;
A h-aisridhean corrach
Nam fasraichibh mollach,
'S i b' fhasa dhomh mholadh,
Bha sonas gu leòr oirr';
Cluigeanach gucagach
Uchdanach còmhnard;
Le dìthean glan ruiteach,
Breac mìleanach sultmhor,
Tha 'n fhrìth air a busgadh
San trusgan bu chòir dhi.

eddies from the gravel
on Ben Dorain's shoulder.
Where Leacainn's side lies
is covered with beauty,
and the small, rocky Frith Choirean
is standing adjacent—
pillars and rock-stacks,
pits and hollows,
hillocks and hummocks,
shaggy, rough-coated,
clumpy and tufted,
ringleted, lovely;
rugged defiles
with rich pastures of tall grass;
it is easy for me to praise her,
blest in abundance;
full of clusters and buds,
with inclines and plains,
with bright, blushing flowers,
chequered, sweet-verdured, well-favoured,
the forest is covered
in agreeable apparel.

Ùrlar

Am monadh farsaing faoin
Glacach srònagach
Lag a' Choire Fhraoich
Cuid bu bhòidhche dheth.
Sin am fearann caoin
Air an d' fhàs an aoibh
Far am bi na laoigh
'S na daimh chròcach;
'S e deisearach ri grèin,
Seasgaireachd dh' a rèir,
'S neo-bheag air an eildeig
Bhith chòmhnaidh ann;
Leannan an fhir lèith
As faramaiche ceum,
Nach iarradh a' chlèir
A thoirt pòsaidh dhaibh;
'S glan fallain a crè
Is banail i na beus,
Cha robh h-anail breun
Ge bè phògadh i.
'S e 'n coire choisinn gaol
A h-uil' òganaich,
A chunna' riamh a thaobh
'S a ghlac eòlas air:
'S lìonmhor feadan caol
Air an èirich gaoth,

Theme/Ground

Wide, open moor,
with dells, and scarps,
hollow of Coire Fhraoich,
was the most bonnie.
A pleasant land
spreading kindliness
where there are calves
and antlered stags:
southward aspect of sunshine,
giving comfort and warmth,
the little hind is not loath
to dwell there,
the grey lad's mate
of sprightly step,
that wouldn't request
the clergy to be married.
A frame pure and lithe
with her modest mien.
A fragrant breath
when kissing her.
The corrie has won
every youth's love,
who ever saw it's side
and knew is so well.
Many narrow gaps
over breezes rising

Far am bi na laoich
Cumail còmhdhalach'
Bruthaichean nan learg
Far am biodh greigh dhearg,
Ceann-uidhe gach sealg'
Fad am beòshlainte;
'S e làn den h-uile maoin
A thig a mach le braon,
Fàileadh nan sùbh-chraobh
Is nan ròsan ann.
Gheibhte tacar èisg
Air a còrsa,
'S bhith gan ruith le leus
Anns na mòr-shruthan:
Morgha cumhann geur,
Le chrann giuthais fhèin,
Aig fir shubhach threubhach
Nan dòrnaibh;
Bu shòlasach a leum
Bric air bruinne rèidh,
A' ceapadh chuileag eutrom
Nan dòrlaichean.
Chan eil muir no tìr
A bheil tuilleadh brìgh
'S a tha feadh do chrìch
Air a h-òrdachadh.

where the gallant lads
keep rendezvous.
Braes of hill slopes,
where there is the red herd
marking the hunt's goal
through their whole life;
full of many riches
that thrives with dew;
fragrance of fruit-bushes
and roses.
Fish could be caught
on her border.
Chasing them by torch-light
in the great rapids:
a slim, sharp fishing-spear,
with a fine pine-shaft,
held by merry, stalwart men
in their fists.
Leaping for joy
trout in calm pools
biting flitting flies
In handfuls.
No land or sea
has more opulence
within your boundary
than there is here.

Crunlùdh

Finale

Tha 'n eilid anns a' ghleannan seo,
'S chan amadan gun eòlas
A leanadh i mur b' aithne dha
Tighinn farasda na còmhdhail:
Gu faiteach bhith na h-earalas,
Tighinn am faisge dhi mun caraich i,
Gu faiceallach, glè earraigeach,
Mum fairich i ga coir e;
Feadh sloc is ghlac is chamhanan,
Is chlach a dhèanadh falach air,
Bhith beachdail air an talamh
'S air a' char a thig na neòil air;
'S an t-astar bhith ga tharraing air
Cho macanta 's a b' aithne dha,
Gun glacadh e dh' a h-aindeoin i
Le h-anabharra seòltachd;
Le tùr, gun ghainne baralach,
An t-sùil a chur gu danarra,
A' stiùradh na dubh-bannaiche,
'S a h-aire ri fear cròice.
Bhiodh rùdan air an tarraing
Leis an lùbt' an t-iarann-earra,

The hind is in this little glen,
and no unskilled fool
could stalk her if he did not know of
making contact with her quietly;
guarding against her warily,
drawing near before she stirs,
cautiously, most toilsomely,
lest she should sense him;
among pits, folds and clefts,
and rocks which conceal him,
taking note of the terrain,
and the way the clouds approach,
advancing on the trail,
as softly as he knows,
that he will trap her, despite her,
by exceptional cunning,
with skill and judgement,
targeting the eye unflinchingly,
aiming the crafty dame
levelled at the antlered-one.
Finger ready to pull
on the hinder spring bend,

Bheireadh ionnsaigh nach biodh mearachdach
Don fhear a bhiodh ga seòladh;
Spor ùr an dèis a teannachadh,
Buill' ùird a' sgailceadh deingean ris,
Cha diùilt an t-srad nuair bheanas i
Don deannaig a bha neònach.
'S e 'm fùdar tioram teannabaich
Air chùl an asgairt ghreannaich,
Chuireadh smùid ri acainn mheallanaich
À baraille Nic Còiseam.
'S i 'n teachdaire bha dealasach,
Nach mealladh e na dhòchas,
Nuair lasadh e mar dhealanach
Gu feareigin a leònadh;
Gu silteach leis na peileirean
Bhiodh luchd nan luirgnean speireacha,
'S nam bus bu tirme bheileanaich,
Gun mheilliche, gun tòicean.
'S e camp na Craige Seiliche
Bha ceannsalach nan ceithreamhnaibh;
Le aingealtas cha teirinn iad
Gu eirthir as an eòlas,
Mur cheannaichear iad deireasach
Ri am na crìche deireannaich,
An tabhannaich le deifir
A bhith deileann air an tòrach;
Gun channtaireachd, gun cheilearachd,
Ach dranndail chon a' deileis rith',
A ceann a chur gu peirealais,
Aig eilid Beinne Dòbhrain.
'S O! b' ionmhainn le fir cheanalta
Nach b' aineolach mu spòrsa,
Bhith timcheall air na bealaichibh
Le fearalachd na h-òige;
Far am bi na fèidh gu faramach,
'S na fir nan dèidh gu caithriseach,
Le gunna bu mhath barantas
Thoirt aingil nuair bu chòir dhi;
Le cuilean foirmeil togarrach,
'G am biodh a stiùir air bhogadan,
'S e miorlairtich gu sodanach,
'S nach ob e dol nam còmhdail.
Na fhuirbidh làidir cosgarrach,
Ro-inntineach neo-fhoisinneach,
Gu guineach sgiamhach gobeasgaidh
San obair bh' aig a sheòrsa;
'S a fhrioghan cuilg a' togail air,
Gu mailgheach gruamach doicheallach,
'S a gheanachan cnuasaicht' fosgailte
Comh-bhogartaich r' an sgòrnan.
Gum b' arraideach a' charachd ud

that would give a sure hit
to the one who aimed it,
a new flint, sure and tight,
hitting the hammer with a crack,
sparking when contact is made,
the pinch that is a marvel.
Dry, matured gun-powder
behind the shrivelled tinder,
the hail-like charge ablazing
from Nic Còiseam's barrel.
A messenger most keen,
not deceiving him of hope,
flashed like lightning
to inflict a wound:
bullet wounds bleeding
the folk of spindled shanks
dry mouths, and pouting lip
neither puffy nor swelling.
Craig Seileach's camp
ranked foremost of their quarters;
as they will not be annoyed
to descend to a coast outwith their ken,
unless they are subdued grievously,
nearer the time of their end,
the barking pack is hasting
and yelping in pursuit.
Neither chantering or carolling,
but dogs snarling and ravenous
to drive her head to frenzy
for the hind of Ben Dorain.
O, joy it was for good fellows,
no mere novices of sport,
circuiting the hill passes
with youth so virile,
where deer stir noisily
men sleeplessly pursuing
with a well warranted gun
firing at the right time,
with a whelp lively and eager,
tail all a-wagging,
whimpering in excitement
ever ready to tackle them,
strong, bloodthirsty warrior,
ardent and impatient,
venomous, yapping, nimble-mouthed,
engaging in his work,
his bristles all erect,
shaggy-browed, grim, sinister,
gathered jowls wide open,
all a-quiver at their throats.
Their twisting pace erratic was

'S bu chabhagach i 'n còmhnaidh,
Nuair shìneadh iad na h-eanganan
Le h-athghoirid na mòintich;
Na beanntaichean 's na bealaichean,
Gum fregradh iad mac-talla dhuit,
Le fuaim na gairme galanaich
Aig faram a' choin ròmaich,
Gan tèarnadh as na mullaichibh
Gu linnichean nach grunnaich iad,
'S ann bhitheas iad feadh na tuinne
Anns an luinneineich 's iad leòinte;
'S na cuileanan gu fulasgach
Gan cumail air na muinealaibh,
'S nach urrainn iad dol tuilleadh as,
Ach fuireach 's bhith gun deò annt'.
Is ged a thuirt mi beagan riu,
Mun ìnnsinn uil' an dleasdnas orr',
Chuireadh iad am bhreislich mi
Le deisimireachd chòmhraidh.

always very hasty
as their hoofs did acrobatics on
the moorland's winding causeways;
the passes and the mountains
would echo all their sounds for you
with noise of baying hounds and all
the shaggy dogs applauding,
down from the hill-tops driving them
to pools where they can't find a hold,
wounded in the tidal surge,
their wallowing appalling;
the hounds have got a grip upon
the deers' throats as they trip along
and they can no more slip away,
their breath goes are they're falling.
And though I've told you some of it,
Before I'd told the sum of it
My head would take a pummelling
With rummeling of talking.

Cumha Choire an Easain

'S mi an-diugh a' fàgail na tìre,
Siubhal na frìth air a leththaobh,
'S e dh' fhàg gun airgead mo phòca,
Ceann mo stòras fo na leacaibh.

'S mi aig bràighe an Alltain Riabhaich,
'G iarraidh gu Bealach na Fèitheadh,
Far am bi damh dearg na cròic,
Mu Fhèill an Roid re dol san dàmhair.

'G iarraidh gu bealach an easa,
Far an tric a sgapadh fùdar,
Far am bidh mìolchoin gan tairbirt,
Cur mac na h-eilde gu dhùlan.

Coire gun easbhaidh gun iomrall,
'S tric bha Raibeart ma do chomraibh,
Gach aon uair a nì mi t' iomradh,
Tuitidh mo chridhe fo thromchradh.

''S e siod mise, Coire an Easa,
Ta mi nam sheasamh mar b' àbhaist;
Ma ta tus nat fhear ma ealain,
Cluinneamaid annas do làimhe.'

'N àill leat mise rùsgadh ceòil dhuit,
'S mi nam aonar an ceò air bhealach
Gun spèis aig duine ta beò dhiom,
On chuaidh an còirneal san talamh?

Mo creach 's mo thùirse is mo thruaighe
San uair-se ga chur dhomh 'n ìre,
An comann chumadh rium uaisle
San uaigh an-diugh gun an dìreadh.

Nan creideadh tu fèin so, a Choire,
Gura dorran sud air m' inntinn,
Gur cuid de dh' adhbhar mo leisgeil
Nach faod mi seasamh ri seinn dhuit.

'Beannachd dhuit agus buaidh làrach
Anns gach àit' an dèan thu seasamh,
A chionn do phuirt bhlasda, dhìonaich,
'S a' ghrian a' cromadh re feasgar.

'S e sud ceòl as binne thruaighe
Chualas bho linn Mhic Aoidh Dòmhnaill;
'S grathann a bhios e nam cluasan,
Am fuaim bha aig tabhann do mheòribh.'

Lament for Coirenessan

Today I am leaving the country
skirting the edge of the moorland,
what had left my pocket without money
is my patron under the flagstones.

I am on the bank of Alltan Riabhach,
wanting across to Bealach na Fèitheadh,
where the russet stag of the antlers
around Rood-day makes for the rutting.

Wanting across to the waterfall gully,
where lead-shot was often scattered,
were greyhounds are incited,
the son of the hind held by their baying.

A corrie without defect or blemish,
often was Raibeart at your waters-meeting;
every time your name I utter.
my heart falls into sadness.

'That's me, Coire an Easa,
I am here just as ever;
if art is your business
let's hear the skill of your handwork.'

Do you want me to bring you forth music
all by myself in the mists in a byway,
lacking the respect of any man living
since the Colonel went to the graveyard?

My undoing, my woe and my sorrow
the moment I heard it related,
that the person who maintained me
is in his grave today without rising.

If you would believe this, Corie,
that it has left my mind in anguish,
it is part of the cause of my plea that
I cannot stand and play before you.

'A blessing to you and victory in battle
everywhere you take your playing
for the sake of your tune, eloquent and hearty,
while the sun goes down in the evening.

That is the music of the sweetest sadness
heard since the time of Mac Aoidh, Dòmhnall;
for a while yet in my ears it will linger,
that swift playing from your fingers.'

Ta cuid de mhaithibh na h-Eireann
Re tighinn gu d' rèidhlean le h-ealain:
Ma sheinn Ruaidhri Dall dhuibh Fàilte
Bha Mac Aoidh ann 's càirdean mar ris.

'S grianach t' ursainn fèin, a Choire,
Gun fhiadh re teàrnadh gu d' bhaile;
Liuthad neach dha'm b'fhiach do mholadh,
Do chrìoch chorrach fhiadhaich bhainneach.

Do chìob, do bhorran, do mhileach,
Do leas, a Choire, gur lèanach
Lùbach luibheach daite diamhair;
Gur fasgach do chuile is gur feurach.

Gu nòineanach gucagach mealach
Lònanach lusnach iomrach,
'S bòrcach do ghorm-luachar mheallaidh
Gun fhuachd na fearthainn ach ciùbhrach.

Do dheud mar uile-dhreach a' chanaich,
Cìrean do mhullaich cha chreathnaich,
Far am bith na fèidh gu torrach
'G èirigh faramach ma t' fhireach.

Gormanach tolmanach àlainn,
Lachadh, lusach, dosach, cràighiach,
Fradharach gadharach breitheach
Ag iomain na h-eilid gu nàmhaid.

Siumragach sealbhagach, duilleach,
Mìnlachach, gormleudach gleannach,
Coire riabhach riasgach luideach,
Far 'm biadhte chuideachd gun cheannach.

'N àm don ghrèin dhol air a h-uilinn
Gasda glèidhteach reubach fuileach
Branach stràcach riachach finleach
Sealgach marbhach targnach giullach.

San àm a bhi teannadh gu d' rèidhlean
Teinnteach cinnteach ciallach cèireach
Fìonach, stòpach, còrnach teudach
Ordail eòlach òlar ceutach.

Ach siod mo dhùrachd dhuit, a Choire,
O tha mo dhùil re dol thairis,
'S gun mi ach tuisleach sa' mhonadh
'S mithich dhomh triall thun a' bhealaich.

Some of the noble artists of Ireland
came to your greenswards with learning:
if Ruaidhri Dall has played you a Fàilte
Mac Aoidh and his friends were with him also.

Sunny your own door-post, fair Corie,
without deer descending to your homestead;
so many people who would justly praise you,
your bounds peaked, desolate, milky.

With your deer-grass, moor-grass, sweet-grass,
flourishing, O Corie, is your garden,
full of herbs and colours, winding, secret;
your meadowy patch is sheltered, verdant.

Daisy-spangled, flowery, honied,
lush and undulating, boggy,
your tussocks of green-rush bursting,
no rain or cold, just drizzle.

Your teeth like cotton-grass in appearance,
the combs of your height do not tremble,
where the numerous fecund deerherds
rise up noisily about your incline.

With knolls and lovely green hillocks,
dense and bushy, with duck and sheldrake,
a good look-out, a place for trapping
the hind hounded towards her enemy.

Leafy, with clover and sorrel,
camomile, green slopes and gullies,
brindled, tousled, ragged corrie,
its company fed without payment.

When the sun is sinking on her elbow,
well-protected the place for bloody tearing,
corn-husks and fennel, thumping and flaying,
hunting, killing, gillies boasting.

When it is time to make for your meadow
there is sensible talk, fire and candles,
wine in stoups, cups and music,
orderly, experienced, pleasant drinking.

But here's my farewell to you, O Corie,
since I need to be crossing over,
as I am only stumbling through the heather,
it is time for me to set off for the byway.

Soraidh na Frìthe

Beir mo shoraidh le dùrachd
Gu ceann eile na dùthcha
Far an robh mi gu sunndach,
Eadar Tunga 's am Parbh;
'N àm dìreadh na h-uchdaich,
Ged a chanadh fear, "Ochain!"
'S ann leamsa bu shocrach
Bhi an soc nam meall garbh,
Far am faicteadh 'm fear buidhe
'S e na chaol-ruith le bruthaich,
Agus mìolchon nan siubhal,
'S iad a' cluiche ra chalg,
Air faobhar a' chadha
'N dèidh clàistinn an spreadhaidh;
'S gum bu phàirt siud dhe m' aighear,
Mac na h-aighe bhith marbh.

Ach, a Mhaighstir Mhioghraidh,
Gu bheil aighear aig t' inntinn,
Aig feabhas do mhuinntir,
Is a' bheinn ann ad chòir—
O dhoras do rùma
Fa chomain do shùla,
Na tha eadar an Dùnan
Agus cnùicean Meall Hòrn.
'S e mo smuaintean gach madainn
An uair sin a bh' againn—
Dhol uaibhse cho fada,
A chuir fadalachd orm;
B'e mo dhùrachd bhith faicinn
An ùdlaich a' feachdadh,
Agus fùdar a' lasadh
Eadar clach agus òrd.

Beir mo shoraidh gu càirdeach
A dh' ionnsaidh mo bhràthar,
'S gun luaidh air do chàirdeas
Gum bu nàbaidh dhuit mi;
Ged a thearbadh air fuinn sinn,
Bu tric anns a' bheinn sinn,
'S gur h-ainmig le m' inntinn
A bhith cùit' agus i.
Tha t' àit-sa mar thachair,
Na bhràighe 's na mhachair,
Na àite cho tlachdmhor
'S a chuir tlachd air do thìr;
'S na tha dh' anabarr air t' aitreabh,
'S mòr m' fharmad ri t' fhasan—

Bighouse's Farewell to the Forest

Take my farewell and good wishes,
To the other end of the country
Where I used to be joyful
Between Tongue and Cape Wrath.
At the time when I climbed the brae,
Though someone would exclaim "Ochoin",
I would be well pleased
To be in the heights of the rugged hills
Where the tawny one could be seen,
Running lithely on the slope
And the deer hounds in full chase
Jumping playfully at his hair
On the edge of the ravine
After hearing the burst of fire.
What a part of my happiness that was—
The offspring of the hind lying dead.

O, Master of Reay,
What happiness it brings your mind,
What with the excellence of your people
And the mountain near to you,
From the door of your room
Right before your eyes
Where it lies between An Dunan
And the knoll of Ben Horn.
I think each morning
Of the time when we used to be there.
It was my distance from you
That made me feel nostalgic.
It would be my delight to see
A hart being beset
And gunpowder blazing
Between flint and hammer.

Take my friendly farewell
To my own brother,
No need to mention your kinship
As you were a neighbour of mine;
Though now we are sundered by the land
Often we were on the mountain
And often was my mind
Wanting to be rid of it.
This is a place at it happens
Of braes and plains
As pleasant a place
As adorns your country.
However magnificent your dwelling,
It is your way of life I envy so much—

Gur soirbh dhuit gach seachdain,
'S tu bhi faicinn na frìth'.

Beir mo shoraidh a-rithis
Gu pàighear na dibhe,
'S làmh dhèanamh na sìthinn,
'S gu cridhe gun fhiamh—
Far a bheil Iain mac Eachainn,
'S mi tamall gun fhaicinn,
Mo dheagh chòmhlan deas, duineil—
Bu tu eascaraid fhiadh;
'N àm nan cuilean a' chasgadh,
Gan cumail 's gan glacadh,
Na b' fheàrr a thoirt facail
Chan fhaca mi riamh.
Bu shealbhach ar tadhal
Air sealgach nan aighean—
Bu tu sgaoileadh an fhaghaid,
'S a chuireadh gadhair gu gnìomh.

Beir mo shoraidh-sa còmhluath
Gu Dòmhnall mac Dhòmhnaill,
Sàr chompanach còmhnard
Om faighteadh còmhradh gun sgìths;
'S gus na h-uaislean dom b' àbhaist
Bhith aig fuaran a' Bhàird leinn,
Chumadh coinneamh rin càirdean
Aig do thàbhairn gach mìos.
Bhiodh geanachas grathainn
Aig na fir fa do chomhair,
'S nuair a b' àill leo, bu domhain
Air thomhas nam pìos.
'S tric m' inntinn fo luasgan,
Ma gach pung bha san uair sin,
'S cha bu mhìorùn don t-shluagh sin,
A chuir air luathair mi sìos.

Beir an t-soraidh seo suas uam,
Far bheil càch de na h-uaislean,
Agus h-aon diubh gu luath,
Gu Aonghas Ruadh mac Mhic Aoidh;
Bha e 'n uiridh chaidh seachad,
'S e mar rium am Fais Bheinn,
'S ged thrèig mis' am fasan,
Tha 'n cleachadh air m' ùidh.
Gum bu chasg siud air m' airtneal,
Bhi 'm measg nam fear tapaidh,
Agus uisge mu m' chasan
Tighinn dachaidh à beinn.
Bu lughad mo mhulad,
Bhi treis am Beinn Spionnaidh,

The weeks pass pleasantly for you
As you look out on the deer-forest.

Take my farewell once more,
To him who pays for the dram
And the hand that provides venison,
And the heart without fear—
To where Iain mac Eachainn is,
And I a while without seeing him,
My good companion, accomplished, manly—
You were the deer's enemy.
At the moment for restraining the yelps,
For holding them and catching them,
Anyone better at giving the word
I never saw.
Our expeditions were fortunate
For hunting the hinds.
You would deploy the hunting party
And put the hounds on the job.

Take my farewell at the same time
To Donald son of Donald,
Excellent, equable companion
Whose conversation never tired,
And to the noble friends
Who would be with us at the Bard's spring,
Who would meet their friends
At your monthly entertainment.
There would be hospitality for a while
Among the people in your company
And when they desired it, deep
Measuring of the cups.
Often my mind would be swirling
With all the topics that were raised,
And it was no ill-will for those people
That sent me away hastily.

Take this farewell up from me,
To the rest of the noblemen
And one of them especially,
Red-haired Angus, son of Mackay,
It was the year gone by,
That I was along with him on Fais Bheinn,
Though I have forsaken the fashion,
The habit on my mind,
That would check my weariness,
Was to be among those brave fellows,
With water surrounding my feet
Coming home from the hill.
My sorrow lessened
To spend a while on Beinn Spionnaidh,

Agus tamall a' fuireach
Ann am bùn Càrn na Frìthe.

Gum bu dòrn siud air mholadh
Don òganach ealamh,
A dheònaicheadh fanadh
Ri talamh 's ri gaoith.
'S ged bu chinnteach à 'chuid e,
Nuair thigeadh e thugainn,
'S e nach milleadh an obair
Air cuideachd a chaoidh.
Bha a làmh is a fhradharc
Air an dèanamh 'n aon adhart,
Nuair a shiùbhladh na h-aighean
A-staigh air a' bheinn.
Le cuilbhear na sraide,
'S làmh chuimseach na graide,
Nach iomrallaicheadh eadar
An claigeann 's an cuing.

B'e ar fasan car grathainn
Gum bu phrosbaig dhuinn t' amharc,
Mun cuairt duinn is romhainn,
'S tu coimhead 's a' falbh.
'S ged bhiodh iad nan seasamh
Air luimead na creachainn,
'S nach b' urrainn duinn fhaicinn
Ach aiteal den calg;
'S ann an sin theireadh Aonghas,
"Ge deacair an ruigheachd,
'S leòr fhad 's a tha sinne
Gun sitheann, gun sealg;
Thèid sinne gu socrach
Air ionnsaidh nam procach,
'S o neamhnaid ar 'n acfhainn,
Bidh 'n asnaichean dearg."

Beir m' iomcharadh chòmhnard,
Gu Dòmhnall Mac Sheòrais—
'S ged thrèig mise an t-eòlas,
'S ann leis bu deòin leam a bhith;
Ri aithris, mar 's còir dhuinn,
'S duine tairis gu leòr e,
'S nuair a thogas a shròn air,
Ris nach còir a bhi strì.
Nuair bhiodh a' ghaoth oirnn a' tionndadh
'S a' mhaoiseach na teann-ruith
'N àm sgaoilidh nan con-taod,
Bu chall bhith gad dhìth
Gu dìreadh nam fuar-bheann,
Leis na sàr-cheumaibh buadhach

And stay for a spell
Near the foot of Carn na Frithe.

That was a fist to be praised
For the deft youth,
Who would readily stay
Despite terrain or wind.
Though some could be sure of him
When he came to join us,
And the work would never be
Spoiled by his company.
His hand and vision
Were made for one purpose—
When the hinds moved off
Into the mountain,
A gun would fire
With a sure, rapid hand
That would not wonder between
The head and the trigger.

For a while it was our wont
To use a telescopic sight,
All around and in front of us,
You searching and moving off,
And though they'd be standing
On the bare rocks
And we could only see
A glimpse of their bristles
It was then that Angus would say,
"Though hard our journey
We have been long enough
Without venison, or game—
We will go stealthily
Towards the one year old stags,
And from the pearl of our tools
Their ribs will be bloodied."

Take my well-considered greetings
To Donald son of George—
And although I have lost his acquaintance
I would wish to be with him,
Proclaiming as is proper:
He is a pretty, kindly man,
And when he takes offence
It is well not to oppose him.
When the wind used to change on us
And the roe were running at full speed
At the time we let slip the leashes,
It was a loss to be without you
Ascending the cold mountains
With the excellent swift strides

Chuireadh 'n cèill gu neo-uaibhreach
Nach bu shuarach do chlì.

'N t-soraidh chliùiteach 's air falbh uam,
Gu mac Hùistein don Bhoralaidh,
Tha do chùisean dhuit sealbhach,
Is gu dearbh chan eil càs;
'S e mo bharail air t' uaisle,
Nach fear masgaill no fuaim thu,
Gheibhear cunbhalach, buan, thu,
Gus an uair 'n tig do bhàs;
Pòitear inntinneach, measail,
Os ceann fheara do stùic thu.
'S a riamh cha b' àirde bhiodh misg ort,
Na bhiodh do ghliocas a' fàs.
Bheireadh t' inntinn ort eirmseachd
Air an fhìrinn d' a seirbhead,
'S cha bhiodh strìth ri do thoirmeasg,
Gus an teirgeadh do bhlàths.

'S ann an rudhachaibh Sheannabhaid,
Tha 'n Sutharlach ainmeil,
Gus an luighigean m' iomcharadh
Iomachar a-suas;
'S ri innseadh mar 's cubhaidh,
'S fior iosail na shuidhe,
'M fear tighearnail, cridheil,
'S ceann-uidhe dhaoin' uails';
Sàr ghìomanach gunna,
Làmh bhiadhadh nan cuilean,
Agus iarraichte tunna,
Ann an cumadh gun chruas;
Dhuinn a b' àbhaist bhi tathaich,
Air na h-àbhaich 'n àm luidhe,
'S ged dh' fhàg mise a' chathair,
Is leam deacair a luaths'.

Which proclaimed modestly
That your strength was not slight.

My famous farewell has gone
To the son of Hugh to Boralaidh,
Your condition is fortunate
And indeed it is not difficult,
My opinion of your nobility is
You are neither a flattering or boorish fellow,
You'll be always steady and lasting,
Even until the day you die,
An intellectual and esteemed imbiber,
Who was a head above other men.
Never did drink get a hold over you,
Nor did your wisdom grow.
Your mind gave easily to wit,
The truth was in your service,
Which would not strive with your sense,
Until your warmth wore out.

In the promontories of Seannabhaid
There is the famous Sutherland,
So as to requite my greetings
Carry them up,
And to say how fitting
That he sits very lowly,
A lordly, hearty fellow,
An object of the nobility;
Excellent gun-toting gamekeeper,
A hand that feeds the whelps,
Who'd request a ton,
Shapely without severity
Whom we used to visit,
Or the joy at going to lie down,
And though I have vacated the chair
It is not easy for me to move.

Cead Deireannach nam Beann

Bha mi 'n-dè 'm Beinn Dòbhrain,
'S na còir cha robh mi aineolach;
Chunna mi na gleanntan
'S na beanntaichean a b' aithne dhomh:
B' e sin an sealladh èibhinn
Bhith 'g imeachd air na slèibhtean,
Nuair bhiodh a' ghrian ag èirigh
'S a bhidh na fèidh a' langanaich.

'S aobhach a' ghreigh uallach,
Nuair gluaiseadh iad gu faramach;
'S na h-eildean air an fhuaran,
Bu chuannar na laoigh bhallach ann;
Na maoislichean 's na ruadhbhuic,
Na coilich dhubha 's ruadha—
'S e 'n ceòl bu bhinne chualas
Nuair chluinn't am fuaim sa chamhanaich.

'S togarrach a dh' fhalbhainn
Gu sealgaireachd nam bealaichean,
Dol mach a dhìreadh garbhlaich,
'S gum b' anmoch tighinn gu baile mi;
An t-uisge glan 's am fàile
Th' air mullach nam beann àrda,
Chuidich e gu fàs mi,
'S e rinn domh slàint' is fallaineachd.

Fhuair mi greis am àrach
Air àirighnean a b' aithne dhomh,
Ri cluiche 's mire 's mànran
'S bhith 'n coibhneas blàth nan caileagan;
Bu chùis an aghaidh nàdair
Gum maireadh sin an-dràsd' ann,
'S e b' èiginn bhith gam fàgail
Nuair thàinig tràth dhuinn dealachadh.

Nis on bhuail an aois mi
Fhuair mi gaoid a mhaireas domh,
Rinn milleadh air mo dheudach
'S mo lèirsinn air a dalladh orm;
Chan urrainn mi bith treubhadh
Ged a chuirinn feum air,
'S ged bhiodh an ruaig am dhèidh-sa
Cha dèan mi ceum ro-chabhagach.

Ged tha mo cheann air liathadh
'S mo chiabhagan air tanachadh,
'S tric a mi mialchù
Ri fear fiadhaich ceannardach;

Last Leave-taking of the Bens

I was yesterday in Ben Dòbhrain—
of her bounds I was not ignorant;
I observed her valleys
and the mountains once familiar;
that was a joyful prospect
to walk upon the top-slopes
when the sun was rising
and when the deer were bellowing.

How happy was that noble herd
when they would set off noisily,
with the hinds beside the wellspring
and the speckled calves so handsome there,
the does and all the roebucks,
the black cocks and the red ones—
they made the loveliest music
when at dawn their tune was audible.

I would set out so happily
to hunt among the mountain passes;
going out to climb the rough slopes,
I'd reach home when the night was darkening,
the pure water and the fragrance
on the summits of high ranges—
that helped me to grow safely,
and gave me good health and vitality.

For a time I had my upbringing
on sheilings I knew intimately,
with frolic, fun and flirting
and the warm kindness of the lassies there;
it would be completely against nature
if that remained unchanging;
we were forced to leave them
when the time had come to separate.

Now since old age has struck me,
I have an illness that is permanent;
it has ruined my teeth's sharpness
and darkened my eyes' clarity;
I cannot aspire to exploits
though I might find that needful,
and though a rout should chase me,
I cannot step out hastily.

Although my head has greyed
and my locks are much thinner now,
I often set a greyhound
to chase the wild and chiefly one;

Ged bu toigh leam riamh iad,
'S ged fhaicinn air an t-sliabh iad,
Cha tèid mi nis gan iarraidh
On chaill mi trian na h-analach.

although I always liked them,
should I see them on a hillside,
I cannot now pursue them,
having lost a third of breath's capacity.

Ri àm dol anns a' bhùireadh
Bu dùrachdach a leanainn iad,
'S bhiodh uair air sluagh na dùthcha,
Toirt òrain ùra 's rannachd dhaibh;
Greis eile mar ri càirdean
Nuair bha sinn anns na campan,
Bu chridheil anns an àm sinn,
'S cha bhiodh an dram oirnn annasach.

When it would be the time of rutting,
I would pursue them eagerly,
and spend an hour with local folk,
giving them new songs and balladry;
I'd spend another while with comrades
when we'd be in encampments;
we were happy in that period,
and the dram would not be strange to us.

Nuair bha mi 'n toiseach m' òige
'S i ghòraich' a chum falamh mi;
'S e Fortan tha cur oirnne
Gach aon nì còir a ghealladh dhuinn;
Ged tha mi gann a stòras,
Tha m' inntinn làn de shòlas,
On tha mi ann an dòchas
Gun d' rinn nighean Deòrs' an t-aran domh.

When I was in youth's initial stages
it was folly that kept me penniless;
it is Fortune that endows us
with everything that's pledged for us;
although I'm short of riches,
my mind is filled with solace,
since I now have the prospect
that George's daughter made the bread for me.

Bha mi 'n-dè san aonach
'S bha smaointean mòr air m' aire-sa,
Nach robh 'n luchd-gaoil a b' àbhaist
Bhith siubhal fàsaich mar rium ann;
'S a' bheinn as beag a shaoil mi
Gun dèanadh ise caochladh—
On tha mi nis fo chaoraibh
'S ann thug an saoghal car asam.

I was yesterday on the hill-slope,
and my mind turned to deep reflection
that those much-loved folk were absent
who once traversed the wilds with me;
and the mountain which I scarce thought
would ever change adversely—
since she is now a sheep-walk,
the world has tricked me wickedly.

Nuair sheall mi air gach taobh dhìom
Cha fhaodainn gun bhith smalanach,
On theirig coill' is fraoch ann,
'S na daoine bh' ann, cha mhaireann iad;
Chan eil fiadh ra shealg ann,
Chan eil eun no earb ann,
Am beagan nach eil marbh dhiubh,
'S e rinn iad falbh gu baileach às.

When I looked all around me,
I could not but be sorrowful,
since an end had come to wood and heather
and the folk who lived there formerly;
there is no deer for hunting,
there is no bird or roe there;
the few that have not perished
have departed from it totally.

