

## ***THA MULAD AIR M' INNTINN: A THIRD SONG BY MARION CAMPBELL OF GLEN LYON?***

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The early modern era in Gaelic Scotland did not lack for episodes which saw particular kindreds fight for their lives to avoid dispossession, subjugation or extinction, but a peculiar quality and intensity marked out the experience of Clann Ghriogair, the MacGregors. Their recent history was inseparable from that of the kindred now in the van of their suppression, the Campbells, and this had bred a deep-rooted matrix of social and personal relationships, as expressed by settlement pattern, patronage and service, and intermarriage. To the regime of James VI, the MacGregors became the epitome of Highland lawlessness, and the proscription of the clan in 1603 inaugurated a programme of state-sponsored repression which aimed to wipe the kindred, and its surname, from the map. One of the reasons the campaign failed was the quite remarkable level of support the clan received from society at large. Another was the MacGregors' formidable military capability, ironically in origin a consequence of their historic role as shock troops of the Campbells, and which enabled them to mount a prolonged defensive campaign of guerrilla warfare. Although the kindred survived, it did so as a scattered diaspora, bereft both of the ruling family from which its chiefs had long been drawn, and of the lands those chiefs had customarily possessed.<sup>1</sup>

These were the twenty merklands of Glen Strae, which ran from the mouth of that glen eastwards along the beautiful and fertile strath watered by the Orchy, to the mouth of Glen Orchy

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<sup>1</sup> This article has been long in the writing, and in that time I have incurred many debts. In addition to those named below, I would like to thank Dr Geraldine Parsons, Dr Virginia Blankenhorn, Prof. William Gillies and the anonymous reader.

itself. The MacGregor chiefs, sometimes styled ‘of Glen Strae’ in contemporary record, seem to have had more than one stronghold at or adjacent to Stronmilchan, their alternative territorial designation. Their traditional burial place was at the ancient church site at Dalmally, *Dìseart Chonnáin*. Beyond its role as secular and spiritual epicentre for the kindred, Glen Strae was a rich economic resource which must have been crucial to the status and power of the MacGregor chiefs. This was land worth fighting for, and the right to it was at the heart of the feud between the Campbells and MacGregors. It took seventy years for the former to displace the latter. The process started in 1554 with the purchase by Cailean Liath, sixth chief of the powerful Glen Orchy branch of the Campbells, of the superiority of Glen Strae from the earl of Argyll; and ended in 1624 with Donnchadh Dubh, Cailean Liath’s son and successor, buying out the *dùthchas* or ‘kindness’ of the MacGregor chief for £10, 000. Henceforth the MacGregor ruling family would be ‘alutterlie secludit and debarrit fra the propertie and possessioun of the saidis landis’ (MacGregor 1989, 268-73).

These dates probably also define the period of composition of the sequence of songs which gave cultural expression to these momentous events, and which has come to occupy a significant place in the canon of early modern Scottish Gaelic vernacular literature (Duncan 1979). Several of these songs remain undated with any more precision, either in absolute or relative terms. An exception is *Griogal Cridhe*, now probably the best-known of the corpus. Previously I sought to combine fresh documentary evidence with a reappraisal of the text to confirm the assertion of tradition that the song was indeed the work of the wife of the MacGregor chief Griogair Ruadh, who was beheaded by Cailean Liath on 7 April 1570. The composer, Marion Campbell, was a daughter of Donnchadh Ruadh Campbell of Glen Lyon, first

cousin of Cailean Liath,<sup>2</sup> and the likely date of composition the early 1570s. The execution came at a late stage in a bitter first phase of war between the kindreds which had formally begun on 7 December 1562 with a night attack on Campbell elements by a MacGregor host headed by Griogair Ruadh. His marriage to Marion most probably took place in a short-lived interlude of truce in 1566-7. I also offered support to Alasdair Duncan's contention that Marion was the composer of a second song, *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid*, whose content connects it to the outbreak of hostilities. If this be accepted, then that song suggests that the relationship was already in being in late 1562, but had been blocked by her father, leaving her current status as one of house arrest (MacGregor 1999).

The background to the feud was the pursuit by Cailean Liath of a systematic and multi-pronged campaign, which commenced virtually with his accession to the headship of his lineage in 1550, to bring Clann Ghriogair to heel by neutralising its leadership. Griogair Ruadh succeeded as chief as a minor following the violent and unexplained death of his brother, and Cailean Liath exploited that minority by buying the superiority of Glen Strae, and the ward and marriage of Griogair Ruadh. He also made a series of bonds in which MacGregor kin-groups or individuals took him as their chief, sometimes renouncing their own in the process. A hollow chiefship or worse beckoned for Griogair Ruadh, who may have spent these years in the neighbourhood of the head of Loch Fyne, the country of his maternal relations, the MacNaughtons of Dunderave and the Campbells of Ardkinglas. His mother belonged to the latter kindred, and was not the only Campbell woman to marry a MacGregor chief before 1550.

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<sup>2</sup> For an explanation of my use of Marion rather than a Gaelic personal name, see MacGregor 1999, 124 and nn. 37, 38. In my study of *Griogal Cridhe* I incorrectly stated that Donnchadh Ruadh was Cailean Liath's uncle rather than his first cousin (MacGregor 1999, 128). I am indebted to Mr Ed Moore, Western USA chapter, Clan Gregor Society, for alerting me to this error. Cailean Liath was son of Cailean, third chief of the Campbells of Glenorchy. Donnchadh Ruadh was son of Cailean's brother Gilleasbuig, first chief of the Campbells of Glen Lyon. For a genealogical chart see Dawson 1997, 268.

Griogair Ruadh becomes visible in record, and in a milieu linking him to his clan's territories, and to Cailean Liath, from later 1561. For various reasons tensions rose during 1562, and in a written obligation of 24 November Cailean Liath forced the issue by promising to give Griogair Ruadh possession of Glen Strae only at the price of the acceptance of certain unspecified legal restrictions, and the surrender of two dependants of Griogair Ruadh, with 1 January 1563 set as a deadline. The young chief was under the most intense pressure, one element of which must have been the attitude of his own clan to his fledgling authority. 7 December 1562 saw the decision made, and his kindred rally round him (MacGregor 1989, 284-314).

The historical background has been revisited and laboured because a third song has come to light which may be by Marion, and which may relate to the situation prior to 7 December 1562. The purpose of this paper is to explore its authenticity and import. There follow the literatim text; an edition which seeks as far as possible to maintain the language of the original rather than resorting to modern standardised forms, and an English translation.

#### LITERATIM TEXT

##### Eisin

1. Ta mulad air m'Inntin  
gar an dubhraig mi Innseadh  
Cuir truim oram fhein mar throm Cheo.
2. 'S ann mu dheibhinn na gruagache  
'S glaine Buidhe na gruaidhe  
Na'n t Ubh'l ud ta shuas air bhar meoir.
3. 'Smi bha bronach an Laithe  
Bha do Chumhnant as tsabhal  
nach rabh mi 's mo Cheathairn nad Choir
4. Cha b'ann gu Cuireadh do Bhainnse  
Ach Los Buil' air do Naimhde  
Dheanainn Fuil orr' o Manndal gu m' Broig

#### EDITION

##### Esan

- Ta mulad air m' inntinn,  
Gar an dùraig mi innseadh,  
Cuir truim' orm fhìn mar throm cheò.
- S ann mu dheibhinn na gruagaiche,  
'S glaine buidhe na gruaidhe  
Na 'n t-ubhal ud ta shuas air bhàrr meòir.
- S mi bha brònach an laithe  
Bha do chùmhnant as t-sabhal  
Nach robh mi 's mo cheatharn nad chòir;
- Cha b' ann gu cuireadh do bhainnse  
Ach los buill' air do naimhde:  
Dhèanainn fuil orr' o'm manndal gu'm bròig.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> This verse occurs out of sequence in the MS, but in the same hand, and with the place to which it properly belongs clearly marked.

<p>5 Dhiolainn snithe do shuilin mor Mhulad 's mor Churam air na shuigh air na Buid as Tigh ost.</p>	<p>Dhiolainn snithe do shùilean Mòr mhulad 's mòr chùram, Air na shuidh air na bùird as taigh-òst';</p>
<p>6 'm fad 's a Chunnbhain mo Chasan gun Tinneas gun Eas Iaint Bheirinn Briathar nach b' airceas duit lon.</p>	<p>'M fad 's a chunnbhainn mo chasan Gun tinneas gun easlaint, Bheirinn briathar nach b' airceas dhuit lòn.</p>
<p><b>Isin</b><sup>4</sup></p>	<p><b>Ise</b></p>
<p>7. 'S olc a Chuir iad mi 'm Priosan 'S nach do ghaid mi riabh ni uadh 'S nach mo fhuair iad mi 'm Striopaigh am Froig.</p>	<p>'S olc a chuir iad mi 'm prìosan, 'S nach do ghaid mi riamh nì uadh', 'S nach mò fhuair iad mi 'm striopaigh am fròig.</p>
<p>8. giodh a thug mi 'n cean fallaigh Dan ogan deas Bharrail Theid air thus an tsluagh Garrail air Thoir</p>	<p>Giodh a thug mi 'n cean falaich Dan' ògan deas-bharrail, Thèid air thùs an t-sluaigh garail<sup>5</sup> air thòir;</p>
<p>9. Da'na ghriogarach ghasta 'Sìol nan Rioghan a bh' againn Chuireadh geur Lann gle scaiteach am Feoil.</p>	<p>Dana Ghhriogarach ghasta – Sìol nan rioghan a bh' againn – Chuireadh geur-lann glè sgaiteach am feòil.</p>
<p>10. sar ghiomanach gun thu Nar a theid thu air h Uilin Chuireadh Stuc air Damh mullaigh an tsroin</p>	<p>Sar ghiomanach gunn' thu; Nuair a thèid thu air th' uilinn Chuireadh stùic air damh mullaigh<sup>6</sup> san t-Sròin</p>
<p>11. 'sar Iasgair air Abhain ga Iarruidh 's ga ghleadhadh Cha bhiodh mian air na Mnaibh nad Choir</p>	<p>Sar iasgair air abhainn, Ga iarraidh 's ga ghlacadh:<sup>7</sup> Cha bhiodh mian air na mnaithibh nad chòir.</p>
<p>12. 'S beg e<sup>8</sup> dh' Ardan Clainne ghriogair 'S mor mo dhuil as gu 'n tig iad giod a leagadh<sup>9</sup> iad mise a Froig.</p>	<p>S beag a dh' àrdan Clainne Ghriogair, S mòr mo dhùil às gun tig iad, Giod a leigeadh iad mise am fròig;</p>
<p>13. ge do Brist iad an Caisteall Edir Iarnabh is ghlasabh 'S mo leigeilse mach air feadh Feoir.</p>	<p>Ge do<sup>10</sup> bhrìst iad an caisteal Eadar iarnaibh is ghlasaibh, 'S mo leigeil-sa mach air feadh feòir.</p>

<sup>4</sup> One would expect *Ise*: I cannot account for the curious MS form, or point to another occurrence.

<sup>5</sup> I am indebted to Dr Ronald Black for pointing to the form *garamhail* in Dinneen (1927), whose range of meanings includes 'neighbourly, obliging, friendly'. Robert Armstrong (1825) gives *garail*, noting the form *gar-amhuil* as given in Shaw (1780). All of Armstrong's meanings for *garail* ('near', 'neighbouring', 'warm', 'comfortable', 'snug') are taken from Shaw.

<sup>6</sup> *Cnú m(h)ullaigh*, 'topmost nut', occurs several times in the classical language between the mid-fifteenth and mid-sixteenth century: Watson 1937, 62, l. 605; Ó Mainnín 2009, 429; Hennessy and MacCarthy 1887-1901, 570, l. 16; Fraser and O'Keefe 1931, 104, vv. 4, 9. *Damh-mullaich* is relatively well attested in the context of the hunt in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Scottish Gaelic vernacular verse: see *Corpas na Gàidhlig*. For other instances of this usage of *mullaich* see Thomson 1992, 58, l. 238; 120, l. 514.

