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The Dewar Manuscripts: an overview

As a personal minute picturesque description of a life in the Highlands as understood by the grandsons of the persons described, this beats any novel or trial that I ever read (Dewar 1964, 27).

So John Francis Campbell summed up the Dewar MSS. Indeed, it represents one of the most outstanding collections of Gaelic oral tradition that we have. Currently, it is housed at Inverary Castle and was collected by John Dewar (1802–72), who was originally in the employ of *Iain Òg Ìle*, John Francis Campbell of Islay (1821–85), and latterly continued under the aegis of the 8th Duke of Argyll, George Douglas Campbell (1823–1900). Much of the material in the collection concerns traditions relating to the clans and understandably much of these relate to Argyll where the vast majority of the material was collected. This paper intends to give an overview of the Dewar MSS and also to put them into their historical context. It is also hoped to highlight areas of the manuscripts' strengths and to give two examples of historical folklore tales from this collection which has been under utilised since the publication of *Vol. I. of the Dewar Manuscripts* edited by the Rev. John Mackechnie (1897–1977), a former reader and head of the Department of Celtic at the University of Aberdeen.

In order for any manuscript collection to be fully utilised a descriptive list, detailing the contents of the material in a summary form, is a must. Considering that access to the material is also difficult (given geographical location, and the fact that it is in private hands), the production of a list will open up access to the contents of a unique collection of Gaelic folklore to scholars.¹

John Dewar is described on his death certificate as 'Collector of Traditions' – an apposite cognomen for someone who took up this art later

¹ I am currently putting a descriptive list together which I hope will be completed in the not too distant future.

in life. As Mackechnie states: 'John Dewar, who was a woodman employed by the Duke of Argyll, left Glendaruel and went to live at Rosneath, but soon he was enabled to devote his whole time to the gathering of tales throughout the Highlands.' (Dewar 1964, 30). However, John Dewar was not merely a collector of traditions, he was an extremely able story-teller in his own right and I shall go on to say something about the methods he used to collect and edit the various stories which he gathered.

Most, if not all, of Dewar's surviving correspondence to J. F. Campbell is contained within Campbell of Islay's papers which Campbell bequeathed to the National Library of Scotland after his death. This correspondence reveals the working and fruitful relationship that existed between the two men. A typical example of a letter written by Dewar with unamended spelling follows:

Clachaig 21st June 1860

Sir

I received your letter of the 11 int. on the 14, with a notice from Mr Robertson, that you do not wish me to send you aney more sgeulachds, but I sent to Mr Robertson the sgeulachds that I had already written. I return you my best thanks, for the time you kept me in imployment I got a half sovereign for to treat those that helped me to get the sgeulachds I cannot at present tell you I am to be in summer, as I have not as yet got aney view of imployment, I think I will be at Clachaig for a fortnight yet.

I have not as yet found aney old books that will account for the sgeulachd, the only one that I have heard in gaelic, and have seen in English, is one that is called the forty thieves, whic begins with a rich and a poor brother and forty thieves which had their treasure hid in a rock which would open when seasam was said the poor brother found the secret, and took away part of the wealth and told it to his rich brother, the rich went also, and got in but forgot the secret word and could not get out again and was taken by the robbers was killed and quartered &c.

I heard that tale when I was but a young boy, and I heard on old man say that he heard it seventy years since I myself heard it fifty years. I repeated it to John Crawford in Arrachar last year and he told me he also heard it when he was in his boy-hood, and he told me that he had it, and many others in a story book but the book was lent out at that time and I did not see it, they might all be foreign storys for aney

thing I know I think that I will be at Clachaig for two weeks
yet I will write and let you know when I leave it.

Your obedient servt.
John Dewar²

In addition to John Dewar, Campbell of Islay employed many other collectors, most notably Alexander Carmichael (1832–1912) and Hector Urquhart (*fl.* 1850) as well as Hector MacLean (1818–92) – a fellow Islayman, and also author of *Ultonian Hero Ballads* (1892), who collaborated with J. F. Campbell during the collection of tales which later appeared in the four volumes of *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* (1860–62) – who translated the whole of the Dewar MSS into English between 1880–81 – a Herculean task which produced some nineteen volumes from the original seven volumes in Dewar’s beautiful copper-plate hand (Dewar 1964, 50).³ To give an indication of the sheer amount of hard work that Dewar undertook we need only look at the first volume of the collection to glean some idea of the size of the task. The first bound volume of the Dewar MSS contains 475 pages which approximates to over 150,000 words (Dewar 1964, 38). Multiplying this by seven then we have approximately more than one and a quarter million words.