Mo shoraidh leis na frìthean,
O 's mìorbhailteach na beannan iad,
Le biolair uaine 's fìoruisg,
Deoch uasal rìomhach cheanalta;
Na blàran a tha prìseil,
'S na fàsnaichean tha lìonmhor,
O 's àit' a leig mi dhìom iad,
Gu bràth mo mhìle beannachd leò.

My farewell to those deer-forests—
they are hills that are most wonderful,
with green watercress and pure water,
a fine noble drink, so excellent;
those meadows that are precious,
those wilds that are abundant,
since I have now relinquished them,
for ever my thousand blessings there.

Òran Seilge do Choire Dhodha

Guma slàn do na fir ghleusda,
Chaidh shealg do Sheumas Òg,
Thug Dòmhnall Donn bheinn iad,
'S cha bu lèir dhoibh leis a' cheò.
'S nan creideadh iad mo sgeulachd-sa,
'S chan fhiach leam bhith ri bòsd,
Mun d' ràinig sibh 'n t-Allt Èiginn,
Bu tric na fèidh dhan leòn.

Gur mithich dhomh bhi 'g èiridh,
As an dèidh, 's am bi mi falbh,
Mur dearmad mòr a dh' èirich
Gu bheil mac na h-eilde marbh;
Faigh gach ball a dh' fheumas e,
San leidig 'n t-each dearg,
San tarraing e na fèidh dhoibh,
Anns a h-uile ceum bhios garbh.

'S nan tàrladhainn as taigh-sheinnse ribh,
'S na bèin a bhith nur dòrn,
Cha bhi mi cleith na fìrinne,
Bu chinnteach mi à stòp;
Chuid nach tèid san fhùdar dheth;
'N lùireach thèid a h-òl,
'S bu bhòidheach na cuid duanagan,
Neo-bhuraidleanach mun bhòrd.

Bha aca airm cho ciatach,
'S a bha riamh ann arm Rìgh Seòrs',
Gur e siud bu mhiannach leibh,
Ach rinn iad di-chuimhn' mhòr,
Nuair dh' ionndraich iad na mìolchon,
Gum bu chianail bha na seòid,
Gun urad 's na coin-eunaich ac',
Dh' fheuchadh dhoibh na h-eòin.

Ach 's iad as fheàrr gu h-èalaidh,
Bha riamh anns an Roinn Eòrp',
Air an crataichean 's air an cliathaichean,
Air damh riabhaich cròic,
Mar bhi nach d' fhuaireadh mìolchoin,
Gun robh mhiann orm a dhol leò,
Bu docha leam na ceudan,
Gun d' fhuair mi trian na spors.

Ach b' eòlach air an fhiadhach mi,
A' falbh le mìolchoin sheang,
'S sheòlainn dhoibh na crìochan,
Anns an tric na reub mi mang,

Hunting Song of Coire Dho

Health to the artful men
who hunted on behalf of young James,
brown-haired Donald guided them to the hill
but they could not see for the mist.
And if they were to believe my account,
better for me not to boast
that before you reached Allt Eiginn
often the deer were wounded.

High time for me to rise
to go out and follow them,
since a major oversight has occurred
that the son of the hind has been killed.
Get every rope required
and tie the russet horse to the litter
so he can pull the deer for them
though each step will be hard.

If I were to join you in the tavern,
and with hides in your grasp,
I'll not hide the truth
for I'd be sure of a stoup:
the portion of it that will not toast the powder
will be consumed in a hauberk,
and lovely would be the ditties
that would flow round the table.

Their armament was as handsome
as any in King George's army,
that is what you wished for
but they completely forgot
about the misplaced hounds
and that made the heroes depressed
as they did not even have pointers
to show them where the fowl were.

They're the best stalkers
there ever were in Europe,
on their flanks and sides
after the brindled antlered stag.
Were it not for the lack of hunting-dogs
my wish would be to go with them,
I'd prefer this more than anything
for I got the third of sport.

But I knew the hunt well,
setting out with wiry hounds,
and I'd show them the grounds,
where I've often torn apart a fawn.

Bhon tha sibh fhèin cho inntinneach,
'S mi cinnteach as nur làimh,
Fiachaibh na h-Uillt Riabhach,
Agus iarraibh Glaic nan Allt.

Since you have such a keen interest,
and I'd be sure of your handiwork,
try out Uillt Riabhach,
and seek out Glaic nan Allt.

Fiachaibh Càrn a' Chaochain,
Agus bun an aonaich thall,
Diridh suas aig Fraoch Choire,
'S troimh Choille Dhaoine nall;
Fiachaibh an t-Allt Caorainn,
'S chan eil a h-aon diubh ann,
Mar glèidh sibh air bheag saoithreach iad,
Cleas nan daoine aig Fionn.

Try out Càrn a' Chaochain,
and the mountain base over,
climb up beside Fraoch Choire,
and through Coille Dhaoine there.
Try out Allt Caorainn
and not one of them will be evident
unless you round them up with a light touch,
which was the very skill of Fionn's band.

An Coire Sgreamhach 's cinnteach,
Gur e cuille frìth nam beann,
'S tha Coire Mheadhain sìnte ris,
'S bu toigh leam sgrìob thoirt ann;
Na Gleanna Fada 's fàsach e,
Tha math gu àrach mhang,
'S e 'n taigh mòr is bàthaich dhoibh,
'S cha cheanglar iad air an ceann.

Coire Sgreamhach for sure
is the mountain's deer-forest store,
and Coire Mheadhain at its flank,
I'd prefer to take a jaunt there
than the wilderness of Gleanna Fada,
a good place for rearing fawns,
a spacious house and barn for them
that will not tie them by their heads.

B'e Taigh Mòr na Seilg' e,
'S cha b'e 'n taigh dhan ainm bhith ann,
'S cha chluinnear braghadh urchair,
Bho dhà thulchainn gu dhà cheann;
Cha bhi coin dhan teirbheirt ann,
Na ni ach leumraich dhanns',
'S cha b'e Taigh na Seilg e,
'S b'e 'n t-seirbhe bhi dol ann.

A great hunting lodge—
and it is no imaginary house—
No report of noisy fire is heard,
between its two hummocks and ends.
Dogs will not be incited there,
rather they'll be skipping and dancing.
If it were not for this hunting lodge
no joy would it be to go there.

'S e Beallach Mòr an Amaisg',
Far a faicte bhos is thall,
Chite firichean 'us ghleann,
'S chuirinn geall 's gum buannaichean,
Mun fhuaran th' aig a ceann,
'S mun imir bheirinn sguaban dheth,
Nach buaint' air machair Ghall.

From Beallach Mòr an Amaisg',
here and there can be seen
deer-forests and glens,
and I'd wager that I could reap [a crop]
around the wellspring at its head
and around the cultivated patch I'd cut sheaves
that could never be reaped in the Lowlands.

'S tha Eileirg na dhà ann,
'S tha sgùr na dhà sa ghleann,
'S tha Coire 'n Lochain Uaine,
'S tha Leac nan Ruadhag ann,
'S gheibhte ri droch uair iad,
Ann an Allt a' Bhuilg gun call,
Cum ri Allt na h-Eirbh' iad,
'S tha 'n t-seilbh ud anns gach ball.

An Elrick or two are there,
a peak or two in the glen,
Corrie of Lochan Uaine,
and Leac nan Ruadhag are there,
their abode in inclement weather
is in Allt a' Bhuilg, with no loss,
they keep to Allt na h-Eiribh
and that possession is found in every limb.

Roi Toll a' Chreagaich b' àbhaist dhoibh,
Dhol le sràchd nan deann,
Aonach Sasann 's sràid aca,

When passing Toll a' Chreagaich
they speed at furious pace,
making that band go in rank

Th' aig a' phàirtidh dol nan rang,
'S nam biodh eagal nàmhaid orr',
'S e 'n ruith 's teàrnadh dhoibh,
'S tric a leag thu làdach orra,
Am bràighe Leac nam Meann.

passing Aonach Sasann in a row.
If frightened by the enemy,
running is what will save their skins,
in the uplands of Leac nam Meann,
where often you fired a volley at them.

An Coire Bodach Ghobhar,
Chuireadh othail iad nan still,
'S gheibhte 'n Coire Chnaimhean iad,
Nam meall a' dol an dìth;
Seas air Bac na Frìtheachd,
'S ma thig iad na bi clì,
'S an Coire Gorm b'e 'n àirigh e,
Gu gillean fhàgail sgìth.

In Coire Bodach Ghobhar
a tumult would make them go at full pelt
heading for Coire Chnaimhean
and squeezing past in droves.
Stand on Bac na Frìtheachd,
and if they come do not be wearied,
Coire Gorm is their sheiling,
which makes the gillies tired.

'S gheibhte air Lag na Còinnich,
An damh donn nach crom le spìd,
Tha 'n coire bh' aig Mac Mhuirich ann,
'Us eilid a' choin chrìon,
'S ma bhios tu 'g iarraidh aithghearr',
Gu gearradh os an cionn,
Tha drochaid air Toll Easaidh
'S cha chosg bonn am feasd don Rìgh.

A brown stag's head standing proud
is found in Lag na Coinnich,
Mac Mhuirich's corrie is there
and the hind to suit a small dog.
If you seek a shortcut,
to shorten the way up above them,
then a bridge crosses Toll Easaidh
that will never cost the King a coin.

'S tha Coire Gaoth an Ear ann,
'S tha pailteas ann do chùirn.
'S cha tèid a h-aon a mhilleadh,
Anns an innis th' air an cùl,
Tha coireachan Uillt Bheatha ann,
Gum feitheamh air gach taobh,
'S iad àiteachan cho brèagha,
'S chunnacas riamh le m' shùil.

Corrie Gaoth an Ear there
with many cairns,
where none of them are felled
in the meadow lying behind.
Corries of Uillt Bheatha
awaiting them on each side
are the most beautiful places
I've seen with mine eye.

'S tha coire ann a thug bàrr orra,
Tha math gu àrach laogh,
'S tha Creig nan Gobhar làmh ris,
'S bidh sràid ac' air a druim,
'S aig Càrn na Fiudhaich dh' fhàg iad sibh,
Seach bràighe 'Choire Chruim,
San Coire Chlach bhiodh sailleachan,
Aig fear mo ghràidh Iain Donn.

An even better corrie there
is good for rearing calves,
with Creig nan Gobhar nearby.
Strutting like a row on her ridge
they left you behind at Càrn na Fiudhaich,
past the brae of Coire Chruim,
Brown-haired John, my dear man,
is in Coire Chlach with deer-grease.

'S aig leacainn na Cloich Glaise,
Far an leigte coin air èill,
San doire dhamh bhiodh ranail,
Ann an tìm na dàireach fhèin,
'S e 'n aois a chum a-bhàn mi,
Gun bhi 'n àirde ri 'n ceum,
'S ann agam a tha farmad,
Ris an t-sealg a rinn sibh 'n-dè.

On the ledges of Cloich Glaise,
where dogs are unleashed,
a stag roars in the wood-thicket
at the very rutting time.
Old age is keeping me down,
leaving me unable to keep pace—
I am envious indeed
of your hunt yesterday.

Nur laigh sinn 's e bu sheanchas dhuinn,

When we laid down and told stories

Le dearbhadh agus cinnt,
Gu faighte 'san t-sean aimsir,
Na sealgairean ri frìth;
'S ge be dh' èisdeadh ri an còmhradh,
Cha bu stòraidhean gun bhrìgh,
San fhàrdach anns an d'èirich sinn,
Gum math a dh'èireas mi.

'S bha 'n Camshronach 's a chèile ann,
Nan caraid fheilidh chòir,
Thug ise drama fhèin dhuinn,
Gun fheum againn air còrr;
Mun dhealaich sinn ri chèile,
Bho nach beusa a bh' ann an ceòl,
'S bha òranan ga seinn againn,
Sa cur na Feinn air seòl.

'S rinn Dòmhnall focail shònraichte,
Chur an òrdugh air Cill Fhinn,
'S thèid Coire Dhodha shomhlachadh,
Còmhla ris na frìthrean;
Nan innsinn-sa mun àite sin,
Chuid àirighean a's ghlinn,
Cha chreidinn às na gasaidean,
Nach fheàrr na Cill Fhinn.

with surety and confidence
about the good old days
and how the hunters fared in the deer-forest.
Whoever overheard their conversation—
nor were their stories vain—
in the homestead where we were raised—
well will I arise.

Cameron and his wife—
generous, worthy friends—
she gave us all a dram,
and we had no need of more
before we took our leave.
As there was no bass notes in the music
we instead sang many a song
that praised the Fianna.

Donald related some apposite words
that put Killin in order,
and Coire Dhodha will be solemnised
along with her deer-forests.
If I told you about this place—
full of sheilings and glens—
then I believe these very tufts
are no better than those of Killin.

APPENDIX B: LEGAL DOCUMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO HUNTING IN THE HIGHLANDS

Tack between Colin Campbell of Glenorchy and Archibald Campbell, 1567

Tack by Colyne Campbell of Glenurquhay to Archibald Campbell of the four merkland of old extent of Auchalladour with the keeping house thereof, the lands of Candderry Byg and the two parts of Oillay with the keeping of the Forest of Bendoran with their pertinents, lying in the barony of Glenurquhay and sherrifdom of Ergile, for the space of xix years from the term of Whitsunday M V^{C} lx seven, for yearly payment for the said lands of Auchalladour of XX stones cheese, four wedders, eight bolls good and sufficient bear at the time of year used and wont, and for the said lands of Canderrybig of ten shillings money, and for the said two parts of Oillay of xlviiii s. money, together with the said Archibald Campbell's own leal and true service, as also that of his sutenants occupying the said lands; it being provided that the said Archibald Campbell shall have a sufficient man under him for keeping the said forest, and shall hold and nourish as many deer in it as it may reasonably sustain, no fault being in the forestership; and the said Colyne Campbell of Glenurquhay discharges the payment of the said vii bolls bear for the firest year of the tak, because the lands were then waste, and also of the whole grassum of the said lands during the said tack, amounting every five years in his rental to vii uviald ky, and that in respect of the said Archibald's good service. Signed at Balloch before witnesses Johne Campbell of Laweris, John M'Avyre, Sir Malcum M'Gillequohonil, and Andro Quhit, Notary, 15 April 1567.

BBT, 409-10

Commission of Forestry, by James, Earl of Atholl, to Alexander Mackintosh in Tirinie, 1606

We James Erle of Atholl, Lord Ballvaney & Innermeith, &^{c}, Haif maid, nominat, constituit and ordainit & be thir pnttīs makes, nominates, constituittis an ordainis oure Servitour Alex^{r} M^{c}Kintoishe in Tyrinie our Forster of the forrest of Beine Cromby and Forrest of Glentilt, for attending to oure Deir, and y^{t} no noylt, horse or lawland oxen pasture w^{t}in the said Forrestis. W^{t} Libertie to oure Forster to tak and apprehend q^{t}sumever horse or oxen sable fund pasturand therein, and to dispone thereupone the tua p^{t} of the saids guides to apperteine to us, and the third to oure Forster, being w^{t}in Aldandcheik in Glenfernat, the heid of Glentattanich, and Glenloquhsie and Forrest of Glentilt, and lykewayes y^{t} gif our Forster sall apprehend oney guides or geir w^{t}in the saids forrestis, waif or w^{t}out ane M^{r}, efter lawfully proclaiming the same to appertene to our forest, and y^{t} the fowlarr nor uthers beirurs of gunnies be seine travalande w^{t}in our saids forrestis under y^{e} pains sett downe in our pntis, y^{t} is escheting of his guides...punishing of his Body. And q^{t}soever y^{t} he be y^{t} sall happen to fuind oney Lame Deir w^{t}in our forrestis y^{t} he schawe the samyn to our Forster affor he tak the samyn away, wtherways y^{e} samyn being trayit y^{t} he sall Incurr and be in Danger of y^{e} Unlaw sett Downe anent y^{e} slaughter of deir. And ordains this our power to be pclaimit at y^{e} Kirkis of Muling, Kirkmichael and Blair, and y^{e} pnttis sall be to you sufficiend warrand.
Subscrivit w^{t} our hand at Dunkeld, y^{e} twelfth daye of Aprill, sex[teen] hundredth and sex yeirs.

CATF, i, Appendix, ix-x.

Copy of the Original Charter of Forreftry of *Mam lorn* in Favours of Sir *Duncan Campbell* of *Glenorchy* and his Son, Predeceffors to the Earl of *Breadalbane*, *anno* 1617

Jacobus Dei Gratia Rex Magnæ Britanniæ, Franciæ & Hiberniæ, fideique defenfor. Omnibus probis homnibus totius terræ fuæ claricis & laicis, falutem. Sciatis, Quai nos, cum avifamento chariffimi noftri confanguinei Joannis Comitis de Mar, Domini Erskine, &c. noftrom computorum rotulatoris magni regni noftri Scotiæ; ac prædilcti noftri familiaris confiliarii Domini Gedeonis Murray de Elibank militis, noftri computorum rolulatoris deputati; intelligentes prædilctum noftrum fildelem & obedientem fubitum Dominum Duncanum Campbell de Glenurquhay militem, fuofque predeceffores antiques & navitos affedatores forreftarios & cuftodes noftrarum fylvarum & forreftarum do Mamlorn, Berenakanfauchie, alias Bedaskerlie, Finglenbeg & Finglenmoir, cum omnibus earundem pendiculis & pertinentiis, jacen. infra Vicecomitatum noftrum de Perth, nobis noftrifque predecefforibus exritiffe, quumque coninuo in omnibus fideliter fuo munere & fervitio defunctos fuiffe; IDEO, ac prodiverfis aliis magnis refpectibus, & bonis confiderationibus nos moven. cum avifamento predict. fecimus, conftituimus & ordinavimus, tenoreque prefentis cartæ noftræ facimus, conftituimus & ordinamus præfatum Dominum Duncanum, durantibus omnibus fuæ vitæ diebus, ac prædilectum noftrum Colinum Campbell feodatarium de Glenurquhie ejus filium, fuofque hærædes mafculos & fucceffores noftros veros, legitimos, indubitatos, & irrevocabiles hereditarios, forreftarios & cuftodes omnium & fingularum prædictarum noftrarum forreftarum & sylvarum de Mamlorn, Berenkanfauche, alias Bendaskerlie, Finglenbeg, & Finglenmoir, infra integras earundem bondas, ac ipfis officium & cuftodiam earundem omnibus termporibus affuturis pro perpetuo prefentes damus & concedimus; Ac pro cuftodia & obfervatione hujufmodi, nos, cum avifamento prædict. pro nobis & fuccefforibus noftris, affiganvimus, dedimus & difpofuimus, tenoreque prefentis chartæ noftræ damus, affignamus & difpanimus præfato Domino Duncano, durante vita fua, & poft ejus deceffum, præfato Colino ejus filio, fuifque herdibus mafculis & fuccefforibus, integras arbores, vulgo, *The haill Fallin Woode*, cum lie bark & beuche integrarum arborum quæ fcindi feu cadere infra prædictas fylvas & forreftas, & integras earundem bondas contigerint, omnibus temporibus affuturis. Ac volumes & concedimus, ac pro nobis noftrifque fuccefforibus decernimus & ordinamus, quod unica fafina nunc per præfatum Dominum Duncanum in vitali redditu, ac per præfatum Colinum ejus filium in feodo & hereditate, ac omnibus temporibus affuturis per heredes mafculos & fucceffores dicti Colini fuper aliquam partem fundi prædict. fylvarum & foreftarum capienda, ftabit & ipfis erit fufficiens fafina pro antedict. officio & cuftodia dict. fylvarum & forreftarum, ac omnibus ejufdem privilegiis; fuper quo nos, pro nobis & fuccefforibus noftris difpenfavimus, ac per prefentis cartæ noftræ tenorem, pro nunc & in perpetuum difpenfamus, Tenen. & Haben. totum & integrum predictum officium forreftariæ & cuftodiæ omnium & fingularum prædict. fylvarum & forreftarum, infra integras earundem bondas, cum antedictis integris arboribus, volgu lie *Fallin wode*, cum lie Bark & Beuche earundem, ac cum omnibus & fingulis cafualitatibus, commoditatibus, proficuis & privilegiis quibufcumque ad hujufmodi fpectan. & pertinen. præfato Domino Duncano, in vitali redditu, pro omnibus fuæ vitæ diebus, nec non dicto Colino Campbel ejus filio, fuifque heredibus mafculis, et fuccefforibus predictis hereditary de nobis, & fuccefforibus noftris in feod. et hereditate in perpetuum, Cum fpeciale & plena poteftate dicto Domino

Duncano, durante vita fua, & poft ejus deceffum dicto Colino ejus filio fuifque heredibus mafculis & fuccefforibus, forreftarum, curias infra predictas filvas & forreftas, ac fingulas earundem bondas, feu infra aliquam earundem partem, affigendi, inchoandi, affirmandi, tenendi, & quoties opus fuerit continuandi, ac in dictis curiis acta & ftatuta predict. filvarum & amerchiamenta contradict. acta & ftatuta tranfgreffores faciendi & conftituendi, nec non ad dictas curias affines proxime adjacentes, ac omnes alios quorum intereft citandi & vocandi, ac dictas penas & amerchiamenta dict. curiarum levandi & intromittend. & eafdem ad fuos proprios ufus applicandi & fi neceffe fuerit pro eifem namandi & diftringendi; ac clericos, ferjandos, ad judicatores, ac omnes alios officiarios & curiæ membra neceffaria faciendi, creandi & jurare caufandi; Nec non cum fpeciale poteftare dicto Domino Duncano & Colino ejus filio fuifque heredibus mafculis & fuccefforibus quamcunque perfonam feu perfonas que venare feu frequentare infra predictas filvas & forreftas, aut infra aliquam partem earundem bondarum per diem feu noctem invenire contigerint, aut gerents, fueu jaculantes, cum machinis arcubus, feu quibufcunque aliis armis aut ingeniis, que dict. filvis & forreftis, feu cervis aut damis vulgo lie *Deir or Rae*, ifra eafem feu aliquam earundem partem, ledi feu Gravari poterint inquirnedi, capiendi, apprehendendi, incarcerandi & puniendi, nec non efcætandi, & intromittendi, cum omnibus jumentis, beftiis, feu animalibus, equis, obvibus, bovibus, capris, feu porcus que reperta intra dictas filvas feu forreftas, aut intra aliquam partem earundem bondarum, ullo tempore futuro paftruan. feurint, & ad fuos proprios ufus applicandi, & generlatier omnia alia & fingula faciendi & ecercendi, que ad dictum hereditarium officium forreftaria filvarum feu forreftarum, de jure, feu regni noftri confuetudine dignofcuntur pertinere, fimile modo, & adeo libere in omnibus refpectibus ficuti aliquis alius hereditarius forreftarius, & cuftos filvarum feu forreftarum infra regnum noftrum facit, feu facere poterit, cum libero intriotu & exitu, ac cum omnibus aliis & fingulis libertatibus, commoditatibus, proficuis, afiamentis, & juftis fuis pertinen. quibufcumque ad predict. officium fpectan. feu jufte fpectare valen. quomodolibet in futurum libere, quiete, plenary, integer, honorifice, bene & in pace, & abfque ulla revocatione, contradictione, impedimento aut obftracula quocunque. REDDENDO inde annuatim dictus Dominus Duncanus, durante vita fua, & poft ejus deceffum dictus Colinus fuifque heredes mafculi & fuccefores nobis & fuccefforibus noftris unum denarium ufualis montete regni noftre Scotiæ, in dei fefti Penthecoftes, supre folo dictarum filvarum & forreftarum, nominee albe firme, fi petatur; Nec non obfervando & cuftodiendo antedict. filvas & forreftas, ac noftros propios cervos vulgo lie deir, infra eafdem ad noftros noftrorumque fuccefforum proprios ufus tantum. In cujus rei teftimonium, huic prefenti cartæ noftræ magnum figillum noftrum apponi precipimus, Teftibus predilectis noftris confanguineis & confiliariis *Jacobo* Marchione de *Hamiltoun*, Comite *Arran*, Domino *Evan*, &c. *Georgio* Marifchalli Comite, Domino *Keith*, &c. regni noftri Marifchallo, *Alexandro* Comite de *Dunfurmline*, Domino *Fyvie* & *Urquhart*, &c. cancellario noftro; *Thomas* Domino *Binning* noftro fecretario; dilectis noftris familiaribus confiliariis Domino *Ricardo Cockburn* juniore de *Clerkington*, noftri fecrecti figilli cuftode, *Georgio Hay* de *Netherliff*, noftrorum rotulorum regiftri ac confilii clerico, *Joanne Cockburn* de *Ormiftoun*, noftre jufticiare clerico, & *Joanne Scot* de *Scottiftarbet*, noftre cancellarie directore, militibus. Apud *Striveling*. vigefismo fecundo menfis *Julii*, Anno Domini Millefimo fexentefimo decimo feptimo regnorumque noftrorum annis quinquagefimo & decimo quinto.

Written to the Great-Seal, 10th Septr. 1617
Subfcribitur, AL. WYLIE,
Sealed at Edinburgh, 10. Sept. 1617

Subfcribitur, JA. RAITH.
The Seal is accordingly appended.

NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/59/3/5

Translation of a Charter under the Great Seal, in Favours of Sir* Duncan Campbell of Glenorchie *in Life-rent, and* Colin *his Son in fee, Predeceffors of the Earl of* Breadalbane, *and their Heirs Males, of heretable Keeping of the Woods and Foreft of* Mamlorn, *&c.
Anno 1617.

James, by the Grace of God, King of *Great Britain*, *France* and *Ireland*, Defender of the Faith; to all and fundry, whom if effiers, to whofe Knowledge, thefe Prefents fhall come, Greeting. Whereas we by the Advice of our moft beloved Coufin *John* Earl of *Mar*, Lord *Erskine*, &c. Treafurer and Comptroller General of our antient Kingdom of *Scotland*, and of our well beloved Counfellor *Sir Gideon Murray*, of *Elibank*, Knight, our Treafurer and Comptroller Depute, Underftanding that our well-beloved faithful and obedient Subject Sir *Duncan Campbell* of *Glenorchy*, and his Predeceffors, have been antient and kindly Tackfmen, Forefters and Keepers of our Woods and Foreft of *Mamlorn*, *Berenakaufauch* alias *Benaskerly*, *Finglenbeg* and *Finglenmoir*, with their haill Pendicles and Pertinents, lying within our Shire of *Perth*, to us and our Predeceffors, in which they demeaned themfelves with great Honour and Truft; Therefore, and for divers other great Refpects and valuable Confiderations moving us; Wit ye us to have made, conftifute and ordain'd, and by the Tenor of this our prefent Charter, make, confitute and ordain the faid Sir *Duncan*, during all the Days of his Life-time, and after his Deceafe, our beloved *Colin Campbell* Fiar of *Glenorchy*, his Son, and their Heirs Male and Successors, our very lawful, undoubted and irrevocable heretable Forefters and Keepers, of all and fundry our faid Foreft and Woods of *Mamlorn*, *Berenakaufauch*, alias *Bendaskerly*, *Finglenbeg* and *Finglenmoir*, within the haill Bounds thereof; and give and grant unto them, by thefe Prefents, the Cuftody and Keeping therof in all Time coming for ever; and for the keeping and Prefervation of the Premifes, we, with Confent forefaid, for us and our Succeffors have affigned, granted and difponed, and, by the Tenor of this oru prefent Charter, give, affign and difpone to the said Sir *Duncan*, during his Life-time, and after his Deceafe, to the faid *Colin* his Son, and his Heirs Males and Succeffors, the whole Trees, which may happen to be cut, or to fall within the said Woods and Foreft, and haill Bounds thereof in all Time coming; and we will and grant, and, for us and our Succeffors, decern and ordain, That a Safine be taken now by the faid Sir *Duncan* in Life-rent, and by the faid *Colin* his Son in Fee and Heritage, and in all Time coming, by their Heirs Male and Succeffors, upon any Part of the Lands of the faid Wood and Foreft fhall ftand, and be to them a fufficient Safine for the faid Office and keeping of the faid Woods, Foreft and haill Privileges thereof; where anent we, for us and our Succeffors have difpenfed, and, by the Tenor of this our prefent Charter, difpenfe for now and ever; TO BE HOLDEN, and for to hold all and haill the aforefaid Office of Foreftry, and keeping of all an fundry the faid Woods and Foreft within the haill Bounds thereof, with the forefaid whole Trees, commonly called fallen Wood, with the Bark and Bough of the famen, together will all and fundry Cafualties, Commodities, Profits and Privileges whatfoever, pertaining or belonging thereto, to the faid Sir *Duncan* in Life-rent, during all the Days of his Life-time, and to the faid *Colin* his Son, and with fpecial and exprefs Power to the faid Sir *Duncan*, during his Life-time, and, after his Deceafe, to the faid *Colin* his Son, and his Heirs Male and Succeffors, of fixing, fineing and

holding Courts of Foreftry, within the said Woods and Foreft, and haill Bounds thereof, or within any Part of the fame, and of continuing the fame as oft as needful, and in the faid Courts to make Acts and Statutes for the Preservation of the faid Woods and Foreft, and to inflict Punifhments and Fines upon the Tranfgreffors of the said Acts and Statutes, as alfo to cite and call to the faid Courts, the next Neighbours, and all others having Intereft, and to levy and intromit with the faid Fines of Court, and to apply the fame to their own proper Ufe, and, if needful, to poind and diftrain for the fame, and to create Clerks, Serjeants, Adjudgers, and other neceffary Members of Court, and to adminfrate Oaths to them; as alfo with exprefs Power to the said Sir *Duncan*, and *Colin* his Son, and their Heirs Male, to fearch for, take, apprehend, incarcerate and punifh all and every Perfon and Perfons they may happen to find hunting or frequenting the faid Woods or Foreft, or within any Part of the Bounds thereof, either by Night or by Day, or bearing or ufing Bows, or any other Arms or Machines, whereby they may hurt or kill either Deer or Rae within the said Foreft, or any Part thereof, as alfo to efcheat and intromit with all young Cattle or Yearolds, Horfe, Sheep, Goat, Cows or Swine, which may be found pafturing within the faid Woods or Foreft, or within any Part of the Bounds thereof in any Time coming, and to apply them to their own proper Ufe, and generally to do and perform every other Thing, which, by the Foreft Laws, or thefe of our Kingdom, is known to pertain to the faid hertable Office of Foreftry, in the fame Manner, and as freely in all Refpects, as any other hertable Forefter and Keeper of Woods and Forefts within our Kingdom does, or may do, with free Ifh and Entry, and with all and fundry other Liberties, Commodities, Profits, Services and righteous Pertinents whatfoever pertaining or juftly belonging thereto, any manner of way in Time coming, freely, quietly, well and in Peace, without any Revocation, Contradiction, Impediment or Obftacle whatfoever. PAYING THEREFORE Yearly, the faid Sir *Duncan*, during his Life, and after his Deceafe, the faid *Colin* and his Heirs Male and Succeffors, to us and our Succeffors, a Penny *Scots* Money, upon the Feaft and Term of *Whitfunday*, upon the Ground of the faid Woods and Foreft, in Name of Blanch Farm, if asked allenarly, and preferving and keeping the faid Woods and Foreft with the Deer within the fame, to the proper Ufe of us and our Succeffors allenarly. In Teftimony whereof we have caufed our Great Seal to be hereunto appended before thefe Witneffes, our well-beloved Coufins and Counfellors, *James* Marquifs of *Hamilton*, Earl of *Arran*, Lord *Evan*, &c. *George* Earl of *Marifhal*, Lord *Keith*, &c. Marifchal of our Kingdom, *Alexander* Earl of *Dumfermling*, Lord *Fyvie* and *Urquhart*, &c. our High Chancellor; *Thomas* Lord *Binning*, our Secretary of State; our beloved Counfellors Sir *Richard Cockburn*, Younger, of *Clerkington*, Keeper of our Privy-Seal; *George Hay* of *Netherliff*, our Clerk Regifter; *John Cockburn* of *Ormifton*, our Juftice-Clerk, and *John Scot* of *Scotftarbet*, Director of our Chancellary Knights; at *Stirling*, the 22d Day of *July*, 1617, and our Reigns the 50 and 15 Years.

Written to the Great-Seal, 10*th* Sept. 1617
Subfcribitur, AL. WYLIE.
Sealed at Edinburgh, 10*th* Sept. 1617
Subfcribitur, JA. RAITH.
The Seal is accordingly appended.

NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/59/3/2

Minute of contract between Colin Earl of Seaforth, Sir Donald Macdonald of Sleat, John MacLeod of Dunvegan, John MacRanald of Ylandtirum, Sir Lauchlan Mackinnon of Strathardell, and Alexander MacLeod or MacGillichallum of Rasa, for the presevation of deer and roe on their respective estates, and the punishment of trespassers, 1628

At Duntulme and respective the nynetene day of September the yeir of God I^{M} VI^{c} tuentie aucht yeiris. It is condiscendit, contractit, finallie and mutuallie agreit and endit betuixt the honnorabill pairties underwrittin, Thay ar to say, Coline Erle of Seafort, Sir Donald M^{c}Donald of Sleat knicht, Johne M^{c}cleud of Dunveggane, Johne M^{c}rannald of Ylandtirum, Sir Lauchlane M^{c}finyeane of Strathardell knicht and Alexander M^{c}Gillichallum of Rasa on the ane and uther pairtis, In maner following; That is to say forsamekill as be divers and sundrie gude actis of parliament maid be his Majesties predicessouris Kingis of Scotland of worthie memory quhairin shuitting with gunnis, bowis and houndis ar absolutlie forbiddin for slaying and shuitting of deir and rae and uther beastis pasturand within his Majesteis boundis of Scotland as at mair lenth is contenit in the saidis actis of Parliamentis; For keping and fulfilling quhairof and for preserving and keeping deir and raes within everie ane of the honorabill pairteis forrestis, iles and boundis alyve and for keping gude societie and nighborheid amangis thame; Witt ye that the saidis honnorabill paireis ar heirby becum bund and obleist, lykeas be the tennour heirof they faithfullie bind and obleis thame ilk ane of thame for their awne pairtis and takand the full burdene in and upoun thame respective for thair haill kinmen, tennentis and cuntriemen within everie ane of thair boundis and iles, that thay nor nather of thame, thair kin, freendis, mentennentis nor countriemen sall nowayes heireafter in tyme comeing presume nor tak upoun hand to hunt with doggis, to slay with hagbute or bow any hart, hynd, deir, rae, or dae or any uther beastis within of the saidis honorabill pairteis forrestis ather in the continent mayne or isle pertening to ather of the saidis honnorabill pairteis but speciall licence had and obtenit in write of the superior to the forrester of the forrest; and quhatsomevir persone gentleman tennent of commoun countreman that presummis heireafter to hunt with dogis, shute with gunnes or bow only deir or rae in ather of the foirsaidis honnorabill pairteis forrestis without the said licence purchest at the said superiouris handis, the offender gentill [man] breaker of this contract and condiscending, sall heirby be bund and obleist to pey and delyver to the honnorabill pairtie owner of the forrest, for the first fault the sowme of one hundreth merkis money of this realmeand the hagbute or bow to be tane fra him and to be deliverit to the superiour of the forrest in quhais boundis forrestis or iles the sayme wrong and contempt beis committit and done and toties quoties for everie brek of this present contract and condiscending; the tennent to be heirby siclyk bund and obleist to pey and delyver to the pairtie owner of the forrest, for the first fault the sowme of fourtie pundis money and the hagbute to the superiour of the forrest and toties quoties for everie brek of this present contract; and quhatsoevir commoun man or any uther stragling persone that beis fund carying ane hagbute or bow throw ony of the saidis honnorabill pairties thair forrestis for slaying deir or rae and that he be nocht solvendo nor worthie the unlaw to be delyverit to the superiour of the forrest quhair he salhappin to be fund and his bodie punished according as pleisis the superiour of the forrest: Lyke as it condiscendit be the saidis honnorabill pairties in respect that mony witnessis dois nocht haunt nor travell throw the saidis forrestis be ressone the same is far distant and spatious frome thame, that ane witnes sable sufficient probatioun aganis quhatsomever persone that beis fund in maner forsaid in ather of the saidis honnorabill pairties forrestis with hagbute bow or hound and the pairtie challenger

and dilater to have for his panes and rewarde the third pairt of the offenderis fyne and the hagbut to the superiour: Siclyk the foirsaidis honnorabill pairteis ar heirby bindis and obleissis thame to deliver the transgressour and offender to the effect the partie wrongeit and offendit may censure and fyne him according to the gravitie of his contempt and fault after tryall tame thairof be famous and honest men; and [that] the pairtie offendar be presentit to the said superiour offendit within fyftene day efter the wrong be committit under the pane of one hundreth pundis money foirsaid to be payit to the pairtie wrongeit and offendit be the superiour of him who committis the wrong and contempt, of his present contract; And what the saidis famous and honest men efter triall descernis the transgressor for his fyne and contempt, his superior salbe heirby bund and obleist to delyver to the honourabill pairtie wronged and offendit his readiest gudes and geir ay and quhill the honourabill pairtie wrongeit and offendit be compleitlie payit of the offendaris fyne under the lyke pane of ane hundreth pundis toties quoties: and finallie it is heirby speciallie condiscendit with consent of the saidis honorabill pairties abone writtin that nane or ather of thair cuntriemen or people sall tak thair courss be boatiis ather to the lochs or harboreis within the forrestis of Lewis and Heriess exceptand the Loches of Herisole in Lewis perteining to the said John M^{c}cleud; Lochmadie, Lochewot, Lochm^{c}faill and Kilrona in Uist pertening to the said Sir Donald M^{c}donald incais they be dung and distrest be storme weather; And incais thay be dung and distrest be stome weather in other uther loches within the Islandis of Lewis and Hereiss, It is heirby condescendit that the kippage of everie bote and salhappin to cum in with thair boittes to any of the loche abonewrittin (except befoir exceptit) with hagbuttis bowis or dog sall not pass nor travell fra thair boittis ane pair of buttis; And gif ony beis fund with gun, bow or dog to exceid the saidis boundis, heirby salbe haldin as ane offendar and contempnar of this present contract and condiscending, and to be punished and fyned as it abonewrittin; And ordanis this present minute of contract be insert and registrat in the buikis of counsall and sessioun to beir the strenth of ane decreit of the lordis thairof, that letteris and executoriallis of poinding and horning or simple charge of ten dayis allanerlie may heirupon be direct and to that effect makis and constitutis Maisteris Alexander Cummyng and Mathow Forsyth thair procuratouris, Promittentes de rato: In witnes quhairof writtin be Johne Ross notar the saidis honarbill pairteis hes subscrivit this present minute of contract day, moneth, place and yeir foisaid, Befoir thir winessis Johne M^{c}keinzie of Lochshin, William M^{c}cleud of Talisker, Johne M^{c}keinzie of Fairburne, John Nicolsone and Johne Ross notaris. Sic subscribitur

Seafort
Sir Donald M^{c}Donald of Sleat
M^{c}cloid of Dunveggane
M^{c}rannald
Alexr. M^{c}gillichallum
Lochshin
Williame M^{c}claud witnes
Johne Nicolsone witnes
Johne M^{c}keinzie witnes
Johne Ross notar witnes

NAS, Register of Deeds, RD1/408, no. 389. Contract recorded 3rd November 1628. Transcription printed in *CRA*, 190-93

Contract between Earl of Seaforth, Simon Lord Fraser of Lovat, Hector Monro of Clynes, John Chisholm of Comer, John Grant of Glenmoriston, and John Bayne of Tulloch, and others of their respective names, for the preservation of the deer and roe on their several estates, and the punishment of trespassers, 1628.

At the yeir of God I^{M} VI^{c} tuentie [aucht] yeiris; It is appointit contractit and finallie endit betuix the noble and honnorabill pairties following, thay are to say, ane noble and potent lord Colin Erle of Seyfort, Lord of Kintaill and Lewis and with him his honnorabill freindis following vix.—Johne M^{c}Keinzie of Coygach, George M^{c}Keinzie of Kildyn, M^{r} Coline M^{c}Keinzie of Kynnok, M^{r} Alex^{r} M^{c}Keinzie of Kilcowie, Alex^{r} M^{c}Keinzie of Coull and Johne M^{c}Keinzie of Fairburne for thameselffis, and the said nobill lord takand upoun him the full burdene for the remanent his kin and freindis and for his Lordshippis men-tennentis and servandis and his foirnamit kinsmen takand upoun thame the full burdene ilk ane respectivé for their awne men-tennetis and servandis on the first pairt; and ane noble and potent lord Symon Lord Fraser of Lovatt, Hew maister of Lovatt his eldest laufull son and appeirand air and with thame thair honnorabill freindis efternamit viz. Thomas Fraser of Strechin, Thomas Fraser of Strowie, Hucheoun Fraser of Kilbokie, and Hucheoun Fraser of Balladrum for thameselffis, and the said noble lord andhis sone takand on thame the full burdene for the remanent thair kin and freindis and for thair men-tennentis and servandis and thair foirnamit kinsmen takand upoun thame the full burdene ilk ane respective for thair awn men-tennentis and servandis on the second pairt; and Hector Monro of Clynes, Robert Monro of Assin for thameselffis and takand on thame the full burdene for Hector Monro of Pitfure and George Munro of Ardchernich and remanent tennentis of the landis of Innerlavell on the third pairt; and John Chisholme of Comer and Alexander Chisholme his eldest laufull sone and apperhand air for thamselffis and takand upoun thame the full burdene for thair brether, men-tennentis and servandis on the fourth pairt; and Johne Grant of Glen Moreiston and Patrik Grant his eldest sone and apperhand air for thameselffs and takand the full burdene for thair men-tennentis and servandis on the fyft pairt; and Johne Bayne of Tulloch, Ronnald Bayne and Kenneth Bayne his brether, for thameselffis and takand on thame the full burdene for the remanent thair brether, men-tennentis and servandis on the sixt part; In manner and effect as efter followis: that is to say forsamekill as thair is divers and sindrie actis of paliament maid to bour soverane lordis progenitouris of worthie memorie anent the steillaris of deir, dae, and rae quhilk is appointit to be punished as thift and anent shuitteris at thame quhilk is appointit to be punished with death and eschiet of thair gudes movable; Quhilkis actis ar and hes bene daylie contravenit thir many yeiris bigane be ressoun of the impunitie of the offendaris, quhairby the wonted store of deir, dae and rae, in speciall within the boundis pertening to the foirsaidis perteis thairof in tyme comeing the saidis sex pairteis ilk ane of thame for thameselffis and takand on thame the burdingis respective foirsaidis be thir presentis bindis and obleissis thame and thair airis ilkane to utheris respective, that they nor nane of thame thair men-tennentis nor servandis sall under quhatsomever cullour or pretext steill nor convoy away be nicht nor be day any deir, dae or rae fedand within the boundis of any of thair forrestis thairof to ony uther forrest, nather yit sall hunt nor slay the said deir dae or rae be dogges gun nor bow outwith the forrest pertening properlie to thameselffis nor transport nor carie gunnis in hillis nor forrest for that effect in na tyme heirefter fra the dait heirof without the speciall licence of the awner of the forrest first had and obtenit thairto in write; under the pane following viz. of ane hundreth merkis money ilk persone of the foirsaidis

pairteis contracteris and of fourtie pundis ilk ane of thair brether, men-tennetis and servandis that sall happin to contravene, as ane liquidat fyen presentlie modefeit be the saidis haill pairteis to be payit be ilk contravenar to the persone or personis within quhais boundis and forrest the contravention salbe committit toties quoties the same sall happin and that within the space of fiftene dayis efter the proving of ilk contravention in presens of the bailleis to be nominat and appointit be the pairtie contravenar and the pairtie contravenit upoun in ane oppin court be haldin within the boundis of the pairtie contravenaris or ather of the pairteis thameselffis refuissis to compeir befoir the saidis bailleis or that the baillie of the pairtie contravenar siclyk refuissis to compeir to hald court and heir probation led; In that cais is salbe committit to ressave witnessis and pronoune decreit alsweill as gif the uther baillie war present; Quhilk decreit being pronuncit, the saidis pairteis ilk ane for thair awne pairtis respective obleissis thame to satisfie and fulfill to otheris but ony exception and to caus thair brether, men tennentis cand servandis to satisfie thair fynes toties quoties or ellis to present thame ilkane to otheris or to our soverane lordis justice at the pairtie offendit thair will and opotioun to underly the law for that effect; Consenting for the mair securitie that thir presentis be insert and registrat in the buikis of counsall and sessioun, and that ane decreit of the Lords thairof be heirto interponit and that lettres and executoriallis of horning and utheris neidfull, the ane but prejudice of the uther heirupon be direct and the horning incais thairof to pass upoun a simple charge of ten dayis onlie: and for that effect constitutis Maisteris Alexander Cummyng procuratouris promittentes de rato: In witnes quhairof written be Alexander Ross servitour to William Lawder commisser with thairhandis day, yeir and place foirsaidis, befoir thir witnessis Hucheane Ross of Kilraock, James Fraser of Popachie, Gawin Dumbar, Hew M^{c}Gill and Alexander Dumbar, Reidar at Croy. Sic subscribitur

Seafort
Lovatt
H. M. Lovatt
Thomas Fraser of Strwy
John Grant of Glenmorestoun
Patrik Grant apperand Glenmoreistoun
Johne Chisholme of Comir
Alexr. Chisholme apperand of Comir
Hucheun Ross witnes
Gawin Dumbar witnes
Hew Makgill, witnes
Alex. Dumbar witnes
James Fraser witnes
Alex. Dumbar witnes to Glenmoreistoun and his sones subscriptioun
W^{am} Finlaysone witnes to Thomas Fraser of Strwy his subscriptioun
Mr W^{am} McKenzie witnes to the Chisholmes subscriptioun
W. Fraser of Drumcharden

NAS, Register of Deeds, RD1/408, no. 388. Contract recorded 3rd November 1628. Transcription printed in *CRA*, 193-195

Mutual obligation betwixt the Marquis of Huntly and the Earls of Mar and the Atholl for preserving the deer and game within their Forests, 1630.

At Strabogie, Scone, and Alloway, the xv, xxiii, and xxv days of September respective, the zeir of God j^{m} cj^{c} threttie and ane zeires, It is appoynitt, contractit, and finalie aggreit, betuix the honorable pairties underwretin, they ar to say, ane noble and michtie Maqueis, George Marques of Huntlie, and George Erle of Enzie, Lord Gordoun, his sone, on the ane pairt; ane noble and potent Earle, Johne Earle of Mar, and Johnne Lord Erskene, his sone, on the second pairt; and ane noble and potent Earle, John Earle of Atholl, on the third pairt; in maner, forme, and effect as eftir followes, That is to say, The saidis noblemen, haifing conderatioun that the forrestis of Badzenocht, Mar, and Atholl, pertenyng to thame respective, hes bene in tymes bygane greatumlie waisted and abused, be Fourlares and Shuteares with gunnes, sua that bayth deir and wyld foule ar becum verye scarse, and far decayd in the number and abundance that hes bene of ald within the saidis forrestis, throw the neglect of the kepares thairof, and impunitie of theis that destroyes the same; Thaifoir, and for remeid thairof, and for the bettir preservation of the saidis forrestis, deare, wyld foule within the same in tyme cumming, It is aggreit, and condiscendit unto, be the saidis noblemen, that so oft as it sall happin ony of thair fostares and keipares of the saidis forrestis to try or apprehend ane uther of the said noble menis servandis, or men, or ony uther persoun quhom they may command, within the boundes of the saidis forrestis, haifing with thame, dog, nett, or gunne, That the challenger sall dilait and give up his name to the nobleman, his Maistir, quha sall give and delyver the dogg, nett, or gunne to the challenger, and thair with sall caus the pairtie challengit sa, tried, or apprehendit, to pay to the said challenger the soume of Tuentie pundis money, toties quoties, and gif ony of the forstares and keipares of the saidis forrestis apprehend any uther of the saidis noblemenis servandis or men within the boundis of the saidis forrestis, wanting dog, net or gunne, or haifing thame, gif they hyd the same, and tell not ane lauchfull erand or cause for the quhilk he salbe fund within the saidis forrestis, he being dilaitit to his maister sall caus him pay to the pairtie challenger siclyk the soume of tuentie pundis, toties quoties, and heirto the saidis noblemen bindis and obleissis thame ilk ane to utheris for observatioun of the premissis upoun honour and thair credite.

In witnes of the quhilk thing all the saidis noblemen hes subscryvit thir presentis with thair handis, wretin be James Keir in Stirling, dayes, zeir and places rescpective foirsaidis, befoir thir witnessis, M^{r} William Paipe, M^{r} James Henrie, Sir Alexander Gordoun of Cluny, George Lesslie, John Mestertoun, John Arnott, and Archibald Doune.

M^{r} Will. Paip, witnes to the Merquis of Huntlie. HUNTLIE.
M^{r} J. Hendrie, witnes to the Merquis of Huntlie.
J. MAR.
Cluny, witnes to the Earles of Atholle, Enzie and to the L^{d} Erskine. ATHOLL.
George Leslie, witnes siclyke.
Johne Maistertoune, witnes to the Erl of Mar.
Jo. Arnote, witnes sicklyk. G. GORDON.
A. Done, witnes, sicklyk. J. ERSKINE.

CATF, i, 99-100. Original Atholl Muniments, NRAS234/29/1/1/33.

Contract between Sir Colin Campbell of Glenorchy and Patrick Gow, 1632

Sir Coline Campbell of Glenurquhay knight sets to Patrick Gow, for the lifetime of the shortest liver of the two, the two merkland of Barrechastellan; and the said Patrick Gow obliges himself to pay therefor yearly three punds money at the usual terms, and to give sufficient presents twice a-year, carriages, hosting, hunting, stenting, and other usual services, to make his principal residence on the saidis lands, to keep the woods undestroyed, and to till none of the untilled ground, to relieve the said Sir Coline of all taxations to be imposed thereon by kirk or king during the said tack, and also to mend all the iron and broken work of the Castle of Glenurquhay, with the plough irons of Kinchrekan and mill thereof, and also to work the whole work of the country, as he shall be employed by the said Sir Coline his tenants and servants dwelling upon the saidis lands, for the usual payment; and not to fall in trouble with any of his neighbours, in blood or otherwise, also to pay every five years two new calved kye, or forty pounds in name of grassum. Singed at Finlary, 20th March 1632.

BBT, 423.

At Edinburgh, 22 March 1634, King Charles I. confirmed a charter by John, Earl of Mar, Lord Erskine and Garioch, of certain lands in Glengairn to Sir Alexander Irvine of Drum, dated at Edinburgh Castle 6 and 13 July 1633.

Apud Edinburgum, 22 Mar. [A.D. 1634]

REX,—cum consensus &c. (11. 18.),—confirmavit cartam sub hac forma;—[To ALL &c., Johnne earle of Mar lord Erskyne and Gareoche, with consent of Johnne lord Erskyne our eldest sone and appeirand air,—forsameikill as, be contract madi betuixt ws and Sir ALEXANDER IRVING of Drum knicht, we are bund to infeft the said Alex. in the landis eftermentioned,—thairfor witt ye ws to have sauld and to fewferme lattin to the said Alex., his airis and assigneyis, but reversioun,—the toun and landis of Richarkarie, with the pendicles thairof callit Torrene and Tonnafrae, extending to half ane davache or 8 oxingaitt of land, with mylness &c., within the parochin of Glengairdyne, earledome of Mar and schirrefdome of Aberdeine; togither with scheillingis, grissingis and pasturages usit and won in Glashell and Torribeg *alias* Ryngles; reservand peat-leave of the mosis of the saidis landis to the tenentis of Rannabrocht, Invereinzie and Ardochie; and to ws the haill growand tries of the saidis landis present and to come:—TO BE HALDIN of ws, our airis maill and successouris quhatsomever; with hunting, except the hunting of deir and rae; reservand to ws yron wre and all other kynd of minerallis: PAYAND yeirlie to ws at our present duelling hous in the Brae of Mar callit the castell of Kindrochit 25 merkis; and doubleing the same soume the first yeir of the entrie of ilk heir; and als payand yeirile at the said castell 6 pultrie foulis, and wining and laying in yeirlie 10 loadis of peattis to the said castell befor the feist of Lambas, and the half of ane long carriadge of ane horse yeirile not exceeding the distance of thriescoir mylles fra the said castell as the samyne sall be requyrit; and if thrie termes or mae rin togither unpayit, the said Sir Alex. and his foirsaidis sall be haldin to double the samyne fewmaill sua oft as they sall commit the said failyie; lykas they sall be haldin to compeir yeirlie be themselffis or be thair procuratouris in the thrie head courtis, quhen it sall happin ws, our said sonne or our foirsaidis in our awin proper persounes to be present within the saidis boundis, the said Sir Alex. &c. being alwayes laufullie warnit to the saidis other courtis; as lykwayes if wponn necessary occasiounes for repressing scorneris (sorneris?) or oppressouris or for keeping guid ordour in the cuintrie or yitt for tryell

of crymes, offences or bluidis or for contravening the lawis or actis of our courtis is sall happin any court to be sett quhair thair sall be ane sufficient number of persouns of inquest to pass wponn assyse, in that caice the said Sir Alex. and his foirsaidis sall be haldin to cause their tenentis gif thair personall compeirance in the saidis courtis, they being lawfullie warnit; and the said Sir Alex. and the saidis tenentis sall be obleist to observe the actis of our courtis anent sick as sall hunt deir or rae within the saidis boundis without our licence, or anent sic as sall happin to steill or putt away haulkis or haulk-nestis within the saidis boundis of Mar, or anent the cutteris, carrieris, distroyeris, selleris or away putteris of our wodis, under the paines that sall be sett doun in the said actis, to witt, for hunting or slaying of deir and rae, resetting of slain deir or rae within thair housis, stealling of any halkis or halk-nestis, cutting &c. of our woddis, they being convict of the saidis offences or any of them sall pay for thair first fault ane mairt (or 20 merkis as the pryce thairof) and being tuyse convict sall pay tua mairtis, and being thryse convict sall pay the thrid tyme thrie mairtis (or pryces thairof *respective* abonewrittin), by and attoure the worth of the saidis wodis; nevertheless if it sall happin the said Sir Alex. or his foirsaidis the tyme of the hunting of fox, wolf or any other ravenous or distroying beast to slay any raes, they sall not be astricted thairfoir in payment of the saidis unlawis; and if the tennent or servand quha sall be convict of the saidis offences sall not be worth the foirsaid unlaw, the said Sir Alex. and his foirsaids thair masteris sall aither delyver the said tennent or sevand to ws, or all caus him be banishit out of thair awin boundis, and all caus intimatt the same at theair paroche kirk wponn ane Sunday, or sall pay thair unlaw themselffis; and quhasoever sall resett him thairefter within thair saidis boundis sall pay ane unlaw of ten pundis for ilk tyme he sall be resett; farder it sall not be leisum to the said Sir Alexander &c. to conveine or judge thair awin tenentis or subtennentis for any blude or bluideweitt, bot the tryall and punishment thairof to belong to ws; mairover the said Sir Alex. sall caus four persounes of the tenentis of the saidis landis give thair personall service to ws with thair dogis and hundis at all our huntingis within the saidis boundis of Mar, and sall caus the saidis tenentis big and putt wp lunkardis for the said hunting, and sall mak and putt furth tinschellis at the same according to wse and wont, and sall caus them carie furth the necessaries requyrit for the said hunting to the lunkardis, and sall carie the same back againe, and tak up the slaine deir and raes to the lunkardis or to our house in Mar as they sall be directed and as they have beine in use to doe in tyme bygaine; in lyk manner the said Sir Alex. &c., sall cause thair tennentis of saidis landis attend ws at all oistingis wponn thair awin chairgis dureing the tyme of the kingis proclamatioun; nather yitt sall the said Sir Alex. suffer the saidis tennentis attend on any other, nor yitt come againes ws with any persoun (the kingis majesties authoritie being excepted), as alsua sall caus thair saidis tennentis attend on ws and our baillies at all generall musteris and wapounchawingis within the said schirrefdome...IN WITNES &c. (writtin be Harie Willamesoun sonne to Johnne W. writer to his majesties signett):—Att the castell of Edinburgh, 6 and 13 Julii 1633:—Beffoir thir WITNESIS (to the subscriptioun of the said earle) Donald Farquharsoun of Maniltrie, Alex. Stirling servitour to the said earle, the saidis Johnne and Harie Williamesounes; (to the subscriptioun of the said lord Eryskne) Harie Dow and Mr Wil. Davidsouyn advocatt:—TEST. *ut in aliis cartis* &c.

RMS, vol. IX (1634–1651), no. 99, 44-46.

Contract between John Campbell of Glenorchy and Nicoll M'Lefcunrick V'Nicoll, 1651

John Campbell, fear of Glenurquhay, sets to Nicoll M'Lefcunrick V'Nicoll, for five years, the merkland of Arrivean in Glenloquhay; he paying yearly out of every couple of new calved kye he shall receive to grass thereupon as much as any former tenant did, with carriages, hosting, hunting, watching, and all other usual services, and releiving the said John Campbell of all taxations thereon. He shall receive to grass on the saids lands some yield kye and pay the usual duty therefrom, keep the mares in Glenloquhay and their followers as stoddert thereof, for which he shall have the usual pay; he shall make his principal residence on the saids lands and preserve the woods, answer the hue and cry of the country against thieves, oppressors, and robbers, and stop them to the utmost of his power, under the penalty of the loss of his moveable goods; it being provided that if the said Nicoll be impeded in labouring the saids lands by any enemy's army, the tack shall become void, and he shall be bound to pay only such duty as four honest men, assessors in the country, shall appoint. Signed at Finlarg, 8 November 1651.

BBT, 425.

Contract between John Campbell of Glenorchy and John Dow Crerar in Garrous, 1663

Johne Campbell of Glenurchay younger sets to Johne Dow Crerar in Garrous, for five years, the merkland of Pitmakie, and the sheilling of Corriegoir; and the said Johne binds himself and his heirs to pay yearly therefor sixty pounds Scots, the usual presents, excepting the teinds payable to the minister, and his own good will of presents; and also obliges himself to be fowler to the Laird, and to go to the hills with a sufficient lying dog and fowling nets, to seek for, take, and kill wild fowl and moorfowl of all kinds, as convenience and the season shall offer and as he shall be required, and on the Lairds desire to send to his house one of his sons skilled in fowling to serve in his office with dogs and nets fit for the purpose, and to train up a sufficient fowling dog for the use of the Laird, for which the Laird will always furnish him with a young dog of a good fowling kind. Signed at Balloch, 25th April 1663.

BBT, 426.

Earl of Mar to Earl of Atholl, 1667

TILLIFOUR, *Oct.* 19, 1667

My Lord,—I had a letter from your Lo/ 2 or 3 dayes agoe complaining y^{t} Innerray and others of my Forresters destroys and kills bothe yo^{r} LO^{pps} deere and mine under a cullour of killing a fieu for my use. Belieue it, my Lord, whatever they may doe of this kind they haue neither my directione nor allouance for it, neither haue they any warrand in the least from me to meddle with yo^{r} deere at all, neither need they make so bare ane excuse for covering any fault y^{t} nature for the number is but verie small that they send to me amongst them all, and I employ but two of them for killing deere to me.

What other use they maye make of killing our deere, my Lord, shurlie I cannot know, living at so great a distance from these Forrests, but I would haue though Innerray as free of faults of y^{t} kinde as any, for I never see him but still he complains y^{t} the Forrest ar not kept, nor deere preserved as they ought, and if my memory serves me

well, he has a bond whiche I signed some years agow for helping such errors, and y^{r} Lo/^{s} hand is likeways at it,[102] and the late Lord Argyll's. And if he be now a destroyer of deere himself, and so much contrarie to his profession, I think it the more strange. However what your LOP has found amiss in thes thinges I am now ways to excuse it, being really

Y^{r} Lo/^{s} aff^{nte} cozen and humble servant

MAR.

CATF, i, 160-61. Original Atholl Muniments, NRAS234/Box 29/1/3/17

Warrant appointing Donald Mackintosh to be a Deer Forester in the Forest of Atholl, addressed to Alexander Steuart, the Chamberlain, 1676

Alexander Steuartt,—We haue appoynted Donald Toshiach to be killer of whatt deir we haue use ffor, therffor you ar to giue him eight bolls off meall and sixtin pound scotts off mony as satisfactione for his service betwixt Mertinmes jmvj^{c} threscor fyftine till mertinmes jmvj^{c} thre scor sixtine yeirs. This he is to haue yeirlie during our pleasor; with ane cu hyde ffor his shoes.

Tack this receat ffor whatt you giue him, which shall be suffitient ffor yo^{r} warand and shall be allow'd to you in yo^{r} accomptis. Giuen under our hand att Dunkeld the senntine day of April jmvj^{c} thre scor sixtine yeirs.

He is to haue pouder and lead ffor killing off the deir ffor our use.

ATHOLL.

CATF, i, 171. Original Atholl Muniments, NRAS234/Box 29/1/3/53.

Commission of forestry by John Campbell, Earl of Breadalbane to John Macintyre in Glacsgour, 1687

Commission by John Earl of Breadalbane, to John M'Intyr in Glacsgour, to be forrester of the south side of the forest of Corichiba for keeping the marches thereof, he being bound not to have any sheillings nor to pasture any goods within the old limits thereof, and to stop all passengers travelling through it with guns; to fee himself, his family, and any who lodge with him of eating venison, except the umbles and entrails fo such as shall be killed for the Earl's use; to kill in seasonable time of year, that is, from Midsummer to Hallowmas, the number of sixteen deer to be sent to the officer of Finlarg, the chamberlain of Glenurchy detaining him for a boll of meal for every deer he is short of the number; and he is to receive all the deer and roes in the forest at the sight of the chamberlain and honest men in the country, and the chamberlain is to write on the back of the tack the number so received that it may be know how the deer have increased under his care; for which the Earl allows the said John the shealing of Blaraven, the said John being bound to sheal himself upon the borders and extremities of the forest, where his predecessors did, in order to keep off broken men and destroyers of deer; and the said John is to have eight bolls meal out of Achnofavnich. Signed at Castle Kelchurne, 30 March 1687.

BBT, 426-27

Instructions given by ane High and Mighty John Duke of Atholl to his Grace's fforesters of the fforestrie of Atholl. July 6th 1706.

[102] Probably Mar is referring to the mutual obligation signed by himself, Huntly and Atholl in 1630, for which see above.

1. They shall neither kill deer nor roe to themselves, nor to any other person whatsoever without a special warrant.
2. They shall neither see nor hear tell of any person to kill deer or roe or wild fowl within any part of the fforests without revealing the name to the said Duke.
3. They shall not suffer any strangers or countryman to shoot guns or hang butts within any part of the fforest without apprehending them and taking their guns from them.
4. They take particular care that no swine be pastured in the fforest.
5. They strictly keep the marches and meiths against persons and suffer none to pasture nor incroach upon the same.
6. They suffer no lowland oxen to pasture or feed within any part of the said fforest.
7. They take particular care and notice of any horses and mares within the fforest and suffer not any strayed horses or mares to pasture therein.
8. They frequently frequent and travell through the bounds of the fforests at all times of the year and shall not absent themselves from the said office except upon lawful occasions.
9. They shall not permitt any person whatsomever to possess any shealling in the fforest without his Grace's warrand in writing, except the tennents of the property.
10. They shall shoot any dogs they shall find within the fforest in regard they scare the Deer and exact 20 schillings Scots from the master of every dog found there.
11. They kill or bring in alive any eagles old or young they can shoot or take in the fforest, and for their encouragement they shall have a warrand for killing a deer for their own use for such eagle old or young brought by them.

Atholl Chartularies, vol. 1 (1706–1724), Charter Room, Blair Castle, Perthshire.

APPENDIX C: TRADITIONS REGARDING WOLVES IN THE HIGHLANDS

If the chronicler Hector Boece is to be believed, wolf hunting has a long pedigree in Scotland, because a legendary Scots King, Dorvadilla, 'set all his pleasure in hunting and keeping of houndes and greyhoundes, ordayning that every householder shoulde finde him two houndes and one greyhounde,'[103] and 'he that killed a Wolf should have an oxe for his paines[...]the Scottish men even from the beginning used to pursue in al they might devise, bicause the same is suche an enimie to cattayle...'[104] Of a later king, Ederus or Ergadus, it is said that his 'chiefe delighte was altogyther in hunting and keeping of houndes and greyhoundes, to chase and pursue wild beastes, and namely the Woolfe the herdsmans foes, by means whereof his advancement was muche the more acceptable amongst the Nobles, who in those dayes were whollye gyven to that kynde of pleasure and pastyme.'[105] Legend has it that in 1010, when King Malcolm II, returning from Mortlach, after gaining victory over Danish invaders, was attacked by an immense wolf in Stochet forest, on the bounds of Aberdeen. The monarch was saved from the ferocious wolf only by the presence of mind of a younger son of Donald of the Isles, who wrapped his plaid around his left arm and hand, and then thrust the muffled hand in the 'gaunt grey' brute's gaping mouth, while at the same time stabbing it do death with his dirk for which he was rewarded a grant of the neighbouring lands of Skene.[106] The founder of the Robertsons (Clann Donnchaidh), Donnchadh Reamhair (*b. c.* 1275), was also, it is said, 'largely instrumental in clearing the Atholl Highlands of wolves, for which public service he received a grant of lands in the district, and also an augmentation to his armorial bearings.'[107]

A later description of wolves, in William Camden's *Britannia* (1588), emphasises the danger that they were to both livestock and men in Strathnaver, in the Reay country:

> The country itselfe[...]by reason of the sharpe and cold aire lesse inhabited: and thereupon sore haunted and annoied by most cruell wolues. Which in such violent rage not only set upon cattaile to the exceeding great dammage of the inhabitants, but also assaile men with great danger, and not in this tract onely, but in many other parts likewise of Scotland, in so much, as by vertue of an act of Parliament, the Sheriffes and inhabitants in every Country are commanded to goe forth thrice a yeere a hunting, for to destroy the wolues and their whelpes.[108]

---

[103] Holinshed, Raphael, *The Firste Volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande*, bk. 2, 13. See also *CSHB*, i, 58, bk. 2, c. 3.

[104] *CSHB*, i, bk. 5, 13.

[105] *Ibid.*, i, bk. 5, 27.

[106] *IMALS*, 116. A folk etymology for Skene (*Sgian*) probably explains this story, despite the fact that the Gaelic for the name of the parish of Skene is Sgàin. For a similar tradition concerning the old family of Skene, derived from Struan (Robertson) or Duncan of Athole, see Duncan, Alister, *Clan Doncha' of Mar: A Historical Sketch* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen Journal Office, 1899), 7-8.

[107] Robertson, James, *Chiefs of Clan Donnachaidh 1265–1749 and the Highlanders at Bannockburn* (Perth: Wood & Son, 1929), 11. For a description and reproduction of the Robertson armorial bearings, with three wolf heads, see Robertson, David, *A Brief Account of Clan Donnachaidh* (Glasgow: Aird & Coghill, 1894), frontispiece; 39.

[108] Camden, William (auth.); Holland, Philemon (transl.), *Britain, or a Chorographical Description of the Most Flourishing Kingdoms, England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London: George Bishop & John Norton, 1610), 54.

As late as 1577, King James VI ordained an Act that there should be a wolf hunt in each barony three times a year, following severe losses of cattle from marauding wolves in Sutherland and doubtless elsewhere.[109] Years later, as stated by Sir Robert Gordon of Gordonstoun, the wolf was included amongst the wild animals of Sutherland. He describes the forests and 'schases' in that country as 'verie profitable for feiding of betsiall, and delectable for hunting, being full of reid deer and roes, woulffs, foxes, wyld catts, brocks...'[110] By 1621, also in Sutherland, a reward for the destruction of any surviving wolves had risen to 'six poundis threttein shillings four pennies gieven[...]to Thomas Gordoune for the killing of ane wolff...',[111] a considerable sum for that time, showing that money was no object in getting rid the land of this particular vermin. In 1661 'woolf skins' make an appearance in the Customs Roll of King Charles II, when two ounces of silver were paid 'for ilk two dacker' (i.e. ten or twelve skins).[112]

Unlike other types of hunting which were limited to a select few, the destruction of roaming wolf packs enjoined the populace to extinguish them both root and branch. As late as 1621, such was the menace of wolves that a monetary fine was imposed upon the tenants of Breadalbane if they proved unwilling to help as recounted in the Barony Court Book of Glenorchy: '...euirie tennent within the saidis boundis respectiue mak four croscattis[113] of irone for slaying of the wolff yeirly in tyme cuming, under the paine of four pundis of money toties quoties incais of failyie.'[114] On 20 February 1622, John Dow McInstalker in Cloichran sued Patrick McNab of Suie for taking his own hired herd, and for the loss of three cows slain by a wolf.[115]

A century earlier Raphael Holinshed (*c.* 1520–1580) mentions different animal species to be found in medieval Scotland and describes the kind of depredations inflicted by wolves: '...in the fieldes and wilde places of the countrey there is great plenty of Hares, red Dere, Fallow dere, Roes, wilde Horses, Wolfes and Foxes[...]The Wolves are most fierce and noysome unto the heardes and flockes in all partes of Scotland[...]where these beastes do no maner of hurt unto the domesticall cattell, but pray onely upon the wilde.'[116]

Tradition relates that Lord Lovat's wife, Lady Margaret Lyon, 'was a stout bold woman. A great hunter, she would have traveled in our hills afoot, and perhaps

---

[109] Mackay, William & Boyd, Herbert C. (eds.), *Records of Inverness*, 192, for an ox slain by wolves in 1570 and for a subsequent action raised, 197.