<sup>7</sup> MS *ghleadhadh* might suggest *g(h)lèidheadh*, 'keeping, preserving', but the need for rhyme with *abhainn* and *mnaithibh* implies that we read *ghlacadh*.

<sup>8</sup> suprascript in MS.

<sup>9</sup> MS *lagadh* with suprascript *e* over the first *a*.

<sup>10</sup> On *ge do* for Modern *ged a*, cf. Gillies (2010-13), 7.

14. gheabhain tuigs' & suairceas ann am buthan ur uaigneach ann sa ghleannan bheag uain' am bith 'n ceò.	Gheibhinn tuigs' agus suairceas Ann am bùthan ùr uaigneach Anns a' ghleannan bheag uain' am bi 'n ceò. <sup>11</sup>
15. 'S dona 'n Tuigse da dhaoine 's aithne 'n Scrioptur a leughadh nach sheachain iad Eacoir sheach Coir.	S dona 'n tuigse da dhaoine, S aithne 'n sgrìobtar a leughadh, Nach seachain iad eucoir seach còir.
16. Bhith gar Cunnbhail o Cheile Le Aibseir gun Beasan Mar mo Bharail ta'n Eacoir ud mor.	Bhith gar cunnbhail o chèile Le aibseir <sup>12</sup> gun bheusan: Mar mo bharail ta 'n eacoir ud mòr.
17. giodh a bheir sibh e dh' Eirinn No Shagsann na Beurla Thig e dhachaidh mu'n teid orm snaim Post.	Giodh a bheir sibh e dh' Èirinn No Shagsainn na Beurla Thig e dhachaigh mun tèid orm snaim pòst';
18. giodh a ni sibh mo cheangal Edir Cheann & Chnaimhin 's mo sparradh gle dhaingeann le h ord.	Giodh a nì sibh mo cheangal Eadar cheann agus chnamhan <sup>13</sup> 'S mo sparradh gle dhaingeann le h-òrd;
19. giodh a chuir sibh mi 's talamh gus an Odh'raigh air m' Anard Cha dean mi Sugra a dh'aindeoin no dheoin.	Giodh a chuir sibh mi 's talamh Gus an odhraich air m' anard Cha dèan mi sùgra a dh'aindeòin no dheòin.

#### TRANSLATION

##### He:

- 1 There is sadness on my mind, though I cannot speak of it, weighing me down like the weight of mist.
2. Concerning the maiden, and brighter the yellow of her cheek than that apple up on the branch's tip.
3. I was grieved on the day your marriage contract was made in the barn; that I and my troop were not there for you.
4. Not to receive an invitation to your wedding, but to attack your enemies: I would bloody them from their mantles to their shoes.
5. I would avenge the weeping of your eyes, your great sadness and burden, on those who sat at the tables in the inn.
6. So long as I would keep my legs from sickness and ailment, I would make a pledge to you that poverty would not be your provision.

##### She:

7. Evil it is for them to imprison me, who never stole a thing from them; no more did they find me as a whore in a hovel.
8. Though I gave love in secret to the surpassing youth, who goes in the van of the (?)loyal host in the pursuit.

<sup>11</sup> This verse is given at the end of the MS in a different hand, and with no indication as to where it might belong.

<sup>12</sup> *Aibseir* is more commonly *aibhisteir*, one of the terms for Satan (Black 2005, 160). I am indebted to Prof. Roibeard Ó Maolaláigh for drawing my attention to the form *àbharsair*: see MacDonald (1966-68), 38.

<sup>13</sup> For *cnamhan* with short initial *a*, as opposed to *cnàmhan*, see Ó Baoill 1979, l. 845 and note; see further below, n. 14.

9. To the noble MacGregor, seed of our kings of old, who would set a razor sharp blade in flesh.
10. A fine hunter with the gun are you; when you go on your elbow, you darken the countenance of the highest stag in Stron.
11. A fine angler on river, pursuing and catching; the women in your company would not go hungry.
12. There is little vainglory in Clan Gregor, and how I hope that they win through, even if in the process they leave me ensnared.
13. Unless they broke down the castle, for all its iron and locks, and release me onto open sward.
14. I would find understanding and consideration in a hut, new-built and remote, in the little green glen of the mist.
15. How contemptible is the wisdom of those who can read scripture, yet do not shun what is wrong for what is right.
16. To be kept apart by an unscrupulous devil: to me that is true injustice.
17. Though you take him to Ireland, or foreign-tongued England, he'll come home before a wedding band goes on me;
18. Though you bind me up from head to toe, and nail me down fast with a hammer;
19. Though you put me in the ground until my death-linen yellows, I will not consummate marriage, consenting or not.

## **Source**

This text is to be found in Manuscript 91 of the collection, begun in the 1750s, of James MacLagan (1728-1805), minister at Blair Atholl and Strowan from 1781 until 1805 (MacLagan Coll.; Thomson 1992-94). What we have of early modern Gaelic vernacular verse we owe in large measure to eighteenth century clerical collectors like MacLagan, of both Moderate and Evangelical theological persuasions (Thomson 1992-94, 407-08, 415; Meek 2002, 99-100; T). As Derick Thomson has pointed out, we are further indebted to them for an editorial approach which is in the main non-interventionist, comparatively sophisticated, and, in terms of inclusivity, more broad-minded than might be anticipated (1955-58, 182, 204, 207; 1992, 2-4, 21-22; 1992-94, 419, 423). These comments are worth bearing in mind in approaching a text which, with its references to prostitution and bible-based hypocrisy, does not pull its punches.

MacLagan includes items such as ‘Òran na Comhachaig’ and ‘An Duanag Ullamh’ which are usually assigned to the sixteenth century (Thomson, 1992-94, 416-19). The chronological profile which Thomson accords to the verse collected by MacLagan’s friend and contemporary, Ewen MacDiarmid, also suggests that we could reasonably expect a composition of the 1560s to fall within their compass; MacDiarmid has one item which can plausibly be assigned to the early sixteenth century (1992, 120-25).<sup>14</sup> Equally, Thomson has emphasised that such judgements on date are unavoidably subjective, given the lack of hard evidence habitually afforded by the texts themselves (1992, 10). Moreover, it is clear that while the oral environment to which we are largely indebted for the survival of the texts could preserve some of them with a high degree of integrity, it was just as possible that as songs circulated freely, and in particular as they distanced themselves from the time, place and circumstances which spawned them, various kinds and degrees of mutation and regeneration could take place (Thomson 1992, 16-19).

Hence a range of formal possibilities present themselves at the outset in relation to our present text. It could be a genuine song by Marion Campbell, faithfully transmitted and preserved across two centuries. It could be a genuine song by another: the MacGregor subject matter does not mean that it must belong to Marion and the 1560s. Whatever its authorship, the song could be genuine, in the sense that it is an authentic product of the MacGregors’ historical experience of the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; but with its integrity diluted during transmission. The dialogue form, if original, might suggest one song of dual rather than single authorship; alternatively, two separately authored but thematically compatible songs could have been spliced together in the process of transmission. Finally, we should acknowledge that the

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<sup>14</sup> ‘... three of the items (Nos. 18, 21, 43) may be sixteenth-century, another three dating from the first half of the seventeenth, another three from the second half of the seventeenth, eight from the seventeenth less specifically, and seventeen items from the eighteenth’ (Thomson 1992, 10).



song could be ‘after’ Marion rather than by her; that her own songs and story may have moved others to the composition of a song or songs extrapolating upon her experience, in her name or style.<sup>15</sup>

These possibilities will be investigated by applying various tests to our text: the evidence of ascription and transmission; the relationship to the other songs presently ascribed to Marion; the relationship to the known historical context; and the evidence of its own internal argument and artistic unity. Other yardsticks are language and form, which – always remembering the potential influence of tradition bearers and scribes, for example in introducing vernacularisms – do not rule out Marion’s authorship, and offer a degree of corroboration. The song contains a number of features not incompatible with a Perthshire provenance: *gar an; dheibhinn; as t-sabhal* (cf. *'s talamh*); *dana; da; chnamhan; sugra*.<sup>16</sup> It contains no elements that clearly contradict a later sixteenth-century dating, and some that might point in such a direction, and/or to the deployment of a conservative linguistic register: *ta; bhainnse/naimhde*, apparently with short *a*; *chunnbhainn* (cf. *chunnbhail*); *dhuit; mò; striopaigh; giod(h) a ; th' uilinn; mullaigh; mnaibh*. The influence of such a register might be indicative of nobility, education and awareness of the classical language on the part of the author or authors.<sup>17</sup> Metrically, the pattern of two lines of two stresses and a concluding line of three stresses, with the three second stresses within each stanza in rhyme, and the third stress of the third line rhyming in *ò* throughout, fits the category of vocal music whose technical name, according to William Matheson, was *iorram*.

Matheson linked *iorram* to the *bàrd*, again in the technical sense of a poet who operated at the

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<sup>15</sup> For studies bringing out the complexities of the process of transmission in the Scottish Gaelic verse tradition, see Meek 1986-87; Clancy 2006.

<sup>16</sup> For the shortening of long *a* as in *cnàmhan* before nasal *mh* in the Perthshire dialect, see Robertson, (1897-98), 8. In verse 1, one would normally expect *fhéin*, not *fhin* (here fixed by rhyme) in a Perthshire text, but Prof. Ó Maolalaigh has suggested to me that this is not enough in itself to count conclusively against a Perthshire origin.

<sup>17</sup> For a recent discussion of language use and register among the upper classes of early modern Gaelic Scotland, see Gillies (2010-13), 1-27, esp. 19-21.

courts of the Gaelic aristocracy in Scotland ‘with an archaic form of regularly stressed metre and stanza, couched in his own vernacular, and devoted mainly to eulogy and elegy, and also including satire’ (Matheson 1970, 149-50; Matheson 1993, 4-5; Ó Maolalaigh 2006).<sup>18</sup>

### **Ascription and Transmission**

Manuscript 91 in the MacLagan collection consists of nine leaves of paper sewn together, containing seven songs in total, of which *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid* is the sixth, and *Tha Mulad air M’ Inntinn* the seventh. They also share the same hand, with the exception of verse 14 in the latter song. Given the similarities in content to which we shall turn in due course, possibilities naturally arising are that both songs are the work of the one author, and were taken down from the one informant. Neither song bears any ascription to support or contradict either hypothesis, an unexceptional occurrence in the eighteenth-century collections in which editorial attribution of authorship is somewhat haphazard, and anonymous verse looms large (Thomson 1992, 4-7; Thomson 1992-94, 410, 415, 418-19).

However, we do possess other, later, versions of *Tha Mulad air M’ Inntinn*, with ascriptions. Michael Newton has published a variant of the male-voiced part of the MacLagan text from the MacGregor Papers in Stirling Archives, one of five songs apparently written down in 1816 (2003, 54-56). There also it is preceded by a version of *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid*, entitled ‘Oran le nighean Dhonnachai Dhuibh do Ghrigair nam basa bana’. The ‘He’ section of *Tha Mulad air M’ Inntinn* is then headed ‘Oran le Grigair nam basa bana do nighean Donachaidh dhuibh’. To find it circulating independently, and assigned to male authorship, is incompatible neither with an ultimate origin as part of a dialogue in poetic form, nor with the possibility that it

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<sup>18</sup> I am indebted to Prof. Ó Maolalaigh for making available to me a provisional linguistic analysis of *Tha Mulad air M’ Inntinn*, upon which this paragraph draws.

was composed not by ‘Grigair nam basa bana’, but by the author of *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid*, ‘nighean Dhonnachai Dhuibh’.

These ascriptions direct us immediately to the first recorded text of *Griogal Cridhe*, published only three years earlier in 1813 by Paruig Mac an Tuairneir, under the following rubric (1813, 286):

Cumha le nighean do Dhonncha dubh, Moir-fhear Bhraigh-dealbunn, an uair a thug a h-athair agus a brathair an ceann dheth a fear, Griogair MacGriogair, agus a ciad leanabh air a glun (an elegy composed by the daughter of Donnchadh Dubh, lord of Breadalbane, when her father and her brother beheaded her husband, Gregor MacGregor, when her first child was but an infant).