Nevertheless, John Mackechnie, the first editor of the Dewar MSS published in 1964, seems to have had a rather remarkable editorial policy. For one who was fully conscious of the contempt for Gaelic culture over the centuries as shown amply in his rather discursive introduction, it seems rather at odds that he should furnish an English translation only of the Dewar MSS instead of a bilingual edition. Strange also, in some respects, that he slavishly followed the original Dewar MSS as the published Vol. 1 follows the order of the original tales contained within the manuscript when bound. On the other hand, Mackechnie at least followed the spirit in which the manuscripts were bound together, although it is certainly not clear whether there was any predisposition to have these stories put in any kind of thematic order when they were bound originally. It seems that Campbell read and made various notes about the various stories during the process of collating Dewar’s papers.⁴ A better editorial policy would have been one where the stories would have been arranged thematically in order to give a cohesive structure to the types of tradition represented within the collection. Having said this, though, Mackechnie’s lavish edition is still

² NLS, Adv. MSS 50.1.14(ii), ff. 473–473^r.

³ It was through the encouragement and, no doubt, the purse of Lord Lorne that the Dewar Manuscripts were translated by Hector MacLean.

⁴ After John Dewar’s death, his brother, Donald Dewar, sent the manuscripts and notebooks to Lord Lorne who then sent them on to J. F. Campbell. By 21 July 1873, Campbell had finished collating them and had them bound.

useful and the historical notes given in his edition are fairly well researched if somewhat difficult to follow at times. Perhaps the late Prof. Kenneth Jackson summed up the merits of Mackechnie's edition in his review of the book when he commented: 'The fact is that a great opportunity has been missed here' (Jackson 1965, 207).⁵ And perhaps Mackechnie's editorial methodology cannot be excused given that Prof. Angus Matheson had already provided a model to follow when he edited and published a traditional account of the Appin Murder from the Dewar MSS themselves (Matheson 1930, 343–404).

Dewar's Methodology

As noted earlier John Dewar was born in 1802 and was brought up in Glen na Callanach. When employed as a woodman for the 8th Duke of Argyll he was injured in an accident which prevented him from continuing in this occupation. Thus, he had plenty time to devote to Gaelic story collecting when J. F. Campbell was looking for willing contributors. What is remarkable about John Dewar is that he not only taught himself to read and write Gaelic but that he also created his own shorthand system in order that he could dictate Gaelic not only quickly but accurately.⁶ Although Dewar collected material for J. F. Campbell, some of which was utilised in *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, he insisted upon more collecting even when Campbell's attention had been turned elsewhere. J. F. Campbell encouraged this and Dewar received a small stipend from the Duke of Argyll to support him while he undertook his labour of love that eventually became the Dewar MSS.

John Dewar, as mentioned earlier, is described as a 'Collector of Traditions' but he was more than just that. He was also an able storyteller in his own right and he possessed a retentive mind. Here, for example, we have J. F. Campbell himself writing in 1870 about the type of method employed by Dewar:

Dewar's method of gathering popular history is to get someone to tell him the story, then to scribble it out from memory and keep his scroll in books, and in loose sheets. Then to get as many versions of the same story as he can get repeated to him, and to put in any new incidents or words, or

⁵ It is open to speculation regarding the reasons why the Rev. John Mackechnie did not continue to publish the rest of the Dewar MSS as this must have been his intention, judging by the first volume's title. It may have been due to adverse reviews such as these which criticised his editorial methodology, or, indeed, it may have been simply down to reasons of finance. Whatever the reason it is still a pity that Mackechnie, had the project of completing a full edition of the Dewar MSS been fulfilled, missed the opportunity to redress his critics by modifying his editorial policy in later volumes.

⁶ An example of this is given between the pages in Dewar 1964, 64–65.

lines in compositions, or anything that will improve & enlarge his scroll. When he has got as much as he can sometimes after a year or two he takes all his stuff and writes out a fair copy. He writes very slowly and looks up words in the dictionary for their spelling. By this method the incidents are genuine popular traditions treated like old manuscripts compared & collated. But the language in which the incidents are dressed in Dewar's language to which a translator may or may not adhere.⁷

Thus in effect John Dewar for the most part acted as an editor of the tales which he collected. For example, he may have used upwards of five informants for a lengthy historical tale which he either memorised or noted down and which he would then later re-arrange and re-work to produce a flowing narrative with all the pieces fitting together as he saw fit. Sometimes this process took months or even years before the initial informant's story was supplemented by others which were then finally re-worked into a version that was satisfactory to Dewar. In some sense he was trying to produce the best version out of all the various bits of material that were available to him, or, in other words, he was reconstructing the information available in order to produce a flowing narrative. This, of course, does not strictly follow the fieldwork methodology of a modern-day folklorist and it may be levelled at Dewar that he was perhaps re-utilising material which did not reflect the form of the original content. However, in the interests of fairness it must be remembered that Dewar was working during the infancy of folklore when best practice in fieldwork methodology had not fully matured. Indeed, it may be argued that Dewar was a pioneer in developing modern fieldwork techniques. Besides, Dewar, in cases where he took the trouble to write down the informants' names, occupations and residence, was fully conscious of his own methodology and also of Campbell's own guidance, and the accusation of forgery, or, rather, making the material appear in a more literary form, cannot be levelled at Dewar as it can be at Alexander Carmichael, another of Campbell of Islay's more famous collectors,⁸ who was later to publish the first two volumes of *Carmina Gadelica* (1900) under his own editorship.