[110] Gordon, (Sir) Robert (of Gordonstoun) (auth.); Weber, Henry William & Gordon, Gilbert (of Sallagh) (eds.), *A Genealogical History of the Earldom of Sutherland from its Origin to the Year 1630*, 3.

[111] HMC, *Second Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts* (London: HMSO, 1874), 179; Anderson, Mark L. (auth.); Taylor, Charles J. (ed.), *A History of Scottish Forestry*, 2 vols. (London: Nelson, 1967), i, 394.

[112] Murray (of Glendook), (Sir) Thomas, *The Laws and Acts of Parliament made by King James the First, Second, Third, Fourth Fifth, Queen Mary, King James Sixth, King Charles the First, King Charles the Second who now presently reigns, Kings and Queen of Scotland: Collected and Extracted, from the Publick Records of the said Kingdom* (Edinburgh: Printed by David Lindsay, 1681), Charles II., 36.

[113] According to Blackmore, Howard L., *Hunting Weapons*, 88-93, a crocatt was a stabbing spear with a short cross-piece set back from the point in order to prevent it passing through a wolf's body, thereby decreasing the risk of injury to the hunter through close contact.

[114] *BBT*, 356.

[115] Gillies, Rev. William A., *In Famed Breadalbane: The Story of the Antiquities, Lands, and People of a Highland District*, 259.

[116] Holinshed, Raphael, *The Firste Volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande*, i, bk. 2, 10.

outwearyed good footmen. She purged Mount Capplach of the wolves; there is a seat there called *Ellig ni Baintearn...*'[117] The period of her repression of wolves is indicated by the succession of her husband to the Lordship of Lovat, which took place in 1450, and it is therefore probable that the 'purging' of 'Mount Capplach' was begun around this time. So hunting was not the male reserve that is commonly attributed to such a sport as the local populace had to thank one of the ladies of Lovat for clearing the wolves from the mountain range of Caiplich, lying between Loch Ness and the Aird.

Such purges may have worked in the short-term nonetheless the great swathe of Caledonian forest gave shelter and sustenance to the general 'head' of wolves, where they seem to have flourished. During King James V's reign their number and ravages were formidable. Great parts of Ross-shire, Inverness-shire, nearly the whole of Cromarty, and large parts of Perthshire and Argyll, were covered with forests of pine, birch, and oak, the remains of which can still be seen in Braemar, Invercauld, Rothiemurchus, Arisaig, the banks of Loch Ness, Glen Strathfarrar, the glens of Lochaber and Loch Errocht, around Rannoch Moor, and the hills of Ardgour. However, during the reign of Mary Queen of Scots (1542–1587), the wolf-plague, which had been gradually coming to a crisis, spread unexampled devastation. Wolves, it was said, when pinched by hunger, ransacked churchyards and feasted on newly buried corpses they unearthed. Along the tract of Ederachillis, in northwest Sutherland, the inhabitants were constrained to transfer the burial of their dead to the adjacent Isle of Handa in order to put an end to such depredations. Similar types of traditions are also related regarding other burial isles around the Highlands: Loch Awe, in Argyll,[118] on Inch Maree in Loch Maree[119] in Ross-shire and also in Loch Leven, at Eilean Munda,[120] near Ballachuilish in Argyll. Corpses were not safe on the mainland where it was the former custom in Atholl to bury the dead in coffins made up of five flagstones in order 'to preserve the corps from the wolves,'[121] and in Ross-shire at Cladh nan Sasannach, at the head of Loch Maree.[122] According to tradition, cairns were built in Assynt to 'prevent[...]numerous wolves from devouring the bodies of their departed relations,'[123] and also for a similar reasons at Kiltearn in Ross-shire.[124] The Rev. Alexander Falconer, minister for Eddrachilles, though he curiously makes no mention of Handa, relates that brochs had been used as cemeteries

---

[117] *Wardlaw*, 110. An etymology of *Eileag na Baintighearna* is offered: *Eileag* appears to have been specially applied to great V-shaped enclosures, open at both ends, into which deer entered by the wide opening, and were shot down as they were driven through the narrow opening. The ruins of such a contrivance is still to be seen at Eilean Bad-a'-chaillaidh, in the parish of Kincardine, Ross-shire. Lady Lovat's *Eileag* was probably at or near the place now know as Carn na Baintearn (Lady's Cairn), Caiplich.

[118] Harting, James E., *British Animals Extinct within Historic Times: With Some Account of British Wild White Cattle* (London: Trübner, 1880), 183.

[119] MacCulloch, John, *The Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland*, ii, 301.

[120] J., 'Highland Scenery—Description of a Stupendous Cataract at Lochleven-head, near Ballachelish, Argyllshire', vol. I, *Edinburgh and Literary Magazine* (Nov., 1817), 340; Fairweather, Barbara, *Eilean Munda: The Burial Island in Loch Leven*, (Glencoe: Glencoe and North Lorn Folk Museum, 1974), 2; Fairweather, Barbara, *Highland Heritage* (Glencoe: Glencoe and North Lorn Folk Museum, 1974), 9.

[121] *OSA*, vol. XII (North and West Perthshire), 107.

[122] Dixon, John H., *Gairloch in North-West Ross-shire: Its Records, Traditions, Inhabitants and Natural History with a guide to Gairloch and Loch Maree* (Edinburgh: Co-operative Print. Co., 1886), 84-85.

[123] *OSA*, vol. XVIII (Sutherland and Caithness), 318.

[124] *OSA*, vol. XVII (Inverness-shire, Ross and Cromarty), 499.

'down to the present times, which practice had its arise probably from their being a security from the ravages of wolves.'[125]

Records concerning wolves in the Highlands are fairly frequent during the 16th century, although by 1570 difficulty was reported in procuring wolfskins, as a piece of correspondence written by Alexander Clark to the Countess of Moray relates: 'As for the Wolf skins ye wrute for I could get na knowledge of ony at the present[...]Gif ony can be gottin I sall do gud weel to satisfy...'[126] Nevertheless, the wolf's bad reputation continued long in folk memory as recounted by the Rev. Joseph MacIntyre for an entry on Glenorchy and Inishail:

> Formerly, the wolf had his haunts in our wilds and mountains, and not only proved fatal to the cattle, but, when impelled by hunger, or inflamed with rage[...]made depredations on the human species. It is said, that, in the year 1680, the last wolf in Britain was killed by Sir Ewen Cameron of Lochiel.[127]

There are many traditions surrounding the killing of the last indigenous wolf in the Highlands. One of the most famous accounts is described by John Drummond of Balhaldie, the biographer of Sir Ewen Dubh Cameron (1629–1719), who left an account on his outdoor pursuits:

> His greatest diversion was hunting, whereof he was so keen, that he destroyed all the wolfs and foxes that infested the country. He killed, with his own hand, the last wolf that was seen in the Highlands. He had a noble forrest that contrabuted much to his pleasure; and the continwall fatigue and hardships that he exposed himself to, in that manly and haithfull exercise, soon made him so vigorous and robust...[128]

The Cameron chief is said to have killed the last wolf in 1680. Nevertheless, other areas in the Highlands favour their own local traditions.[129] The 'Wolfstone', at Brora in Glen Loth, marks the place of the last wolf said to have been killed in Sutherland by a hunter named Polson,[130] a version of which subsequently entered into that region's folklore.[131] Other traditions survive from various areas that mark the wolf's extinction from that particular area: Mullinavadie (Muillin a' Mhadaidh) in Rannoch Moor;[132] at Shenval (Seann Bhaile) of Glengairn near Braemar;[133] or at Allt a' Mhadaidh Allaidh, near Derry Lodge, in the Forest of Mar about the year 1650;[134] at

---

[125] *OSA*, vol. XVIII (Sutherland and Caithness), footnote, 406-07.

[126] Quoted in Anderson, Mark L. (auth.); Taylor, Charles J. (ed.), *A History of Scottish Forestry*, i, 275.

[127] *OSA*, vol. VIII (Argyll), 117.

[128] Drummond (of Balhaldie), John, *Memoirs of Sir Ewen Cameron of Locheill, Chief of the Clan Cameron*, 86; Pennant, Thomas, *A Tour in Scotland 1769* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2000), 138; Dixon, John H., *Pitlochry Past and Present* (Pitlochry: L. Mackay, 1925), 176 where it is claimed Sir Ewen Cameron killed the last wolf at Killiecrankie in 1680. Apparently, an auction catalogue for a London Museum in 1818 had the stuffed wolf for sale, where an entry stated: "Wolf—a noble animal in a large case. The last wolf killed in Scotland by Sir Ewan Cameron." Unfortunately, the whereabouts of this piece is now unknown.

[129] MacGregor, Alasdair Alpin, *The Peat-Fire Flame: Folk-tales and the Traditions of the Highlands and Islands* (Edinburgh: The Moray Press, 1937), 135-37, where brief summaries are given of the most popular traditions of the killing of the last wolf.

[130] *DDSSH*, 284-86.

[131] *PTWH*, i, 281-82; Rendell, Joan, 'The Hunter and the Hunted: [The Legend of the Killing of the Last Wolf in Sutherland]', *Scots Magazine*, vol. 146, no. 6 (Jun., 1997), 641-42; *DDSSH*, 285-86.

[132] Barnett, T. Radcliffe, *The Road to Rannoch and the Summer Isles* (Edinburgh: Grant & Son), 148.

[133] Grant, John, *Legends of the Braes o' Mar* (Aberdeen: Murray, 1910), 17.

[134] Gordon, Seton, *The Cairngorm Hills of Scotland*, 207.

Dalcrombie, near Dores, Inverness-shire;[135] Glassary, Argyll;[136] Kirkmichael, Banffshire (around 1644);[137] at Bach-na-gairn, Forfarshire;[138] Duthil;[139] Coire Mhadaidh in Kincardine Slugan, Abernethy;[140] and at Claggans, Menteith.[141] Thus, the wolf, once so common in Scotland, through constant persecution, was virtually extinct by the end of the 17th century.

Another mention of a wolf is made by Iain Lom in *Iorram do Shìol Dùghaill*, composed while he was in exile in Kintail after he fell foul of his own clan due to his outspoken politics and calls for justice in the wake of the Keppoch murder (1663):

> 'Gam chur a m' fhearann gun adhbhar
> 'S nach do shalaich mo shadhbhaidh
> Mar mhadadh-allaidh is caonnag 'n thòin.
>
> I am ejected from my land without reason—and it is
> not that I have befouled my lair—like a wolf with the hunt
> close up on him.[142]

Brae Lochaber may have been one of the last places where wolves were not extinct. This mention, however brief, cannot be taken literally, but it is interesting to compare it with the date of the wolf's extinction in Lochaber in 1680. It may well be the case that the hounds of Clan Donald were still driving the species towards extinction. Also in the same song, the bard decries his situation by comparing his persecution to that of a coursed hare, showing the flexibility of using a hunting image from its usual context:

> Mo nì 's m'àirneis air monadh,
> Mar gheàrr eadar chonaibh,
> Gun chead teàrnadh gu loinidh measg feòir.
>
> My goods and possessions are scattered on the hill-side,
> and I am as a hare among hounds without a chance to
> descend to the grassy meadow land.[143]

It seems, however, that the last wolf to be killed was in the forest of Darnaway, Morayshire, by MacQueen of Pollochock in 1743:

> The last of their race was killed by MacQueen of Pall-a-'chrocain, who[...]was the most celebrated "carnach"[...]remarkable for his strength, courage and celebrity as a deer-stalker. It will not be doubted that he has the best "long-dogs" or deer greyhounds in the country; and for their service and his own, one winter's day[...]a large "black beast," supposed to be a wolf, had appeared in the glens, and the day before killed two children[...]in consequence of which a

---

[135] Sinton, Rev. Thomas, 'Places, People, and Poetry of Dores in Other Days. No. I.', *TGSI*, vol. XXVI (1904–1907), 324.
[136] *NSA*, vol. VII (Argyleshire), 680.
[137] *OSA*, vol. XVI (Banffshire, Moray & Nairnshire), 286.
[138] Ogilvy, D., *Book of Highland Minstrelsy* (London: G. W. Nickisson, 1846), 251.
[139] Forsyth, Rev. William, *In the Shadow of Cairngorm*, 7.
[140] *Ibid.*, 7.
[141] Hutchison, A. F., *The Lake of Menteith: Its Islands and Vicinity; with Historical Accounts of the Priory of Inchmahome and the Earldom of Menteith* (Stirling: Eneas Mackay, 1899), 46.
[142] *ÒIL*, 114-15, ll. 1462-1464.
[143] *ÒIL*, 114-15, ll. 1456-1458.

> "Tainchel," or gathering to drive the country, was called to meet at a tryst above Fi-Giuthas, where MacQueen was invited to attend with his dogs.—Pall-a'-chrocain informed himself of the place where the children had been killed—the last tracks of the wolf, and the conjectures of his haunt, and promised his assistance.
> In the morning the Tainchel has long assembled, and MacIntosh waited with impatience, but MacQueen did not arrive; his dogs and himself were, however, auxiliaries too important to be left behind, and they continued to wait until the best of a hunter's morning was gone, when at last he appeared, and MacIntosh received him with an irritable expression of disappointment.
> "*Ciod e a chabhag?*"—"What was the hurry?"—said Pall-a-'chrocain. MacIntosh gave an indignant retort[...]
> MacQueen lifted his plaid—and drew the black bloody head of the wolf from under his arm—"*Sin e dhùibh!*"—"There it is for you!"[144]

It is said that this tradition lingered for a long while after among Morayshire storytellers. By way of coincidence there is a crude medieval carving of wolf-slayer (using a bow) at Darnaway Castle in Moray.[145]

The Gaels had a no-nonsense solution to a practical problem. Livestock was protected at all costs as the burden of depredations by wolves upon cattle and sheep could not be suffered, especially during the sparse months of winter-time. After all, many lived at a near-subsistence level with the spectre of famine and scarcity of foodstuffs could sometimes be a anxiety and thus they could not brook such losses.

---

[144] *LDF* ii, 245-47; Chambers, Robert, *Domestic Annals of Scotland: From the Reformation to the Revolution*, iii, 609; Fittis, Robert Scott, *Sports and Pastimes of Scotland*, 45-47; Lauder (of Fountainhall), (Sir) Thomas Dick, *An Account of the Great Floods of August 1829, in the Province of Moray, and Adjoining Districts* (Edinburgh: Adam Black, 1830), 41-43.

[145] Crone, Anne & Watson, Fiona, 'Sufficiency and Scarcity: Medieval Scotland, 500–1600', in T. C. Smout (ed.), *People and Woods in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 71-73, fig. 3.6.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Bibliography is divided, and thus organised into six sections, namely: 1. Archival and Manuscript Sources; 2. Printed Contemporary and Early Sources; 3. Secondary Sources; 4. Newspapers and Periodicals; 5. Theses and, lastly, 6. Reference Works.

Abbreviations:

AUR	Aberdeen University Review
BBCS	Bulletin Board of Celtic Studies
CMCS	Cambridge/Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies
CMag	Celtic Magazine, The
CMon	Celtic Monthly, The
CR	Celtic Review, The
DJBDS	Deer: The Journal of the British Society
GNB	Guth na Bliadhna: The Voice of the Year
H	Highlander, The
MT	MacTalla
NC	Northern Chronicle, The
OT	Oban Times, The
PASJ	Pictish Arts Society Journal
PSAS	Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland
RCAHMS	The Royal Commission of the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland
SA	Sound Archive (School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh)
SGS	Scottish Gaelic Studies
SH	Scottish Highlander, The
SHR	Scottish Historical Review
SMCJ	Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal
SR	Scottish Review
SS	Scottish Studies
TGSD	Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Dublin
TGSI	Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness
TGSG	Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Glasgow
TISSFC	Transactions of the Inverness Scientific Society and Field Club
TOS	Transactions of the Ossianic Society
Toch.	Tocher
WHFP	West Highland Free Press
ZCP	Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie

1. Archival and Manuscript Sources

Aberdeen University Library, Special Libraries and Archives, Aberdeen

MS 2607	Abstracts of papers of Murray family, Blair Atholl, Perthshire, 15th–19th centuries.
John MacLean MS	This collection was made in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland by John MacLean, the poet. Microfilm of the original manuscript in the Public Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia. See Ó Baoill, Colm, *MacLean Manuscripts in Nova Scotia: A Catalogue of the Gaelic Verse Collections MG15G/2/1 and MG15G/2/2 in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia* (Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen, Department of Celtic, 2001).
MS 2318	Compiled by Hector MacLean. Collection of Gaelic poetry. Original in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Halifax, Nova Scotia.
MS 3137	Atholl Manuscripts. 4 Microfilm reels.

Dunvegan Castle, Muniments Room, Isle of Skye

NRA(S) 2950/Section 5/57/1-3	*Bannatyne Manuscript* compiled by Sir William MacLeod Bannatyne (1743–1833), Knight Judge. The manuscript chronicles the Clan MacLeod of Skye from earliest times but has hitherto remained unedited and unpublished.

Edinburgh University Library

Carmichael-Watson Collection	The Carmichael-Watson Collection consists of papers belonging to the Rev. Alexander Cameron of Arran, Alexander Carmichael (1832–1912), civil servant and folklorist, Alexander MacBain (1855–1907) of Inverness, and Professor William John Watson (1865–1948) and his son James Carmichael Watson (1910–1942), along with books and papers belonging to the Rev. Charles Robertson (1864–1927) of Jura, the Rev. Angus MacDonald (1860–1932), the Rev. Archibald MacDonald (1853–1948) and the Rev. Father Allan McDonald of Eriskay (1859–1905). Alexander Carmichael was born in Lismore, off the coast of Argyll, in 1832. He was educated at Greenock Academy, and in Edinburgh. As a civil servant with Customs and Excise, his work took him to Skye, Uist and Oban, where in the middle of the 19th century Gaelic still dominated. He collaborated with the folklorist John Francis Campbell (1821–1885) in his folklore collection, and made a large collection of his own between 1855 and 1899 and particularly from 1865 to 1882 when the family resided in the Hebrides. His collection consisted mainly of Gaelic prayers and invocations, hymns, blessings, charms, and a great many songs. The material was collected from both mainland and island sources and range in date over several centuries. Carmichael would finally settle in Edinburgh. His publications include *Grazing and Agrestic Customs of the Outer Hebrides* (1884) which had been requested for the Report of the Crofter Royal Commission, and *Carmina Gadelica* (1900). Alexander Carmichael died in 1912. Elizabeth (Ella) Catherine

Carmichael, his daughter, married William John Watson, a Gaelic scholar, born in Easter Ross in 1865. He was Rector of Inverness Royal Academy and then Edinburgh's Royal High School, and later, between 1914 and 1938, Professor of Celtic at Edinburgh University. His publications include *Place-names of Ross and Cromarty* (1904), *Gaelic Prose* (1915), Gae*lic Poetry* (1918), *History of the Celtic place-names of Scotland* (1926), and *Scottish Verse from the Book of the Dean of Lismore* (1937). Professor William John Watson died in 1948. His son, James Carmichael Watson, born in 1910, and successor to his father as Professor of Celtic at Edinburgh University in 1938, contributed to later volumes of *Carmina Gadelica.* James Carmichael Watson died, missing in action, in 1942.

The Laing Collection, La.I–V — After the death of David Laing (1793–1878), his private library was sold in an auction occupying thirty-one days. His collection of charters and other papers is of national importance and the most distinguished of its kind in any Scottish university. It is an essential source for the 18th century, and a much used one for all periods of Scottish history from the earliest times. The Laing Collection falls into five main sections, designated as La.I., La.II., La.III., La.IV., and La.V.

Glasgow University Library, Glasgow

MS Gen 1042 — McLagan Collection of Gaelic manuscripts. 254 Gaelic manuscripts collected or transcribed by the Rev. James McLagan (1728–1805), chaplain to the Black Watch and minister at Blair Atholl. Much of the material influenced Gillies's *Sean Dain agus Orain Ghaidhealach* (1796).

Cameron, Rev. Alexander (auth.); MacBain, Alexander & Kennedy, John (eds.), 'The Maclagan MSS', *Reliquiae Celticae: Texts, Papers and Studies in Gaelic Literature and Philology left by the late Alexander Cameron, LL.D.*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1892), vol. 1, 295-370;

Kennedy, John, 'Some Unpublished Gaelic Ballads from the Maclagan MSS, no. I', *TGSI*, vol. XXI (1896–97), 214-229

Kennedy, John, 'Poems from the Maclagan MSS, no. II', *TGSI*, vol. XXII (1897–98), 168-193;

Kennedy, John, 'Poems from the Maclagan MSS, no. III', *TGSI*, vol. XXIII (1898–99), 89-91;

Kennedy, John, 'Unpublished Gaelic Ballads from the Maclagan MSS, no. IV', *TGSI*, vol. XXIV (1899–1901), 157-184;

Macdonald, A. & Macdonald, A. (eds.), *The Macdonald Collection of Gaelic Poetry* (Inverness, 1911);

Mackinnon, Donald, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Gaelic Manuscripts in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, and elsewhere in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1912), 302-310;

Mackechnie, John, *Catalogue of Gaelic Manuscripts in Selected Libraries in Great Britain and Ireland* (Boston, 1973), vol. 1, 412-452;

MacThómais, Ruaraidh, 'Bho Làmh-sgrìobhainnean MhicLathagain', *Gairm*, air., 113 (Geamhradh, 1980/1981), 79-81;

air.,114 (Earrach, 1981), 175-79; air. 115 (Samhradh, 1981), 273-78; air., 116 (Foghar, 1981), 377-383; air., 117 (Geamhradh, 1981/1982), 37-40; air., 118 (Earrach, 1982), 150-154; air., 120 (Foghar, 1982), 317-321; air. 124 (Foghar, 1983), 353-357; air., 133 (Geamhradh, 1985/1986), 60-62; air., 137 (Geamhradh, 1986/1987), 64-67; air., 144 (Foghar, 1988), 351-354; air., 145 (Geamhradh, 1988/1989), 63-66;
Thomson, D. S., 'A Catalogue and Indexes of the Ossianic Ballads in the McLagan MSS', *SGS*, vol. XIII, pt. II (1955–58), 177-224; Thomson, D. S., *The Gaelic Sources of Macpherson's 'Ossian'* (Edinburgh, 1952), Appendix 3: 'Five Ballads from the Maclagan MSS not printed in Reliquiae Celticae', 91-100; Thomson, D. S., 'The McLagan MSS in Glasgow University Library: A Survey', *TGSI*, vol. LVIII (1992–94), 406-24.

MS Gen 1090 — George Henderson Collection of Gaelic MSS and working papers. A collection of several hundred Gaelic manuscripts and transcriptions formed by the Rev. Dr George Henderson (1866–1912), lecturer in Celtic Studies at Glasgow University from 1906 to 1912.

MS Gen 139 — Charles W. Loch. The animal kingdom in Scotland: names in Gaelic. Alexander R. Forbes's *Gaelic Names of Beasts* (1905) is shelved alongside this manuscript and has been press-marked MS Gen 139A.

Inverary Castle, Inverary, Argyll

Dewars MSS — The Dewar Manuscripts (photocopies and microfilm available at the School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh). Collected by John Dewar (1802–1872) originally in the employ of John Francis Campbell (1821–1885). Hector MacLean (1818–1892), a native of Islay, translated the Dewar MSS into English. The English translation of the Dewar MSS comprises some 19 volumes.

National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh

Acc. 7708 — Papers of Alexander Macdonald (1860–1928), wrote under the pen-name "Gleannach", author of *Story and Song from Loch Ness-side* (1914).

Acc.11044 — Badenoch Bards
Gaelic verse, mostly of Badenoch bards, later 19th century, and written down *c.* 1799, from the collection of the Rev. Dr Neil Ross (1873–1943), Lagan. Many items in this collection were described and published by the Rev. Thomas Sinton (1855–1923), Dores, in 'Gaelic Poetry from the Cluny Charter Chest', *TGSI*, vol. XXIII (1898–99), 247-81.

Acc.8168
Adv.Ms.50.1.1-51.2.7
MSS.2993-2994 — Campbell of Islay Papers
Correspondence and papers, including many manuscripts in Gaelic, journal, yearbooks (with many photographs), albums of watercolour paintings and sketches, and experimental notebooks, of John Francis Campbell of Islay (1821–1885), Gaelic scholar and collector of oral tradition, traveller, scientist, official of the royal household and public servant. For the biographical background to Campbell's life and career see generally *Lamplighter and Storyteller: John Francis*

Campbell of Islay 1821–1885 (Edinburgh, 1985); and also Thompson, Frank G., 'John Francis Campbell', *TGSI* vol. LIV (1984–86), 1-57, and 'John Francis Campbell', *Folklore* vol. 101 (1990i), 88-96.

Adv.Ms.72.3. 9-10 — Kennedy's Collection
Ossianic verse collected 1774–83 by Duncan Kennedy (1763–?). Described by J. F. Campbell as the most interesting collection I know (Adv.Ms.72.3.10, p. vi). Kennedy collected between the ages of 12 and 20 while travelling through Argyll and Lochaber. The poems are written down in standardised fashion, i.e. in quatrains throughout and proceeded by an argument (introduction) in English. According to J. F. Campbell there are two volumes in Kennedy's Collection which he classifies as 1st, dating from 1774–1780, containing 4,448 lines and 2nd, dating from 1774–1783, containing 4,460 lines, totalling 8, 908 lines in all. He was a schoolmaster at Kilmelford in Argyll, and afterwards accountant in Glasgow; when Reid wrote he was living at Loch Gilphead [*sic*] on Loch Fyne.
There is an account of Kennedy's collection in the Highland Society of Scotland's *Ossian Report*, 107-29.

Adv.Ms.73.1. 14 — Skene Collection, mainly of Gaelic manuscripts. Bequeathed, 1892, by William Forbes Skene (1809–1892). Mainly material obtained by Skene from the Rev. Dr Mackintosh Mackay (1800–1873). Mackay was a native of the Reay Country, the son of Capt. Alexander Mackay of Duard Beg. In 1828, Skene, then nineteen, was sent by his father, at Sir Walter Scott's recommendation, to study Gaelic with him at Laggan. Mackay had then just finished his work on the Highland Society of Scotland's *Dictionary*.

Adv.Ms.73.1. 23 — Alexander Pope's Collection
Collection of Ossianic Poems by the Rev. Alexander Pope (*c.* 1706–82) or Reay. A letter written by Pope in 1763 and published in the Ossian Report, Appendix, 52, indicates that this collecting activity took place about 1739. The present manuscript is printed almost complete in *Leabhar na Féinne* (1872), 218-24.

Adv.Ms.73.1. 24 — Archibald Fletcher's Collection
Ossianic poems by various anonymous hands from the recitation of Archibald Fletcher (*b. c.* 1734), Achallader, Argyll. Described by J. F. Campbell (*Leabhar na Féinne*, p. xvi) as 'as genuine a bit of folk lore as any in the world'. J. F. Campbell subsequently printed the bulk of the text in *Leabhar na Féinne* (1872)

Adv.Ms.72.2. 16 — Ossianic Miscellany. Source material and translations collected by the Highland Society of Scotland's Ossian Committee and its successor the Committee on Celtic Literature, *c.* 1797–1816. Variously endorsed or annotated by Henry Mackenzie (1745–1831), Donald Macintosh (1743–1808) and Ewen MacLachlan (1773–1822).

MSS.357-483 — Robertson Collection, relating to Gaelic philology and Highland topography, folk-lore, etc., compiled by the Rev. Charles Montcrieff Robertson (1864–1927), Minister of the United Free Church, Kilchoman, Islay.

MS 874 — Mackintosh Mackay
Volume labelled "Mr. Train" containing letters of Joseph Train,

1817–31, and other letters and documents of historical and antiquarian interest addressed to or collected by Scott. Train's letters and the accompanying documents deal with demonology, the legends, antiquities, and agriculture of Dumfriesshire and Galloway, gipsies, Buckhaven fishermen, and legends and customs of the Isle of Man and Skye. Many were intended to afford illustrative anecdotes for Scott's novels and some were printed in Scott's notes. The latter part of the volume contains a large number of miscellaneous papers relating to the Highlands, Rob Roy, the Jacobite Risings of 1715 and 1745 (with copies of contemporary documents), and the Porteous Riot, much of the Highland material being in the autograph of Dr Mackintosh Mackay (ff. 319, 352, 424, 457).

MSS 1635-44 Ochtertyre Manuscripts. Essays (historical and other), biographies, reminiscences, etc., by John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, Advocate (1736–1814). There are for the most part descriptive of 18th century in Scotland, and are contained in 10 folio volumes, each bearing the title assigned to it by him, showing his grouping and division of his manuscript. Subjects are treated in one volume, however, are apt to occur again in others.

MSS 2129-39 Gregory's Collections. 'Collections from the Public Records of Scotland and various other sources illustrative of the history of the West Highlands and Hebrides (in the 16th & 17th centuries) and of the genealogies of the different valleys, made by Donald Gregory', 11 vol., 1830-31, n.d., doubtless made in preparing his *History of the Western Highlands and Isles from 1493 to 1625* (Edinburgh, 1836).

MS 2184 Sobieski Stuart Papers. Unpublished treatises of John Sobieski Stuart (John Hay Allan), calling himself Count d'Albanie, with materials collected for them: 'Miscellaneous Fragments', 'Literature', 'Chap. IV. The Poetry of the Forest', dealing with Gaelic (Ossianic) poetry, apparently unpublished (f. 75).

MSS.5136-5138 Atholl Correspondence

National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh

GD 44 Gordon Castle Muniments
GD 46 Seaforth Papers
GD 50 John MacGregor Collection
GD 80 MacPherson of Cluny Papers
GD 112 Breadalbane Muniments
GD 124 Earls of Mar and Kellie Collection
GD 128 Charles Fraser-Mackintosh Collection.
GD 160 Earls of Perth (Drummond Castle MS)

School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh

Sound Archives (SA) Main chronological series of field tape recordings in the archives of the Scottish School of Studies, University of Edinburgh. Each reference to a Sound Archive can be identified by the index system used at the School of Scottish Studies.

Calum Maclean's MSS — Manuscript notebooks in the School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh, mostly transcribed from his own subsequently erased recordings by Calum I. Maclean 1951–2. Each reference to this manuscript is indexed using the following system: Reciter; Title; CIM [Calum I. Maclean], followed by the book number; TSB [Tales from Spean Bridge], followed again by book number then the page reference; and the date on which the tape was transcribed.

MS 1961 — Unpublished 20th century account postmarked 1961. The impression given is that of an amateur local historian with no pretensions but great attention to detail, knowledge of oral and written sources and considerable industry in research. This has now been identified as the work of Meta Humphrey Scarlett where the manuscript in question appears as a chapter of her work *In the Glen Where I Was Young* (1988).