The statement that Marion Campbell was the daughter of Donnchadh Dubh, the son and successor of Cailean Liath, we know to be mistaken. If we assumed that her father’s identity had simply become confounded in tradition, to which both Paruig Mac an Tuairneir and the scribe at work in 1816 were faithfully and independently giving voice, then on the basis of these ascriptions an argument could be made that all three songs were understood to belong together, and to share the one author. However, it is equally conceivable that the ascriptions of 1816 expose the direct influence of Paruig Mac an Tuairneir’s edition. Evidence from later in the nineteenth century shows that within Glen Lyon tradition at least, Marion’s paternal identity was correctly remembered, and that Paruig Mac an Tuairneir was believed to be guilty of editorial malpractice rather than straightforward error in this regard (MacGregor 1999, 129-31). The

references in 1816 to Griogair Ruadh as ‘Grigair nam basa bana’, could derive solely from the line in *Griogal Cridhe* describing him as ‘Griogair bàn nam basa geala’ rather than representing an established kenning.

What gives substance to this line of thinking is the collection of MacGregor tradition made by the Strathfillan schoolmaster Dòmhnall MacGregor around 1824, which includes a version of the story of Griogair Ruadh and Marion. This certainly possesses original features, but there is also explicit acknowledgement and use of Turner’s edition which casts a shadow over the claim that the male protagonist is ‘called in traditionary lore “Grigair òg na bassa geala”’ (Newton 1998-2000, 288-89). This collection also has much corrupted versions of stanzas 12 and 13 of *Tha Mulad air M’ Inntinn*, the comments on authorship perhaps again reflecting the ambiguity naturally arising if we posit an original dialogue form: ‘one account states, it to be the composition of a lady who was confined by her relations, to prevent her marrying a MacGregor, others say, it was compos’d by some outlaw connected with the MacGregors who was confined in some Castle – and address’d the verses to the Clan Gregor, suing for deliverance’ (Newton 1998-2000, 297).

To summarise thus far, while there are good reasons for treating the evidence of ascription with caution, the place accorded *Tha Mulad air M’ Inntinn* within MacGregor tradition is at least suggestive, and its close association in the manuscripts with *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid* particularly so. Three further versions of this song have been identified to date.<sup>19</sup> The first is MacLagan Manuscript 70 (Appendix A, no. I). While its linguistic forms indicate that it may share with MacLagan Manuscript 91 a Perthshire provenance, along with some important points of substance omitted from all other versions, its ‘He’ section shows a much closer

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<sup>19</sup> For drawing my attention to these I am indebted to Dr Kate L. Mathis and Dr Andrew Wiseman.

relationship to the text of 1816. Hereafter MacLagan Manuscript 91 shall be referred to as P[erthshire]1, and MacLagan Manuscript 70 and the text of 1816 as P2(i) and P2(ii) respectively.<sup>20</sup> The other two versions date respectively to 1806, in a miscellany of Gaelic verse published at Inverness,<sup>21</sup> and to 1888, as one of a number of songs collected from Badenoch (Appendix A, nos. II and III). They are very closely related: the 1888 text could derive in its entirety from that of 1806. These texts may represent a variant of the song localised in Badenoch and the eastern Highlands, and shall be referred to hereafter as B[adenoch](i) and B(ii) respectively.

Close comparison suggests that P1, P2 and B represent three distinct but related<sup>22</sup> lines of transmission of *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn*, and that P1 stands significantly closer to the urtext. While P2 and B maintain a broad fidelity to the substance and spirit of P1, this co-exists with a weakening of the internal coherence associated with the constant presence of one authorial voice. While P2(i) and B survive as dialogues, they are irregular in metre and rime, erratic in structure and sense, and replete with examples both of clichéd ‘filling and caulking’, and of padding in the form of redundant verses. In the case of B in particular, this is compounded by the disappearance or warping of specifics, perhaps arising from the settling of the song in a locale where these no longer had meaning. B’s rubrics or attributions tell their own story – *Oran eadar Oig-fhear agus a Leanan* (‘A Song between a Youth and his Love’) in 1806, and this from Rev. Thomas Sinton in 1888 (231):

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<sup>20</sup> P2(i) and P2(ii) share two verses not found in P1, lack one verse found in P1, and describe the cheeks of the ‘She’ protagonist as red, not pale as in P1.

<sup>21</sup> This collection, *Co-chruinneachadh nuadh do dh’orannibh Gaidhealach*, contains two other songs from the MacGregor cycle, *MacGriogair à Ruadhshruth* and *Clann Ghriogair air Fògradh*.

<sup>22</sup> In terms of textual inter-relationships, note that P2 shares with B the stanza praising the shapeliness of the girl’s foot, while there are several further points of connection between P2(i) and B(i): P2(i) v. 13 and B(i) v. 19; P2(i) l. 18c and B(i) l. 11c; P2(i) l. 16b and B(i) l. 20b. P1 has none of these. However, P1 and B(i) share one point of contact absent elsewhere: P1 l. 6c and B(i) l. 8c.

Many are the lays attesting the ‘unconquerable strength of love’. Some very plaintive ones are cast in dramatic form. Here is a ballad of this kind. It is two or three hundred years old, and tells how the course of true love was violently interrupted. It is perhaps vain to inquire who were the parties, injuring and injured. They evidently belonged to the higher ranks.

Here, as with Dòmhnall MacGregor’s comments *circa* 1824, there is a strong sense of tradition asserting ownership and stripping out the clues by which authorial identity might be recognised or recovered. Assimilation implies artistic homogenisation, and a consequence, intended or not, is sanitisation and virtual censorship: there are no allusions to prostitution and scriptural hypocrisy in B.

Thus, the history of the transmission of *Tha Mulad air M’ Inntinn* would seem to present two faces of Scottish Gaelic tradition: extraordinary fidelity to an original text maintained across two centuries, and simultaneous departure from it. Their Perthshire provenance would be the obvious explanation for both the integrity of P1,<sup>23</sup> and the better fist P2 makes of preserving the specifics found in P1 and lost in B.<sup>24</sup> Yet P2 is a manifestly flawed text, demonstrating that provenance alone offered no guarantee against degradation.<sup>25</sup> B exhibits similar degradation, but

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<sup>23</sup> For Ossianic verse in the MacLagan Collection obtained from named Glen Lyon informants, see Thomson 1955-58, 183, 196-97, 204. It is also possible that P1 derives from a written rather than an oral source. For written exemplars underlying texts in the MacLagan Collection, see Thomson 1955-58, 182-83, 193, 209, 216-17; Thomson 1992, 175-76.

<sup>24</sup> Compare P1 vv. 7, 14 and 15 respectively with P2(i) vv. 17, 22 and 12, and see further below, pp. 25, 30.

<sup>25</sup> The metrics, stanzaic order and overall coherence of P2(i) are highly erratic. It has redundant verses (vv. 9, 18), and muddled versions of P1 verses 8 and 10, including the tell-tale treatment of ‘Sron’ (see further below, pp. 30-31 and n. 30). It seems to be the male rather than the female protagonist whose death and burial is envisaged in verse 15.

still has the capacity to preserve potentially original features even when these are being lost from P2. In our investigation of the authenticity of P1, P2 and B have roles to play as comparators and controls, means of pinpointing potentially genuine features which P1 has retained. Their very existence implies that the original behind P1, or which P1 faithfully represents, was old enough to have spawned several distinct lines of descent by *circa* 1800.

### **Relationship to the oeuvre of Marion Campbell**

*Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* purports to represent the perspectives of a man and woman on their, or rather her, predicament, for she is the source of his sorrow. It offers no clue as to her identity. He is a MacGregor, youthful, and apparently of high social status, judging by his place at the head of the host, the expected station of the chief of the kindred in time of conflict (vv. 3c, 8b-c, 9a). In bare outline the song refers to a relationship which has involved concealment or repression on both sides (vv. 1b, 8a), and which has now been thwarted through enforced physical separation (vv. 7a, 13a, 16a); and to an alternative relationship for which a contract has been made, but to which she has not consented, and never will (vv. 3b, 4a, 17-19). Her enemies – defined firstly as those complicit in the making of that contract, whom he would attack (vv. 3b, 4b, 5c), and secondly as those she holds responsible for her imprisonment – are not named, but she characterises the latter grouping as evil, as religious hypocrites, and in one instance, as a devil (vv. 7a, 15, 16b).

Vehemence of the woman's attitude towards her enemies, and the violence of the destruction wished for them, is a significant link between *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* and the two songs currently attributed to Marion Campbell. In *Griogal Cridhe*, however, the desire for vengeance is tempered by her knowledge of what this would mean to another woman, as well as

by her own doubt that her son will ever realise it. Another common concern is material sufficiency: his pledge to provide for her in *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* (v. 6c); her rejection of wealth for him in *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid*; her preference for hardship with him over comfort with another in *Griogal Cridhe*. In *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* and especially *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid* the woman anticipates escape from confinement, the journey towards him, reunion and travel together; in *Griogal Cridhe* the woman reflects on the itinerant life they had. The reference to the apple in verse 2 of *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* – representative of her, and high in the tree – evokes the famous allusion in verse 11 of *Griogal Cridhe*, where the apple is used of him, in life and then in death, with ‘the back of his head to the ground’ (cf. Mathis, 2008: 58-60; Newton 2003: 55). Also shared with *Griogal Cridhe* are the role of his military retinue as means of avenging her grief, and, stylistically, runs of three thematically connected verses opened by the particle *giodh/ged (a/tha)*.

There is no lack of substantive and verbal connection between *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* and *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid* (reproduced here for convenience in Appendix B) to enable a case to be made for them as united by scenario, timeframe and authorship. Both open by establishing the oppression of sorrow (*mo chuid mhulaid/mulad; thrumaich/truim*) as keynotes – he burdened by her grief in *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn*, she by his in *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid* – and close with the woman envisioning her own death and burial. In each song enemies define themselves as those who stand in the way of the relationship between the leading characters, with one figure to the fore: the woman’s father in *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid* (vv. 3-4); and the unprincipled devil in *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* (v. 16). Another point of contact may lie in the second verse of *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid*, in which the woman recalls her first sighting of the man now denied her: ‘*On a ghlac mi ’n ciad iùl ort / ’S nach do*



*dhùraig mi pòsadh*'. The second line might be translated, 'And I did not dare to think of marriage', meaning that from the outset she recognised the problems attendant upon marriage to him; and if those concerned were indeed Marion Campbell and Griogair Ruadh MacGregor, then fraught political circumstances would provide the likely explanation. However, the more obvious translation – 'And I did not want marriage' – could rather mean that consciousness of him ruled out marriage to another. The evidence of *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* may suggest that arrangements for such a marriage were indeed underway at that juncture, or were begun thereafter expressly to preclude the marriage she wanted.

Acceptance of the linkage of these two songs yields a literal narrative along the following lines. First contact led to a clandestine relationship, possibly because another marriage was already in prospect, probably because of potential opposition within one or both kindreds: it is notable that the male persona in *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* begins by stating that he is giving voice to what he cannot utter publicly. Perhaps the isolated hut referred to in verse 14 of *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* was a meeting place, and destination for the journeying described in *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid*. That song's allusion to her failure to keep one such tryst may mark the point of exposure, setting in train her father's refusal to countenance this marriage, her contraction to another, and her non-cooperation. Simultaneously, her incarceration was meant to keep them apart; to punish and humiliate her by treating her like a common criminal; to coerce her into consent; to break her will. There are good reasons for believing that *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* treats of an earlier timeframe. Here the status of the male protagonist as warrior is couched in generalities and conditional or future tenses (vv. 4, 5, 8, 9), making it unclear whether he is blooded or not, a matter on which *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid* can provide explicit and graphic detail. In *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn*, the fact that she can describe her foes as taking him

to Ireland or England (v. 17) could suggest that he is a subordinate rather than a combatant, again implying the absence of active hostilities. In this song she hopes for a MacGregor revival but is conscious that her own position could suffer thereby (v. 12), precisely the state of affairs that has come to pass in *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid* (v. 12). Finally, there are the contrasting attitudes towards her own death. In *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* it is a positive: a rhetorical measure of the extent of her rejection of the arranged marriage. With the possible exception of verse 2, *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid* ignores such a marriage, but is nevertheless a song of resignation: death is her only way out given that the marriage she wanted is now beyond reach. *Griogal Cridhe* could then be interpreted as bringing closure to the sentiment. While he was alive but apart from her, she could contemplate death. On his death she must think of the living, in the shape of their son: death is no longer a luxury she can afford (cf. Mathis 2008: 60-61).