Elsewhere, J. F. Campbell comments further upon the methods adopted by Dewar:

Dewar had to find out for himself the best method of obtaining and then of recording tales. To listen to the

⁷ NLS, Adv. MSS 50.2.2, f. 78^v.

⁸ See Robertson 1976 and a reply made by Campbell, J. L. 1978. However, the most recent introduction written by Dr John MacInnes gives the most balanced view regarding this controversy, see MacInnes 1992.

seanachaidhs, to carry home in his head all that he had heard and then in the quiet of the evening to write all that down did not appear to be very satisfactory. Again, were he to start writing down the tales to the dictation of the speakers he would probably upset the trend of recollection in their minds, and not only so, but the time taken up by this method would be out of all reason. A combination of all these methods, however, was the ideal, and Dewar discovered this. He started when he had reached an age at which most people are prepared to regard their days of study as over, to make use of shorthand, and he developed a system of his own. In some places yet there are tales of how he used to take down the words of a story 'just as quick as they are spoken.' This goes far to explain how he was able to collect so many tales in such a short time (Dewar 1964, 31).

One can only admire the sheer will power of Dewar, who was not only up in years, but tramped miles around Argyllshire and elsewhere (and doubtless in all sorts of weather) in search of a story. Perhaps Campbell's following words succinctly described all that was best about Dewar: 'He is a precise accurate man with a wonderful memory and small imagination. A popular tale in his hands becomes more like fact than fiction, and poetry turns to prose.' (Dewar 1964, 31). Here J. F. Campbell expresses his satisfaction that Dewar had followed his instructions and the traditional narratives which he recorded were not altered or embellished in any way.

Contents of the Dewar Manuscripts

So what then are the main contents of the collection? As would be expected there is a large amount of material belonging to Argyllshire where Dewar spent most of his time collecting. The greatest strength of the Dewar MSS lies in the vast amount of historical tales especially concerning clan traditions. Local heroes, battles, cattle-lifting, genealogy and such like traditions all make an appearance on a regular basis. The late Prof. Kenneth Jackson in his paper *The Folktale in Gaelic Scotland* lucidly summarises the types of stories in question:

Another important body of Gaelic folktale, and a large one, is the stories about known historical characters and events, particularly about clan chiefs and the relations between clans. These may sometimes contain fragments of real history unknown to conventional historical sources. The clan tales are a type of folklore very much developed in Scotland than in Ireland, where the upheavals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the English rule of the eighteenth century and nineteenth seem to have wiped

almost all memory of the local aristocracy from the popular mind. Here in Scotland one may gather traditions about the battle of Inverlochy, the Keppoch murders, Culloden, the massacre of Glencoe, and much else, and endless tales of the clan chiefs, often involving some element of the marvellous or supernatural (Jackson 1952, 130–31).

Prof. Jackson's points are just as valid, if not more so, for the Dewar MSS. However, Campbell of Islay himself, given his intimate knowledge and involvement with the Dewar MSS, not unsurprisingly provides a pithy and powerful summary of its vast content:

As ornaments to engraft on general or local history the matter is most valuable. These stories are anecdotes, family traditions about individuals, adventures of individuals at battles which were really fought. This which is the popular view of great events looked at from below is microscopic and accurate for details, but hazy, vague, distorted, and mythical, for all that is beyond the people (Dewar 1964, 25).

As far as I am aware this collection contains the greatest number of historical narratives concerning the Highland clans and these types of tales are not found in such great supply as they are here. Many of these historical tales centre around the time of 'Linn nan Creach' (*the Age of Forays*), a period of instability (c. 1500 to c. 1745) in Gaeldom after the collapse of the Lordship of the Isles when it was forfeited to the Scottish Crown in 1493. Once the hegemony of the Lordship had been broken a power-vacuum led to an anarchic struggle for predominance amongst the clans. Many of the historical narratives date from around this time and continue through to Culloden and beyond. A couple of examples will suffice in order to give a taste of the historical stories contained within the Dewar MSS.

I shall firstly give an abstract of the first tale to be met with concerning the beginning of Clan MacIntyre. The original of the text can be found in the appendix. Briefly, the tale goes that while MacDonald of Sleat was out in his ships they came into difficulty and were in danger of being sunk. But a quick thinking MacDonald clansman put his thumb into the hole, struck his finger off, thus saving the day. From that day hence MacDonald called him Mac an t-Saoir and rewarded him with lands in Sleat. However, the MacIntyres grew numerous and powerful so that MacDonald of Sleat grew jealous and decided to massacre them all to retain his own power in Sleat. Word got out about MacDonald of Sleat's intention and a woman fled with an infant MacIntyre to the protection of MacDougall of Lorn at Dunolly Castle. She and the infant were received with true hospitality and – one of the favourite time-spans of folklore – it

was not until a day and year had passed that MacDougall asked who they actually were. The woman related the story of how she and the infant came to Dunolly. In time the young MacIntyre grew into a young man and fell in love with one of MacDougall's daughters. She fell pregnant and so they both fled to Glenoe in Argyllshire in order to avoid the wrath of MacDougall of Lorn. Eventually MacDougall of Lorn found them there but instead of carrying out his plan of revenge, he forgave them when he saw how happy they were together. And so there is a typical fairy tale ending with MacIntyre, wife and family living happily ever after in Glenoe where his descendants were said to be numerous.