ANDERSON, John (Skye, Inverness-shire), *'S gann gun dìrich mi chaoidh*, SA 1953/175/5

BEATON, Rachel (Skye, Inverness-shire), *'S gann gun dìrich mi chaoidh*, SA 1958/74/A4

CAMERON, Archibald (Kinlochlaggan, Inverness-shire), *Caiptean Dubh Bhaile Chròdhain*, CIM I.III.3, 1382

CAMERON, Charles (Roybridge, Brae Lochaber, Inverness-shire), *An Caiptean Dubh agus an Sgalag*, SA 1969/174/B10
———, *Call Ghàdhaig*, SA 1969/175/A7
———, *Naidheachd mu Dhòmhnall Mór Òg*, SA 1969/173/A10
———, *Naidheachd mu Dhòmhnall Mór Òg*, SA 1969/173/B1
———, *Dòmhnall Mac Fhionnlaigh a Mharbhadh Damh 'nuair a bha e Sean*, SA 1969/174/A4
———, *Iarrtas Dhòmhnaill 'ic Fhionnlaigh mu shuidheachadh na h-uaghach aige*, SA 1969/174/A5
———, *A' Chomhachag*, SA1969/174/A6

CAMERON, John (Insh, Badenoch, Inverness-shire), *Call Ghàdhaig*, CIM I.III.2, 1241-44

CAMPBELL, James C. M. (Dornie, Lochalsh, Ross-shire) *Coire Cheathaich*, SA 1952/88/A7
———, *Òran don Ghunna dham b'ainm NicCòiseam*, SA 1952/88/A8

CAMPBELL, John (Kingussie, Badenoch, Inverness-shire), *Call Ghàdhaig*, CIM I.III.2, 1278-83

CLARK, James (Glenshiel, Ross-shire), *Fenian Boar Hunt*, PN1972/01

FINLAYSON, Donald (Balmacara, Lochalsh, Ross-shire), *'S gann gun dìrich mi chaoidh*, SA 1955/167/A4

FINLAYSON, John (Drumbuie, Lochalsh, Ross-shire), *Fionnlagh Dubh nam Fiadh*, SA 1955/168/A11

———, *Diarmad agus Torc Neimh*, SA 1955/162/B8 and SA 1955/169/A1
———, *Sealg Gheamhraidh Ghlinn Lichd*, SA 1958/21/A8A&A8B

FRASER, Andrew (Glenurquhart, Inverness-shire), *Oithichiar*, CIM I.V.1, 1491-92

GILLIES, John (Isle of Skye, Inverness-shire), *'S gann gun dìrich mi chaoidh*, SA 1960/212/B6

JOHNSON, Donald Alasdair (Ardmor, South Uist, Inverness-shire), *Bàs Dhiarmaid*, SA 1970/37/B2
———, *Rìgh nan Cèist*, SA 1974/59/A+B1

JOHNSTON, Calum (Barra, Inverness-shire), *Ged is socrach mo leabaidh*, SA 1954/71/A8 [composed by An Ciarain Mabach]

MACCORMICK, Capt. Dugald (Mull, Argyll; Glasgow, Strathclyde), *Sgeulachd Iain Ghoiridh*, SA 1955/87/B10

MACDONALD, Dr Allan (Uig, Skye, Inverness-shire), *'S gann gun dìreach mi chaoidh*, SA 1953/179/6 & SA 1953/182/A6

MACDONALD, Donald (Arisaig, Inverness-shire), *Oisean*, SA 1954/43/6 & SA 1954/44/1

MACDONALD, James (Glenurquhart, Inverness-shire), *Call Ghàdhaig*, CIM I.V.1, 1514-15

MACDONALD, John (Highbridge, Brae Lochaber, Inverness-shire), *An t-Seann Eilid*, SA 1952/126/5
———, *Bha mi 'n-dé 'm Beinn Dóbhrain*, SA 1961/50/A4
———, *Cailleach a Thachair ri Sealgairean*, CIM 4, TSB IV, 343-46
———, *Captain Dubh Bhaile Chròbhain*, CIM 2, TSB II, 144-46
———, *Chunna mi an damh donn 's na h-Eildean*, SA 1961/50/A6
———, *Dòmhnall Mór Òg*, CIM 3, TSB III, 271-74
———, *Dòmhnall Mór Òg*, SA 1953/255/B2
———, *Eilid Bhàn an Coire Mheadhoin*, CIM 4, TSB IV, 326-38
———, *Fàg an Ceann*, CIM 8, TSB VIII, 721-72
———, *Fàg an Ceann*, SA 1952/126/4&6
———, *Fear a Mharbh Fiadh Iongantach*, SA 1952/126/4
———, *Fear a Thug an Ceann de Fhiadh*, SA 1952/126/6
———, *Lorg an Dóbhrain*, SA 1952/126/3
———, *Mar a Thaghadh Fionn a Chù*, CIM 8, TSB VIII: 734
———, *Marbhrann do Dhòmhnaill Mhóir Òig*, SA 1961/48/A3
———, *Marbhrann Dhòmhnaill Mhóir Òig*, CIM 3, TSB III, 274-79
———, *Marbhrann Dhòmhnaill Mhóir Òig*, SA 1952/124/4a,b
———, *Naidheachd mu Fhear a Chaidh a Shealg*, SA 1952/126/4
———, *Naidheachd Seilge*, CIM 4, TSB IV, 324-25
———, *Sealgairean agus Maigheach*, SA 1958/20/A8
———, *Sealgairean agus Maigheach*, SA 1958/21/A8
———, *Verses of Òran na Comhachaig*, SA 1961/48/A4

MACDONELL, Allan (Roybridge, Brae Lochaber, Inverness-shire), *Cailleach Beinn Bric*, CIM 1, TSB I, 17

MACKAY, Sandy (Ob-an-Doill, Harris, Ross-shire), *Òran Seachran Seilge*, SA 1952/111/3
———, *'S gann gun dìrich mi chaoidh*, SA 1952/111/4

MACKENZIE, Norman (Glenelg, Ross-shire), *Òran Mòr Loch Iall*, SA 1968/04/A1
———, *Gura mis' fo mhulad 's mi bhith fuireach sa chaimb*, SA 1968/04/B3

MACINNES, Archibald (Roybridge, Brae Lochaber, Inverness-shire), *Call Ghàdhaig*, CIM 3, TSB III, 256-57
———, *Fear a Mharbh Damh-féidh*, CIM 7, TSB VII 645

MACLELLAN, Angus 'Beag' (South Uist, Inverness-shire), *Mar a' chailleadh an t-sealg air an Fhéinn*, SA 1960/11/A6+B2
———, *Oisean an dèidh na Fèinne*, SA 1968/152/A1

MACLELLAN, Neil (Skye, Inverness-shire?), *Tha na féidh am Bràidh Ùige*, SA 1951/5/12

MACLEOD, Angus (Scalpay, Ross-shire), *Moladh Beinn Dóbhrain*, SA 1954/71/B4
———, *Cead Deireannach nam Beann*, SA 1954/71/B9
———, *Ged is Socrach mo Leabaidh*, SA 1954/71/B11

MACLEOD, John (Glenfinnan, Inverness-shire), *Dòmhnall MacFhionnlaidh nan Dàn*, CIM 8, TSB VIII, 770-71

MACMILLAN, John (Strath Tay, Perthshire), *Cailleach Beinn a' Bhric Hò Rò*, SA 1963/24/B1

MACPHAIL, Jane (Claddach Vallay, North Uist, Inverness-shire), *'S gann gun dìrich mi chaoidh*, SA 1956/6/3

MACPHERSON, Donald (Strontian, Argyll), *Am Madadh-allaidh mu dheireadh ann an Suaineart*, SA 1952/75/5 & SA 1952/75/1A

MACRAE, Peggy (South Uist, Inverness-shire), *Thogainn Fonn air Lorg an Fhéidh*, SA 1951/33/A12

MATHESON, Rev. William (North Uist, Inverness-shire; Edinburgh, Lothian), *Òran Seilge*, SA 1962/37/A1
———, *Cumha Choire an Easain*, SA 1975/223/B8
———, *Ged is socrach mo leaba*, SA 1975/225/A4
———, *Seinn uraibh bhinn o ho*, SA 1975/88/B6

MURRAY, George (Sutherland), *Last Wolf*, SA 1955/126/B13

SHAW, Gilbert (Jura, Argyll), *Boar Hunt*, SA 1969/169/B2

SINCLAIR, Donald (Balephuil, Tiree, Argyll), *Oisean an Déidh na Féinne*, SA 1958/2/6
———, *Bàs Dhiarmaid*, SA 1960/70/5

———, *Sgeulachd Fhionn*, SA 1964/83/B2
———, *Moladh Beinn Dòbhrainn*, SA 1964/83/A3
———, *Òran Seacharan Seilge*, SA 1966/103/15
———, *Òran do NicCòiseam*, SA 1968/24/9

STEWART, Alec 'Ali Dall' (Sutherland), *Stòiridh Oisean*, SA 1958/73/A11 and SA 1955/74/A2

2. Printed Contemporary and Primary Sources

ADOMNÁN (of Iona) (auth.); SHARPE, Richard (ed.), *The Life of St Columba* (London: Penguin Books, 1995)

BAIN, J., BOYD, W. K. & CAMERON, A. I. (eds.), *Calendar of State Papers Relating to Scotland and Mary, Queen of Scots, 1547–1603*, 13 vols. (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1898–1969)

BEVERIDGE, J., FLEMING, D. H. & LIVINGSTONE, M. (eds.), *Registrum Secreti Sigilli Regum Scotorum*, 8 vols. (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1908–1982)

BLACK, Ronald (ed.), *An Lasair: Anthology of 18th Century Scottish Gaelic Verse* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2001) [see also MACILLEDHUIBH, Raghnall]

BROWN, P. Hume (ed.), *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland 1625–1660*, second ser., 8 vols. (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1899–1908)
———& PATON, Henry (eds.) *et al*, *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland 1661–1691*, third ser., 16 vols. (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1908–1970)
———(ed.), *Early Travellers in Scotland* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1891)

BOECE, Hector (comp.); BELLENDEN, John (transl.), BATHO, Edith C., CHAMBERS, R. W. & HUSBANDS, H. Winifred (eds.), *The Chronicles of Scotland complied by Hector Boece*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1938–41)

BURTON, J. H. & MASSON, D. (eds.), *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland 1545–1625*, first ser., 14 vols. (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1877–98)

CALDER, Rev. George (ed.), *Orain Ghaidhealach le Donnchadh Macantsoir: The Gaelic Songs of Duncan Macintyre* (Edinburgh: Grant, 1912)

CAMERON, Rev. Alexander (comp.); MACBAIN, Alexander & KENNEDY, John (eds.), *Reliquiae Celticae: Texts, Papers, and Studies in Gaelic Literature and Philology*, vol. 1: *Ossianica*; vol. 2: *Poetry, History and Philology* (Inverness: Northern Chronicle, 1892–94)

CAMERON, J. (ed.), *The Justiciary Records of Argyll and the Isles*, vol. I (1664–1705) (Edinburgh: Stair Society, 1949)

CAPP, Bernard, *The World of John Taylor the Water-Poet, 1578–1653* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994)

DICKSON, T. & PAUL, (Sir) James Balfour (eds.), *Compota Thesaurariorum Regum Scotorum/Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*, 11 vols. (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1877–1916)

DOOLEY, Ann & ROE, Harry (eds.), *Tales of the Elders of Ireland (Acallam na Senórach)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

DRUMMOND, John (auth.); MACKNIGHT, J. (ed.), *Memoirs of Sir Ewen Cameron of Locheill, Chief of the Clan Cameron* (Edinburgh: Abottsford Club, 1842)

EDWARD (Second Duke of York) (auth.); BAILLIE-GROHMAN, William. A & Florence N. (eds.), *The Master of Game* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1909) [mainly a translation which was first published 1406–13 of Gaston III, surnamed Phoebus, Count de Foix and Viscount de Béarn, *Livre de la chasse*]

EELES, Francis C. (ed.), *The Holyrood Ordinale: A Scottish Version of a Directory of English Augustinian Canons, with Manual and Other Liturgical Forms* (Edinburgh: T. & A. Constable, 1916)

FRASER, James (auth.); MACKAY, William (ed.), *Chronicles of the Frasers: The Wardlaw Manuscript entitled 'Polichronicon seu Policratica Temporum, or, The True Genealogy of the Frasers.' 916–1674* (Edinburgh: T. & A. Constable, 1905)

FRASER, (Sir) William, *The Sutherland Book*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: [privately printed], 1892)

GASTON III PHOEBUS [Comte de Foix] (auth.); THOMAS, Marchel & FRANÇOIS, Avril (eds.), SCHLAG, Wilhem (comm.), *The Hunting Book of Gaston Phébus: Manuscrit Français 616, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale* (London: Harvey Miller, 1998)

GILLIES, Eoin, *Sean Dain agus Orain Ghaidhealach* (Peairt: John Gillies, 1786) [known as the Gillies Collection]

GRIGOR, Alexander, *A Treatise on the Game Laws of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Tait, 1834)

GORDON, (Sir) Robert (of Gordonstoun) (auth.); WEBER, Henry William & GORDON, Gilbert (of Sallagh) (eds.), *A Genealogical History of the Earldom of Sutherland from its Origin to the Year 1630* (Edinburgh: A. Constable & Co., 1813)

GREGORY, Donald & SKENE, William F. (eds.), *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis: Consisting of Original Papers and Documents Relating to the History of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Thomas G. Stevenson, 1847)

HANDS, Rachel (ed.), *English Hawking and Hunting in 'The Boke of St Albans': A Facsimile Edition of 'The Boke of St Albans' (1486)* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975)

HISTORIC MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION, *Report on the Manuscripts of Earl of Mar and Kellie* (London: HMSO, 1904)
———, *Supplementary Report on the Manuscripts of Earl of Mar and Kellie* (London: HMSO, 1930)

HOLINSHED, Raphael, *The Firste Volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande: Conteyning the Description and Chronicles of England, from the First Inhabiting vnto the Conquest: the Description and Chronicles of Scotland, from the First Originall of the Scottes Nation, Till the Yeare of our Lorde 1571: The Description and Chronicles of Yreland, Likewise from the First Originall of that Nation, vntill the Yeare 1547*, 2 vols. (London: Lucas Harrison, 1577)

IMRIE, John (ed.), *The Justiciary Records of Argyll and the Isles, 1644–1742*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Stair Society, 1949–69)

INNES, Cosmo (ed.), *The Black Book of Taymouth, with Papers from the Breadalbane Charter Room* (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1855)
———, *Sketches of Early Scottish History and Social Progress* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1861)

INNES, C. & THOMSON, T. (eds.), *The Acts of the Parliament of Scotland*, 12 vols. (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1844–75)

KING JAMES VI & I (auth.); CRAIGIE, James (ed.), *The Basilicon Doron of King James VI*, vols. 2 (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1944–50)
———, *Basilicon Doron 1599* (Mentson: The Scolar Press, 1969) [facsimile of the original 1599]

KNOX, John, *A Tour through the Highlands of Scotland and the Hebrides Isles in 1786* (Edinburgh: Gordon & Eliot, 1787)

LANG, Andrew (ed.), *The Highlands of Scotland in 1750 From MS 104 in King's Library, BM* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1898)

LINDSAY, Robert (of Pitscottie) (auth.); DALYELL, John Graham (ed.), *The Chronicles of Scotland Published from Several Old Manuscripts*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: George Ramsay & Co., 1814)
———(auth.); MACKAY, Aeneas J. G. (ed.), *The Historie and Cronicles of Scotland from the Slauchter of King James the First to the Ane Thousande Fyve Hundreith Thrie Scoir Fyftein Zeir*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1899–1911)

LOTHIAN, Duncan, *Comh-chruinneachidh, Orannaigh Gaedhealach agus Bearla* (Aberrain: Clo-Bhuailt ann le Sheumas Chalmers, airson, Wm. Sharp, ann 'n Innerness, 1780)

LHYUD, Edward (auth.); CAMPBELL, John L. & THOMSON, Derick S. (eds.), *Edward Lhuyd in the Scottish Highlands 1699–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963)

MAC-AN-TUAIRNEIR, Paruig, *Comhchruinneacha do dh'òrain taghta, Ghàidhealach, nach robh riamh roimhe clò-bhuailte gus a nis, air an tional o mheodhair, air feadh gaidhealtachd a's eileine na h-Alba* (Duneidionn: T. Stiubhard, 1813) [known as the Turner Collection]

MACDOMHNUILL, Raonuill, *Comh-chruinneachidh Orannaigh Gaidhealach* (Duneidiunn: Walter Ruddiman, 1776) [known as the Eigg Collection]

MACDONALD, Alexander, *Letters to the Argyll family: from Elizabeth Queen of England, Mary Queen of Scots, King James VI, King Charles I, King Charles II, and Others. From Originals Preserved in the General Register House* (Edinburgh: The Maitland Club, 1839)

MACDONALD, Alexander, 'Fragment of a MacKenzie MS', *TGSI*, vol. XXXVI (1931–33), 187-212

MACDONALD, James, *General View of the Agriculture of the Hebrides, or Western Isles of Scotland* (Edinburgh: R. Phillips, 1811)

MACFARLANE, Walter (comp.); MITCHELL, (Sir) Arthur (ed.), *Geographical Collections Relating to Scotland Made by W. Macfarlane*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: SHS, 1906–08)

MACKAY, Rob (Donn) (auth.); MACKAY, Mackintosh (ed.), *Songs and Poems in the Gaelic Language by Robert Mackay; with a memoir of the author, and observations on his character and poetry: Orain le Rob Donn, Bard Ainmeil Dhuthaich Mhic-Aoidh* (Inverness: R. Douglas, 1829)
———; MORRISON, Hew (ed.), *Songs and Poems in the Gaelic Language by Rob Donn, The Celebrated Reay Country Bard* (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1899)

MACKENZIE, Anne M. (ed.), *Òrain Iain Luim: Songs of John MacDonald, Bard of Keppoch* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1964)

MACKINTOSH, Lachlan (of Raigmore), *Observations on objects interesting to the Highlands of Scotland, particularly to Inverness and Inverness-shire* (Edinburgh: Caledonian Mercury Press, 1814)

MACLEOD, Angus (ed.), *Òrain Dhonnachaidh Bhàin: The Songs of Duncan Ban Macintyre* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1952)

MACLEOD, Rev. Canon Roderick C. (ed.), *The Book of Dunvegan 1340–1920*, 2 vols. (Aberdeen: Spalding Club, 1938–39)

MACNEILL, Eoin & MURPHY, Gerard (transl.), *Duanaire Finn: The Book of the Lays of Fionn*, 3 vols. (London: Irish Texts Society, 1908–53)

MACPHAIL, J. R. N. (ed.), *Highland Papers*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: SHS, 1914–34)

MACPHERSON, James, *Fingal: An Ancient Epic Poem, in Six Books: Together with Several Other Poems, Composed by Ossian, the Son of Fingal* (London: T. Becket & P.A. De Hondt, 1762)
———, *Temora: An Ancient Epic Poem in Eight Books, Together with Several Other Poems, Composed by Ossian, the Son of Fingal* (London: Becket & De Hondt, 1763)
———(auth.); LAING, Malcolm (ed.), *The Poems of Ossian, &c. Containing the Poetical Works of James Macpherson, Esq in Prose and Rhyme*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable & Co., 1805)

MATHESON, William (ed.), *The Songs of John MacCodrum: Bard to Sir James MacDonald of Sleat* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1938)

MARTIN, Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland* (London: Andrew Bell, etc., 2nd ed., 1716)
———(auth); MACLEOD, Donald J. (ed.), *A Description of the Western Isles of Scotland circa 1695* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1994)

MCLAUCHLAN, Thomas (transl.) & SKENE, William F. (comp.), *The Dean of Lismore's Book: A Selection of Ancient Gaelic Poetry* (Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas, 1862)

MCLEOD, Wilson & BATEMAN, Meg (eds.), *Duanaire na Sracaire/Songbook of the*

Pillagers: Anthology of Medieval Gaelic Poetry (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2007)

MONRO, Dean Donald (auth.); MUNRO, R. W. (ed.), *Monro's Western Isles of Scotland and the Genealogies of the Clans 1549* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1961)

MURRAY (of Glendook), (Sir) Thomas, *The Laws and Acts of Parliament made by King James the First, Second, Third, Fourth Fifth, Queen Mary, King James Sixth, King Charles the First, King Charles the Second who now presently reigns, Kings and Queen of Scotland: Collected and Extracted, from the Publick Records of the said Kingdom* (Edinburgh: Printed by David Lindsay, 1681)

NESS, John William, *A Treatise on the Game Laws of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Michael Anderson, 1818)

Ó BAOILL, Colm (ed.), *Bàrdachd Shìlis na Ceapaich c.1660–c. 1779* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1972)
———(ed.), *Eachann Bacach agus Baird eile de Chloinn Ghill-Eathain/Eachann Bacach and other MacLean Poets* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1979)
———(ed.) & BATEMAN, Meg (transl.), *Gàir nan Clàrsach: The Harps' Cry* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1994)

PATTEN, Rev. Robert, *The History of the Late Rebellion* (London: J. Baker & T. Warner, 1717)

PENNANT, Thomas, *A Tour in Scotland 1769* (Chester: John Monk, 1771)
———, *A Tour in Scotland, and Voyage to the Hebrides, 1772*, 2 vols. (Chester: John Monk, 1774; London: Benjamin White, 1776)
———& SIMMONS, Andrew (ed.), *A Tour in Scotland and a Voyage to the Hebrides 1772* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1998), 224.
———, *A Tour in Scotland 1769* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2000)

POCOCKE, Richard (auth.); KEMP, Daniel William (ed.), *Tours in Scotland 1747, 1750, 1760* (Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable, 1887)

QUIGGIN, E. C. (comp.); FRASER, James (ed.), *Poems from the Book of the Dean of Lismore* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1937)

RAE, Rev. Peter, *History of the Late Rebellion* (London: A. Millar, 1746)

RAMSAY (of Ochtertyre), James (auth.); ALLARDYCE, Alexander (ed.), *Scotland and Scotsmen in the 18th Century, from the MSS of James Ramsay Esq. of Ochtertyre*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1888)

ROBERTSON, James, *General View of the Agriculture in the County of Perth* (Perth: Board of Agriculture, 1799)

ROSS, Neil (ed.), *Heroic Poetry from the Book of the Dean of Lismore* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1939)

SINCLAIR, (Sir) John (ed.), *The Old Statistical Account of Scotland*, 21 vols. (Edinburgh: William Creech, 1791–99)
———; WITHRINGTON, Donald J. & GRANT, Ian R. (eds.), *The Statistical Account of*

Scotland, 20 vols. (Wakefield: EP, 1975–1983)

STEWART, Alexander & STEWART, Donald (eds.), *Cochruinneacha Taoghta de Shaothair nam Bard Gaëleach: A Choice Collection of the Works of the Highland Bards, Collected in the Highlands and Isles*, 2 vols. (Duneidin: Stiuart, 1804)

STEWART-MURRAY, John J. H. H. (Seventh Duke of Atholl) (ed.), *Chronicles of the Atholl and Tullibardine Families*, 5 vols. (Edinburgh: Ballantyne Press, 1908)

STUART, John, *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, 2 vols. (Aberdeen: Spalding Club, 1856; Edinburgh: Spalding Club, 1867)

STUART, John Sobieski Stolberg & STUART, Charles Edward, *The Costume of the Clans* (Edinburgh: John Menzies, 1845)

———, *Lays of the Deer Forest*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1848)

STUART, John, *et al* (eds.), *Rotuli Scaccarii Regum Scotorum=The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland 1264–1600*, 23 vols. (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1878–1908)

TAYLOR, John (auth.); CHANDLER, John (ed.), *Travels Through Stuart Britain: The Adventures of John Taylor, the Water Poet* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1999)

THOMSON, Derick S. (ed.), *The MacDiarmid MS Anthology: Poems and Songs Mainly Anonymous from the Collection dated 1770* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1992)

———, *Gaelic Poetry in the Eighteenth Century: A Bilingual Anthology* (Aberdeen: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1993)

THOMSON, John M., PAUL, James B., STEVENSON, John Horne & DICKSON, William K. (eds.), *Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum*, 11 vols. (Edinburgh: General Register House, 1882–1914)

THOMSON, R. L. (ed.), *Foirm na h-Urrnuidheadh: John Carswell's Gaelic Translations of the Book of Common Order* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1970)

TURBERVILLE, George, *Turberville's Booke of Hunting, 1576* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908)

TWITI, William (auth.); DANIELSSON, Bror (ed.), *The Art of Hunting* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1977)

WATSON, J. Carmichael (ed.), *Orain agus Luinneagan Gàidhlig le Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh/Gaelic Songs of Mary MacLeod* (London; Glasgow: Blackie & Son, 1934)

WATSON, William J. (ed.), *Scottish Verse from the Book of the Dean of Lismore* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1937)

XENOPHON & ARRIAN (auths.); PHILLIPS, A. A. & WILLCOCK, M. M. (eds.), *Xenophon and Arrian: On Hunting (ΚΙΝΗΓΕΤΙΚΟΣ)* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1999)

3. Secondary Sources

AILLEASACH, 'Marbhrann do Mhurchadh Mac Alasdair', *H*, vol. III, no. 130 (6 Nov., 1875), 3

ALCOCK, Leslie, 'An Heroic Age: War and Society in Northern Britain, AD 450–850', *PSAS*, vol. 118 (1988), 327-34

———, 'Image and Icon in Pictish Sculpture', in R. Michael Spearman & John Higgit (eds.), *The Age of Migrating Ideas: Early Medieval Art in Northern Britain and Ireland* (Edinburgh; Stroud: National Museums of Scotland & Alan Sutton, 1993), 230-36

———, 'From Realism to Caricature: Reflections on Insular Depictions of Animals and People', *PSAS*, vol. 128 (1998), 515-36

ALEXANDER, Henry, 'Gaick', *SMCJ*, vol. XIV (1917), 178-90

ALLEN, J. Romilly & ANDERSON, Joseph, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, 2 vols. (Balgavies, Angus: Pinkfoot, 1993)

ALLEN, Michael J. B., 'The Chase: The Development of a Renaissance Theme', *Comparative Literature*, vol. XX (1968), 301-12

ALLSEN, Thomas T., *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006)

ALMOND, Richard, 'Medieval Hunting: Ruling Classes and the Community', *Medieval History*, vol. 3 (1993), 147-55

———, 'Medieval Deer Hunting', *DJBDS*, vol. 9, no. 5 (Nov., 1994), 315-18

———, *Medieval Hunting* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 2003)

ALMQVIST, Bo, Ó CATHÁIN, Séamas & Ó HÉALAÍ, Pádraig (eds.), *The Heroic Process: Form, Function and Fantasy in Folk Epic* (Dun Laoghaire: The Glendale Press, 1987)

ALTHERR, Thomas & REIGER, John F., 'Academic Historians and Hunting: A Call for More and Better Scholarship', *Environmental History Review* 19 (1995), 39-56

ANDERSON, John K., *Hunting in the Ancient World* (Berkeley, California; London: University of California Press, 1985)

ANDERSON, Joseph, *Scotland in Early Christian Times*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1881)

ANDERSON, Mark L. (auth.); TAYLOR, Charles J. (ed.), *A History of Scottish Forestry*, 2 vols. (London: Nelson, 1967)

ANGART, O., '"The Battle of Otterburn" and the "Hunting of the Cheviot"', *Studia Neophilologica*, vol. 47 (1974), 7-13

ANON., '"Call Ghaig" na othaichear Dubh Bhail-a'-Chrodhain', *MT*, vol. 7, no. 45 (09 Jun., 1899), 354-55

———, 'Cruachan a' Cheathaich', *MT*, vol. VI, no. 48 (27 May, 1898), 384

———, 'Diarmaid O' Duibhne', *H*, vol. III, no. 137 (27 Nov., 1874), 3
———, *Faoghaid nam Fiadh ann an Eilean Leodhais–Hunting the Deer in Lewis* (New Glasgow, N. S.: S. M. MacKenzie, 1888)
———, 'Mu Shealg Dheirinneach Oisein', *An Gàidheal*, leabh. V, air. 50 (Apr., 1876), 45-46
———, 'Murdoch MacIain and the Green Fairy of Gaick Forest', *CMon*, vol. XVI, no. 12 (Sep., 1908), 236
———, 'Oichair Dubh Bhaile-Chrodhain', *MT*, vol. III, no. 14 (Oct., 1894), 6-7
———, 'Oran do Dh-Ailain Muirdetach', *MT*, vol. II, no. 5 (Jul., 1893), 8
———, 'Oran le Donnachadh Brocair', *MT*, vol. II, no. 35 (Mar., 1894), 8
———, 'Oran Seilg', *An Gàidheal*, leabh. XX, earr. 4 (Am Faoilteach, 1925), 53
———, *Oran Seilg a Rinneadh do Dh'Iain Crubach, Triath Aird-Ghobhar* (Glasgow: Archibald Sinclair, 1863)
———, *Report of the Movement for Erecting a Monument to the Memory of Duncan Ban Macintyre, the Glenorchy Bard, and More Especially of the Great Public Meeting Held in St. Enoch's Hall, Glasgow, on the Evening of Thursday, February 15, 1855* (Glasgow: James Paterson, 1855)
———, *Festival in Honour of the Memory of Duncan Ban Macintyre, the Glenorchy Bard: Celtic and Masonic Gathering at Dalmally, Sept. 2, 1859* (Glasgow: James Frazer, 1860)
———, 'Sealg an Fheidh', *An Gàidheal*, leabh. XX, earr. 7 (An Giblein, 1925), 97-98
———, 'The Black Captain MacPherson" or Caiptain Dubh Bhaile Chrobhain', *H*, vol. II, no. 72 (26 Sep., 1874), 3
———, 'Thogainn Fonn air Lorg an Fheidh', *H*, vol. I, no. 15 (23 Aug., 1873), 3

ARBUTHNOT, Sharon, 'On the Name Oscar and Two Little-Known Episodes Involving the Fíon', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, vol. 51 (2006), 68-81

ARBUTHNOT, Sharon & HOLLO, Kaarina (eds.), *Fil sùil nglais—A Grey Eye Looks Back: A Festschrift in Honour of Colm Ó Baoill* (Ceann Drochaid: Clann Tuirc, 2007)

BAILEY, Richard N., 'The Meaning of the Viking-age Shaft at Dacre', *Transactions of the Cumberland & Westmorland Antiquities & Archæological Society*, vol. LXXVII (1977), 61-74

BALFOUR, J. A. & MACKENZIE, W. M. (eds.), *The Book of Arran*, 2 vols. (Glasgow: Hugh Hopkins, 1914)

BARRINGER, Judith M., *The Hunt in Ancient Greece* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001)

BARROW, G. W. S, 'Hunting and the Forest in Medieval Scotland', Presidential Address to the Scottish History Society (Unpublished speech, 1975)

BATEMAN, Meg, 'Cruth na Tìre ann am Bàrdachd Ghàidhlig an 18mh Linn', in Wilson McLeod & Máire Ní Annracháin (eds.), *Cruth na Tíre* (Baile Átha Cliath: Coiscéim, 2003), 69-89

BATH, Michael, 'Some Ancient Traditions of Longevity in Animals', *Journal of the Society for the Bibliography of Natural History*, vol. 8, no. 3 (1977), 249-58
———, 'The Legend of Caesar's Deer', *Medievalia et Humanistica: Studies in*

Medieval and Renaissance Culture, vol. 9 (1979), 53-66
———, 'The White Hart, the *Cerf Volant*, and the Wilton Diptych', in Jan Goossens & Timothy Sodmann (eds.), *Proceedings, Third International Beast Epic, Fable and Fabliau Colloquium* (Cologne; Vienna: Böhlau Verlay, 1981), 25-42, pls. 1-11
———, 'Weeping Stags and Melancholy Lovers', *Embletica: An International Journal of Emblem Studies*, vol. 1 (1986), 12-52
———, *The Image of the Stag: Iconographic Themes in Western Art* (Baden-Baden: Valentin Koerner, 1992)

BEAVER, Daniel C., 'The Great Deer Massacre: Animals, Honour, and Communication in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 38 (1999), 187-216

BELL, E. Weston, *The Scottish Deerhound: With Notes on its Origin and Characteristics* (Edinburgh: D. Douglas, 1892)

BENTON, Janetta R., *The Medieval Menagerie: Animals in the Art of the Middle Ages* (New York: Abeville Press, 1992)

BERGIN, Osborn, 'Address to Sémas mac Aonghais', *SGS*, vol. IV, pt. II (1935), 136-49

BIL, Albert, *The Shieling 1600–1840: The Case of the Central Scottish Highlands* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1990)

BIRRELL, Jean, 'Deer and Deer Farming in Medieval England', *Agricultural Historical Review*, vol. 40 (1992), 112-26
———, 'Peasant Deer Poachers in the Medieval Forest', in Richard H. Britnell & John Hatcher (eds.), *Progress and Problems in Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Edward Miller* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 68-88

BLACKMORE, Howard L., *Hunting Weapons* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1971)

BLAIR, Rev. D. B. [D. B. B], 'Faoghaid nam Fiadh', *OT*, vol. 1614 (22 Jun., 1889), 6
———, 'Oifhichear Dubh Bhaile-Chrodhain', *MT*, vol. I, no. 36 (Jan., 1893), 3
———, 'Call Gadhaig', *MT*, vol. I, no. 37 (Feb., 1893), 3

BLAXTER, (Sir) Kenneth, 'Cervinus Annos Vivere: An Account of Opinion about the Length of Life of the Deer', *British Veterinary Journal: A Monthly Review of Veterinary Science*, vol. 135 (1979), 591-99

BLÜCHEL, Kurt G. (ed.), *Game and Hunting* (Cologne: Köneman, 2000)

BLUNDELL, Rev. F. Odo, 'Notes on the Church and Some Sculptured Monuments in the Churchyard of Saint Maelrubha of Arisaig, and on an Artificial Island There; also on Some Sculptured Monuments in the Churchyard of Kilchoan', *PSAS*, vol. 45 (1910–11), 353-66

BOARDMAN, Stephen I., 'The Campbell and Charter Lordship in Medieval Argyll', in Steven Boardman & Alasdair Ross (eds.), *The Exercise of Power in Medieval Scotland, c. 1200–1500* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), 95-117

BRANDER, Michael, *Hunting and Shooting: From Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1971)
———, *Deer Stalking in Britain* (London: The Sportsman's Press, 1986)

BREEZE, D., 'The Great Myth of Caledon', *Scottish Forestry: The Journal of the Royal Scottish Forestry Society*, vol. 46 (1992), 331-35

BROWN, Keith M., *Bloodfeud in Scotland, 1573–1625: Violence, Justice and Politics in an Early Modern Society* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986)
———, *Noble Society in Scotland: Wealth, Family and Culture from Reformation to Revolution* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000)

BROWN, Michael B., 'White Red Deer: Legend, Myth and Fact', *DJBDS*, vol. 9, no. 6 (Mar., 1995), 370-72
———, 'The Oldest Deer', *DJBDS*, vol. 9, no. 9 (Jan., 1996), 588-91

BRUFORD, Alan, *Gaelic Folk-Tales and Mediaeval Romances: A Study of the Early Modern Irish 'Romantic Tales' and their Oral Derivatives* (Dublin: The Folklore of Ireland Society, 1969)
———, 'The Singing of Fenian and Similar Lays in Scotland', in Hugh Shields (ed.), *Ballad Research: The Stranger in Ballad Narrative and other Topics* (Dublin: Folk Music Society of Ireland, 1986), 55-70
———, 'Oral and Literary Fenian Tales', in Bo Almqvist, Séamas Ó Catháin & Pádraig Ó Héalaí (eds.), *The Heroic Process: Form, Function and Fantasy in Folk Epic* (Dun Laoghaire: The Glendale Press, 1987), 25-56

BRUSEWITZ, Gunnar, *Hunting: Hunters, Game, Weapons and Hunting Methods from the Remote Past to the Present Day* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969)

BRYDALL, Robert, 'Notice of a Group of Carved Grave-slabs at Dalmally, Argyleshire', *PSAS*, vol. 31 (1896–97), 81-85

BULLOUGH, Donald, ''Imagines Regum' and their Significance in the Early Medieval West', in Giles Robertson & George Henderson (eds.), *Studies in Memory of David Talbot Rice* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1975), 223-76

CALDER, Rev. George, 'The Bard of Glenorchy', *GNB*, vol. II, no. 2 (An t-Earrach, 1907), 139-50

CAMERON, Rev. Alexander, 'Ossianic Ballads, collected by the late Rev. Dr Macdonald', *TGSI*, vol. XIII (1886–87), 269-300

CAMPBELL, (Lord) Archibald, *Records of Argyll: Legends, Traditions, and Recollections of Argyllshire Highlanders* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1885)

CAMPBELL, Donald, 'Sketches Founded on Highland Tradition', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. XVI (Jun., 1849), 367-76

CAMPBELL, Duncan, *Reminiscences and Reflections of an Octogenarian Highlander* (Inverness: Northern Counties Publishing Co., 1910)
———, *The Book of Garth and Fortingall: Historical Sketches relating to the*

District of Garth, Fortingall, Athole, and Breadalbane (Inverness: Northern Counties Publishing Co., 1888)
———, *The Lairds of Glenlyon: Historical Sketches relating to the Districts of Appin, Breadalbane* (Perth: S. Cowan & Co., 1886)

CAMPBELL, John D. S. (Duke of Argyll), *Adventures in Legend: Being the Last Historic Legends of the Western Highlands* (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co., 1898)

CAMPBELL, John F. (ed.), *Leabhar na Féinne. Vol. I. Gaelic Texts: Heroic Gaelic Ballads collected in Scotland chiefly from 1512 to 1871* (London: Spottiswoode, 1872)
———(coll.), *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, 4 vols. (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1890–93)
———(coll.), *Popular Tales of the West Highlands Vol. I* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1994)
———(coll.), *Popular Tales of the West Highlands Vol. II* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1994)
———(coll.); MCKAY, John G. (transc. & transl.), WATSON, William J., MACLEAN, D. & ROSE, H. J. (eds.), *More West Highland Tales Vol. I* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1994)
———(coll.); MCKAY, John G. (transc. & transl.), WATSON, William J., MACLEAN, D. & ROSE, H. J. (eds.), *More West Highland Tales Vol. II* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1994)

CAMPBELL, John Lorne (comp. & ed.); MACCORMICK, Donald (coll.), MCDONALD, Fr Allan (transl.), & COLLINSON, Francis (transc.), *Hebridean Folksongs: A Collection of Waulking Songs I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969)
———(ed. & transl.), COLLINSON, Francis (trancs.), *Hebridean Folksongs II: Waulking Songs from Barra, South Uist, Eriskay and Benbecula* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977)
———, *Hebridean Folksongs III: Waulking Songs from Vatersay, Barra, South Uist, Eriskay and Benbecula* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981)
———(auth.); CHEAPE, Hugh (ed.), *A Very Civil People: Hebridean, Folk History and Tradition* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2000)