### **Historical Context**

Could this narrative belong to Griogair Ruadh and Marion Campbell? If so, then the version of events presented by contemporary diplomatic would suggest later 1561, and Griogair Ruadh's earliest appearances in Campbell-related texts, as a plausible *terminus post quem* for her first sighting of him; and the outbreak of war on 7 December 1562 as the watershed demarcating the experience of *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* from that of *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid*. Within that period, the known sources make no mention of any relationship between them, of a marriage contract involving her and a third party, or of Marion at all. Yet they are barely more forthcoming thereafter. Marion and Griogair Ruadh appear in record only once together, at a point when they were already husband and wife, in 1568. She is named in two further documents while her husband was alive. No information survives regarding their marriage, and we are left

to assume that it took place during the brief rapprochement between the kindreds in 1566-7. Furthermore, if we take our cue from the secretive nature of the relationship described in *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn*, such a silence may be explicable and even eloquent. Before 1550, marriages involving MacGregor chiefs and Campbell noblewomen had signified the MacGregors' position as favoured Campbell clients. Given his determination to alter that state of affairs, it is hard to see a strategic benefit for Cailean Liath in a match between Griogair Ruadh and Marion. The opposition of her father, Donnchadh Ruadh of Glen Lyon, would be unsurprising given his status as Cailean Liath's close kinsman and political ally, to which might be added a paternal solicitude based upon a rational appraisal of Griogair Ruadh's highly uncertain political and economic prospects. In MacGregor eyes, and in the light of the course of events since 1550, awareness of such a relationship could have contributed to perceptions of Griogair Ruadh as a Campbell puppet. It would not have been forgotten that in 1552 Donnchadh Ruadh had played a prominent role in the pursuit and execution of Donnchadh Làdasach and his sons, the main source of MacGregor resistance to Cailean Liath during the first phase of his actions against the kindred (MacGregor 1989, 284-95). One can reasonably conclude that all interested outside parties would have regarded this relationship as further complicating an already problematic situation, and that the couple concerned would have had good reason to suppress awareness of it.

What the songs do share with the historical context is an abiding concern with landed substance and chiefly status. The importance of this theme to the author of *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* will be argued below. To the author of *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid*, its male subject is no common churl or 'cladhaire gòrach', but a 'fear taighe', implying both a husband and man of means, and thus in tension with her later assertion that she would prefer him over land and

riches. The bond of 24 November 1562 made explicit Cailean Liath's intent to use his feudal superiority of Glen Strae to undermine Griogair Ruadh's chiefship from the first. He was here referred to as 'Gregor McGregor sone and apperand air to wmqhile Alexander McGregor of Glenshray' (Breadalbane Muns., 1/123). From then until his execution, documents emanating from the Campbells and others disagree as to whether or not they are willing to style Griogair Ruadh as 'of Glen Strae' – whose legal proprietorship he seems never to have been granted in his lifetime – and as chief of his kindred (Breadalbane Muns., 1/124, 124a, 125, 126, 134, 173, 182, 182a, 847; cf. Dawson 1997, 70). The bond required him to discharge the standard casualty of 'entry and marriage', a one-off payment acknowledging that in reaching his majority he was now entitled to take possession of Glen Strae, and to assume responsibility for his own marriage. We do not know whether the sum involved, 600 marks, was calculated to provoke. In 1565, as negotiations for an end to the feud gathered pace, the same figure was accepted without demur by both sides (Dawson 1997: 99, 102, 107). The other main precondition for infertment in Glen Strae in 1562, the surrender of two dependants, was unconventional and very provocative, cutting straight to the heart of chiefly autonomy. By yielding his right and responsibility of jurisdiction and protection, Griogair Ruadh would have effectively sanctioned those bonds by which, during his minority, various MacGregor elements had taken Cailean Liath as their chief, in some cases to the exclusion of their own. Come 1565, this was the issue which Cailean Liath was prepared to concede, albeit in changed political circumstances which allowed him to do so without losing face (MacGregor 1989, 349-51; Dawson 1997, 102, 108).

There survives a remarkable letter to Cailean Liath which can probably be dated to 30 November 1562, and which shines a vivid light on Griogair Ruadh in his time of trial. One passage argues that acceptance of the terms of the bond of 24 November would be eased should

the MacGregors be allowed to attack a part of Cailean Liath's lands, with his prior approval. The reference may be to the ritual raid designed to inaugurate the young warrior or leader in the eyes of his people, here adapted to salvage for Griogair Ruadh enough honour and credibility to enable his chiefship to survive (MacGregor 1989, 310-12; MacLeod 1994, 101-02). Irrespective of whether Cailean Liath ever acceded to this, what happened on 7 December was of a different magnitude. Of itself it was an act of brutality, a cold-blooded assault on unarmed and defenceless men by vastly greater numbers (MacGregor 1989, 313-17). Symbolically, its significance was twofold. By rising for him, his kindred acknowledged Griogair Ruadh as chief, and legitimised him. Simultaneously, this was a throwing down of the gauntlet, an act of virtually suicidal defiance guaranteed to bring down upon the young chief and his kindred the dual wrath of Campbells and crown. Had a prior relationship between Griogair Ruadh and Marion Campbell existed, then any possibility of its coming to pass had now been sacrificed to clan politics. Here we return to the dilemma of the woman in both *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* and *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid*: that the success she wishes for her lover's kindred and for him can only augment their separation and her sorrow. There is the further and tantalising fact that it was the Campbells of Glen Lyon, Marion's uncle among them, who suffered particularly on 7 December. *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid* refers to an attack upon the woman's close kin in terms which invite identification with what is known to have happened on 7 December 1562 (MacGregor 1999, 126-27). Could the chain of evidence be extended as far as *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn*, which has its male persona declare vengeance upon those responsible for the woman's predicament? In a letter of 1564 reflecting on the feud with the MacGregors from its inception, Marion's father represented himself as 'the man that thai handlit maist unfrendlie of the hous that I am cumit of ... I suld be the last man that suld agre or be assurit with thaim of the surnam I beir insafar as

they haif done to me the maist inguris that thai can at this present'. All too cryptically and ambiguously he adds: 'concernin the begynning of thir materis I cann nocht stope the ruvmor of vulgar pepill and specialy of my unfreindis' (Dawson 1997, 77-78).

### **Textual Specifics**

The content of *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* must now be studied in greater detail to assess its credibility as a witness to the origins of the feud between MacGregors and Campbells, and as an historical and ethnological artefact belonging to the early 1560s. The song owes much to invocation of ritual, both that of burial with which it ends, but more so that of marriage. Jane Dawson's discussion of marriage practice involving high-ranking Campbells in precisely this period makes it clear that for them as for the early modern Scottish nobility in general, it was the norm for a pre-nuptial contract to be made, with the wedding to follow after an interval that might vary from months to years. A dowry, typically of money, would come with the bride to be, who would expect to receive land in return: the wife's terce, being a liferent of a third of the husband's heritable estate. If a terce were already held by a widow, then a 'lesser terce' would be granted (Dawson 1997, 28-34; Brown 2000, 133-34). Without Glen Strae, Griogair Ruadh had nothing to offer a prospective partner. Moreover, he had a widowed mother, the daughter of Campbell of Ardkinglas, to provide for. Ardkinglas was prominent in the negotiations of late 1562, where there is no indication that his daughter already had a stake in Glen Strae. She had borne children to her previous husband, the chief of the MacNaughtons of Dunderave, and was, presumably, mother to some at least of Griogair Ruadh's siblings, of whom five younger brothers are known. That this woman should return to Ardkinglas and Dunderave at the head of Loch Fyne on the death of her MacGregor husband would be natural, especially if she held terce

land there from her first marriage; but the denial or loss of her terce of Glen Strae may have been a contributory factor. It is potentially telling that when Cailean Liath made peace with the MacGregors in October 1570, the concessions included provision for Griogair Ruadh's mother and wife – described as 'the Ladyis auld and young' – out of the Glen Strae lands, which were to be granted in ward to his infant elder son (MacGregor 1989, 389 and n. 393). All this may underlie the need of *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* to assert the ability of its male protagonist to provide for the woman denied him (v. 6), and the women in his company (v. 11).

In Gaelic the pre-marital contract or rite of betrothal was known as the *rèiteach*. Neill Martin's comprehensive study is weighted towards non-elite practice in the modern era, but throws up several points of contact with what we find in *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* (2000-06, 77-158).<sup>26</sup> In its fullest expression there were three steps to marriage, with the *rèiteach* anticipating the wedding, and following upon the *còrdadh* or 'agreement' (sometimes called the *rèiteach beag*). The *còrdadh* was a private and small-scale affair, essential in establishing the consents of the woman and her father. These in place, it was safe to proceed to the *rèiteach*, a highly ritualised and more inclusive event, in which it was for the groom's side to address and smooth over all the impediments to marriage which the bride's party could muster. Both man and woman might be eulogised, but the emphasis was upon the groom as ideal husband and sure provider, and sometimes to the exclusion of the woman (Martin 2000-06, 114-15, 142-45). Leading the praise and central to negotiations was the groom's male companion and advocate, an individual noted for his verbal dexterity and eloquence. Father and daughter made public their consents; a contract was finalised specifying the mutual material commitments to be made; practical arrangements for the wedding, including the issuing of invitations, might be decided upon.

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<sup>26</sup> I am indebted to Dr Kate L. Mathis for drawing my attention both to this article, and to the potential significance of the *rèiteach* for the proper understanding of *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn*.

*Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* reserves virtually all of its praise for the man. It employs *cùmhnant*, a word frequently applied to the marriage contract in the later evidence; it may be that *cuireadh* (the wedding invitation), and perhaps *ceatharn* (the groom's retinue) and *briathar* (the man's pledge to provide), also bear a technical flavour.<sup>27</sup> The *rèiteach* as envisioned in vv. 3-5 was a collective gathering in a setting named first as a *sabhal* (now usually translated as 'barn'), and then as an inn or *taigh-òst*'. Remarkably, the contemporary interchangeability of 'barn' and 'inn' in a Scots linguistic context is confirmed by the very legal documents which detail the first of the night attacks of 7 December 1562 (MacGregor 1999, 126).<sup>28</sup> The tables at which the company was seated may recall the long table, *bòrd a' rèitich*, which acted as a barrier to be overcome as the drama unfolded (Martin 2000-06, 86-87). The choice of an inn as venue would meet the need for 'a space large enough to accommodate a crowd' (Martin 2000-2006: 129); and for liquor, invariably whisky in the modern accounts, and including the glass shared by the prospective couple to seal their betrothal. The woman was either present throughout, or made her appearance once agreement had been reached. *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* seems to imply the woman's presence, but thereafter it departs from the script, for it is concerned above all else to assert her lack of consent.

No less crucial was the consent of the woman's father (Martin 2000-06, 79 and *passim*). In *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid*, the narrator singles out her father as the reason why she cannot marry the man she wants. If read together in the light of marriage ritual, these two songs gain meaning and retain compatibility. Verse 2 of *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid* may imply that when the woman first laid eyes on this man, the *còrdadh* initiating her marriage to another

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<sup>27</sup> Perhaps verse 6 as a whole is representative of the sort of formulaic statement of intent expected of the groom at the *rèiteach*.

<sup>28</sup> For another instance of a barn in the role of an inn subjected to a night attack in circumstances involving a wedding, see Gregory 1836, 238.



had already taken place, and she instantly acknowledged to herself that she could take that process no further. When it came to the *rèiteach* she withheld her consent, and stalemate ensued between father and daughter. While the right of refusal existed in theory, to do so was an act of radicalism, bravery and risk. Neill Martin has argued that underlying marriage practice in Gaelic Scotland and elsewhere was belief in *an droch shùil*, or the evil eye: the coveting of one's goods by an outside party, and the injurious consequences arising if remedial action were not taken (2000-06, 137-51). The ritualised obstructiveness of the *rèiteach* was really a coded admission that it was in the best interests of the woman's side to ensure her surrender. For the woman to refuse at this stage was to invoke a very powerful stigma capable of harming her own reputation and well-being, and that of her kin. In the light of accounts of the wasting away of animals or persons understood to be victims of the evil eye, the culmination of these songs in the death of the woman may gain added resonance.