Now, such tales, intrinsically valuable in themselves, may have some historical fact behind them but there are obvious folklore motifs present as well. Whether one can corroborate any independent evidence or documents to support any historical veracity within such tales makes an interesting and valuable study. What we do know is that the MacIntyres were in possession of Glenoe, near Bunawe in Lorn, in 1300, and these lands were retained until around 1810.

One of the earliest traditions of the origins of the MacIntyres is recounted as follows from a *Fragment of a Manuscript History of the MacDonalds* in *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis*, where a similar account is given with the only difference being that Sommerled gains the hand of Olave's daughter through the machination of the alleged progenitor of the MacIntyres, a certain Maurice MacNeill:

There was at that time a foster brother of Olay's, one Maurice MacNeill, in Olay's company, who was a new friend of Sommerled; and when Sommerled brought his two galleys near the place where Olay's ship lay, this Maurice aforesaid came where he was, and said that he would find means by which he might come to get Olay's daughter. So, in the night time, he bored Olay's ship under water with many holes, and made a pin for each hole, overlaying them with tallow and butter. When they were up in the morning and set to sea, after passing the point of Ardnamurchan, Olay's ship sprung a leak, casting the tallow and butter out of the holes of the ship tossing on the waves, and beginning to sink, Olay and his men cried for help to Sommerled. Maurice replied, that Sommerled would not save him unless he bestowed his daughter upon him. At last, Olay being in danger of his life, confirmed by an oath that he would give his daughter to Sommerled, who received him immediately into his galley. Maurice went into to Olay's galley, and fixed the pins in his holes which he had formerly prepared from them, and by these means they landed in safety. From

that time the posterity of Maurice was called MacIntyres (or wright's son) to this day (Gregory 1847, 283–84).

The historical narrative given in the Dewar MSS is probably an example of a tradition later attached to the MacDonalds of Sleat. And it is an example of how genealogy can be used as propaganda where a claim is made to a powerful or, indeed, famous antecedent in order to bolster the status of the clan. As such this mythical origin of the Clan MacIntyre appears in all the histories which have been noticed so far (MacIntyre, 1901 2–3; MacIntyre 1977, 3).

This type of phenomenon has been studied in great depth by both Prof. William Gillies and W. D. H. Sellar with regard to Clan Campbell, and there is no need to go into more detail here (See Sellar 1977, Gillies 1978 and Gillies 1999). Suffice to say that Donnchadh Bàn nan Òran (1724–1812) was himself constrained to mention a similar type of tradition in his song 'Rainn Gearraidh-Arm' (*Verses on Arms*) reflecting the powerful nature of myth with regard to clan origins:

Bha sibh uair gu grinn a' seòladh
Air tuinn sàile;
Chaidh tarrang a aon de bhòrda
Druim a' bhàta;
Leis a' chabhraig spàrr e 'n òrdag
Sìos 'na h-àite,
'S bhuail gu teann leis an òrd i,
'S ceann dhith fhàgail.

*Once ye were trimly sailing
on ocean waves;
from one of the boat's keel planks
a nail slipped out;
with all haste he thrust the thumb
down in its place,
drove it tightly with the hammer,
and left its tip there* (MacLeod 1952, 234–35).

The other example of a historical tale from the Dewar MSS is quite well known and may be summarised as follows.

There was a dispute between Lochiel and the Duke of Atholl (some say Marquis) about their borders in Rannoch.⁹ They agreed to meet up at

⁹ A version of this popular tale entitled 'Lochiel and the Duke of Athol' was published (Dewar 1964, 89–91). There are also other manuscript versions of this tale cf. NLS, Adv. MSS 50.1.11, ff. 52^v–53^r; NLS, Adv. MSS 50.2.18, ff. 150–59. For other renditions of this tale, see Stewart, A. 1928, 60–61 and Cameron, J. 1894,

the disputed border in order to see whether they could come to some agreement or another. While Lochiel was on his way he met the witch Gormshùil Mhòr na Maighe (other accounts say it was his nursemaid) who related to him that the Duke of Atholl was going to bring his men with him in order to force Lochiel to assent to the Duke's claim to the disputed lands. Lochiel duly returned to fetch his men and then made this way to the meeting place. Before he met with the Duke of Atholl he made sure that he would give a signal if there was any sign of trouble. They duly met but it seemed that they were not going to agree terms so the Duke of Atholl on a pre-arranged signal called his men. Lochiel asked somewhat indignantly who these men were, and the Duke replied, 'The Atholl wethers coming to eat the grass of Ben Breac.' Ewen then signalled for his men, and the Duke in turn asked indignantly who these men were, and Lochiel replied, 'The Lochaber dogs who are going to eat the Atholl wethers for eating the grass of Ben Breac.' By these actions both men saw two immovable forces had been brought to bear and decided to agree terms. To seal the agreement they both threw their swords into a nearby loch at Corrour thenceforth renamed Lochan a' Chlaidheimh.