CAMPBELL, Rev. John G., 'Fionn's Ransom', *TGSI*, vol. XV (1888–89), 46-62
———, *The Fians; or, Stories, Poems, & Traditions of Fionn and his Warrior Band*, Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition, Argyllshire Series, vol. IV (London: David Nutt, 1891)
———, (coll.); WALLACE, Jessie & MACINNES, Duncan (eds.), *Clan Traditions and Popular Tales of the Western Highlands and Islands*, Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition, Argyllshire Series, vol. V (London: David Nutt, 1895)
———, *Superstitions of the West Highlands and Islands* (Glasgow: James MacLehose & Sons, 1900)
———, *Witchcraft and Second Sight in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (Glasgow: James MacLehose & Sons, 1902)
———; BLACK, Ronald (ed.), *The Gaelic Otherworld* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2005)

CAMPBELL, Marion (of Kilberry) & SANDEMAN, Mary, 'Mid Argyll: An Archaeological Survey', *PSAS*, vol. 95 (1961–62), 1-125

CANNADINE, David & PRICE, Simon (eds.), *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987)

CANTOR, Leonard M., 'Forests, Chases, Parks, and Warrens', in Leonard Cantor (ed.), *The English Medieval Landscape* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 56-85
———& HATHERLY, J., 'The Medieval Parks of England', *Geography*, vol. 64, no. 2 (1979), 71-85

CARAID NA GAIDHLIG, 'Oidhche 'n Oicheir Dubh', *Teachdaire nan Gaidheal*, leabh. II, air. 11 (An Liunasdail, 1927), 3-4

CARMICHAEL, Alexander, 'Cumha an t-Sealgair (The Hunter's Lament)', *H* (Aug., 1881), 52-54
———(coll. & ed.); WATSON, James Carmichael & MATHESON, Angus (eds.), *Carmina Gadelica [Ortha nan Gàidheal]: Hymns and Cantations,* 6 vols. (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 2nd edn., 1900–1972)

CARRINGTON, Ann J., 'The Horseman and the Falcon: Mounted Falconers in Pictish Sculpture', *PSAS*, vol. 126 (1996), 459-68
———, 'David Imagery and the Chase Motif in Pictish Sculpture', *Studia Celtica*, vol. 30 (1996), 147-58

CARTMILL, Matt, *A View to a Death in the Morning: Hunting and Nature through History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993)

CASSELS, Kenneth A. H., 'Traditional Deer Coursing in the Highlands', *DJBDS*, vol. 1, no. 5 (Feb., 1968), 174-76
———, *A Most Perfect Creature of Heaven: The Scottish Deer Hound* (Shaffron Aalden: K. Cassels, 1997)

CHADBOURNE, Kate, 'The Voices of Hounds: Heroic Dogs and Men in the Finn Ballads and Tales', in Joseph Falaky Nagy & Leslie Ellen Jones (eds.), *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: CSANA Yearbook 3-4* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 28-41

CHALMERS, Patrick, *The Ancient Sculptured Monuments of the County of Angus* (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1848)

CHAMBERS, Robert, *Domestic Annals of Scotland: From the Reformation to the Revolution*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: W. & R. Chambers, 1858–59)

CHISHOLM, Colin, 'Traditions of Strathglass I', *CMag*, vol. VI, no. LXI (Nov., 1880), 35-37; 'Traditions of Strathglass II', vol. VI, no. LXII (Dec., 1880), 74-77; 'Traditions of Strathglass III', vol. VI; no. LXIII (Jan., 1881), 116-19; 'Traditions of Strathglass IV', vol. VI, no. LXIV (Feb., 1881), 146-49; 'Traditions of Strathglass V', vol. VI; no. LXV (Mar., 1881), 180-83; 'Traditions of Strathglass VI', vol. VI, no. LXVI (Apr., 1881), 219-22; 'Traditions of Strathglass VII', vol. VI, no. LXVII (May, 1881), 265-69; 'Traditions of Strathglass VIII', vol. VI; no. LXVIII (Jun., 1881), 310-13; 'Traditions of Strathglass IX', vol. VI, no. LXIX (Jul., 1881), 357-61; 'Traditions of Strathglass X', vol. VI, no. LXX (Aug., 1881), 410-12; 'Traditions of Strathglass XI', vol. VI, no. LXXI (Sep., 1881), 452-55
———, 'Orain agus Sgeulachdan Shrath-Ghlais', *TGSI*, vol. X (1881–83), 220-39
———, 'Old Gaelic Songs', *TGSI*, vol. XI (1884–85), 216-40
———, 'Unpublished Old Gaelic Songs', *TGSI*, vol. XII (1885–86), 131-66

CLOSE-BROOKS, Joanna, *The Highlands* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1986)
———& STEVENSON, Robert B. K., *Dark Age Sculpture: A Selection from the Collections of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1982)

CLUTTON-BROCK, Juliet, 'The Master of Game: The Animals and Rituals of Medieval Venery', *Biologist*, vol. 31, no. 3 (1984), 167-71
———, 'Origins of the Dog: Domestication and Early History', in James Serpell (ed.), *The Domestic Dog: Its Evolution, Behaviour and Interaction with People* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 7-20

COLQUHOUN, John, *The Moor and the Loch: Containing Minute Instructions in all Highland Sports* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 4th edn., 1878)

COWAN, Edward J., 'James VI, King of Scots and the Destruction of the Gaidhealtachd', in Bernard Sellin (ed.), *Écosse des Highlands Mythes et Réalité: Actes du Colloque International, Brest, 22–23 Mars 2002* (Brest: Le Centre de Recherche Bretonne et Celtqiue, Université de Bretagne Occidentale, 2003), 149-66
———, 'The Discovery of the Gàidhealtachd in Sixteenth Century Scotland', *TGSI*, vol. LX (1997–98), 259-84

C. M. P., 'Oran na Comhachaig (The Song of the Owl)', *GNB*, vol. V, no. 2 (An t-Earrach, 1908), 169-87

CRAIGIE, W. A., 'The Legend of the Fiann in the Highland Bards', *TGSG*, vol. 3 (1888), 131-68
———, 'Three Tales of the Fiann', *SR*, vol. XXIV (1894), 270-97

CRUDEN, Stewart H., *The Early Christian and Pictish Monuments of Scotland* (London: HMSO, 1957)

C. S., 'Soiridh', *An Gàidheal*, leabh. V, air. 50 (Apr., 1876), 44

CUMMINS, John G., *The Hound and the Hawk: The Art of Medieval Hunting* (London: Phoenix Press, 2001)

CUMMINS, Walter A., *The Picts and Their Symbols* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1999)

CUPPLES, George, *Scotch Deer Hounds and Their Masters* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1894)

CURLE, Cecil L., 'The Chronology of the Early Christian Monuments of Scotland', *PSAS*, vol. 74 (1939–40), 60-116

CURRIE, Archibald, *A Description of the Antiquities and Scenery of the Parish of North Knapdale, Argyleshire* (Glasgow: W. R. M'Phun, 1830)

DAVIDSON, Hilda Ellis & CHAUDHRI, Anna, 'The Hair and the Dog', *Folklore*, vol. 104 (1993), 151-63

DAY, J. Wentworth, *The Dog in Sport* (London: George G. Harrap & Co., 1938)

DAVIES, Sioned & JONES, Nerys Ann (eds.), *The Horse in Celtic Culture: Medieval Welsh Perspectives* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997)

DAWSON, Jane E., 'The Fifth Earl of Argyle, Gaelic Lordship and Political Power in Sixteenth-century Scotland', *SHR*, vol. LXVII, no. 183 (1988), 1-27

———, 'The Origins of the "Road to the Isles": Trade, Communications and Campbell Power in the Early Modern Scotland', in Roger Mason & Norman Macdougall (eds.), *People and Power in Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1992), 74-103

———, 'The Gaidhealtachd and the Emergence of the Scottish Highlands', in Brendan Bradshaw & Peter Roberts (eds.), *British Consciousness and Identity: The Making of Britain, 1533–1707* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 259-300

———, 'Clan, Kin and Kirk: The Campbells and the Scottish Reformation', in N. Scott Amos, Andrew Pettegree & Henk van Nierop (eds.), *The Education of a Christian Society: Humanism and the Reformation in Britain and the Netherlands* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 211-42

DEQUOY, Alfred W., *The Irish Wolfhound in Irish Literature and Law* ([McLean, Va]: [A. W. DeQuoy], 1977)

DEVINE, T. M., *Clanship to Crofters' War: The Social Transformation of the Scottish Highlands* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994)

———, 'A Conservative People? Scottish Gaeldom in the Age of Improvement', in T. M. Devine (ed.), *Eighteenth Century Scotland* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), 225-36

DEWAR, John (coll.); MACKECHNIE, Rev. John (ed.), *The Dewar Manuscripts, Vol. 1: Scottish West Highland Folk Tales* (Glasgow: W. MacLellan, 1964)

DEWAR, Pía, 'Kingship Imagery in Classical Panegyric for Scottish Chiefs', in Wilson McLeod, James E. Fraser & Anja Gunderloch (eds.), *Cànan & Cultur / Language & Culture: Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 3* (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2006), 39-55

DICKINSON, W. C., 'The *toschederach*', *Juridical Review*, vol. 53 (1941), 85-111

———, 'The Administration of Justice in Medieval Scotland', *AUR*, vol. XXXIV, no. 107 (Autumn, 1952), 338-51

———; DUNCAN, Archibald A. M. (ed.), *Scotland from the Earliest Times to 1603* (Oxford: Clarendon, 3rd edn., 1977)

DODGSHON, Robert A., *Land and Society in Early Scotland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981)

———, 'Law and Landscape in Early Scotland', in Alan Harding (ed.), *Law-makers and Law-making in British History: Papers Presented to the Edinburgh Legal History Conference, 1977* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1980), 127-45

———, 'Medieval Rural Scotland', in Graeme Whittington & Ian D. Whyte (eds.), *An Historical Geography of Scotland* (London: Academic Press, 1983), 47-71

———, 'West Highland Chiefdoms, 1500–1745: A Study in Redistributive Exchange', in Rosalind Mitchison & Peter Roebuck (eds.), *Economy and Society in Scotland and Ireland, 1500–1939* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1988), 27-37

———, *From Chiefs to Landlords: Social and Economic Change in the Western Highlands and Islands, c. 1493–1820* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998)
———, *The Age of the Clans: The Highlands from Somerled to the Clearances* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2002)

DORSON, Richard, *Folklore and Fakelore: Essays Towards a Discipline of Folklore Studies* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1976)

DRISCOLL, Stephen T., 'Power and Authority in Early Historic Scotland: Pictish Symbol Stones and other Documents', in John Gledhill, Barbara Bender & Mogens T. Larsen (eds.), *State and Society: The Emergence ad Development of Social Hierarchy and Political Centralization* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 215-36

DRUMMOND, James, *Sculptured Monuments in Iona and the West Highlands* (Edinburgh: Printed for the Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1935)

DRUMMOND-NORIE, W., 'Famous Highland Bards. No. III.–Duncan Ban Macintyre', *CMon*, vol. III, no. 2 (Nov., 1894), 22-25

DUN-AILEAN, 'A Gaelic Song on the Gaick Forest Calamity at the Beginning of this Century', *NC*, no. 210 (7 Jan., 1885), 3

DUNNE, John, 'The Fenian Traditions of Sliabh-na-m-Ban', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. I (1849–51), 333-62

DUKE, Rev. William, 'Notice of the Fabric of St Vigeans Church, Forfarshire; With Notice and Photographs of Early Sculpted Stones Recently Discovered There, &c.', *PSAS*, vol. 9 (1870–72), 481-98

EPSTEIN, Hans J., 'The Origins and Earliest History of Falconry', *Isis*, vol. XXIV, no. 98 (Autumn, 1943), 497-509

ERSKINE, Stuart, *Braemar: An Unconventional Guide Book and Literary Souvenir* (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1898)

ERGERT, Bernd E., 'Early Treatises on Hunting', in Kurt G. Blüchel (ed.), *Game and Hunting* (Cologne: Köneman, 2000), 102-31

FAIRWEATHER, Barbara, *Highland Heritage* (Glencoe: Glencoe and North Lorn Folk Museum, 1984)

FENTON, Alexander & KISBAN, Eszter (eds.), *Food in Change: Eating Habits from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (Edinburgh: John Donald in association with the National Museums of Scotland, 1986)

FERGUSSON, Charles, 'The Gaelic Names of Trees, Shrubs, and Plants', *TGSI*, vol. VII (1877–78), 127-56
———, 'The Gaelic Names of Birds. Part I.', *TGSI*, vol. XI (1884–85), 240-60
———, 'Gaelic Names of Birds. Part II.', *TGSI*, vol. XII (1885–86), 28-93
———, 'Sketches of the Early History, Legends, and Traditions of Strathardle and its Glens. Part III.', *TGSI*, vol. XIX (1893–94), 245-71
———, 'Sketches of the Early History, Legends, and Traditions of Strathardle and its

Glens. Part IV.', *TGSI*, vol. XX (1894–96), 248-74
———, 'Sketches of the Early History, Legends, and Traditions of Strathardle and its Glens. No. VII', *TGSI*, vol. XXIII (1898–99), 154-78
———, 'Sketches of the Early History, Legends, and Traditions of Strathardle and its Glens. No. VIII', *TGSI*, vol. XXIV (1899–1901), 195-231
———, 'The Macgregors of Roro', *TGSI*, vol. XXIV (1899–1901), 413-28

FERGUSSON, (Sir) James, *The White Hind and Other Discoveries* (London: Faber & Faber, 1963)

FIFE, J., 'Legal Aspects of the Hunting Scene in "Powyll"', *BBCS*, vol. XXXIX (1992), 71-79

FINLAYSON, Bill, *Wild Harvesters: The First People in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books with Historic Scotland, 1998)

FINLAYSON, John (Drumbuie), 'Fionnlagh Dubh nam Fiadh (Dark Finlay of the Deer)', *Toch.*, no. 39 (1986), 158-59

FISHER, Ian, *Early Medieval Sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands* (Edinburgh: RCAHMS and the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 2001)

FITTIS, Robert Scott, *Sports and Pastimes of Scotland* (East Ardsely: EP, 1975)

FLEMING, Arnold, *Falconry and Falcons* (Wakefield: EP, 1974)

FLORES, Nona C. (ed.), *Animals in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays* (London; New York: Garland, 1996)

FORSYTH, Rev. William, *In the Shadow of Cairngorm: Chronicles of the United Parishes of Abernethy and Kincardine* (Inverness: Northern Counties Publishing Co., 1900)

FOSTER, Sally M. (ed.), *The St Andrews Sarcophagus: A Pictish Masterpiece and its International Connections* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998)
———, *Picts, Gaels and Scots: Early Historic Scotland* (London: B. T. Batsford, 2004)

FRASER, G. M., 'Ben Dorain: The Sacred Mountain of the Highlands', *An Gàidheal*, leabh. XX, earr. 10 (An t-Iuchar, 1925), 148-50

FRASER, John, 'The Gaelic *Notitiae* in the Book of Deer', *SGS*, vol. V (1938), 51-66

FRASER-MACKINTOSH, Charles, *Letters of Two Centuries: Chiefly Connected with Inverness and the Highlands, from 1616 to 1815* (Inverness: A. & W. MacKenzie, 1890)

FRATER, Anne C., 'The Gaelic Tradition up to 1750', in Douglas Gifford & Dorothy McMillan (eds.), *A History of Scottish Women's Writing* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 1-14
———, 'Women of the Gàidhealtachd and their Songs to 1750', in Elizabeth Ewan & Maureen M. Meikle (eds.), *Women in Scotland, c. 1100–c. 1750* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), 56-66

GARDNER, Keith S., *In Pursuit: Early Iconography of British Sporting Art: Being a Review of the Artistic Portrayal of Hunting with Hawk and Hound from Celtic to Post-medieval Times* (Newmarket: British Sporting Art Trust, *c.* 2003)

GASKILL, Howard, 'What Did James Macpherson Really Leave on Display at His Publisher's Shop in 1762?', *SGS*, vol. XVI (1990), 67-89
———(ed.), *Ossian Revisited* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991)

GASSETT, José Ortega y (auth.); WESCOTT, Howard B. (transl.), *Meditations on Hunting* (Belgrade, Montana: Wilderness Adventures Press, 1995)

GEDDES, Arthur, 'Some Gaelic Tales of Herding Deer or Reindeer: Traditions of the Habitat and Transhumance of Semi-domesticated 'Deer' and or Race Rivalry', *Folklore*, vol. LXII (1951), 296-311
———, *The Songs of Craig and Ben: Lays, Laments, Love Songs and Lilts of the Mountaineers and Cragsmen of the Highlands and Isles*, vol. 1, *Songs of Daring, Praise and Worship* (Edinburgh: Sefif, 1951); vol. 2, *Songs of Farwell, Love and Laughter* (Glasgow: William Maclellan, 1961)

GIBSON, Alex J. S. & SMOUT, T. C., 'Food and Hierarchy in Scotland, 1550-1650', in Leah Leneman (ed.), *Perspectives in Scottish Social History Essays in Honour of Rosalind Mitchison* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), 33-52
———, 'Scottish Food and Scottish, History, 1500–1800', in Rab A. Houston & Ian D. Whyte (eds.), *Scottish Society, 1500–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 59-84
———, *Prices, Food and Wages in Scotland, 1500–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)

GILBERT, John M., 'Crossbows on Pictish Stones', *PSAS*, vol. 107 (1975–76), 316-17
———, *Hunting and Hunting Reserves in Medieval Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1979)
———, 'The Statutes of Ettrick Forest, 1499', in David Sellar (ed.), *Miscellany Two* (Edinburgh: The Stair Society, 1984), 41-60

GILLIES, William, 'The Poem in Praise of Ben Dobhrain', *Lines Review*, vol. 63 (Dec., 1977), 42-48
———, 'Some Aspects of Campbell History', *TGSI*, vol. L (1976–78), 256-95
———, 'Courtly and Satiric Poems in the Book of the Dean of Lismore', *SS*, vol. 21 (1977), 35-53
———, 'Heroes and Ancestors', in Bo Almqvist, Séamas Ó Catháin & Pádraig Ó Héalaí (eds.), *The Heroic Process: Form, Function and Fantasy in Folk Epic* (Dun Laoghaire: The Glendale Press, 1987), 57-73
———, 'Gaelic: The Classical Tradition', in R. D. S. Jack (ed.), *The History of Scottish Literature Vol. 1: Origins to 1660* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1989), 245-61
———, 'Gaelic Songs of the 'Forty-five', *SS*, vol. 30 (1991), 19-58
———(ed.), *Gaelic and Scotland: Alba agus a' Ghàidhlig* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1989)
———, 'The Invention of Tradition, Highland-Style', in A. A. MacDonald, Michael Lynch & Iain B. Cowan (eds.), *The Renaissance in Scotland: Studies in Literature, Religion, History and Culture* (Leiden; New York: E. J. Brill, 1994), 144-56

———, 'The Clanranald Histories: Authorship and Purpose', in Geraint Evans, Bernard Martin & Jonathan Woods (eds.), *Origins and Revivals*: *Proceedings of the First Australian Conference of Celtic Studies* (Sydney: Australia Celtic Foundations Series: 2000 [2002]), 315-40
———, 'Gun ann ach an ceò: "Nothing left but their Mist": Farewell and Elegy in Gaelic poetry', in Sally Mapstone (ed.), *Older Scots literature. Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Scottish Language and Literature Medieval and Renaissance* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2005), 370-96
———, 'Traditional Gaelic Women's Songs', in Marco Fazzini (ed.), *Alba Literaria: A History of Scottish Literature* (Venice: Amos Edizioni, 2005), 165-78

GILLIES, Rev. William A., *In Famed Breadalbane: The Story of the Antiquities, Lands, and People of a Highland District* (Perth: The Munro Press, 1938)
———, 'Extracts from the Baron Court Books of Menzies', *TGSI*, vol. XXXIX/XL (1942–50), 103-17

GLASIER, Philip, *Falconry and Hawking* (London: Batsford, 2nd ed., 1986)

GLASRACH, 'Sealg Bheinn-Eidir', *An Gàidheal*, leabh. IV, air. 39 (Mar., 1875), 81-85

GOODARE, Julian, *The Government of Scotland, 1560–1625* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

GOOSSENS, Jan & SODMANN, Timothy (eds.), *Proceedings, Third International Beast Epic, Fable and Fabliau Colloquium* (Cologne; Vienna: Böhlau Verlay, 1981)

GORDON, C. A., 'The Pictish Animals Observed', *PSAS*, vol. 98 (1964–65/1965–66), 215-24

GRAHAM, Robert C., *The Carved Stones of Islay* (Glasgow: James MacLehose & Sons, 1895)

GRANNDA, Gilleasbuig, *Dain agus Orain* (Inbhirnis: Mac Illeathan & Paterson, 1863)

GRASSBY, Richard, 'The Decline of Falconry in Early Modern England', *Past and Present*, vol. 157 (1997), 37-62

GRANT, Alexander, 'Earls and Earldoms in Late Medieval Scotland (*c.* 1310–1460)', in John Bossy & Peter Jupp (eds.), *Essays Presented to Michael Roberts* (Belfast: Blackstaff, 1976), 24-40

GRANT, John, *Legends of the Braes o' Mar* (Aberdeen: Murray, 1910)

GRANT, Katherine W., 'The Influence of Scenery and Climate on the Music and Poetry of the Highlands', *The Caledonian Medical Journal*, vol. 5 (1902-04), 105-41
———, 'Cailleach Bheur', *An Sgeulaiche*, leabh. II, air. 2 (An Samhradh, 1910), 172-85.
———, *Myth and Tradition and Song from Argyll* (Oban: Oban Times, 1925)

GRANT (of Laggan), (Mrs.) Anne, *Essays on the Superstitions of the Highlanders of Scotland*, 2 vols. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown, 1811)
———, *Letters from the Mountains*, 2 vols. (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longman, 6th edn., 1845)

GRANT, Raymond, *The Royal Forests of England* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1990)

GRAY, Affleck, *Legends of the Cairngorms* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1987)

GREEN, Miranda J., *Animals in Celtic Life and Myth* (London: Routledge, 1992)

GREGORY, Donald, *The History of the Western Highlands and Isles of Scotland, from A.D. 1493–A.D. 1625* (London: Hamilton & Adams, 2nd edn., 1881)

GRIMBLE, Augustus, *Deer-stalking and the Deer Forests of Scotland* (London: Kegan Paul, 1901)

GRIMBLE, Ian, *Highland Man* (Inverness: Highlands & Islands Development Board, 1980)
———, *The World of Rob Donn* (Edinburgh: Saltire Society, 1999)
———, *Clans and Chiefs* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2000)

GUNN, Rev. Adam & MACKAY, John (eds.), *Sutherland and Reay Country: History, Antiquities, Folklore, Topography, Regiments, Ecclesiastical Records, Poetry and Music, etc.* (Glasgow: John MacKay, Celtic Monthly Office, 1897)

HALL, Robert, *The Highland Sportsman: A Comprehensive Guide to the Highlands of Scotland for the Sportsman and Tourist* (London: Highland Sportsman, 1883)

HAMMERSLEY, G., 'The Revival of the Forest Laws under Charles I', *History*, vol. 45 (1960), 85-102

HANAWALT, Barbara, 'Men's Games, King's Deer: Poaching in Medieval England', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, vol. 18, no. 2 (1988), 175-93

HANAWAY, William L., 'The Concept of the Hunt in Persian Literature', *Boston Museum Bulletin*, vol. 69 (1971), 21-35

HARDY, James, 'History of the Wolf in Scotland', *History of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club*, vol. 4 (1856–62), 268-92

HART-DAVIS, Duff, *Monarchs of the Glen: A History of Deer-stalking in the Scottish Highlands* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1978)

HARTING, James E., *British Animals Extinct within Historic Times: With Some Account of British Wild White Cattle* (London: Trübner, 1880)
———, *A Short History of the Wolf in Britain* (Whitstable: Pryor, *c.* 1994)

HASKINS, Charles H., 'The *De Arte Venandi cum Avibus* of the Emperor Frederick II', *English Historical Review*, vol. 36, no. 143 (July, 1921), 334-55
———, 'Some Early Treatises on Falconry', *Romantic Review*, vol. 13 (1922), 18-27

HENDERSON, Angus [A. M. E.], 'Feidh is Frithean', *GNB*, vol. XI, no. 1 (An t-Earrach, 1914), 36-52; 'Feidh is Frithean II', vol. XI, no. 2 (An Samhradh, 1914), 220-35; 'Feidh is Frithean III', vol. XI, no. 3 (Am Foghar, 1914), 298-311; 'Feidh is Frithean IV', vol. XI, no. 4 (An Geamhradh, 1914), 483-98

HENDERSON, George, *Leabhar nan Gleann: The Book of Glens* (Edinburgh: Norman MacLeod, 1898)
———, 'Lamh-Sgriobhainnean Mhic-Neacail', *TGSI*, vol. XXVII (1908–11), 340-409

HENDERSON, George & HENDERSON, Isabel, *The Art of the Picts: Sculpture and Metal Work in Early Medieval Scotland* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004)

HENDERSON, Isabel, *The Picts* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1967)
———, 'The Meaning of the Pictish Symbol Stones', in Edward Meldrum (ed.), *The Dark Ages in the Highlands: Ancient Peoples, Local History and Archaeology* (Inverness: Inverness Field Club, 1971), 53-67
———, 'Sculpture North of the Forth after the Take-over by the Scots', in James T. Lang (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon and Viking Age Sculpture and its Context* (Oxford: Oxford British Archaeological Reports, 1978), 47-74
———, 'Pictish Art and the Book of Kells', in Dorothy Whitelock, Rosamund McKitterick & David Dumville (eds.), *Ireland in Early Medieval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 79-105
———, 'The 'David Cycle', in Pictish Art', in J. Higgit (ed.), *Early Medieval Sculpture in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1986), 87-123
———, 'The Picts: Written Records and Pictorial Images', in J. R. F. Burt, E. O. Bowman & N. M. Robertson (eds.), *Stones, Symbols and Stories: Aspects of Pictish Studies* (Edinburgh: Pictish Arts Society, 1992), 44-66
———, 'The Insular and Continental Context of the St Andrew Sarcophagus', in B. E. Crawford (ed.), *Scotland in Dark Age Europe* (St Andrews: Committee for Dark Age Studies, University of St Andrews, 1994), 71-102
———, '*Primus inter Pares*: The St. Andrews Sarcophagus and Pictish Sculpture', in Sally M. Foster (ed.), *The St Andrews Sarcophagus: A Pictish Masterpiece and its International Connections* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), 97-167

HENRICK, Thomas S., 'Sport and Social Hierarchy in Medieval England', *Journal of Sport History*, vol. 9, no. 2 (Summer, 1982), 20-37

HICKS, Carola, *Animals in Medieval Art* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993)
———, 'The Pictish Class I Animals', in R. M. Spearman & J. Higgit (eds.), *The Age of Migrating Ideas* (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland; Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1993), 196-202

HIGGIT, John (ed.), *Early Medieval Sculpture in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1986)

HOBUSCH, Erich, *Fair Game: A History of Hunting, Shooting and Animal Conservation* ([s. l.]: Edition Leipzig, 1980)

HUFF, Chris, 'Falconers, Fowlers and Nobles: The Sport of Falconry in Anglo-Saxon England', *Medieval Life: The Magazine of the Middle Ages*, vol. 7 (Summer, 1997), 7-10
———, 'The Introduction of Falconry to the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms: A Consideration of the Evidence from Anglo-Saxon and Continental Sources', *Medieval*

Life: The Magazine of the Middle Ages, vol. 10 (Autumn, 1998), 7-12

HUGHSON, Irene I., 'Pictish Horses and Pictish Society', in Ronald Black, William Gillies & Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh (eds.), *Celtic Connections: Proceedings of the Tenth Congress of Celtic Studies* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), 211-21

HULL, Denison B., *Hounds and Hunting in Ancient Greece* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964)

HULL, Eleanor, 'Legends and Traditions of the Cailleach Beurra as Old Woman (Hag) of Beara', *Folklore*, vol. XXXVIII (1927), 223-54
———, 'The Hawk of Aichill, or the Legend of the Oldest Animals', *Folklore*, vol. XLIII (1932), 376-509

HUNTER, James, *On the Other Side of Sorrow: Nature and People in the Scottish Highlands* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1995)

HUNTER, Thomas, *Woods, Forests, and Estates of Perthshire, with Sketches of the Principal Families of the County* (Perth: Henderson, Robertson & Hunter, 1883)

IDLE, E. T. & MITCHELL, J., 'The Fallow Deer of Loch Lomondside', *DJBDS*, vol. 1, no. 7 (Nov., 1968), 263-65

ISAACSON, Rupert, *The Wild Host: The History and Meaning of the Hunt* (London: Cassell & Co., 2001)

J. R., 'The Highland Hunt Long Ago', *H*, vol. IV, no 183 (11 Nov., 1876), 3

JACKSON, Anthony, *The Symbol Stones of Scotland: A Social Anthropological Resolution of the Problem of the Picts* (Stromness: The Orkney Press, 1984)

JACKSON, Kenneth H., 'Some Remarks on the Gaelic *Notitiae* in the Book of Deer', *Ériu*, vol. XVI (1952), 86-98
———(ed.), *The Gaelic Notes in the Book of Deer* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1972)
———(ed.), *Early Welsh Gnomic Poetry* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1961)
———, *Studies in Early Celtic Nature Poetry* (Felinfrach: Llanerach, 1995)

JAMES, Noel D. G. J., *A History of English Forestry* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981)

JARVIE, Grant, 'Royal Games, Sport and the Politics of the Environment', in Grant Jarvie & Graham Walker (eds.), *Scottish Sport in the Making of the Nation: Ninety Minute Patriots?* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1994), 154-72
———; JACKSON, Lorna & HIGGINS, Peter, 'Scottish Affairs, Sporting Estates and the Aristocracy', *Scottish Affairs*, vol. 19 (1997), 121-30
———& JACKSON, Lorna, 'Deer Forests, Sporting Estates and the Aristocracy', *Sports Historian*, vol. 18, no. 1 (May, 1998), 24-54

JENKINS, Dafydd, 'Hawk and Hound: Hunting in the Laws of Court', in T. M. Charles-Edwards, Morfydd E. Owen & Paul Russell (eds.), *The Welsh King and His Court* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 2000), 255-80

JONES, W. R., 'The Image of the Barbarian in Medieval Europe', *Comparative*

Studies in Society and History, vol. 13 (1971), 376-407

KEATING, Geoffrey (auth); COMYN, David & DINEEN, Patrick (eds.), *The History of Ireland/Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, 4 vols. (London: David Nutt, 1902–13)

KELLY, Fergus, *Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988),

———, *Early Irish Farming: A Study based mainly on the Law-texts of the 7th and 8th centuries AD* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1997)

———, 'Trees in Early Ireland', *Irish Forestry: Journal of the Society of Irish Foresters*, vol. 56 (1999), 39-57

KENNEDY, Rev. John, 'Duncan Ban Macintyre', *CMag*, vol. XIII, no. CLIII (Jul., 1888), 384-93; vol. XIII, no. CLIV (Aug., 1888), 433-38; vol. XIII, no. CLV (Sep., 1888), 481-86

———, 'Robert MacKay–Rob Donn', *CMag*, vol. XIII, no. CLVI (Oct., 1888), 529-38

———, 'Unpublished Gaelic Ballads from the MacLagan MSS', *TGSI*, vol. XXIV (1899–1901), 157-84

KERR, John, *The Living Wilderness: Atholl Deer Forests* (Perth: Jamieson & Murray, 1996)

KERRIGAN, Catherine & BATEMAN, Meg (eds.), *An Anthology of Scottish Women Poets* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991)

KINBRACE, 'The Elegies of Rob Donn, The Reay Bard I', *CMag*, vol. II, no. XV (Jan., 1877), 81-84; 'The Elegies of Rob Donn, The Reay Bard II', vol. II, no. XVI (Feb., 1877), 137-40; 'The Elegies of Rob Donn, The Reay Bard III', vol. III, no. XXIX (Mar., 1878), 187-91; 'The Elegies of Rob Donn, The Reay Bard IV', vol. III, no. XXX (Apr., 1878), 229-35

KIRBY, C. & KIRBY, E., 'The Stuart Game Prerogative', *English Historical Review*, vol. 46 (1931), 239-54

KLINGENDER, Francis D. (auth.); ANTAL, Evelyn & HARTHAN, John (eds.), *Animals in Art and Thought in the End of the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971)

LAING, Lloyd, 'The Chronology and Context of Pictish Relief Sculpture', *Medieval Archaeology*, vol. 44 (2000), 81-114

LAING, Lloyd & LAING, Jennifer, 'The Date and Origin of the Pictish Symbols', *PSAS*, vol. 114 (1984), 261-76

———, 'Archaeological Notes on Some Scottish Early Christian Sculptures', *PSAS*, vol. 114 (1984), 277-87

LAMONT, W. D., *Ancient and Medieval Stones of Islay* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1968)

LEITCH, Roger, 'Hogg, Scott, and the Gaick Catastrophe', *Studies in Hogg and his World*, vol. 1 (1990), 126-28

LENMAN, Bruce, 'The Gaidhealtachd, the Lordship and the Crowns of England and Scotland to 1558', in Bruce Lenman (ed.), *England's Colonial Wars, 1550–1668: Conflicts, Empire and National Identity* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 41-59

LENEMAN, Leah, *Living in Atholl: A Social History of the Estates 1685–1785* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1986)
———, 'Highland and Lowland Perthshire in the Eighteenth Century–Two Different Worlds', *Scotia (Amerian-Canadian Journal of Scottish Studies)*, vol. XII (1988), 1-12

LINNARD, William, 'The Nine Huntings: A Re-examination of *Y Naw Helwriaeth*', *BBCS*, vol. XXXI (1984), 119-32

LLOYD, J. H., BERGIN, O. J. & SCHOEPPERLE, G., 'The Death of Diarmaid', *Revue Celtique*, vol. XXXIII (1912), 157-79

LODER, John de Vere, *Colonsay and Oronsay in the Isles of Argyll* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1935)

LOGAN, James (auth.); STEWART, Rev. Alexander (ed.), *The Scottish Gaël; or, Celtic Manners as Preserved among the Highlanders*, 2 vols. (Inverness: Hugh MacKenzie; Edinburgh: MacLachlan & Stewart, 1876)

LORIMER, Hayden, 'Guns, Game and the Grandee: The Cultural Politics of Deer-stalking in the Scottish Highlands', *Ecumene*, vol. 7, no. 4 (2000), 431-59

LOVE, John A., 'Deer Traps on the Isle of Rhum', *DJBDS*, vol. 5, no. 3 (Nov., 1980), 131-32
———, 'Sheilings of the Isle of Rum', *SS*, vol. 25 (1981), 39-63
———, *The Isle of Rum: A Short History* ([s. l.]: [s. n.], 1983)
———, *Rum: A Landscape Without Figures* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2001)

LOW, Mary, 'The Spiritual Status of Animals in *Carmina Gadelica* I–II', in Wilson McLeod, James E. Fraser & Anja Gunderloch (eds.), *Cànan & Cultur / Language & Culture: Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 3* (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2006), 235-52