Of greatest importance to the validity of marriage was the consent of the man and woman, as confirmed to witnesses, and by their own intercourse consequent upon the marriage. Intercourse might also take place after the *rèiteach*, which on occasion was capable of supplanting the marriage ceremony itself (Martin 2000-06, 79). *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* ends with a flat denial of the possibility of intercourse, conclusive affirmation of the woman's lack of consent to this marriage. The final phrase, *a dh'aindeòin no dheòin*, is a set turn of speech, usually now encountered in the form *dheòin no dh'aindeòin*, which might be translated as, 'under any circumstances'. Its literal meaning is 'unwillingly or willingly', and perhaps the alternatives should be allowed their full force here. The woman may be saying that if it were left purely to her own free will, her love for one man would preclude intercourse with another. An arranged marriage to this other would force intercourse upon her against her will, and this too

she rejects, as tantamount to prostituting herself. Prostitution therefore frames the ‘she’ section of *Tha Mulad air M’ Inntinn*, and is central to her own sense of moral outrage at the hypocrisy of those who without foundation have punished her as if she were a prostitute, while simultaneously expecting her to behave as one.

Verses 8 to 11 praise her real partner as a rightful husband, and legitimate chief of his kindred. He leads the host in war, and is descendant of kings of Scots of old. Belief in MacGregor royal descent in both Gaelic and non-Gaelic sources is traceable from at least the early sixteenth century, and broadly attested by the century’s end (MacGregor 1989, 22-23, 31-33 and n. 84, 116-17 and n. 257). This detail has been lost in P2 and B, while B also lacks the ensuing reference to the gun. The hunter on his elbow, poised to pull the trigger, is a cardinal vignette of early modern vernacular song in Scottish Gaelic. Its assured deployment as early as the early 1560s is currently unparalleled, and needs discussion. Hand-held guns became prevalent across the British mainland and Ireland during the sixteenth century, although tracing that process is complicated by ambiguities in terminology. In English and Scots linguistic contexts the words most frequently encountered in the record of the period are ‘gun’ itself, along with ‘culverin’ and ‘hagbute’, both forerunners of the modern rifle. ‘Culverin’ may initially have been applied generically to any handgun, but came to refer to lighter models which could be fired from the hands alone without recourse to a support, in contrast to the heavier hagbut (Caldwell 1982, vol. 1, 114; vol. 2, 344, 350). All three terms could be applied to larger weaponry –artillery used in open field or sieges – as well as to portable firearms (OED; DOST). In the first half of the sixteenth century, the Scots tended to hire gunners to provide expertise in small arms as and when necessary, with the burghs conspicuous in meeting the costs (Caldwell 1982, vol. 1, 113-17, vol. 2, 348-49). The implication is that at this time the requisite weapons

and skills were lacking in Scottish society. It was to address this situation that the Scottish parliament legislated with explicit reference to small arms in 1535, enacting measures to ensure that henceforth the national army could count upon the ready availability of hagbutts and culverins, and competence in their use, lest the defence of the realm be compromised (RPS 1535/29; cf. *idem*, 1535/30, 1540/12/30, 1540/12/65, 1540/12/66):

because the schott of gunnys, hagbutis, hand bowis and uther small artalyerie now commounlie usit in all cuntreis, baith be say and land, in thare weris is sa felloune and uneschewable [so savage and of such great danger] to the pithe and hie curage of noble and vailyeand men, quhais actis and deidis can nocht be schewin without contrar provisioune be had of instrumentis of were and battell ...

By 1600 handgunners had become a standard component of Scottish hosts, but their incorporation was gradual and did not overturn dependence upon conventional arms, especially the pike (Caldwell 1982, vol. 1, 96-97, 117-22; vol 2, 348-49; RPS 1563/6/11, 1600/11/45). Costs may have set a limitation, with the crown continuing to delegate these to the lieges and the burghs. Yet in tension with this is incontrovertible evidence that in the domestic spheres of hunting, and inter-personal violence and protection, handguns became widely adopted in Scotland in the second half of the sixteenth century, in defiance of parliament's best and frequent efforts to prohibit and regulate (RPS 1551/5/3, 1555/6/26, 1563/6/15, 1567/12/16, 1567/12/22, 1579/10/40, 1581/10/49, 1587/7/53, 1594/4/31, 1597/11/26, 1597/11/44, 1600/11/25, 1600/11/47; cf. Caldwell 1982, vol. 2, 349).

As early as 1502, four culverins were in the possession of the chief of the Menzieses at Weem in Highland Perthshire, close to Glen Lyon, and the monetary value assigned to them may imply that these were indeed handguns rather than artillery pieces (Gregory 1831, 322-23). Thereafter, Gaelic Scotland seems to conform to the national pattern of acceleration of use across the century, but not at the expense of existing weaponry (Wiseman 2007, 117-23; MacGregor 2012a, 226; MacCoinnich 2015, 56-57 and Table 3.3; Crawford 2016, 101-2; cf. Fraser 1874, 242-43; Macphail 1934, 36-37). The MacGregor song cycle is itself testimony to the continued vitality of the bow, and the rich material culture associated with the art of arrow-making (Black 1996, 5-17). One song, *Clann Ghriogair air Fògradh*, conceivably dating to as early as the 1560s, mentions the gun alongside bow and arrow in language which has been construed as implying that this technology was still relatively new in the poet's eyes, but might equally indicate a degree of familiarity and knowledge (Watson 1976, 243; Black 1996, 14-15, 17):

Gun seachnadh Rìgh nan Dùl sibh

O fhùdar caol neimhe,

O shradagan teine,

O pheileir 's o shaighid ...

*May the King of the Elements protect you, from thin deadly powder;*

*from sparks of fire, from bullet and arrow ...*

The catalogue of weapons employed by the MacGregors on 7 December 1562 did not include guns, but culverins were in their possession when they tried to assassinate Donnchadh Ruadh of Glen Lyon following Griogair Ruadh's execution in 1570 (MacGregor 1989, 314, 335; Dawson 1997, 149-50).

In Ireland, guns made their first appearance shortly before 1500. By around 1550 small arms proliferated across the country, and the Gaelic Irish had developed a reputation for proficiency in their use (Hayes-McCoy 1938, 47-48, 61-62). In Gaelic sources *gunna*, or variants thereupon, was the earliest term used (Harbison 1975-76, 279). Its first datable occurrence in a Scottish context is in the treaty made between An Calbhach Ó Domhnaill of Tír Conaill and the earls of Argyll in 1555 and again in 1560, although the *gunna* in question – the *Gonna Cam* or ‘crooked gun’ of Irish sources – was a siege gun (MacKechnie 1951-53, 97-98; Hayes-McCoy 1938, 65). Neither ‘hagbut’ nor ‘culverin’ seems to have generated corresponding terms in Gaelic, which would imply that *gunna* did duty for both. In the late 1560s a new long handgun called the caliver, light and ideal for hunting, made its first appearance in the English and Scottish record (DOST; OED; Caldwell 1981, vol. 2, 351). In English and in Scots the name took two slightly different forms, both of which passed into Gaelic as *cuilbheir* and *cuilìobhair* (Campbell 1940, 44; Matheson 1948-52, 65-66). The earliest datable reference to a caliver in Scottish Gaelic is the elegy beginning ‘A Mhic an fhir ruaidh’ whose subject, described as skilled in its use in the hunt, must be Eoin Dubh, younger son of Griogair Ruadh and Marion, who would have been growing to manhood in the later 1580s and 1590s, and who died in 1603 (Watson 1976, 239-41). By 1600 a new type of long handgun called the musket, or *musgaid* in Gaelic, was coming into vogue, but this was a heavier weapon, impractical for hunting (Caldwell 1981, vol. 2, 351; RPS 1600/11/45; MacCoinnich 2015, 57 and Table 3.3; Corpas na Gàidhlig).

The evidence suggests that hunter and firearm could feature in a song composed in Gaelic-speaking Scotland in the early 1560s. Since the Scottish parliamentary legislation on hunting from 1551 onwards gives prominence to the culverin and not the heavier and less suitable hagbut, the weapon in question would most probably have been what was called ‘culverin’ in Scots, and could only at this point have been called *gunna* in Gaelic. On the basis of the earliest surviving specimens, it has been suggested that one likely point of entry for the gun into Gaelic Scotland was for hunting, as a luxury item only affordable by the elite (Thomson 1987: 10). This is exactly the context suggested by a reference to ‘ane culvering that beis rycht fyne and schotes fur [?far]’, imported from the continent for the chief of the Rosses of Balnagown in 1553 (MacGill 1909, 264-65 (no. 673)).<sup>29</sup> If the motif of the hunter on his elbow originated as an expression of chiefly wealth and prestige, then its application to Griogair Ruadh would be pointed political shorthand on the part of our author.

The same holds true of the hunter’s preferred locale. The manuscript form surely represents *sròn*, literally ‘nose’, in its well-known toponymic sense, describing a particular configuration of upland (Stuart-Murray 2000-06, 170). If the word be capitalised as a place-name, then the obvious candidate is Stronmilchan, principal residence of the MacGregor chief in the lands of Glen Strae; and the hunter who brings down the topmost stag there is most likely to be the chief himself. The elegy beginning ‘A Mhic an fhir ruaidh’ includes the verse (Watson 1976, 240):

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<sup>29</sup> I am indebted to Dr Aonghas MacCoinnich for this reference. There is a formal possibility that ‘culverin’ could refer here to an artillery piece rather than a handgun, but it should be noted that the next item listed in this document is ‘four ferynks of fine culvering poudyr’. ‘Ferynks’ probably represents ‘firkins: a firkin was a measure of capacity which could be used of powder and gunpowder (DOST; OED). I am indebted to Dr David Caldwell for the suggestion that ‘fine’ may denote powder of the consistency required for handguns, as opposed to the coarser texture which sufficed for artillery. Perhaps Gaelic ‘caol’, present in the phrase ‘fùdar caol neimhe’ (*thin deadly powder*) cited above, carries the same implication.

Triath na Sròine

Mas fhìor dhòmh-sa e:

Gur ì a' chòir as fheàirde leat.

*Lord of Sron, as I understand it: that is the right that matters most to  
you.*

As already noted, the subject must be Eoin Dubh, who died at the battle of Glen Fruin in 1603, and was younger brother of the then chief, Alasdair Ruadh. These were the two sons of Griogair Ruadh and Marion Campbell, who inherited the struggle for possession of Glen Strae from their father. It is entirely predictable that the deftness of the allusion to Sronmilchan in *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* should be misunderstood and mangled in later transmission, as attested by P2 and B.<sup>30</sup>

The hunter on land then becomes the angler on water, another stock image which comes alive once immediate context is restored. The river is the Orchy, rich in trout and salmon, running through the strath of that name where most of the Glen Strae lands lie. Since hunting rights were commensurate with lordship, he who freely enjoys the bounty of earth and water can only be the true lord.<sup>31</sup> From strath to mountain top, Glen Strae with all its pertinents belongs to

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<sup>30</sup> See P2(i) vv. 13, 19; B(i), vv. 9, 15; B(ii), vv. 5, 16. In B, *sròn* has become disassociated from the verse on hunting, and appears instead both with reference to the facial appearance of the male subject, and in a verse in which he is transplanted to an entirely spurious maritime setting, apparently because of aural confusion with *ròn*, 'seal'. For parallel instances of relocation from land to sea, see Thomson 1992, 25-32, 101-05.

<sup>31</sup> For the expression of similar sentiments in the classical idiom, we might compare the eulogy addressed to Maol Coluim, MacGregor chief from 1415 to 1440 (Watson 1937, 26-31), and stanzas such as:

Maol Coluim 'ga dheaghchungbhàil  
aithnid dúinn d'éis a athar  
deisgeart Glinne gealUrcháidh,  
madh síoth do chách madh cagadh.

him. To deny it renders him a victim of injustice and malpractice as surely as she is. To accept it ensures his ability to provide for those closest to him. In early modern Gaelic vernacular song, the hunter naturally signifies both the rightful possessor, and a worthy mate. His movements delineate the bounds of his jurisdiction, and simultaneously give that landscape an erotic and amatory charge: a setting for assignation and courtship, in trysting places such as that described here in verse 14. Viewing verses 8 to 11 as a whole, the woman's enumeration of male virtues therein is a declaration of her willingness to marry this man, in response to his own declaration in verse 6. If the subject be Griogair Ruadh, then these four verses are a highly compressed and sinuously woven affirmation of his right to rule.