The sequel of this story is, that about 1826, when some men were fishing in the lochan, they pulled up an old rusty broadsword, which they took to the parish minister of Kilmonivaig. Word of how and where the sword had been found spread round the district, and a deputation of twelve Cameron men, four from Nether Lochaber, four from Locharkaig, and four from Lochyside, saw the minister and requested the he should give him the sword. They then took it and threw it back into the Loch were it remains to this day (Stewart 1984, 21).

Here, again, there is at least some evidence (albeit slight) for the veracity of the folktale. Obviously there are folklore motifs present here where Lochiel is warned before going on to meet with the Duke of Atholl. A similar type of tradition is the breaking of a *geis* (or taboo) and a famous example of this is given in the Dewar MSS also with regard to Sir Lachlann Mòr MacLean who fought and died at the Battle of Tràigh Gruineart in Islay in 1598.¹⁰

These clan legends are a product of a late manifestation of a heroic age – of a warrior society where warfare is seen as an aristocratic game; emphasis is put upon the young warrior; there is stress upon single

as well as other local historical books about the Lochaber area. It may be noted that a similar type of tradition is also claimed by the Robertsons.

¹⁰ An account of this battle from the Dewar MSS was published by Campbell, J. F. 1950. See also Fraser 1905, p. 233 and Smith 1895, pp. 105–07, no. lx.

combat; not to mention death in battle and the praise of the bards (MacInnes 1992, 382) – and although they contain a basis of historical fact, they are, as the late Dr. Alan Bruford puts it, ‘assimilated to known patterns of heroic legend, borrowing details from native Gaelic heroic tales, international folktales and supernatural legend.’ (Thomson 1994, 148). Regarding the Dewar MSS, they are primarily narrative histories which relate a story, stories essentially about adventure composed both for entertainment and instruction, and the vast majority are related to a definite period of time (i.e. the heroic age of ‘Linn nan Creach’). In addition to historical narratives, part fiction and part fact, there are other items such as Gaelic songs, Ossianic ballads, genealogy (especially Campbell genealogy), poetry, rentals and other related material. Indeed such accounts from oral tradition provide an important underbelly to other historical sources and any scholar who approaches Highland history without the necessary linguistic skills suffers from an immediate disadvantage which cannot be obviated in the case of Highland historiography as many of the traditions were communicated through oral transmission.¹¹ J. F. Campbell himself remarks upon the usefulness of the various historical elements of these tales while recognising that they cannot claim to be as authoritative as more traditional historical sources:

If anyone should read this collection of popular history with the hope of finding anything like MacAulay’s History he will be grievously disappointed [. . .] On the other hand, anyone who values genuine materials will here find themes for an unlimited number of poems, plays, novels, family histories, pictures and mental edifices of all kinds [. . .] these are bricks from which some future historian may make something. (Dewar 1964, 26).

The real question to ask of the Dewar MSS and especially of the historical tales contained therein is regarding their historicity. Indeed how can they be judged as either historical or fictional tales? Where does the history stop and the fiction take over? Can, indeed, the two ever be separated? Or as these traditional historical tales depend upon oral transmission for preservation before (and if) they are recorded are they then necessarily deprived *a priori* of any validity as historical sources? Dr. John MacInnes makes the following lucid comment when writing of such historical narratives:

It has been suggested that if all the known folktale motifs were removed, we would be left with a core of historical fact. Often enough, however, a clan saga may consist in its

¹¹ This issue has been taken up and explored by Stiùbhart 2002.

entirety of what are patently folktale motifs. Others have a propaganda element in them; these stories have obviously been constructed with a bias in favour of a certain clan or kindred. It would be a fascinating if monumental task to separate fact from fiction in all the historical tales; there is an enormous field for research here. (MacInnes 1992, 392).

Such a task indeed would be enormous but ultimately worthwhile. Oral traditions are not necessarily untrustworthy as historical sources, but, on the contrary, they merit a certain amount of credence within certain limits and, as such, have great similarities to other more “authoritative” historical sources. Yet, they must also be evaluated according to the rules of historical methodology and some sort of criteria must be used in order to evaluate such traditional narratives. These include the following: identifying folklore themes grafted onto historical settings; allowance for personal and emotional bias slanting a tradition; cross-checks of multiple traditions; corroboration of a tradition from printed records; corroboration of a tradition from geographical landmarks; corroboration of a tradition from material culture and knowledge of the character of the informant (Dorson 1973, 111).