LUMSDEN, H. W., 'Notice of Some Fragments of Sculptured Monumental Slabs in the Churchyard of Arisaig, Inverness-shire', *PSAS*, vol. 18 (1883–84), 211-12

LYNCH, Michael, 'Court Ceremony and Ritual in the Personal Reign of James VI', in Julian Goodare & Michael Lynch (eds.), *The Reign of James VI* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 71-93
———, 'James VI and the 'Highland problem'', in Julian Goodare & Michael Lynch (eds.), *The Reign of James VI* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 208-28
———, SPEARMAN, Michael & STELL, Geoffrey (eds.), *The Scottish Medieval Town* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1988)

MACAONGHUIS, A., 'Coire Dhodha (The Corry of the River Doe)', *NC*, no. 1098 (15 Jan., 1902), 3

MACASKILL, Alex J., 'Life in the Highlands in the 17th and 18th Centuries: As seen through the Eyes of the Poets of that Period', *TGSI*, vol. XLI (1951–52), 157-77

MACAULAY, James S., 'A Review of the Pictish Crossbow', *PSAJ*, vol. 10 (Winter, 1996), 2-6

MACBAIN, Alexander, 'Call Ghadhaig', *H*, vol. II, no. 75 (Oct., 1874), 3
———, 'Calum Dubh nam Protaigean', *H*, vol. II, no. 83 (Dec., 1874), 3
———, 'The Heroic and Ossianic Literature', *TGSI*, vol. XII (1885–86), 180-211
———, 'Highland Superstition', *TGSI*, vol. XIV (1887–88), 232-72
———, 'Badenoch: Its History, Clans and Place Names', *TGSI*, vol. XVI (1889–90), 148-97
———, 'Who Were the Feinn?', *TGSG*, vol. II (1891–94), 67-106

MAC CANA, Proinsias, *The Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1980)
———, '*Fianagecht* in the Pre-Norman Period', in Bo Almqvist, Séamas Ó Catháin & Pádraig Ó Héalaí (eds.), *The Heroic Process: Form, Function and Fantasy in Folk Epic* (Dun Laoghaire: The Glendale Press, 1987), 75-99

MACCOINNICH, Aonghas, '"His spirit was given only to warre:" Conflict and Identity in the Scottish Gàidhealtachd, c. 1580–c. 1630', in Steven Murdoch & Andrew Mackillop (eds.), *Fighting for Identity: Scottish Military Experience, c. 1550-1900* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 133-62

MACCULLOCH, John, *The Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland*, 4 vols. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown & Green, 1824)

MACDHUGHAILL, Eachann, 'Breac à Linne, Slat à Coille, 's Fiadh a Fireach–Meirle as nach do Ghabh Gàidheal Riamh Naire', *An Deò-Gréine*, earr. VI., air. 8 (1911), 120-22; leabh. VI earr. 9 (1911), 136-38; leabh. VI, earr. 10 (1911), 151-54; leabh. VI, earr. 11 (1911), 170-72; leabh. VI, earr. 12 (1911), 187-90; leabh. VII, earr. 2 (1911), 31-33; leabh. VII, earr. (1912) 39-42
———, 'Fionnladh Dubh Mac Rath', *The Celtic Annual: Year Book of the Dundee Highland Society 1916*, vol. 5 (1916), 60
———, 'Beachdachadh mu Ainmhidhean na Gàidhealtachd', *TGSI*, vol. XXXI (1924–25), 135-74
———, 'Beachdachadh mu Ainmhidhean na Gàidhealtachd (Earrann II)', *TGSI*, vol. XXXV (1929–30), 98-144

MACDONALD, Alasdair [Alasdair an Ridge], 'Aoir a Mhathain', *MT*, vol. II, no. 25 (23 Dec., 1893), 5
———, 'Oran na Spainntich', *MT*, vol. VI, no. 20 (12 Nov., 1897), 159
———, 'Cumha do dh' Fhorsair Choire-'n-t-Sith', *MT*, vol. VI, no. 27 (31 Dec., 1897), 216

MACDONALD, Alexander [Gleannach], 'Scraps of Unpublished Poetry and Folklore from Lochness-side—No. II', *TGSI*, vol. XXIII (1898–99), 179-208
———, 'Unpublished Gaelic Poetry', *TGSI*, vol. XXVIII (1912–14), 326-90
———, *Story and Song from Loch Ness-side* (Inverness: Northern Counties Publishing Co., 1914)

MACDONALD, Alexander, 'Fragment of a MacKenzie MS', *TGSI*, vol. XXXVI (1931–33), 187-212

MACDONALD, Rev. Archibald (ed.), *The Uist Collection: The Poems and Songs of John MacCodrum, Archibald MacDonald, and some of the Minor Uist Bards* (Glasgow: Archibald Sinclair; Edinburgh: Norman MacLeod, 1894)

MACDONALD, Rev. Angus & MACDONALD, Rev. Archibald (eds.), *The MacDonald Collection of Gaelic Poetry* (Inverness: Northern Counties Publishing Co., 1911)
———, *Poems of Alexander MacDonald (Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair)* (Inverness: Northern Counties Publishing Co., 1924)

MACDONALD, Donald, 'Bas Bhrain agus Dhiarmaid', *CR*, vol. VI (1909), 131-35

MACDONALD, Rev. James, 'Stray Customs and Legends', *TGSI*, vol. XIX (1893–94), 272-86

MACDONALD, John (Highbridge, Brae Lochaber), 'Dòmhnall Mór Òg', *Toch.*, no. 39 (1986), 162-68

MACDONALD, Keith Norman, *MacDonald Bards from Medieval Times* (Edinburgh: Norman Macleod, 1900)
———, 'A Lochaber Bard', *CMon*, vol. XIX, no. 8 (Aug., 1911), 146-48

MACDONELL, Allan[?] [Ailean Ruadh na Beinne, Forsair Ghlinne Garaidh], 'The Deer Hunt; Thogainn Fonn air Lorg and Fhéidh', *Cuairtear nan Gleann*, no. 16 (Jun., 1841), 100-04

MACDOUGALL, Rev. James (ed.), *Folk and Hero Tales*, Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition, Argyllshire Series, vol. III (London: David Nutt, 1891)
———, 'Ùruisg Choire-nan-Nuallan', *ZCP*, vol. 1 (1897), 328-41
———(auth.); CALDER, Rev. George (ed.), *Fairy Tales and Fairy Lore*, (Edinburgh: James Grant, 1910)

MAC GILLE SHEATHANAICH, Niall, 'Cuairt anns an Fhrith', *An Ròsarnach*, vol. 1 (1917), 171-91

MACFARLANE, Malcolm, 'Bàs Dhiarmaid O Duimhne', *CMon*, vol. XII, no. 11 (Aug., 1904), 211-15

MACFHIONGHAIN, Iain, 'Call Ghaig', *An Gàidheal*, leabh. 157, air. 3 (Màrt, 1962), 26-28

MACGREGOR, A., 'Two Antler Cross-Bow Nuts and Some Notes on the Early Development of the Crossbow', *PSAS*, vol. 107 (1975–76), 317-21

MACGREGOR (of MacGregor), Amelia G. M., *History of The Clan Gregor*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: William Brown, 1898)

MACGREGOR, Arthur, 'Animals and the Early Stuarts: Hunting and Hawking at the Court of James I and Charles I', *Archives of Natural History*, vol. 16, no. 3 (Oct., 1989), 305-18
———, ''The King's Disport': Sports and Pastimes of the Early Stuarts', in Arthur MacGregor (ed.), *The Late King's Goods, Collections, Possessions and Patronage of Charles I in the Light of the Commonwealth Sale Inventories* (London: Alistair

McAlpine in association with Oxford University Press, 1989), 403-21
———, 'Deer on the Move: Relocation of Stock between Game Parks in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Anthropozoologica*, vol. 16 (1992), 167-79
———, 'The Household Out of Doors: The Stuart Court and the Animal Kingdom', in Eveline Cruickshanks (ed.), *The Stuart Courts* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 2000), 86-117

MACGREGOR, Martin, '"Surely one of the greatest poems ever made in Britain": The Lament for Griogair Ruadh MacGregor of Glen Strae and its Historical Background', in Edward J. Cowan & Douglas Gifford (eds.), *The Polar Twins* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1999), 114-53
———, 'Church and Culture in the Late Medieval Highlands', in James Kirk (ed.), *The Church in the Highlands* (Edinburgh: Scottish Church History Society, 1999), 1-36
———, 'Creation and Compilation: The Book of the Dean of Lismore and Literary Culture in Late Medieval Gaelic Scotland', in Iain Brown, Thomas O. Clancy, Susan Manning & Murray Pittock (eds.), *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature, Volume One: From Columba to the Union (until 1707)* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 209-18
———, 'The Statues of Iona: Text and Context', *The Innes Review*, vol. 57, no. 2 (Autumn, 2006), 111-81
———, 'The View from Fortingall: The Worlds of the *Book of the Dean of Lismore*', *SGS*, vol. XXI (2006), 35-85

MACIAIN, 'The Black Captain–*An t-Offigeach Dubh*', *CMag*, vol. III, no. XXVII (Jan., 1878), 112-19
———, 'Iain Ruadh Mac Dhughail (John Roy MacAulay, The Famous Hunter)', *CMag*, vol. II, no. XXIV (Oct., 1877), 478-85

MACILLEDHUIBH, Raghnall, 'Seasons: Féill Ròid of the Roaring', *WHFP*, no. 802 (11 Sep., 1987), 13
———, 'The Quern-Dust Calendar: The Gaick Disaster – Part 1', *WHFP*, no. 922 (29 Dec., 1989), 9 ; 'The Quern-Dust Calendar: The Gaick Disaster – Part 2', *WHFP*, no. 924 (12 Jan., 1990), 11
———, 'The Quern-Dust Calendar: The Earth Mother and the Cailleach', *WHFP*, no. 1002 (12 Jul., 1991), 13
———, 'The Quern-Dust Calendar: Deer's Feet and Ceilidh-house', *WHFP*, no. 1476 (11 Aug., 2000), 15
———, 'The Quern-Dust Calendar: The Eagle of Loch Tréig', *WHFP*, no. 1566 (3 May, 2002), 15
———, 'The Quern-Dust Calendar: In Search of a Mythical Owl', *WHFP*, no. 1570 (31 May, 2002), 15
———, ''Moladh Beinn Dobhrain' agus Cùis Bhraid Albainn', in Michel Byrne, Thomas O. Clancy & Sheila M. Kidd (eds.), *Litreachas & Eachdraidh: Rannsachadh 2: Papers from the Second Conference of Scottish Gaelic Studies, Glasgow 2002* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, Dept. of Celtic, 2005), 97-117 [see also BLACK, Ronald]

MACINNES, Allan I., 'Seventeenth Century Scotland: The Undervalued Scottish Gaelic Perspective', in Cyril J. Byrne, Margaret Harry & Pádraig Ó Siadhail (eds.), *Celtic Languages and Celtic Peoples: Proceedings of the 2nd North American Congress of Celtic Studies 1989* (Halifax, N. S.: D'Arcy McGee Chair of Irish

Studies, Saint Mary's University, 1992), 535-54
———, 'Crown, Clans and "Fine": The "Civilising" of Scottish Gaeldom, 1587–1638', *Northern Scotland*, vol. 13 (1993), 31-55
———, 'Landownership, Land Use and Elite Enterprise in Scottish Gaeldom From Clanship to Clearance in Argyllshire, 1688–1858', in T. M. Devine (ed.), *Scottish Elites* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1994), 1-42
———, 'Gaelic Culture in the Seventeenth Century: Polarization and Assimilation', in Steven G. Ellis & Sarah Barber (eds.), *Conquest and Union: Fashioning a British State, 1485–1725* (London: Longman, 1995), 162-94
———, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart, 1603–1788* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1996)
———, 'Scottish Gaeldom from Clanship to Commercial Landlordism, c. 1600–c. 1850', in Sally Foster, Allan I. Macinnes & Ranald MacInnes (eds.), *Scottish Power Centres from the Early Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century* (Glasgow: Cruithne Press, 1998), 162-90

MACINNES, Rev. Donald (ed.), *Folk and Hero Tales,* Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition Argyllshire Series, vol. II (London: David Nutt, 1890)

MACINNES, John (auth.); NEWTON, Michael (ed.), *Dùthchas nan Gàidheal: Selected Essays of John MacInnes* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2006)
———, 'Gaelic Panegyric Verse', in John Beech, Owen Hand, Fiona MacDonald, Mark A. Mulhern & Jeremy Weston (eds.), *Oral Literature and Performance Culture* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2007), 82-94
———, 'The Gaelic Hero-Tales', in John Beech, Owen Hand, Fiona MacDonald, Mark A. Mulhern & Jeremy Weston (eds.), *Oral Literature and Performance Culture* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2007), 64-81
———, '*Òrain Luaidh* and Other Work Songs', in John Beech, Owen Hand, Fiona MacDonald, Mark A. Mulhern & Jeremy Weston (eds.), *Oral Literature and Performance Culture* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2007), 412-26

MACINTOSH, Duncan, *Co-chruinneachadh Dh'òrain Taghte Ghàelach: Nach Robh Riamh Roimh ann Clo-buala* (Edinburgh: John Elder, 1831)

MACINTYRE, Dugald, 'Highland Fox-Hunters', *Scots Magazine*, vol. XLIII, no. 6 (Sep., 1945), 428-31

MACK, Alastair, *Field Guide to Pictish Symbol Stones* (Balgavies, Angus: Pinkfoot Press, 1997)

MACKAY, Alex, 'John Mackay, the Blind Piper of Gairloch', *CMon*, vol. I, no. 10 (Jul., 1893), 151

MACKAY, John, 'Rob Donn', *TGSI*, vol. V (1875–76), 81-97

MACKAY, William, 'Sgeulachdan Ghlinn-Uruchdainn', *TGSI*, vol. II (1872–73), 74-80
———, 'The Songs and Poems of Alastair Mac Iain Bhain', *TGSI*, vol. X (1880–83), 279-90
———, *Urquhart and Glenmoriston: Olden Times in a Highland Parish* (Inverness: Northern Counties Publishing Co., 1893)

MACKECHNIE, Rev. John (ed.), *The Owl of Strone* (Glasgow: Sgoil Eòlais na h-Alba, 1946)

MACKENZIE, Alexander, 'John MacRae—Ian MacMhuirich—The Kintail Bard I', *CMag*, vol. VII, no. LXXVIII (Apr., 1882), 271-76; 'John MacRae—Ian MacMhuirich—The Kintail Bard II', vol. VII, no. LXXIX (May, 1882), 322-25; 'John MacRae—Ian MacMhuirich—The Kintail Bard III', vol. VII, no. LXXX (Jun., 1882), 387-89; 'John MacRae—Ian MacMhuirich—The Kintail Bard IV', vol. VII, no. LXXXI (Jul., 1882), 426-28; 'John MacRae—Ian MacMhuirich—The Kintail Bard V', vol. VII, no. LXXXII (Aug., 1882), 464-67
———, *History of the MacLeods* (Inverness: A. & W. MacKenzie, 1889)

MACKENZIE, Bridget, 'The Life and Works of Iain Dall MacAoidh', *TGSI*, vol. LXII (2000–02), 184-229

MACKENZIE, Donald A., *Finn and His Warrior Band, or, Tales of Old Alban* (London: Blackie & Son, 1911)
———, *Scottish Folklore and Folklife: Studies in Race, Culture and Tradition* (London: Blackie & Son, 1935)

MACKENZIE, Ewen, 'The Game Laws', *CMag*, vol. I, no. IV (Feb., 1876), 113-19

MACKENZIE, Henry (ed.), *Report of the Committee of the Highland Society of Scotland, appointed to inquire into the nature and authenticity of the Poems of Ossian* (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable & Co; London: Longman, Hurst, Ress & Orme, 1805)

MACKENZIE, John, *Sar-Obair nam Gaelach, or, The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry, and Lives of the Highland Bards* (Glasgow: MacGregor, Polson & Co., 1841)

MACKENZIE, William, 'Oran do Mhac-'ic-Alastair', *CMag*, vol. II; no. XVII (Mar.,1877), 200
———, 'Leaves from my Celtic Portfolio. I', *TGSI*, vol. VII (1877–78), 52-76
———, 'Leaves from my Celtic Portfolio. III', *TGSI*, vol. VIII (1878–79), 18-32
———, 'Leaves from my Celtic Portfolio. IV', *TGSI*, vol. VIII (1878–79), 100-28
———, 'Leaves from my Celtic Portfolio. V', *TGSI*, vol. IX (1879–80), 19-43
———, 'Leaves from my Celtic Portfolio. VI', *TGSI*, vol. IX (1879–80), 43-74
———, 'Leaves from my Celtic Portfolio. VII', *TGSI*, vol. IX (1879–80), 95-113
———, 'Seann Oran Seilge', *CMag*, vol. III, no. XXXVI (Oct., 1878), 480
———, 'Gaelic Incantations, Charms, and Blessings of the Hebrides' *TGSI*, vol. XVIII (1891–92), 97-182
———, *Gaelic Incantations, Charms and Blessings of the Hebrides* (Inverness: Northern Counties Publishing Co., 1895)

MACKINNON, Donald, 'Collection of Ossianic Ballads by Jerome Stone', *TGSI*, vol. XIV (1887–88), 314-69

MACKINTOSH, Donald T., 'James Macpherson and the Book of the Dean of Lismore' *TGSI*, vol. XXXVII (1934–36), 347-65
———, 'James Macpherson and the Book of the Dean of Lismore', *SGS*, vol. VI, pt. I (1949), 11-20

MACLEAN, Donald P., 'The Songs of William Smith', *TGSI*, vol. LX (1997–98), 125-47

MACLEAN, John, 'Am Pìobaire Dall (The Blind Piper)', *TGSI*, vol. XLI (1951–52), 283-306

MACLEAN (of Dochgarroch), Loraine (ed.), *The Middle Ages in the Highlands* (Inverness: Inverness Field Club, 1981)

MACLEAN, Sorley (auth.); GILLIES, William (ed.), *Ris a' Bhruthaich: Criticism and Prose Writings of Sorely MacLean* (Stornoway: Acair, 1985)

MACLEOD, Donald J., 'The Poetry of Rob Donn Mackay', *SGS*, vol. XII, pt. I (1971), 3-21

MACLEOD, Neil, 'Donnachadh Ban Mac-an-t-Saoir', *TGSI*, vol. XII (1885–86), 94-98
———, 'Miann a' Bhàird Aosda', *TGSG*, vol. II (1891–94), 127-39
———, 'Miann a' Bhàird Aosda', *TGSI*, vol. XIX (1893–94), 89-98

MACLEOD, Rev. Canon Roderick C., 'The West Highlands in Peace and War', *SHR*, vol. XXIV (1927), 123-29
———, *The Island Clans during Six Centuries* (Inverness: Robert Carruthers & Sons, 1930)

MACLENNAN, Angus (auth.); CAMPBELL, John Lorne (transl.), *Stories from South Uist* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961)

MAC-NA-CEÀRDADH, Gilleasbuig, *An t-Oranaiche: Comhchruinneachadh de Orain Ghaidhealach, a' Chuid Mhor Dhiubh a Nis air an Clo air son na Ciad Uaire* (Glasgow: Archibald Sinclair; Edinburgh: R. M'Gregor & Co., 1879)

MACNALLY, Lea, *Highland Deer Forest* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1970)
———, 'Stalking Highland Red Deer', *DJBDS*, vol. 5, no. 10 (Mar., 1983), 494-504

MACPHERSON, Alexander, *The Gaick Catastrophe and Capt. John Macpherson, Ballachroan a Memorable Incident of the Year* 1800 (Kingussie: Archibald Cameron, 1881)
———, 'Captain John MacPherson of Ballachroan: A Counter-Blast', *Inverness Chronicle*, no. 2 (12 Jan., 1881), 3
———, 'Selections from the MSS. of the late Captain Lachlann Macpherson, embracing the Macniven's Cave of Old Raitts of Badenoch, and Other Papers', *TGSI*, vol. XVI (1889–90), 207-28
———, *Glimpses of Church and Social Life in the Highlands in Olden Times* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1893)
———, *Captain John Macpherson of Ballachroan and the Gaick Catastrophe of the Christmas of 1799 (O.S.): A Counterblast* (Kingussie: George A. Crerar, 1900); also printed in *The Scots Magazine*, vol. XXV (1900), 215-28
———, 'The Black Officer', *Chamber's Journal*, vol. XI, no. 541 (May, 1908), 301-04

MACPHERSON, Donald C. [Abrach], *An Duanaire: A New Collection of Gaelic Songs and Poems* (Edinburgh: MacLachlan & Stewart, 1868)

———, 'Cailleach Beinn a' Bhric', *An Gàidheal*, leabh. II, air. 26 (Apr., 1874), 369-71
———, [Diarmad], 'Donull Mac Fhionnlaigh agus Oran na Comhachaig', *An Gàidheal*, leabh. V, air. 59 (Nov., 1876), 328-34
———, 'The Clan Donald of Keppoch', *CMag*, vol. 4 (1878), 368-75
———, *Fionn ann an Tigh a' Bhlair Bhuidhe gun Chomas Suidhe no Éirigh: Fingal in the House of Blar Buidhe without the Power of Sitting Down or Rising up* (Glasgow: Maclaren, 1920)

MACPHERSON (of Edinburgh), James, 'Captain John MacPherson of Ballachroan', *Inverness Courier*, vol. LXIV, no. 3334 (13 Jan., 1881), 6
———, 'Captain John MacPherson of Ballachroan', *OT*, no. 762 (22 Jan., 1881), 3

MACPHERSON, Norman, 'Notes on Antiquities from the Island of Eigg', *PSAS*, vol. XII (1876–78), 577-97

MACQUEEN, John, 'The Renaissance in Scotland', in Glanmor Williams & Robert Owen Jones (eds.), *The Celts and the Renaissance: Tradition and Innovation* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1990), 41-56

MACQUEEN, Hector L., *Common Law and Feudal Society in Medieval Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993)

MACRAE, Rev. Alexander, *History of the Clan MacRae with Genealogies* (Dingwall: A. M. Ross & Co., 1899)
———, 'Legends and Traditions of the Clan MacRae', *CMon*, vol. XII, no. 3 (Dec., 1903), 56-57

MACRAE, Donald, 'Beannachd Baird', *TGSI*, vols. III/IV (1874–76), 192-95

MACTHÓMAIS, Ruaraidh (deas.), 'Forsair Choir-an-t-sìth', *Gairm*, air. 159 (An Samhradh, 1992), 258-63 [See also THOMSON, Derick S.]

MALCOLM, George, *Deer Forest: Past, Present and Future* (Duneideann: Macriobhain & Wallace, 1890)

MANNING, Roger B., *Hunters and Poachers: A Social and Cultural History of Unlawful Hunting in England 1485–1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993)

MARVIN, William P., 'Slaughter and Romance: Hunting Reserves in Medieval England', in Barbara A. Hanawalt & David Wallace (eds.), *Medieval Crime and Social Control* (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 224-52

MASON, Roger, 'Civil Society and the Celts: Hector Boece, George Buchanan and the Ancient Scottish Past', in Edward J. Cowan & Richard J. Finlay (eds.), *Scottish History: The Power of the Past* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), 95-119

MATHESON, Duncan, 'Fearchair Mac Iain Oig', *Toch.*, vol. 1, no. 5 (1972), 142-47

MATHESON, Rev. William, 'Traditions of the MacKenzies', *TGSI*, vols. XXXIX/XL (1942–50), 193-228

MAXWELL, H. A., 'Red Deer and Forestry with Special Reference to the Highlands of Scotland', *DJBDS*, vol. 1, no. 4 (Nov., 1967), 126-30

MCALLISTER, Ron, *The Scottish Bowman: A Short History of the Bow in Scotland* (n. p.: n. pub, 1982)

MCCONE, Kim R., 'Werewolves, Cyclops, Diberga, and Fíanna: Juvenile Delinquency in Early Ireland', *CMCS*, vol. 12 (1986), 1-22
———, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1990)
———, 'Cúlra Ind-Europach na Féinne', in Pádraig Ó Fiannachte (ed.), *An Fhiannaíocht: Léachtaí Cholm Cille 25* (Maigh Nuad: An Sagart), 7-29
———, 'The Significance of the *Duanaire Finn*', in John Carey (ed.), *Duanaire Finn: Reassessments* (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 2003), 39-50

MCCONNOCHIE, Alex. Inkson, *Deer and Deer Forests of Scotland: Historical, Descriptive, Sporting* (London: H. F. & G. Witherby, 1923)
———, *Deerstalking in Scotland* (London: H. F. & G. Witherby, 1924)
———, *Deer Forest Life* (London: Alexander Maclehose, 1932)

MCDONALD, R. Andrew, 'The Western *Gàidhealtachd* in the Middle Ages', in Bob Harris & Alan R. MacDonald (eds.), *Scotland: The Making and Unmaking of the Nation c. 1100–1707: Volume 1. The Scottish Nation: Origins to c. 1500* (Dundee: Dundee University Press, 2006), 65-89

MCKAY, John G., 'Mu Shealg Dheireannach Oisein/Concerning Ossian's Last Hunting', *An Deò-Gréine*, leabh. XV, earr. 11 (1920), 181-86
———, 'Comh-abartachd eadar Cas-shiubhal-an-t-Sléibhe agus A' Chailleach Bheurr', *SGS*, vol. III, pt. I (1929), 10-51
———, 'The Deer-Cult and the Deer-Goddess of the Ancient Caledonians', *Folklore*, vol. XLIII (1932), 144-74

MCLEOD, Wilson & NÍ ANNRACHÁIN, Máire (eds.), *Cruth na Tíre* (Baile Átha Cliath: Coiscéim, 2003)

MCNEILL, Peter & NICHOLSON, Ranald, *An Historical Atlas of Scotland c. 400–c. 1600* (St. Andrews: Atlas Committee of the Conference of Scottish Medievalists, 1975)

MCOWAN, Rennie, 'Bring Me The White Hind', *Scots Magazine*, vol. 128, no. 1 (Oct., 1987), 46-52
———, 'Not So Black Duncan: [Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy as Conservationist]', *Scots Magazine*, vol. 131, no. 6 (Sep., 1989), 579-87
———, 'A-chasing the Deer', *Scots Magazine*, vol. 143, no. 2 (Aug., 1995), 186-91
———, 'Fair Duncan of the Songs', *Scots Magazine*, vol. 147, no. 1 (Jul., 1997), 47-53

MEEK, Dòmhnall E., 'Laoidhean na Féinne ann an Dualchas nan Gàidheal', in Gordon W. MacLennan (ed.), *Proceedings of the First North American Congress of Celtic Studies* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 1986), 417-22 [see also MEEK, Donald E.]

MEEK, Donald E. & KIRK, John, 'John Carswell, Superintendent: A Reassement', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, vol. 119 (1977), 1-22

———, 'The Banners of the Fian in Gaelic Ballad Tradition', *CMCS*, vol. 11 (1986), 29-69

———, 'Development and Degeneration in Gaelic Ballad Texts', in Bo Almqvist, Séamas Ó Catháin & Pádraig Ó Héalaí (eds.), *The Heroic Process: Form, Function and Fantasy in Folk Epic* (Dun Laoghaire: The Glendale Press, 1987), 131-60

———, 'The Gaelic Ballads of Medieval Scotland', *TGSI*, vol. LX (1986–88), 47-72

———, 'The Scots-Gaelic Scribes of Late Medieval Perthshire: An Overview of the Orthography and Contents of the Book of the Dean of Lismore', in J. Derrick McClure & Michael R. G. Spiller (eds.) *Bryght Lanternis* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1989), 387-404 [reprinted as 'The Scots-Gaelic Scribes of Late Medieval Perthshire: An Overview of the Orthography and Contents of the Book of the Dean of Lismore', in Janet Hadley Williams (ed.), *Stewart Style: Essays on the Court of James V* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1996), 254-72]

———, 'The Death of Diarmaid in Scottish and Irish Tradition', *Celtica*, vol. XXI (1990), 335-361

———, 'The Gaelic Ballads of Scotland: Creativity and Adaptation', in Howard Gaskill (ed.), *Ossian Revisited* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), 19-48

———, '"Norsemen and Noble Stewards": The MacSween Poem in the Book of the Dean of Lismore', *CMCS*, vol. 34 (Winter, 1997), 1-49

———, '*Duanaire Finn* and Gaelic Scotland', in John Carey (ed.), *Duanaire Finn: Reassessments* (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 2003), 19-39

———, 'The Scottish Tradition of Fian Ballads in the Middle Ages', in Cathal G. Ó Háinle & Donald E. Meek (eds.), *Unity and Diversity: Studies in Irish and Scottish Gaelic Language, Literature and History* (Dublin: Trinity College Dublin, School of Irish, 2004), 9-23 [see also MEEK, Dòmhnall E.]

MELDRUM, Edward (ed.), *The Dark Ages in the Highlands* (Inverness: Inverness Field Club, 1971)

MENZIES, David P., *The "Red and White" Book of Menzies* (Glasgow: Banks & Co., 1894)

MENZIES, Pat, 'Oran na Comhachaig', in Michel Byrne, Thomas O. Clancy & Sheila M. Kidd (eds.), *Litreachas & Eachdraidh: Rannsachadh 2: Papers from the Second Conference of Scottish Gaelic Studies, Glasgow 2002* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, Dept. of Celtic, 2005), 83-96

MEYER, Kuno (ed.), *Fianaigecht: Being a Collection of Hitherto Unedited Irish Poems and Tales relating to Finn and his Fiana* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, & Co., 1910)

MHIC MHUIRICH Ni, 'The Black Captain', *H*, vol. II, no. 74 (Oct., 1874), 3

MICHIE, Rev. John G. (ed.), *The Records of Invercauld* (Aberdeen: Spalding Club, 1901)

MILLAR, Alastair D., *A Bit of Breadalbane* (Edinburgh: The Pentland Press, 1995)

MITCHELL, Ian R., *Scotland's Mountains Before the Mountaineers* (Edinburgh: Luath

Press, 1998)

MITCHELL, John, 'The Fallow Deer of Lochlomondside', *DJBDS*, vol. 5, no. 7 (Mar., 1982), 369
———, 'The Legacy of the Loch Lomondside Wolf', *Glasgow Naturalist*, vol. 21, pt. 1 (1996), 4-6

MITCHISON, Rosalind, 'The Government and the Highlands, 1707-45', in N. T. Phillipson & Rosalind Mitchison (eds.), *Scotland and the Age of Improvement: Essays in Scottish History in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970), 24-46

MURDOCH, B., 'In Pursuit of the Cailleach Beara', *ZCP*, vol. 44 (1991), 80-127

MURPHY, Gerard, *The Ossianic Lore and Romantic Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: At the Sign of the Three Candles, 1955)

NAGY, Joseph Falaky, 'Liminality and Knowledge in Irish Tradition', *Studica Celtica*, vols. 17/18 (1981/82), 135-43
———, 'Close Encounters of the Traditional Kind in Early Irish Literature', in Patrick Ford (ed.), *Celtic Folklore and Christianity* (Santa Barbara, California: McNally & Leftin, 1983), 129-49
———, 'Heroic Destinies in the *Macgnímrada* of Finn and Cú Chulainn', *ZCP*, vol. 40 (1984), 23-29
———, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw: The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in Gaelic Literature* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1985)
———, 'Fenian Heroes and their Rites of Passage', in Bo Almqvist, Séamas Ó Catháin & Pádraig Ó Héalaí (eds.), *The Heroic Process: Form, Function and Fantasy in Folk Epic* (Dun Laoghaire: The Glendale Press, 1987), 161-82

NAIRNE, David, 'Highland Forests, Ancient and Modern', *TGSI*, vol. XVII (1890–91), 170-221

NEISTERS, Horst, 'The Art of Falconry', in Kurt G. Blüchel (ed.), *Game and Hunting* (Cologne: Köneman, 2000), 162-93

NEVILLE, Cynthia J., *Native Lordship in Medieval Scotland: The Earldoms of Strathearn and Lennox, c.1140–1365* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005)

NEWTON, Michael, *Bho Chluaidh gu Calasraid: From the Clyde to Callander* (Stornoway: Acair, 1999)
———, *A Handbook of the Scottish Gaelic World* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000)

NICHOLSON, Lewis E., 'Beowulf and the Pagan Cult of the Stag', *Studi Medievali*, vol. 27 (1986), 637-69

NICOLL, Eric H. (ed.), *A Pictish Panorama: The Story of the Picts and a Pictish Bibliography* (Balgavies, Angus: Pinkfoot Press, 1995)

NICOLSON, Alexander, *History of Skye: A Record of the Families, The Social Conditions, and the Literature of the Island* (Glasgow: Alex. MacLaren & Sons, 1930)

Ní DHONNCHADHA, Máirin, '*Cailleach* and Other Terms for Vieled Woman in Medeival Irish Texts', *Éigse: A Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 28 (1994-95), 71-96

Ní SHÉAGHDHA, Nessa (ed.), *Agallamh na Seanórach*, 3 vols. (Baile Átha Cliath: Oifig an tSoláthair, 1942–45)
———(ed.), *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne* (Dublin: Irish Text Society, 1967)

Ní SUAIRD, Damhnait, 'Jacobite Rhetoric and Terminology in the Political Poems of the Fernaig MS (1688-1693)', *SGS*, vol. XIX (1999), 93-140

NOLAN, Liam M., 'Carved in Stone: Deer in Irish and British Stone Ornament', *DJBDS*, vol. 9, no. 8 (Oct., 1995), 518-20
———, 'Medieval Scottish Deer Forests', *DJBDS*, vol. 10, no. 6 (Oct., 1997), 354-56

NORDEN, Walter, '"Let No One Dare Steal from Our Forests..."', in Kurt G. Blüchel (ed.), *Game and Hunting* (Cologne: Köneman, 2000), 144-46

NUTT, Alfred, *Ossian and the Ossianic Literature* (London: David Nutt, 1910)

Ó BAOILL, Colm, 'Scotland in Early Gaelic Literature (600–1200 A.D.)', *TGSI*, vol. XLVIII (1972–74), 382-94
———, 'The Scots-Gaelic Interface', in Charles Jones (ed.), *The Edinburgh History of the Scots Language* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 551-68
———, 'The Oldest Songs of the Gael', in Edna Longley, Eamonn Hughes & Des O' Rawe (eds.), *Ireland (Ulster) Scotland: Concepts, Contexts, Comparisons* (Belfast: Cló Ollscoil na Banríona, 2003), 65-76
———, ''Neither Out or In': Scottish Gaelic Women Poets 1650-1750', in Sarah M. Dunnigan, C. Maire Harker & Evelyn S. Newlyn (eds.), *Women and the Feminine in Medieval and Early Modern Scottish Writing* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 136-52

Ó CADHLAIGH, Cormac, *An Fhiannuidheacht* (Baile Átha Cliath: Oifig Díolta Foillseacháin Rialtais, 1936)