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

...

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

Ní dhearna Fionn fianaidhe  
sealg gan sireadh a ceada:  
sealg Alban gan fhiafraighe  
ag Maol Choluim 's a creacha.

*Known to us is Maol Coluim, who followeth his sire, well maintaining the southern side of fair Glen Orchy, whether others be at peace or at war.*

*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.*

...

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

*Fionn the warrior made no hunting without leave asked: Alba's hunting and her forays are Maol Coluim's without seeking.*



Three specifics remain for discussion. The site of Marion's imprisonment – the castle of verse 13 – cannot be identified for certain, and indeed more than one location may have been involved (MacGregor 1999, 127 and nn. 54, 55). The likeliest candidate is the tower house of Meggernie, described as a *turris* and a *castellum* in its first known appearance in written record in 1603, when it was the principal residence of the Campbells of Glen Lyon (Thomson 1882-1914, vol. 6 (1593-1608), no. 1420). It may have performed this role for much or all of the preceding century, for the lands of Meggernie were part of the barony of Glen Lyon originally granted to the Campbells by the crown in 1502, while actual Campbell occupancy of the lands of the barony went back further, to 1488 (Thomson 1882-1914, vol. 2 (1424-1513), no. 2668; MacGregor 1989, 146-48).<sup>32</sup> The site of the tower house, on flat and fertile grassland close by the River Lyon in the upper reaches of the glen, accords well both with what is said in this song, and with the woman's statement in *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid* that she would swim the stream in order to reach her beloved (see figure 1). As to her destination, the hut or bothy of verse 14, summer hunting shielings are known to have existed in this time and place (Wiseman 2007, 290). Perhaps more significantly, transhumance was extensively practised (Bil 1990), and has left behind considerable physical evidence in the form of shieling huts and ancillary structures dating back at least as far as the late fifteenth century. Some were located 'in the upper reaches of the glens beyond the watershed dividing Lochtayside from Glen Lyon, where the North Lochtayside tenants had rights to pastures belonging to the Glen Lyon tenantry' (Boyle

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<sup>32</sup> The brief discussions of Meggernie by architectural historians tend to favour a later sixteenth-century dating, 'although possibly incorporating a still older nucleus' (Tranter 1962-70, vol.2, 132-33; cf. MacGibbon and Ross 1887-92, vol. 3, 457-58; Gifford 2007, 514-15; CANMORE: <http://canmore.org.uk/site/24235>). For most of the fifteenth century, the lands in Glen Lyon which the Campbells took over in 1488 were held by the Stewarts of Garth or Fortingall. These Stewarts, scions of the earls of Atholl, were a significant kindred whose caput was the tower house of Garth, below Schiehallion (Watson 1937, 176-79). Meggernie was both good alluvial land, and strategically situated close to passes connecting Glen Lyon with Rannoch (another possession of these Stewarts) to the north and Loch Tay to the south. It would be unsurprising for a fortress to have existed here in the fifteenth century.

2003, 22-25). A notable concentration of shielings, on record from the earlier sixteenth century, lay in the high plateau of the pass which begins east of Meggernie, and runs south to connect Glen Lyon with north Lochtayside (Macdonald 2010).

In verse 17, to find *Sagsann*, ‘England’, in use in Gaelic Scotland before 1600 is rare but not unparalleled. The well-known song *Caismeachd Ailein nan Sop*, conventionally dated to around 1537, refers to *bogha dearg Sasgannach*, ‘a ruddy-hued English bow’ (McLeod and Bateman 2007, 390-91). *Saxanach* occurs in the Campbell/Ó Domhnaill treaties of 1555/1560 (MacKechnie 1951-53, 98). A Gaelic manuscript belonging to the Beaton medical kindred and completed in 1563 – albeit in Ireland, and with an Irish scribe at work at the point in question – includes an apology for the quality of the handwriting: ‘and it is no wonder, for I am on the move fleeing before the English (*Saxunachaibh*) throughout *Coill Néill*, and it is in this very wood that I have written part of it and prepared the vellum’ (Bannerman 1986, 117). The greater frequency of occurrence after 1600 may reflect nothing more than source survival, but it has also been suggested that from around that time onwards, *Sagsann* and its cognates began to monopolise the meaning of ‘England’ to the exclusion of alternative and earlier terminology (MacGregor 2010, 29-30; MacGregor 2012b, 35-36).

As to the reading of scripture, a detail absent from B, Cailean Liath was in the van of Campbell commitment to Reformation in Scotland from the point at which he first heard John Knox preach in 1556. He stood beside his chief, the fifth earl of Argyll, as one of the Lords of Congregation during the Reformation crisis in 1559-60, and introduced a reformed minister to his domains at the east end of Loch Tay, close to Glen Lyon, as early as 1561. It is known for certain that the contemporary head of the Lawers branch of the Campbells of Glen Orchy also subscribed to Protestantism, and it would be extremely unlikely that the same were not true of

Donnchadh Ruadh of Glen Lyon, given both his closeness to Cailean Liath, and the unanimity of Campbell response to religious change across the upper echelons of the kindred (MacGregor 1989, 247-51, 256-57; Dawson 1999, 217, 220, 226-28, 234-35). The allusion here may be to the reading of the Bible to the household when gathered at table, as attested elsewhere in early modern Scottish Gaelic verse (Ó Baoill 1979, ll. 260-62 and note; cf. Coira 2012, 131-32, 144, 150, 328). For anyone experiencing this song within the primary world which gave it birth, there would have been no doubting the identities of those who read scripture without paying heed to its meaning, or the nature and severity of the charges laid upon them.

## **Conclusions**

For the historian, early modern vernacular verse in Scottish Gaelic is a major but problematic resource, given the difficulties normally attendant upon establishing the basic facts surrounding its composition. The linguistic evidence is indispensable, with rime and metre contributing to the preservation of dialectal features. Ascriptions or rubrics, where they exist, are far less reliable guides. The songmakers themselves are interested not in superficial introductions and acquaintances, but the frank revelation of their emotional selves. Female authorship is often assumed for the many anonymous songs, particularly those which consist of panegyrics centred upon men; but explicit confirmation even of gender is incidental, if it is forthcoming at all. Where human subjects are involved, the approach is conditioned by a rhetoric of praise which appears excessively generic to modern tastes. The portrait may be vivid and comprehensive, but often lacks a name. It is rare to encounter a climactic unveiling as follows, almost as if a taboo were being broken (Thomson 1992, 269):

'S mòr mo mhulad san àm  
'S gach uair a chluinneas mi d'ainm  
Iain Stiùbhard mhic Nèill o'n t-Sròin.

*Great is my sorrow at this juncture, and every time I hear your name,  
John Stewart, son of Niall, from Sron.*

The gravitational pull exerted by this 'panegyric code' (MacInnes 1976-78, 435-98) means both a comparative dearth of the textual specifics which might help to give the songs a local habitation, and the vulnerability of such details to omission or distortion in the process of transmission, as genre displaces author. Even where they do survive, lack of historical research compromises our ability to act upon them.

In the case of *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* it has proved possible to address these challenges, argue for authenticity, and reunite a song with its maker and setting. The grounds are greatly strengthened for claiming *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid* – our reading of its second verse duly emended – as also the work of Marion Campbell, now the author of three known songs. Her possession of an oeuvre suggests that the dual voices of *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* are more likely to derive from Marion alone than from collaboration with another. Dialogue brings her together with Griogair Ruadh. Artistic form is thus a means of fulfilling her predominant desire, and maintaining her defiance of those who would keep them apart. Equally, by conjuring his presence and giving him voice, Marion can engage in covert criticism, a technique likely to come to the fore in any poetic culture wedded to a panegyric paradigm, and to public over private utterance. She has to speak for him because on his own opening admission, he dare not

speak himself. If his sorrow is literally the weight of mist, then he wears it lightly. He ventures to praise the hue of her cheek, but it is far from the conventional red resorted to by P2 and B, perhaps anticipating her actual physical state as revealed in verse 5, or even the pallor of her shroud envisaged in the last verse. He may be with her now, within the world of the song, but this only emphasises his absence when it mattered, on the day she was contracted in marriage. The idea that he, her true spouse, should there have received an invitation to her wedding to another, hints at irony and scorn on her part, complicity and acquiescence on his. Marion is of course the ultimate source of these verses, speaking through him even as he speaks through her. Multiplication of voice enables her to engage simultaneously in private and public discourse. She has invoked him to reproach him, and to receive his apology. *He* is the source of *her* sorrow, and she has grounds for asking how far the obverse is true. She needs to hear him confess what he ought to have done, and what by implication she would have done in his stead: she would not have failed him as he did her. He must know the extent of her suffering and humiliation, promise atonement, and pledge himself to her. Yet these verses still function as his public avowal of sympathy, remorse, vengeance and love, for they cannot detract from her greater responsibility: to assert his worth.<sup>33</sup> To this she turns, in her own voice.

Marion was incarcerated to secure her silence, impotence and compliance.<sup>34</sup> As a mode of response, vernacular Gaelic song offered her forms of freedom, and a means to communicate with and influence all who were able to understand and willing to listen. She envisions her own escape from confinement in *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn*, but once made, her song was itself

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<sup>33</sup> For a discussion of the lullaby, *Griogal Cridhe* included, as providing women in Gaelic Scotland with another avenue of personal expression compatible with the male-dominated social order in which they lived, see Hillers 2006.

<sup>34</sup> Compare the case of Teàrlach Campbell of Strachur, held in captivity by his father in or before 1577 to force him to sell certain lands, a measure Teàrlach revoked on recovering his liberty (Macphail 1914-34, vol. 4, 38). I am indebted to Dr Ross Crawford for alerting me to this reference.

capable of escape. Such song was never composed on the premise that no-one would hear it: her audience was neither defined by her solitude, nor confined to the realms of aspiration or imagination. *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* may now appear anonymous and allusive, but these are pointers to the intimacy of its relationship with its own time and place, when the identity of the actors and the issues at stake were a given. It demands to be understood within the historical process, not as a passive commentary upon it. In the mould of a *brosnachadh catha* or 'incitement to battle', it enjoins Griogair Ruadh to take up arms, both to avenge her, and to claim what is his and theirs by right. We must allow the possibility that this song had reached him before 7 December 1562 and influenced the course of action he took that night, when his victims included kinsmen of Marion's who may have been present when her marriage contract was made. But the role accorded to song and its composers within Gaelic society makes *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* much more than a message to Griogair Ruadh, a verse epistle akin to the hundreds of letters in Scots which were one channel through which the feud was articulated. Gaelic song may not have been the sole medium by which Marion could make her voice heard, but it possessed the authority and reach to challenge the legal and official version of events, as written up in another language. *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* is both a charter to rule for Griogair Ruadh, unfettered by the restrictions found in Cailean Liath's bond of 24 November 1562; and an alternative marriage contract by which she consents to him while rejecting all others. It was noted at the outset that one of the most striking features of the MacGregor experience, in the 1560s and after, was the support the clan garnered from wider society in the form of the sheltering or 'resetting' of fugitives and their material goods, and on a scale which rules out intimidation or blackmail as adequate explanations (MacGregor 1989: 327-30, 341-42, 381-86, 397). In the battle for hearts and minds the feud engendered, the MacGregor songs, with their

ability to appeal to Gaelic-speaking society at large, may have played a pivotal role. Song was a superior form of communication, with the power to establish truths and right wrongs. Its circulation and retention for posterity signified its acceptance by society, of which it was now a part. *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* found an audience.<sup>35</sup>

Gender was a yet more permanent form of incarceration, and basic to Marion's predicament. It linked Griogair Ruadh to her enemies alongside his failure to protect her from harm. Powerless to prevent men from taking the lead in dictating her fate, one element of Marion's artistic response was to assume the sex of her tormentors and oppressors. In *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* she speaks as Griogair Ruadh; as the legitimator offering an inaugural ode to the new chief, a function historically associated with the male professional poet; and, perhaps, as the prospective bridegroom's male companion and advocate. Her ready reversal of gender polarities meant access to the power of men, and the scope to criticise Griogair Ruadh, in his own voice (cf. Frater 1999, 78; Mathis 2008, *passim*, esp. 45-52, 61-62). It highlighted the absurdity of a social order that denigrated her and her cause for no other reason than her sex. Escaping her body and transgressing gender can also be read as part and parcel of Marion's deeper yearning for freedom.<sup>36</sup> Yet her nonconformism was intended to highlight abuse of gender rather than to deny her acceptance of gender difference *per se*. *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* remains first and foremost an avowal of love unto death from a woman to a man, and a eulogy of that man in his public guise, as a species of male nobility and virtue.