Regarding the style of the historical tales contained in the Dewar MSS, they are told in a terse economic manner which carries the narrative along, and yet there is always some outstanding element, whether a memorable sleight of phrase or episode, which transforms these historical narratives from a merely mundane rendering, an accusation, at times, which may be levelled at them. As noted by Dr. John MacInnes there is also a clear stylistic tone shared between these type of ‘historical tales’ and those of Icelandic Saga (MacInnes 1992, 380, 387–88). This can be seen time and time again in the Dewar MSS where the sheer amount of detail given is astonishing with its wide sweep of tradition belonging to Argyll and beyond, ranging from the Appin Murder (1752) to Campbell genealogy, from the skirmish of Sròn a’ Chlachain (1646) to a poem by a Kintyre bard on the Hercules (an emigrant ship). It is the modest hope of this present paper that it provides at least some idea of the sheer size and scope of the narrative histories contained within the Dewar MSS which resembles nothing less than a great iceberg floating in the sea of Gaelic oral tradition. And perhaps more importantly the Dewar MSS offer a fascinating insight into the neglected area of how the Gaels themselves actually perceived, created and remembered their own history and traditions.

Conclusion

So what then is the next stage? Apart from Mackechnie’s rather idiosyncratic edition it is fair to say that the Dewar MSS have been under utilised and thus under-valued. This is, of course, a symptom of what we

are only too aware of – the lack of scholars in Scottish Gaelic with conflicting demands and other priorities as witnessed by the slow (but sure) publications of the Scottish Gaelic Texts Society. But, I would suggest, it is high time that the Dewar MSS should be edited, and given a modern English translation complete with detailed historical and explanatory notes, so that a unique collection of traditions can gain something of the stature (albeit belatedly) of Campbell's great collection *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*.¹² A new scholarly or popular edition is needed before Dewar's labours can come anywhere near to fruition and before he can be credited as one of Gaeldom's unsung heroes. It would make a tremendous addition to the legacy of publications of Gaelic oral tradition.

Although he may not be remembered as he should be, John Dewar did not suffer the ignominy of being unsung, albeit in a quiet and, perhaps, restrained fashion but in such a way which retains dignity. Calum C. MacPhail, *Am Bàrd Latharnach*, (1847–1913) composed a moving elegy, entitled 'Cumha Iain Mhic an Deòir',¹³ which inevitably gives expression to the poet's loss and also praises the work and legacy of John Dewar, the 'Collector of Traditions'.¹⁴ The following two quatrains not only evoke the poet's feelings but also the respect and admiration which Dewar had enjoyed from his contemporaries:

Bha bhuidhean àrd os cionn a staid,
Is dhearbh e siud air iomadh dòigh;
Ged tha e 'n diugh am bòrdan caol,
Gur tric ri fhaotainn sgrìob a mheòir.

Do dh' àrdan riamh cha tug e luaidh,
Ach dh' fhalbh gu stuama réir na còir;
Mar 's irisliche bhios a chuairt,
'S ann 's àirde 'n duais an riogh'chd na glòir.
(MacPhàil 1947, 35)

¹² A projected series of volumes (to be published by Edinburgh University Press) were to be edited by the late Donald Archie MacDonald together with historical notes by Dr John Shaw. This venture, unfortunately, never came to fruition due to the untimely death of Donald Archie MacDonald.

¹³ I am indebted to Dr Michael Newton for the reference to this elegy and to Dr Nancy McGuire, University of Aberdeen, for providing a copy of it. This poem, entitled *Cùmhnadh Iain Mhic an Deòir*, originally appeared in the *Oban Times*, 1 May 1875, p. 2.

¹⁴ Illness struck John Dewar in 1871 when he was living at Camusail, Rosneath. He moved to his brother's home at Dumbarton where he passed away on 13 December 1872, aged 70.

Appendix:
Dewar MSS, vol. II, ff. 74–79

[*fol.* 74]

Sgeul air Tus an dream ris an abaireir Clann-an t Shaoir

Bha dream de na Domhnailich a chomhnuidh ann an Sleibhte ris an abairte Clann-Domhnuil Shleibhte, agus bu dream iad a bha uasal righeadhail dhiubh fein, agus ann an ard inbh. Bha latha air an deach Mac Dhomhnuil Shleibhte agus a theaghlach gu leir ann am bàta ghabhail turus toileach-inntinn dhoibh fein. An deigh dhoibh bhi astar mach air chuan shéid gaoth laidir. Chuir an stiuireadair mu'n cuairt am bàta gu dol gu cala, ach co dhiubh dh'éirich an t-side gu stoirm, agus iar a bhàta bhi re tamull iar a luasgandh leis na tuinn, chlisg aon de na crann-tarrnain a bha fuaigheal a bhàta ri a cheile as a h-aite, agus thainig an sàile stigh na steall throimh an toll, agus a dh'aindheoin an fhir thaomain bha choltas gu'n lionadh am bàta agus gu'n rachadh i do'n ghrund leo, agus gu'm bitheadh iad gu leir bàite. Trath bha iad anns a chunnart sin gun dochas gu'n ruigeadh iad gu bràth tir, bha aon de mhic Mhic Dhomhnail Shleibhte a thùr, a chorraig chuir ann an toll na crann-tarrainn a chumail mach an t-sàile; agus iar dh'a, a cuir 's an toll agus i bhi ann re tamull bha i dobhairt péin dha, agus bha a phèin dol na bu mudha, agus bha e air a chràdh. Ghabh e a chladheamh s ghearr e dheth a chorrage, agus bhuail e i g'a cuir teann anns an toll gus a cumail dionach; agus le chuir a mheur anns an toll mar a rinn e thearuinn e e-fein agus a chuid eile de theaghlach Mhic Dhomhnail Shleibhte gun bhi iar am bàthadh. Agus an deigh dhoibh faighinn sàbhailte gu tir, thug Mac Dhomhnail Shleibhte os near; gu'n robh taing an teaghlach gu leir aig an fhear a chuir a chorrage ann an toll na crann-tarrann s a dh'fhàg ann i, oir gu'm b'e a thearuinn an an teaghlach gun iad bhi iar an call. Agus dh'ordaich e gu'n abairte an Saor-Sleibhteach ris, agus gu'n abairte Clann-an-t-Saoir ris an t-sliochd a ghineadh uaidh. Agus an deigh do'n t-shaor pòsadh agus clan bhi aige, b'e Mic an t-Saoir a theirte riutha agus lean Clann an t-saoir mar shloinne air a shliochd, agus dh' fhàs an dream liomhor ann an sleibhte.