Ó CORRAIN, Donnchadh, BREATNACH, Liam & MCCONE, Kim (eds.), *Sages, Saints and Storytellers: Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney* (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1989)

Ó CRUALAOICH, Gearóid, 'Continuity and Adaptation in Legends of Cailleach Bhéarra', *Béaloideas*, vol. 56 (1988), 153-78
———, *The Book of the Cailleach: Stories of the Wise-Woman Healer* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2003)

O' DALY, John, 'Agallamh Oisin agus Phatraic/The Dialogue of Oisin and Patrick', *TOS*, vol. IV (1859), 2-63
———, 'Fiadhach Fhianna Eireann ar Shliabh Truim/The Finnian Hunt of Sliabh Truim', *TOS*, vol. VI (1861), 102-26
———, 'Seilg na Féinne os cionn Lochu Deirg/The Finnian Hunt of the Borders of Louch Derg', *TOS*, vol. VI (1861), 154-61
———, 'Seilg Ghleanna an Smóil, nó, Eachtra na Mná Moire Tar Lear/The Chase of

Gleann an Smiol, or, The Adventures of the Giantess who Crossed the Sea', *TOS*, vol. VI (1861), 74-101
———, 'Sealg Locha Lein/The Chase of Loch Lein', *TOS*, vol. IV (1859), 201-25
———, 'Seilg Muca Draogheachta Aonghuis Un Bhrogha/The Chase of the Enchanted Pigs of Aenghus an Bhrogha', *TOS*, vol. VI (1861), 132-53
———, 'Seilg Shléibhe Fuaid/The Chase of Sliabh Fuaid', *TOS*, vol. VI (1861), 20-75
———, 'Seilg Shléibhe g-Cuilinn/The Chase of Sliabh Guilleann', *TOS*, vol. VI (1861), 3-19
———, 'Seilg Shleibhe na m-Ban/The Chase of Sliabh-na-mBan', *TOS*, vol. VI (1861), 126-31

O' SULLIVAN, Catherine, *Hospitality in Medieval Ireland, 900-1500* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004)

OGGINS, Robin S., 'Falconers in the English Royal Household to 1307', *Studies in Medieval Culture*, vol. 4, no. 2 (1974), 321-29
———, 'Falconry in Anglo-Saxon England', *Mediaevalia: A Journal of Medieval Studies*, vol. 7 (1981), 173-208
———, 'Falconry and Medieval Social Status', *Mediaevalia: A Journal of Medieval Studies*, vol. 12 (1986), 43-55
———, 'Falconry and Medieval Views of Nature', in Joyce E. Salisbury (ed.), *The Medieval World of Nature: A Book of Essays* (New York; London: Garland, 1993), 47-60
———, *The Kings and Their Hawks: Falconry in Medieval England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004)

OGLE, M. B., 'The Stag-Messenger Episode', *American Journal of Philology*, vol. 37 (1916), 387-416

O' GRADY, Standish Hayes, 'The Pursuit after Diarmuid O' Duibhne and Grainne', *TOS*, vol. III (1855), 132-53

Ó HÓGÁIN, Dáithí, 'Magic Attributes of the Hero in Fenian Lore', in Bo Almqvist, Séamas Ó Catháin & Pádraig Ó Héalaí (eds.), *The Heroic Process: Form, Function and Fantasy in Folk Epic* (Dun Laoghaire: The Glendale Press, 1987), 207-42
———, *Fionn mac Cumhaill: Images of the Gaelic Hero* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1988)

ORME, Nicolas, 'Medieval Hunting: Fact and Fancy', in Barbara A. Hanawalt (ed.), *Chaucher's England: Literature in Historical Context* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 133-53

ORR, Willie, *Deer Forests, Landlords and Crofters: The Western Highlands in Victorian and Edwardian Times* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1982)

Ó SIOCHFHRADHA, Pádraig [An Seabhac], *Laoithe na Féinne* (Baile Átha Cliath: An Cumann le Béaloideas Éireann, 1941)

OSWALD, Charles A., *The History and Practice of Falconry* (Jersey: Spearman, 1982)

PATTERSON, Nerys, *Cattle Lords and Clansmen* (Norte Dame: University of Notre

Dame Press, 1994)

PEATE, Iorwerth C., 'The Nine Huntings', *Antiquity: A Quarterly Review of Archaeology*, vol. VIII (1934), 73-80

PENDERGRAST, John P., 'Of Hawks and Hounds in Ireland', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. II (1852–53), 144-55 [reprinted from *Journal of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society*, vol. 1I (1852–53), 144-55]

PETIT-DUTAILLIS, Charles, 'The Forest in Medieval England', in *Studies and Notes Supplementary to Stubbs' Constitutional History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1930), 147-251

PETLEY, Charles C., 'A Short Account of some Carved Stones in Ross-shire, accompanied with a Series of Outline Engravings', *Archaeologia Scotica; or Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. IV, pt. III (1857), 345-52

PETTERSSON, Gerd, *Finn and the Fian: Reflections of Ancient Celtic Myth and Institutions in Early and Medieval Ireland* (Göteborg: Department of Religious Studies, University of Göteborg, 1999)

PLUSKOWSKI, Aleks G. (ed.), *Medieval Animals* (Cambridge: Department of Archaeology, 2002)

———, 'Lupine Apocalypse: The Wolf in Pagan and Christian Cosmology in Medieval Britain and Scandinavia', *Cosmos: The Journal of the Traditional Cosmology Society*, vol. 17 (2004), 113-31

———, *Wolves and the Wilderness in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006)

POLLARD, John, 'Killer Wolves in Scotland', in John Pollard (ed.), *Wolves and Werewolves* (London: Robert Hale, 1991), 85-98

POPE, Saxton T., *A Study of Bows and Arrows* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1923)

PORTER, John, '"Bring Me the Head of James Macpherson": The Execution of Ossian and the Wellsprings of Folklore Discourse', *Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 114 (2001), 396-435

RAMSAY, Anna A. W., *The Arrow of Glenlyon: The Life of Alasdair MacGregor of Glenstrae, A Highland Gentleman of the Sixteenth Century* (London: John Murray, 1930

RANKIN, Robert A., 'Oran na Comhachaig: Text and Tradition', *TGSG*, vol. V (1958), 122-71

———, 'Place-names in the *Comhachag* and Other Similar Poems', *SGS*, vol. XVIII (1998), 111-30

REES, William, 'Survivals of Ancient Celtic Custom in Medieval England', in Henry Lewis (ed.), *Angles and Britons* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1963), 148-68

REID, W. Stanford, 'The Earls of Argyll and the Reformation' *Scottish Tradition*, vol. 17 (1992), 1-49

REINHARD, John R. & HULL, Verham E., 'Bran and Sceoland', *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies*, vol. XI (1936), 42-58

RITCHIE, Anna, *The Kingdom of the Picts* (Edinburgh: W. & R. Chambers, 1977)
———, *Picts: An Introduction to the Life of the Picts and the Carved Stones in the Care of the Secretary of State for Scotland* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1989)

RITCHIE, Graham & RITCHIE, Anna, *Scotland: Archaeology and Early History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981)

RITCHIE, J., 'The Lake Dwelling or Crannog in Eadarloch, Loch Treig: Its Traditions and its Construction', *PSAS*, vol. 76 (1941–42), 8-78

RITCHIE, James, *The Influence of Man on Animal Life in Scotland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920)

RIXSON, Denis, *The Small Isles: Canna, Rum, Eigg and Muck* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2001)

ROBERSTON, Rev. Charles M., 'Topography and Traditions of Eigg', *TGSI*, vol. XXII (1897–98), 193-210
———, 'Folklore from the West of Ross-shire', *TGSI*, vol. XXVI (1904–07), 262-99

ROBERTSON, J. L., 'Ossianic Heroic Poetry', *TGSI*, vol. XXII (1897–98), 257-325

ROONEY, Anne, *Hunting in Middle English Literature* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1993)

ROSE, D. Murray [D. M. R.], 'Poaching in the Olden Days', *NC,* no. 1142 (19 Nov., 1902), 3

ROSS, A., 'Early Travellers in the Highlands', *TGSI*, vol. XXIII (1898–99), 91-129

ROSS, Alexander, 'Notice of St. Clement's Church at Rowdill, Harris', *PSAS*, vol. XIX (1884–85), 118-32

ROSS, Anne, *Everyday Life of the Pagan Celts* (London: Batsford, 1970)
———, *Pagan Celtic Britain: Studies in Iconography and Tradition* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967)
———, 'The Divine Hag of the Pagan Celts', in Venetia Newall (ed.), *The Witch Figure* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 139-64

ROSS, James, 'A Classification of Gaelic Folk-song', *SS*, vol. 1 (1957), 95-151

ROSS, John, *The Book of Red Deer* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1925)

RCAHMS, *Outer Hebrides, Skye and the Small Isles* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1928)
———, *Argyll Volume 1: Kintyre* (Glasgow: HMSO, 1971)
———, *Argyll Volume 2: Lorn* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1975)
———, *Argyll Volume 3: Mull, Tiree, Coll & Northern Argyll (Excluding the Early Medieval & Later Monuments of Iona)* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1980)
———, *Argyll Volume 4: Iona* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1982)

———, *Argyll Volume 5: Islay, Jura, Colonsay & Oronsay* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1984)
———, *The Archaeological Sites and Monuments of Easter Ross, Ross and Cromarty District, Highland Region* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1979)
———, *Central Angus 1 (Prehistoric and Roman), Angus District, Tayside Region* (Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 1983)
———, *Argyll Volume 7: Mid Argyll & Cowal: Medieval & Later Monuments* (Glasgow: HMSO, 1992)
———, *Pictish Symbol Stones: An Illustrated Gazetteer* (Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 1999)
———, *South-East Perth: An Archaeological Landscape* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1994)
———, *RCAHMS Broadsheet 11: Early Medieval Sculpture in Angus Council Museums* (Edinburgh: RCAMHS, 2003)

SALISBURY, Joyce E., *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1994)

SÄLZLE, Karl, 'Riding to Hounds, German Hunting and Other Hunting Spectacles', in Kurt G. Blüchel (ed.), *Game and Hunting* (Cologne: Köneman, 2000), 132-43

SANKEY, Margaret & SZECHI, Daniel, 'Elite Culture and the Decline of Scottish Jacobitism, 1716–1745', *Past and Present*, no. 173 (2001), 90-128

SAVAGE, Henry L., 'Hunting in the Middle Ages', *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies*, vol. VIII (1933), 30-41

SAYERS, William, 'Games, Sport and Para-military Exercise in Early Ireland', *Aethlon: The Journal of Sport Literature*, vol. 10 (1992), 105-23

SCOTT, (Sir) Walter, 'On the Supernatural of Fictitious Composition', *The Foreign Quarterly Review*, vol. I (1827), 68-69
———, 'Notice to Correspondents—An Authentic Account of the Melancholy End of (Captain) Macpherson', *The Foreign Quarterly Review*, vol. II (1828), 352-54

SCARLETT, Meta Humphrey, *In the Glen Where I Was Young* (Moy: Siskin, 1988)

SCHARFF, R. F., 'The Wolf in Ireland', *The Irish Naturalist*, vol. XXXI (1922), 133-36
———, 'On the Breeds of Dogs Peculiar to Ireland and their Origin', *The Irish Naturalist*, vol. XXXIII (Aug., 1924), 77-95

SCROPE, William, *Days of Deer Stalking in the Scottish Highlands* (London: Hamilton, Adams, 1883)

SCRUTON, Roger, *On Hunting* (London: Yellow Jersey, 1998)

SEAMRAG, 'Oran Eadar an Sealgair is an Fiadh', *MT*, vol. X, no. 26 (Mar., 1902), 199

SEANCHAIDH, 'The Baile Chrodhain Family', *H*, vol. II, no. 78 (Nov., 1874), 3

SELLAR, W. D. H., 'Celtic Law and Scots Law: Survival and Integration', *SS*, vol. 29 (1989), 1-27

SHAW, Donald [Glenmore], *Highland Legends* (Edinburgh: John Lindsay, 1859)

SHAW, Frances J., *The Northern and Western Islands of Scotland: Their Economy and Society in the Seventeenth Century* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1980)

SHAW, John, 'Caiptean Dubh Bhaile Chroic/The Black Captain from Ballachroan', *Am Bràighe*, vol. 7, no. 3 (Winter, 1999), 16-17

SHAW, Margaret Fay, *Folksongs and Folklore of South Uist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977)

SHERRATT, Andrew, 'The Chase—From Subsistence to Sport', *Asmolean*, vol. 10 (1986), 4-7

SIMMS, Katherine, 'Guesting and Feasting in Gaelic Ireland', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 100 (1978–79), 67-100

SINCLAIR, Rev. Alexander MacLean, *The Gaelic Bards from 1775 to 1825* (Sydney, Cape Breton: The 'Mac-Talla' Office, 1896)
———, *Mactalla nan Tur* (Sydney, Cape Breton: Mac-Talla Publishing Co., 1901)
———, 'A Collection of Gaelic Poems', *TGSI*, vol. XXVI (1904–07), 235-62

SINCLAIR, Rev. Allan, *The Grants of Glenmoriston* (Edinburgh: MacLachlan & Stewart; Inverness: A. & W. MacKenzie, 1887)

SINCLAIR, Donald, 'Diarmaid agus Gràinne', *Toch.*, vol. 3, no. 18 (1975), 60-65

SINTON, Rev. Thomas, 'Snatches of Song Collected in Badenoch. I', *CMag*, vol. XII, no. CXXXIII (Nov., 1886), 25-26; 'Snatches of Song Collected in Badenoch. II', vol. XII, no. CXXXV (Jan., 1887), 117-19; 'Snatches of Song Collected in Badenoch. III', vol. XII, no. CXXXVI (Feb., 1887), 176-79; 'Snatches of Song Collected in Badenoch. IV', vol. XII, no. CXXXVII (Mar., 1887), 232-36; 'Snatches of Song Collected in Badenoch. V', vol. XII, no. CXXXVIII (Apr., 1887), 255-59; 'Snatches of Song Collected in Badenoch. VI', vol. XII, no. CXXXIX (May, 1887), 295-304; 'Snatches of Song Collected in Badenoch. VII', vol. XII; no. CXVI. (Dec., 1887), 85-91; 'Snatches of Song Collected in Badenoch.VIII', vol. XIII, no. CXLVII (Jan., 1888), 113-22; 'Snatches of Song Collected in Badenoch. IX', vol. XIII, no. CXLIX (Mar., 1888), 227-33; 'Snatches of Song Collected in Badenoch. X', vol. XIII, no. CL (Apr., 1888), 258-64
———, 'Stray Verses of Gaelic Poetry', *TGSI*, vol. XIX (1893–94), 73-89
———, 'Snatches of Song collected in Badenoch', *TGSI*, vol. XXII (1897–98), 233-56
———, 'Gaelic Poetry from the Cluny Charter Chest', *TGSI*, vol. XXIII (1898–99), 247-81
———, 'Gaelic Poetry from the MSS. of the Late Mr. James MacPherson, Edinburgh', *TGSI*, vol. XXIV (1899–1901), 394-412
———, *The Poetry of Badenoch* (Inverness: Northern Counties Publishers Co., 1906)

SMITH, John S., 'War and Peace in the Braes of Mar', *AUR*, vol. XLVIII, no. 161 (Spring, 1979), 36-43

SMITH, Iain Crichton, *Ben Dorain: Translated from the Gaelic of Duncan Ban*

Macintyre (Newcastle upon Tyne: Northern House, 1988)

SMITH, W. MacCombie, *The Romance of Poaching in The Highlands: As Illustrated in the Lives of John Farquharson and Alexander Davidson, the Last of the Free-Foresters* (Stirling: Eneas Mackay, 1904)

SMOUT, T. C. (ed.), *Scotland and Europe 1200–1850* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986)
———, *Scotland Since Pre-History: Natural Change and Human Impact* (Aberdeen: Scottish Cultural Press, 1993)
———, 'Highland Land-use before 1800: Misconceptions, Evidence and Realities', in T. C. Smout (ed.), *Scottish Woodland History* (Edinburgh: Scottish Cultural Press, 1997), 5-23
———(ed.), *People and Woods in Scotland: A History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997)

SPROTT, Gavin, 'From Fowling to Poaching', in Hugh Cheape (ed.), *Tools and Traditions: Studies in European Ethnology presented to Alexander Fenton* (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland, 1993), 125-31

STEWART, Alasdair M., 'Monarch of the Glen', *AUR*, vol. XLVIII, no. 163 (Spring, 1980), 307-13

STEWART, Alexander, *A Highland Parish, or, The History of Fortingall* (Glasgow: Alex. MacLaren & Sons, 1928)

STEWART, Rev. Alexander (Nether Lochaber), 'Nether Lochaber', *Inverness Courier*, vol. LV, no. 2943 (9 Apr., 1874), 2
———, 'Nether Lochaber', *Inverness Courier*, vol. LV, no. 2980 (24 Dec., 1874), 2
———, *Nether Lochaber: The Natural History, Legends and Folk-Lore of the West Highlands* (Edinburgh: William Paterson, 1883)

STEWART, William G., *Lectures on the Mountains; or, the Highlands and the Highlanders As They Were and As They Are*, 2 vols. (London: Saunders, Otley & Co., 1860)

STETKEVYCH, Jaroslav, 'The Hunt in Classical Arab Poetry: From Mukhadram *Qasīdah* to Umayyad *Tardiyyah*', *Journal of Arabic Literature*, vol. 30 (1999), 107-29

STIÙBHART, Dòmhnall Uilleam, 'Women and Gender in the Early Modern Western Gàidhealtachd', in Elizabeth Ewan & Maureen M. Meikle (eds.), *Women in Scotland, c. 1100–c. 1750* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), 233-49

STAFFORD, Fiona J., *The Sublime Savage: A Study of James Macpherson and the Poems of Ossian* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1988)

STEER, K. & BANNERMAN, J. W. M. (eds.), *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands* (Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 1977)

STEVENSON, Robert B. K., 'Pictish Art', in F. T. Wainwright (ed.), *Problems of the Picts* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1955), 97-128
———, 'The Inchyra Stone and Some Other Unpublished Early Christian

Monuments', *PSAS*, vol. 92 (1959), 33-55

STEWART, James, *Settlements of Western Perthshire: Land and Society North of the Highland Line 1480–1851* (Edinburgh: The Pentland Press, 1990)

TAYLER, Alistair N. & TAYLER, Henrietta, *1715: The Story of the Rising* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1936)

THIÉBAUX, Marcelle, 'The Medieval Chase', *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies*, vol. XXIV (Apr., 1967), 260-74
———, 'The Mouth of the Boar as a Symbol in Medieval Literature', *Romance Philology*, vol. 22 (1968), 281-99
———, *The Stag of Love: The Chase in Medieval Literature* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1974)

THOMAS, A. Charles, 'The Animal Art of the Scottish Iron Age and its Origins', *Archaeological Journal*, vol. CXVIII (1961), 14-64
———, 'Interpretation of the Pictish Symbols', *Archaeological Journal*, vol. CXX (1963), 31-97

THOMAS, A. Keith, *Man and the Natural World, 1500–1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983)

THOMPSON, Francis, *A Scottish Bestiary and the Lore and Literature of Scottish Beasts* (Glasgow: Molendinar Press, 1978)

THOMPSON, Francis G., 'The Folklore Elements in 'Carmina Gadelica'', *TGSI*, vol. XLIV (1964–66), 226-55

THOMSON, Derick S., *The Gaelic Sources of Macpherson's 'Ossian'* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1951)
———, 'The Gaelic Oral Tradition', *Proceedings of the Anthropological and Folklore Society*, vol. V, no. 1 (1954), 1-17
———, 'Scottish Gaelic Folk-Poetry ante 1650', *SGS*, vol. VIII, pt. I (1955), 1-17
———, 'Catalogue of the Ossianic Ballads in MacLagan MSS', *SGS*, vol. VIII, pt. II (1958), 177-224
———, '"Ossian" Macpherson and the Gaelic World of the Eighteenth Century', *AUR*, vol. XL, no. 129 (Spring, 1963), 7-20
———, 'Gaelic Learned Orders and Literati in Medieval Scotland', *SS*, vol. 12 (1968), 57-78
———, *An Introduction to Gaelic Poetry* (London: Gollanz, 1974)
———, 'The Earliest Scottish Gaelic Non-classical Verse Texts', in Dietrich Strauss & Horst W. Drescher (eds.), *Scottish Language and Literature, Medieval and Renaissance: Fourth International Conference* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1986), 533-46.
———, 'Macpherson's 'Ossian': Ballads to Epics', in Bo Almqvist, Séamas Ó Catháin & Pádraig Ó Héalaí (eds.), *The Heroic Process: Form, Function and Fantasy in Folk Epic* (Dun Laoghaire: The Glendale Press, 1987), 243-64
———, 'Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's Nature Poetry and its Sources', in Derick S. Thomson (ed.), *Gaelic and Scots in Harmony: Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on the Languages of Scotland* (Glasgow: Department of Celtic, University

of Glasgow, 1988), 95-115
———, 'Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's Political Poetry', *TGSI*, vol. LVI (1988–90), 185-213
———, 'The Seventeenth-century Crucible of Scottish Gaelic Poetry', *Studia Celtica*, vol. XXVI/XXVII (1991/92), 155-62
———, 'The McLagan MSS in Glasgow University Library: A Survey', *TGSI*, vol. LVIII (1992–94), 406-24
———, 'Gaelic Literature [Scotland]', in Paul H. Scott (ed.), *Scotland: A Concise Cultural History* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1993), 127-44
———, 'Influences of Medieval Thinking on the Gaelic World in Scotland, in the Sixteenth Century and Later', in Marie-Françoise Alamicheal & Derek Brewar (eds.), *The Middle Ages after The Middle Ages in the English-Speaking World* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: D. S. Brewer, 1997), 17-26
———, 'Scottish Gaelic Traditional Songs from the 16th to the 18th Century', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. 105 (2000), 93-114
———, 'Alexander MacDonald, William Ross and Duncan Macintyre: Gaelic Poetry in the Eighteenth Century' in Marco Fazzini (ed.), *Alba Literaria: A History of Scottish Literature* (Venice: Amos Edizioni, 2005), 121-32

TOLMIE, Frances, *One Hundred and Five Songs of Occupation from the Western Isles of Scotland* (Felinfach: Llanerach, 1997) [Reprinted from the *Journal of the Folk-song Society*, vol. IV, no. 16 (Dec., 1911), 143-276]

TURNOCK, David, *The Making of the Scottish Rural Landscape* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995)

VERITAS, 'The Black Officer', *H*, vol. II, no. 75 (Oct., 1874), 3

WAINWRIGHT, F. T. (ed.), *The Problem of the Picts* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1955)

WALCH, Karl, 'Hunting Dogs', in Kurt G. Blüchel (ed.), *Game and Hunting* (Cologne: Köneman, 2000), 386-417

WALKER, Agnes, 'Duncan Bàn MacIntyre', *CMon*, vol. XI, No. I (Oct., 1902), 16-17

WALLACE, T. D., 'The Wild Boar in Scotland', *TISSFC*, vol. V (1895–99), 299-305

WATSON, Adam & ALLAN, Elizabeth, 'Papers Relating to Game Poaching on Deeside, 1766–1832', *Northern Scotland*, vol. 7 (1986), 39-45

WATSON, Jim, 'Oifichear Dubh Bail' a' Chrodhain/The Black Officer of Baile Croan', *Am Bràighe*, vol. 6, no. 4 (Spring, 1999), 16-18

WATSON, William J., 'Some Sutherland Names of Places', *CR*, vol. II (1906), 232-42; 360-68
———, 'Aoibhinn an Obair an t-Sealg', *CR*, vol. IX (1913–14), 156-68
———, 'Classic Gaelic Poetry of Panegyric in Scotland', *TGSI*, vol. XXIX (1914–19), 194-235
———, 'The Death of Diarmad', *CR*, vol. X (1916), 350-57
———, 'Vernacular Gaelic in the Book of the Dean of Lismore', *TGSI*, vol. XXXI (1924–25), 259-88

———, 'Deer and Boar in Gaelic Literature (Aoibhinn an Obair an t-Sealg)', in John Ross (ed.), *The Book of Red Deer* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1925), 75-100
———, *History of the Celtic Place Names in Scotland* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1926)

WEIDNER-WEIDEN, Heidi, 'Hunting Lodges—Their Splendour and Glory', in Kurt G. Blüchel (ed.), *Game and Hunting* (Cologne: Köneman, 2000), 246-77

WHITE, Thomas P., 'Notice of Saddell Abbey, in Kintyre, Argyllshire; with its Sculptured Slabs', *PSAS*, vol. 8 (1868–70), 122-35
———, *Archaeological Sketches in Scotland: District of Kintyre* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1873)
———, *Archaeological Sketches in Scotland: Knapdale and Gigha* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1875)

WHITEHEAD, G. Kenneth, *The Deerstalking Grounds of Great Britain and Ireland* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1960)
———, *Deer Stalking in Scotland* (London: Percival Marshall & Co., 1964)
———, *Hunting and Stalking Deer in Britain through the Ages* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1980)

WHYTE, Henry [Fionn], 'Marbhrann Forsair Choire-an-t-Sith', *An Gàidheal*, leabh. VI, air. 70 (Oct., 1877), 307-08
———, 'The Fate of Monaltrie', *OT*, no. 736 (14 Jul., 1880), 3

WIGHTMAN, Andy, HIGGINS, Peter, JARVIE, Grant & NICOL, R., 'The Cultural Politics of Hunting: Sporting Estates and Recreational Land Use in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland', *Culture, Sport, Society*, vol. 5, no. 1 (Spring, 2002), 53-70

WILLIAMS, Elizabeth, 'Hunting the Deer: Some Uses of a Motif-Complex in Middle English Romance and Saint's Life', in Maldwyn Mills, Jennifer Fellows & Carol M. Meale (eds.), *Romance in Medieval England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1991), 187-206

WILSON, Wilson D., *Description of An Ancient Cross at Kilmory in Argyleshire* (Edinburgh: Privately printed, 1839)

WISEMAN, Anndra E. M., 'Call Ghàdhaig ann am Ficsean is ann am Fìrinn', *TGSI*, vol. LXII (2000–02), 298-346

YOUNG, Charles R., *The Royal Forests of Medieval England* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1979)

4. Newspapers and Periodicals

ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY REVIEW (Aberdeen, 1913–)
BÉALOIDEAS: JOURNAL OF THE FOLKLORE OF IRELAND SOCIETY (Dublin, 1927–)
BULLETIN BOARD OF CELTIC STUDIES (London, 1923–)
CAMBRIDGE/CAMBRIAN MEDIEVAL STUDIES (Aberystwyth, 1981–)
CELTIC MAGAZINE, THE (Inverness, 1876–1888)
CELTIC MONTHLY, THE (Glasgow, 1892–1917)
CELTIC REVIEW, THE (Edinburgh, 1904–1916)
CYNEGETICA (Uppsala, 1953–)
DEER: JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH DEER SOCIETY (London,1966–)
DEÒ-GRÉINE, AN (Glasgow, 1905–1923, continued as AN GÀIDHEAL, 1923–)
ÉISGE: A JOURNAL OF IRISH STUDIES (Dublin, 1939–)
FOLKLORE (London, 1890–)
GÀIDHEAL, AN (Edinburgh; Glasgow, 1871–1877)
GÀIDHEAL, AN (Glasgow, 1923–1967, formerly AN DEÒ-GRÉINE, replaced by SRUTH)
GUTH NA BLIADHNA (Various places, 1904–1925)
HIGHLAND MONTHLY, THE (Inverness, 1889–1893)
HIGHLANDER, THE (Inverness, 1873–1882)
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF THE HISTORY OF SPORT (London, 1987–)
MACTALLA (Sydney, Cape Breton, 1892–1904)
NORTHERN CHRONICLE, THE (Inverness, 1881–1964)
NORTHERN SCOTLAND (Aberdeen, 1972–)
OBAN TIMES, THE (Oban, 1866–)
PICTISH ARTS SOCIETY JOURNAL (Edinburgh, 1992–)
PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND FOLKLORE SOCIETY, THE (Edinburgh, 1939–1956)
PROCEEDINGS OF THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF SCOTLAND, THE (Edinburgh, 1851–)
RÒSARNACH, AN (Glasgow, 1917–1930)
SCOTS MAGAZINE, THE (Edinburgh, 1739–)
SCOTTISH CELTIC REVIEW, THE (Glasgow, 1881–1885)
SCOTTISH GAELIC STUDIES (Aberdeen, 1926–)
SCOTTISH HIGHLANDER, THE (Inverness, 1885–1898)
SCOTTISH HISTORICAL REVIEW (Aberdeen, 1903–)
SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL (Edinburgh, 1891–)
SCOTTISH REVIEW, THE (Perth, 1882–)
SCOTTISH STUDIES (Edinburgh, 1957–)
SGEULAICHE, AN (Glasgow; Perth, 1909–1911)
SPORTS HISTORIAN: THE JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH SOCIETY OF SPORTS HISTORY (London, 1993–)
STUDIA CELTICA (Cardiff, 1966–)
TAIT'S EDINBURGH MAGAZINE (Edinburgh, 1832–1860)
TEACHDAIRE GAELACH, AN (Glasgow, 1829–1831)
TEACHDAIRE NAN GÀIDHEAL (Glasgow, 1844)
TEACHAIRE UR GAIDHEALACH (Glasgow, 1835–1836)
TOCHER (Edinburgh, 1971–)
TRANSACTIONS OF THE ROYAL HIGHLAND AND AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND (Edinburgh, 1830–1968)

TRANSACTIONS OF THE GAELIC SOCIETY OF DUBLIN, THE (Dublin, 1808–)
TRANSACTIONS OF THE GAELIC SOCIETY OF INVERNESS, THE (Inverness, 1871–)
TRANSACTIONS OF THE GAELIC SOCIETY OF GLASGOW, THE (Glasgow, 1887–1958)
TRANSACTIONS OF THE INVERNESS SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY AND FIELD CLUB (Inverness, 1875–1925)
TRANSACTIONS OF THE OSSIANIC SOCIETY (Dublin, 1853–)
TRANSACTIONS OF THE ROYAL SCOTTISH ARBORICULTURAL SOCIETY (Edinburgh, 1888–1916)
WEST HIGHLAND FREE PRESS (Broadford, Isle of Skye, 1971–)
ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR CELTISCHE PHILOLOGIE (Tubingen, 1887–)

5. Theses

BATH, Michael E., *The Image of the Stag in Literary and Iconographic Traditions of the Middle Ages* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Strathclyde, 1981)

CARRINGTON, Ann, *The Iconography of the Chase and the Equestrian Motifs of Eighth to Tenth Century Pictish and Irish Sculpture with Reference to Early Medieval Celtic Literature* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1995)

GRIMBLE, Ian, *The Survival of a Celtic Society in the Mackay Country formerly called Strathnaver, in Northern Scotland, from the 16th century* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1964)

MACLEAN, Douglas G., *Early Medieval Sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, 2 vols. (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1985)

MACINNES, John, *Gaelic Poetry* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1975)

MENZIES, Patricia M., *Òran na Comhachaig: A Study of Text and Content* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2001)

MORÉT, Ulrike, *Gaelic History and Culture in Mediaeval and Sixteenth-century Lowland Scottish Historiography* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1993)

NEWTON, Michael, *The Tree in Scottish Gaelic Literature and Tradition* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1998)

WILDE, Roxanne L., *Bows and Arrows in Gaelic Verse* (Unpublished Honour's Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1984)

WISEMAN, Andrew E. M., *Brae Lochaber Gaelic Oral Tradition and the Repertoire of John MacDonald, Highbridge* (Unpublished MPhil Thesis, University of Glasgow, 1996)

6. Reference Works

BLACK, Ronald, *A Catalogue of Classical Gaelic Manuscripts* (Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland, *c.* 1985)

BRANDER, Michael, *The Language of the Field* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1997)

CAMERON, Sheila H. M., *Index to Scottish Gaelic Periodicals 1871–1975* (Willingham: Cameron, 1996)

COX, Richard W., *British Sport: A Bibliography to 2000*, Vol. 1: *Nationwide Histories*; Vol. 2: *Local Histories*; Vol. 3: *Biographical Studies of British Sportsmen, Sportswomen and Animals*, 3 vols. (London: F. Cass, 2nd edn., 2003)

DALBY, David, *Lexicon of the Mediæval German Hunt: A Lexicon of Middle High German Terms (1050–1500) associated with the Chase, Hunting with Bows, Falconry, Trapping and Fowling* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1965)

DWELLY, Edward, *The Illustrated Gaelic-English Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, new ed., 2001)

FORBES, Alexander R., *Gaelic Names of Beasts* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1905)

GRANT, William & MURISON, David D., *The Scottish National Dictionary*, vols. 10 (Edinburgh: The Scottish National Dictionary Association, 1931–76)

LEE, Richard B. & DALY, Richard Heywood (eds.), *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Hunters and Gatherers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

MACBAIN, Alexander, *An Etymological Dictionary of the Gaelic Language* (Stirling: Eneas MacKay, 1911)

MACKECHNIE, Rev. John (comp.), *Catalogue of Gaelic Manuscripts in Selected Libraries in Great Britain and Ireland*, 2 vols. (Boston, Massachusetts: G. K. Hall, 1973)

MACKINNON, Donald (ed.), *A Descriptive Catalogue of Gaelic Manuscripts in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, and elsewhere in Scotland* (Edinburgh: W. Brown 1912)

MACLEAN, Donald, *Typographia Scoto-Gadelica: Books Printed in the Gaelic of Scotland, from the Year 1567 to the Year 1914 with Bibliographical and Biographical Notes* (Edinburgh: Grant, 1915)

NICOLSON, (Sheriff) Alexander (ed.), *A Collection of Gaelic Proverbs and Familiar Phrases* (Edinburgh: MacLachlan & Stewart, 1881)

———, *A Collection of Gaelic Proverbs and Familiar Phrases* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1996)

Ó BAOILL, Colm & MACAULAY, Donald (comps.), *Scottish Gaelic Vernacular Verse to 1730: A Checklist* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University, Department of Celtic, rev. ed., 2001)

REID, John, *Bibliotheca Scoto-Celtica; or, An Account of all the Books which have been Printed in the Gaelic Language* (Glasgow: J. Reid & Co.; Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd; London: Whittaker, Treacher & Arnot, 1832)

THOMSON, Derick S. (ed.), *The Companion to Gaelic Scotland* (Glasgow: Gairm, 1994)

WEGNER, Robert, *Wegner's Bibliography on Deer and Deer-Hunting: A Comprehensive Annotated Compilation of Books in English Pertaining to Deer and their Hunting, 1413–1991* (Deforest, Wisconsin: St. Hubert's Press, 1992)

WHITEHEAD, G. Kenneth, *The Whitehead Encyclopaedia of Deer* (Shrewsbury: Swan Hill Press, 1993)