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<sup>35</sup> According to the late-seventeenth century *Sleat History*, the chief of the Camerons took refuge in Ireland after taking arms against the forces of the MacDonald Lordship of the Isles at the battle of Inverlochy in 1431; 'and the verses sent by Cameron from that place, composed to Macdonald during his exile, are still extant, and Macdonald's answer to these verses' (Macphail 1914-34, vol. 1, 46).

<sup>36</sup> We might compare *Rìgh gur mòr mo Chuid Mhulaid*, and Marion's wish to take the form of squirrel or gull as a means of enabling escape from captivity (v. 15).

The historian should pause and reflect before giving way to scholars of literature and language. History holds no monopoly over *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn*, and would do a grave disservice to the song by imposing upon it a reductive over-literalism, a relentless quest for the real in every phrase and line. Marion Campbell could look beyond her own lived experience in order to interpret it. In a discussion of her two other songs, Kate L. Mathis (2008) has drawn attention to how much they share with the latter stages of one of the most enduring and poignant narratives in the Gaelic canon, that of Deirdre and Naoise, to use the names by which its main characters were best known within the Scottish tradition. *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* significantly enhances the already remarkable parallelism, for it was to escape an unwanted union with another man that Deirdre fled with Naoise at the outset of the tale. Had these three songs come down to us in total isolation, we might have been forgiven for treating them as purely literary creations, a latter-day cycle on the Deirdre theme. By restoring a context and author, historical enquiry enables us to see how that author has turned to Deirdre as a ready-made metaphor for her own experience, rather than as a surrogate for it. The degree of correlation was such that there was no need for Deirdre to be named to be present. Nonetheless, the lives of the real woman and her fictional counterpart could not correspond in every detail. Marion plays on convergence and divergence alike in order to enrich and amplify her own voice, and to establish rapport with an audience which, she knew, would be capable of making these comparisons. Her *modus operandi* across these three songs inspires confidence that her own arranged marriage, for which no corroboration has yet been found, was also real.<sup>37</sup> Her suggestion of Ireland as a destination for Griogair Ruadh may echo the flight of Deirdre and Naoise from Ireland to Scotland, and their

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<sup>37</sup> It may be noted that Raibeart Menzies of Comrie, whom Marion went on to marry following Griogair Ruadh's execution in 1570, features as a witness to documents involving Cailean Liath between 1555 and early 1563 (MacGregor 1999, 134); and in documents alongside both Cailean Liath and Donnchadh Ruadh of Glen Lyon between 1559 and 23 September 1562 (Breadalbane Muns., 1/110, 113, 116, 117, 121).



subsequent return. It compounds the complexity of the life-art relationship that Griogair Ruadh did indeed take refuge in Ireland as the feud unfolded, although at the head of a warband of his own kindred rather than in the company of Marion; further evidence, perhaps, of the prophetic quality that has been claimed for her (MacGregor 1999, 127, 135-36). The ghost of Deirdre gives Marion's audience an established and authoritative point of reference by which they can know her suffering, identify her enemy, and accept the moral compass of her songs.

Analogies can be made with Marion's deployment of the panegyric code. Viewed through purely modern eyes, the code stands monolithic and amorphous. If the immediate setting of *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn* be ignored, then its panegyric content is unexceptional. Setting restored, the code is activated and energised, born of society and society's needs. Marion could draw upon its pantheon of images to find those best matching her own situation. Her deployment or invention of a new motif, hunter and firearm, shows the adaptability and three-dimensionality of the code; nor was she debarred from introducing details peculiar to her own position. The code's rhetorical shorthand brought cogency and power to *Tha Mulad air M' Inntinn*. It created common ground where artist and audience met, a shared language allowing for the reciprocal comprehension of experience. As with the tale of Deirdre, Marion could assume that her audience knew her circumstances well enough to recognise them as represented by the code, thereby disobliging her from naming every person and place. This binds her to a contemporary audience even as it distances her from a modern one. The song's formulaic aspects therefore confirm its absolute relevance to its own time and place, its belonging to life as much as art. It follows that Gaelic verse of this order is a *sine qua non* for the historian. Equally, an important premise for the literary scholar to bear in mind is the inherently historicist cast of Gaelic song, regardless of whether independent evidence as to historical setting has survived.

On 29 March 1570 Cailean Liath put his name to a document setting out his intentions for the lands of Glen Strae should he proceed to execute Griogair Ruadh, ‘now captive in my handis’ (Breadalbane Muns., 1/182a). Within forty days thereafter he would grant half-shares of the ward and non-entry of Glen Strae (six of its historic 20 merk lands excepted) to Griogair Ruadh’s son, here unnamed, and to his mother. No condition attached to the share of the son, who on coming of age would duly receive heritable possession of Glen Strae. With Marion it was otherwise. Should she remarry without taking Cailean Liath’s advice, her share would be forfeit. The condition placed her in a position analogous to that of her husband following the bond of 24 December 1562, and evoked a dreadful and surely intentional symmetry with the stance she had taken towards her own marriage at that time. Cailean Liath was again using Glen Strae as a ratchet by which to bend others to his will. No less than her husband, Marion was to be given to learn the consequences of resistance and the price of freedom.<sup>38</sup>

The songs of Marion Campbell bear witness to a free and indomitable spirit circumscribed by a highly traditional society and culture. In *Tha Mulad air M’ Inntinn*, she balanced rebellion with obeisance to conventions both artistic and social, as exemplified by her private critique of Griogair Ruadh even as she celebrated him publicly as the epitome of the Male. Throughout her oeuvre, a voice exceptional in its violence and tenderness alike gains restraint, formality and dignity from what it owes to classical poetic practice and technique, the panegyric code, heroic narrative, and the rites of marriage and death. In its interplay of passion and sophistication the resultant aesthetic perhaps recalls John Donne, just as the palette of the grave – the pure white of the linen shroud fading to yellow – finds a visual echo in the ‘bracelet

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<sup>38</sup> The documents of 24 November 1562 and 29 March 1570 share the provisions that Cailean Liath would meet his stated obligation within forty days of the condition specified being carried out, and that certain unnamed legal restrictions would pertain to the granting of possession of Glen Strae. The parallelism raises the possibility that Cailean Liath may have had a say in the question of Marion’s marriage in the early 1560s.

of bright hair about the bone', 'the subtile wreath of hair that crowns my arm', of Donne's great death poems, *The Funerall* and *The Relique*.<sup>39</sup> The artistic achievement is inseparable from the sorrow which is the keynote of her songs and of this phase of her life, in which she last reveals herself alone and awake at the edge of her bed, beating her two hands, while the wives of others sleep (MacGregor 1999, 135). Her songs could bring no justice when it mattered most, during her own lifetime and those of the sons she bore to Griogair Ruadh (MacGregor 1999, 135-36), and we may doubt that it would have brought her any consolation to know that they would endure to allow generations to come to make their own estimations of her cause, and of her.

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<sup>39</sup> For the interest shown in 'macabre grave-detail' by both the classical and vernacular Gaelic poetic traditions, including the colour contrasts wrought by decay, see Thomson 1989, 55-56, 86.

APPENDIX A: VARIANTS OF *THA MULAD AIR M' INNTINN*

I Source: MacLagan Coll., MS 70, ff. 18-21<sup>40</sup>

Oran See No 27<sup>41</sup>

- 1 Tha truime air m intin  
Gad nach dean mi cach inseadh  
Ach ga chumal orm fein na throm cheo
- 2 Mu dheabhen na h annair  
S gille fo annard  
Gur curaidh na canal a pog
- 3 Mu dheabhen na gruagach  
S glan cur rughe na gruaidhibh  
Mar t ubhal se h suas ar bhar mheoir
- 4 Truidh chruin theid an cashard<sup>42</sup>  
S nach chuir guaig ar a leth-taobh  
Calpa as sdeise u a sheases ar broig
- 5 Bha mi lathair an latha  
An robh do chorda a s thsaull  
S truagh gun mise s mo chearna ad choir
- 6 Cha b ann a chuirreadh do bhainse  
Ach a bhualadh bhuillean mar namhdean  
Dorta fola o ceann-dale gu bhroig
- 7 Dhiolainn snigh do shuilean  
Do mhulad is do churam  
Mun saigheadh na burd a s thigh osta

Ishe ga Freagrathse

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<sup>40</sup> I am indebted to Dr Kate L. Mathis for providing me with a transcript, which I have checked against the original. In the MS the text concludes with the statement, 'This song is to be repeated over/The verses is [*sic*] to be said double'. Line division and capitalisation have been standardised. In the MS stanzas are numbered consecutively, but after stanza 18 comes 02 (*sic*), 21, 22 and 23: there is no stanza numbered 19 in the MS. Otherwise, the text is that of the MS.

<sup>41</sup> If the reference be to MS 27 within the MacLagan Collection, the connection may be of form rather than content. MS 27 is a dialogue headed 'Oran molfidh rin[n] fear Ghealanie air an cheud mhnaoi do bhi aig ninghean d' fhear Bailneasbuig'.

<sup>42</sup> For *caisbheart* see Dwelly (1994) s.v. *caisbheart*: 'Shoes and stockings ... Greaves (lit. foot-gear, as opposed to head-gear – *ceann-bheart*).

- 8 Airson gu d thug mi gaol-falach  
Do n fiuran deas flathal  
Theid air thus na fhear barrach air thos
- 9 Cha-neil cron ort ar chinnt  
As urrain cach inseadh  
Ach nach cuntar do ni air an lon
- 10 Cas a siubhall na free u  
Le d chuilber caol direach  
S tu a dh fhagadh damh ghiceach fuidh leon
- 11 Bu tu iasger na haubhen  
Gan iarraidh s ga taubhaich  
Cha bhi miann ar na mnathan a dheoin
- 12 S olc an tuigsa do dhaoine  
Ni an Scriptur a leabhamh  
Nach tuig iad an eacoir seach coir
- 13 Bhi gar cumail a chele  
Gun chron-fhaach gun reasan  
Ach nach cuntar do spreidh air an t sroin
- 14 Gad a chuir sibh e a dh Earin  
Na do Sassan na beurladh  
Gus an d thig e cha dheid orm snain posta
- 15 Gad a ni sibh a cheangall  
Eidir chasan is lamhan  
Is a chuir an chistie chaoil dainean fuidhn fhoid
- 16 Gus an oubhraich an t annard  
Ann an uir is an gaineadh  
Cha dean mi sugradh ribh a dhainnean na dheoin
- 17 S olc a chuir sibh mi am prìosan  
S nach do ghoid mi ni riabh uaibh  
S nach mo thuair sibh diolan mi n froig
- 18 S olc a rinn sibh gun aobhar  
S nach do thog mi ar caorich  
S nach mo thog mi laoidh as ar cro
- 19 Bu bheag a ardan Chloinne-Grigor