Iar do bheagan linnean dol seachad, agus gu n robh Clann antShaoir a fàs lion-mhor ann an dhùthaich Shleibhte; bhuail [*fol.* 75] farmad Mac Dhomhail, agus lion e le eud, agus smaointich e, mur deanadh e ni-eigin gus grabadh a chuir air fas lion-mhor Chlann an t-Saoir, ri tiom, gu'm b'e Mac an t-Saoir bhitheadh na Thriath air Sleibhte an aite Mhic Dhomhnail; agus chuir e an cèill ri a dhaoine, gu'n rachadh iad anns an oidhche gu taighean Chlann an t Shaoir agus gu'm marbhadh siad iad. Dh' aotaich na daoine; agus chaidh iad ann a' marbh na h-oidhche agus mharbh iad mu thuairream air tri-fichead s deich eadar shean s òg de Chlann an t-Shaoir, agus cho-eiginnich iad an fheadhainn de Chlann an t-saoir nach deach a mharbhadh air an oidhche sin iad fein a shloinneadh air Mac Dhomhnail.

Bha té àraid ann an sleibhte aig an robh aon de mic Mhic an t-Shaoir g'a altram le ciche aig an am, agus trath chuala i mu'n sgrìos a thug Mac Dhomhnail Shleibhte air Clann an t-Shaoir, bhuail eagal i, na'm faigheadh Mac Dhomhnail fios gum b'e aon de mic Mhic an t-Shaoir am paiste a bha aic-se g'a altram, gu tigeadh e, agus gu'm marbhadh e esan faraon. Theich i a' sleibhte leis a phàiste, agus rainig i Mac Dhughaill Latharna. Bha Mac Dhughaill Latharna a bh' ann aig an tiom sin, ag gleidh bord-beidh ris an abair-te bòrd-follaiseach, far am faodadh neach air bhith suidhe agus biadh a ghabhail; agus dh'fhaodadh neach air bhith dol na chuile latha agus an leoir biadh itheadh aig bord foillaiseach Mhic Dhuhgail rè agus bliadhna, gun a bhi iar fharraid dhiùbh co iad, na cia as bha iad, na c'ainm a bh' orra. Agus dh' fhan a bhanaltrum latha s bliadhna mu'n cuairt tigh Mhic Dhughaill leis a phaiste, agus i gach latha dhiubh sin, a dol agus a suidhe aig bord follaiseach Mhic Dhughaill, agus ag itheadh a leoir beidh, gun neach fharraid dhi co i.

An deigh do bhanaltrum Mhic an t Saoir-òig bhi corr a's bliadhna a fanail mu'n cuairt tigh Mhic Dhughaill Latharna; thachair Mac Dhughaill e fein urra aon latha, agus dh' fharraid e dh'i, "cò thu a bhean, agus cia as a thainig thu?" Fhreagair ise, "thainig mi a' sleibhte, is e Nic Dhomhnail m' ainm, agus is e Mac an t-Saoir ainm a phaiste so a ta mi ag giùlan." Agus dh'innis i do Mhac Dhughaill sgeul Mhic an t-Shaoir o a thùs, agus an t aobhar mu'n d' fhàg i Sleibhte, agus gu n deach i do latharna a dh'iarraidh fasgath s lòn mu'n cuairt tigh Mhic Dhughaill.

[fol. 76] Ghabh Mac Dhughaill banaltrum Mhic an t-Saoir mar shearbhanta na thigh, agus chaidh Mac an t Saoir e fein altram ann an tigh Mhic Dhughaill mar dhileachdann.