S mor m earbsa gu d thig iad  
Gad a bhuaileadh iad friber mur sroin

20 Gad a leagadh iad caisteal  
Eadar aol agus clachan  
Agus mise thoirt a mach ar bhar fheoir

21 Thigh tudha na slaite  
Cha chumadh e mach mi  
Ach a ghaol cha leig glasan mi ad choir

22 Air deoth thiginn ann Uaingneas  
Agus bhearrin u fuadach  
Do n ghleanan bheag uainne am bhi ceo

II Source: Inverness Collection 1806, 150-52

*Oran eadar Oig-fhear agus a Leanan*

- 1 Moch sa mhadin 's mi 'g eiridh,  
Cha bheag mo chuid eislean  
Aig eadh s' tha do sgeul gun tigh'n oirn.
- 2 Gu 'm bheil mulad air m' inntin,  
Ge 'd nach dean mi chach innseadh  
Ach ga chumail oirm fhein na throm cheo.
- 3 Mi bhi cumha na gruagich,  
Is glan ruthadh a gruaidhean,  
Mar ubhal ga bhuan a bhar meoir.
- 4 Ri bu diom'bach mi 'n la  
Bha do chumhnant' a' 's t sobhul,  
'S truagh nach raibh mi 's mo cheathairn' ad choir.
- 5 Cha b'ann a chuireadh do bhains',  
Ach bhualadh buillean mar naimhdean  
Leigin fuil orr', le lan-gheur, gu 'm brog.
- 6 Dhiolain snighe do shuilin,  
Do mhulad, 's do thursa,  
Air na shuidh mu na buird, sa 'n taigh-osd'.
- 7 Dheanain carraid, mu 'n eirin,  
'N am tharraing na 'n geur-lan,

- Dhoirtin fuil, agus reibin am feoil.
- 8 'S mi nach leigeadh thu dhathigh,  
Gu do chairdin, gu d' chasaid,  
'S cha mho chluinte gu 'm b' airce dhuit lon.
- 9 Gur e fath mo chion fein ort,  
Mheud s' tha dh'ailteachd na d' eudain,  
'S nach bheil ardan gun cheil ann do shron.
- 10 Troidh chuimear a 'n caiseard,  
Nach cuir cuaig air a leth-taobh,  
Ri gur uasal an t-shlat a mhnaoi og.
- 11 "Ge do chuir sibh mi 'm prisan,  
Cha do ghoid mi riabh ni uaibh,  
'S cha mho thug mi fhein laoigh as nar cro;
- 12 Mar d' thug mi cion falaich  
Do 'n oig-fhear dheas fhearail,  
A theid air thus a'n t sluaigh bharr' air an tor.
- 13 'S beag do dhardan chlan Ghriogair,  
'Us meud mearlaid gu 'n thig iad,  
Ge do dheanadh iad sligan mu 'n bhord.
- 14 Ge do leigeadh iad caistail,  
Eadar fhiogh agus chlachan,  
Agus mis' thoirt amach air bhar feor.
- 15 Fhir na gearra ghruaige dui,  
Tha mi dear-lan do chumha,  
Bho 'n latha ghear thu cuan struthach na 'n romn.
- 16 Ach ge d' a racheadh tu dh'Eirin,  
'Us do Shasan, na dheidh sin,  
Thig thu dhathigh mu 'n theid orm snaim posd'.
- 17 Bu tu iasgar na h-amhan,  
Moch ga iaraidh, is ga fhaighin,  
Cha bhiodh a mhian air na mnathan na 'd choir.
- 18 Agus sealgar a mhonidh,  
Nuair a rach'dh tu air tuillin,  
A chuireadh luidh, air damh mullaich, is leon.

- 19 'S cha 'n eil achde do reusan  
Gu nar cumail o cheile,  
Ach nach cunnt iad do spreidh air an lon.
- 20 Ach gus an uraich air tanairt,  
Ann an uir, 's ann an gaineamh;  
Cha dean mi sugradh, a dhaindeon, na dheon.
- 21 Ge do dheanta mo cheangal,  
Eadar lamhan 'us chnamhan,  
Is ge do chuirte mi 'n geamhail le ord,
- 22 'S mo chumail fuidh ghlasan,  
Far nach fheud mi leus fhaicsin,  
Cha d' theid do ghaol as mo bheachdsa ri m' bheo".

III Source: Sinton 1888, 231-33

ISE.

- 1 Ged a chuir sibh mi'm prìosan,  
Cha do ghoid mi riamh nì bhuaibh,  
'S cha mho thug mi laoigh á n-ur cro.
- 2 Mur d' thug mi 'n cion-falaicht,  
Dha 'n oigear dheas, fhearail,  
Theid air thùs an t-sluaigh bharr air an torr.
- 3 Ach s' beag dh' ardan Clann-'ic-Griogair,  
'S meud m' earlaid gun tig iad,  
Ged a dhianadh iad sligean mu'r bord.
- 4 Ged a leagadh iad an caisteal,  
Eadar fiodh agus clachan,  
Agus mise 'thoirt a mach air bharr feoir.
- 5 Fhir na dearg-ghruaidh dhuibhe,  
Tha mi deurach 'g ad chumhadh,  
Bho'n la reub thu cuan sruthach nan ron.
- 6 Bu tu iasgair na h- amhna,  
Moch 'g a iarraidh 's 'g a fhaighinn,  
'S cha bhiodh miann air na mnathaibh ad choir,



- 7 Agus sealgair a' mhunaidh,  
'N uair a rach tu air d'uilinn,  
Chuirea' tu an damh mulcach fo leon.
- 8 'S ged a racha' tu dh' Eirinn,  
'S 'a Shasuinn an déigh sin,  
Thig thu dhachaidh mu 'n téid orm snaim-phosaidh.
- 9 Ged a rachadh mo cheangal,  
Eadar lamhan is cnaimhean,  
'S mo chur ann an geamhal le ord.
- 10 'S ged a rinn sibh mo ghlasadh,  
Far nach fhaod mi leus 'fhaicinn,  
Cha teid do ghaol as mo bheachd-sa ri 'm bheo.
- ESAN.
- 11 Naile! 's mis' tha fo mhi-ghean,  
Gar-n dian mi 'chach innseadh,  
Ach 'g a chumail orm fhin 'na throm cheo.
- 12 Mi 'bhi cumhadh na gruagaich,  
Bu ghlain 'rughadh a gruaidhean,  
Na 'n t-ubhal 'ga bhuain bharr meoir.
- 13 High! gur diombach mi 'n latha  
Bha do chùmhnannt 's an t-sabhal,  
Nach robh mi 's mo cheathaira<sup>43</sup> ad choir.
- 14 Cha b' ann le cuireadh do bhàinnse,  
Ach bhual' bhuillean mar naimhdean,  
'S dhianainn fuil orra le lainn ghéir gu 'm broig.
- 15 Dhiolainn snighe do shuilean,  
Do leann-dubh is do chùram,  
Air na shuidh mu na buird 's an tigh-osd'.
- 16 Gur e fath mo chion féin ort,  
'Mheud 's tha fhàilteachd 'n ad aodainn,  
'S nach eil àrdan gun chéill ann do shron.

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<sup>43</sup> Presumably a typesetter's error for *cheathairn*.

APPENDIX B: *RIGH GUR MOR MO CHUID MHULOID*

Source: MacGregor 1999, 140-41

- |     |  |  |
|-----|--|--|
| 1.  | Rìgh gur mór mo chuid mhulaid<br>On chiad là thrumaich do bhròn orm, | Lord, how great is my sorrow,<br>Since the first day your grief oppressed me,            |
| 2.  | On a ghlac mi 'n ciad iùl ort<br>'S nach do dhùraig mi pòsadh.       | Since I caught the first sight of you<br>And I turned against marriage.                  |
| 3.  | Gur diombach mi air m'athair,<br>S caol a sgath e o m' fheòil mi:    | I am displeased with my father,<br>? Who has almost separated me from my<br>flesh:       |
| 4.  | Chum e uamsa fear taighe<br>Nach robh adhannt' no gòrach -           | He kept from me a husband<br>Who was not bashful or foolish -                            |
| 5.  | Sàr Ghriogarach gasta<br>Nach bu tais air an tòrachd.                | A fine MacGregor hero<br>Who was not faint-hearted in the pursuit.                       |
| 6.  | Bhuidhinn do làmh dhuit urram<br>O Là cumasg Beinn Lòchaidh.         | Your hand won you honour<br>From the day of the skirmish of Ben Lochy.                   |
| 7.  | S iomad Guinneach mór prìseil<br>Dhen tug thu 'shiòda 's a bhòtan    | And from many a big wealthy Campbell<br>You removed his silk shirt and his boots.        |
| 8.  | Agus ògan deas innealt'<br>Dhan ghearr thu 'mhuineal mu 'chòtan.     | And (? many a) well adored, fashionable<br>youth<br>Whose throat you cut above his coat. |
| 9.  | Gum meal thu 'n cuid aodaich<br>Ged as dìleas iad dhomhsa!           | May you long enjoy their garments<br>Though they are closely related to me!              |
| 10. | Na biodh ortsa bonn mìghein<br>Ged a dhìobair mi 'chomhdhail,        | Do not let yourself be displeased<br>Although I failed to keep the tryst,                |
| 11. | Rach thusa air adhart<br>'S na b'ann 'nad chladhaire gòrach,         | You go forward<br>And not as a foolish coward,   |
| 12. | 'S na bu mhise do phiseach<br>Ged tha mise dheth brònach             | And may your success not diminish<br>Although it saddens me.                             |
| 13. | Mur bhith daingneach nan caisteal<br>'S nan geatacha móra            | If only it were not for the strength of the<br>castles<br>And of the great gates,        |

- |     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
| 14. | Agus cuingead nan glasan<br>Nach fhaigh mi asta gun ordaibh!                | And the restraint of the locks<br>Which I cannot escape without (the giving<br>of) an order! |
| 15. | Truagh nach eil mi mar fhaoilinn<br>No cho caol ris an fheòraig -           | It is a pity that I am not like a gull<br>Or as slender as a squirrel -                      |
| 16. | Gun leumainn an uinneag<br>'S cha chumadh an tòir mi;                       | Or I would leap from the window<br>And the pursuers would not restrain me;                   |
| 17. | Gun snàmhainn am buinne<br>Gun aon fhuireach ri ordugh;                     | I would swim the stream<br>Without once stopping when commanded;                             |
| 18. | S dearbh gun siubhlainn ri gaillinn<br>Mìle fearann gun bhrògaibh,          | Indeed I would travel through the storm<br>A mile / A thousand? without shoes,               |
| 19. | Dol an coinnimh an òig laghaich -<br>Ceist 's roghainn bhan òg' e!          | Going to meet the kind youth -<br>The darling and the choice of young<br>women!              |
| 20. | Shiubhlainn leis an fhleasgach<br>'Na bhreacan caol bòidheach;              | I would journey with the young man<br>In his fine, close-fitting tartan;                     |
| 21. | S beag do dh' fheartaibh Dhé fhathast<br>Ar cur a laigh' a dh' aon sheòmra: | It wouldn't be asking too much of God yet<br>To let us lie in the one chamber:               |
| 22. | Bhithinn 'n-sin 'na do ghlaicibh<br>'S gheibhinn blas air do phògaibh.      | I would be there in your embrace<br>And I would taste your kisses.                           |
| 23. | Ged bhiodh agams' deich mìle<br>De ghìnidhean òirdhearg,                    | Though I had ten thousand<br>Of red-gold guineas,  |
| 24. | Urdal eile de dh'fhearann,<br>De dh'earras 's de stòras,                    | As much again of land.<br>Of treasure and of wealth,   |
| 25. | S dearbh gun lúiginn mi fhéin ort,<br>A lùb threubhach dheas bhòidheach.    | Indeed I would wish myself on you,<br>Handsome, elegant, valorous young man.                 |
| 26. | Sgrios nàmhaid gun iarr mi<br>A ghearradh 'n gialla 's an sgornain.         | For an enemy I wish a destruction<br>Which would cut jaws and throats.                       |
| 27. | Sgrios eil' a theachd a-nìos orr'<br>Gun aon trian theachd às beò dhiubh-   | May another destruction come upon them<br>Which would leave but a third of them alive-       |
| 28. | Gach aon neach a chuir seach orm  | Every single one who put beyond my reach   |



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Figure 1. ‘*S mo leigeil-sa mach air feadh feòir* (and release me onto open sward)’? An oblique aerial view of Meggernie Castle in upper Glen Lyon, with the River Lyon in the background, taken from the north-north-east in 2012. The original tower house is furthest from camera.

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