Trath bha Mac an t-Saoir na bhalachan mu'n cuairt tigh Mhic Dhughaill bhitheadh e bitheannta falbh comhla ri mic Mhic Dhughaill gu sealg agus agus iasgachd, agus dh' fhàs e fein ra theoma air sealg agus iasachd. Agus trath dh' fhàs e suas gu inbh duine dh' fhàs e fein agus te de nigheanan Mhic Dhughaill mór aig a cheile; agus be bu deireadh dhoibh, gu'n d' fhàs ise leth-tromach. Bha eagal aca le cheile roimh Mhac Dhughaill, agus bha fios aca nach luasaicheadh Mac Dhughaill dhoibh pòsadh agus fanail comhla le sith, agus theich iad o lathair Mhic Dhughaill iar eagal is gu'n cuireadh e gu bàs iad le cheile, agus chaidh iad gu taobh Bheinn Chruachain; agus chuir iad suas tigh-casain dhoibh-fein, aig taobh abhainn-atha aig aite ris an abaireir Grunnach, agus bha iad 's an aite sin re tiom fhada mu'n do fhuair Mac Dhughaill brath air an aite anns an robh iad. Ach mu dheire bha cuid-eigin de dhaoine Mhic Dhughaill dol suas taobh a Bhrànn-shruth (ris an abairte uaireibh am Brànnra) aig bun beinn Chruachain, agus faicear e bùthan Mhic an-t-Saoir agus nighean Mhic Dhughaill; agus chaidh am fear sin a' dh'ionnsaidh Mhic Dhughaill, agus thug se brath dha air an aite far an robh a nighean agus Mac an t-Saoir a tuineadh. Bha feirg air Mac Dhughaill ri Mac an t Saoir, a chionn e dh'fhalbh am fuadach le a nighinn, agus bha e los Mac an t saoir a

mharbhadh, oir bu tàmailte anabharra leis, a nighean bhi iar a mealladh, agus a dohairt air falbh le fear fuadain gun stòras gun fhearann mar a bha Mac an t-Saoir.

Thog Mac Dhughaill buidhinn de a dhaoine, agus dh' fhalbh e air tòir Mhic an t-Saoir gus a mharbhadh agus a nighean a thoirt dhachaidh. Trath rainig Mac Dhughaill agus a bhuidhinn dhaoine gu ruig Grunnach, fhuair iad aig doras bùthan Mhic an t-Saoir fiadh marbh aig darna taobh an doruis, agus bha earba agus bradan marbh aig an taobh eile. Thubhairt Mac Dhughaill ri a ghillean le cagar beag, “ach cha'n eil iad uile gu leir gun am biadh co-dhiùbh.” Sheall fear de na gillean stigh throimh tholl cùil a' bh' anns an tigh, agus chunnaic e Mac an t-Saoir agus nigheann Mhic Dhughaill nan luidh air an drim taobh ri taobh ann an [fol. 77] leaba, bha paiste na shuidh air na broilleich aca, bha iad le cheile ag cleasachd ris a phaiste, bha am paiste a' garachdaich ris a chluicheag bha iad a' deanamh ris, agus bha feith-ghaire air aodan Mhic an-tsaoir a's nighean Mhic Dhughaill, agus iad anabharra toilichte coltach. Agus thubhairt an gille ri Mac Dhughaill, “tha dùil agam fein a Mhic Dhughaill, gur ann is fhearr dhuibh an dithis sin fhàgail beò comhla, ma mharbhas sibh aon, marbhaidh sibh dithisd, agus ma mharbhas sibh an dithis faodaidh sibh an trì a mharbhadh; agus is ann is fhearr dhuibh an trì fhagail beò; cha bhi bhur nighean gu bràth na is toilichte na tha i an so comhla ri Mac an t saoir.” Sheall Mac Dhughaill e fein stigh throimh an toll, agus chunnaic e a nighean na luidh ri taobh Mhic an t saoir, agus lamh Mhic an-t-Saoir mu a muineal, iad le cheile ra thoilichte colach ag cluicheag ris an leanabh, agus an leanabh a' gèrachdaich, agus thionndaidh Mac Dhughaill mu'n cuairt ri a ghillean agus thubhairt e, “cha'n 'eil mise dol a sgaradh o cheile dithisd a ta co gràdhach mu a cheile is a ta iad sin, tha ar-learn gur e cùis bu mhodh uram dhomh, an dohairt dhachaidh a's buaile cruidd a' thabhairt dhoibh, agus an sin iad a sholar air an son fein mar a b' fhearr a dh' fhaodadh iad.” Mhol na gillean sin a dheanamh, agus dh' fhosgail iad doras a bhuthain agus chaidh iad stigh far an robh Mac an t-Saoir s nighean Mhic Dhughaill, agus an deigh beagan bruidhinn eile thubhairt Mac Dhughaill ri Mac an t-saoir, “Cha'n eil mi toilichte gu'n d'fhalbh thu mar a rinn thu am fuadach le m' nighean, ach bho 'n a ta a chuis mar a ta i, agus gu'm bheil sibh toilichte ri cheile, is ann is fhearradh le cheile dol dachaidh do Dhun-ollaidh comhla rium-sa, agus bheir mi dhuibh mir fearainn agus buaile cruidd, agus an sin bitheibh a solar air bhur son fein mar is fhearr a dh' fhaodas sibh, is e is fhearr dhuibh na gun bhi agaibh ach a cuir earbsa a' sealg s iasgachd.” Dh' aontaich Mac an-t Saoir, ach bu chomh-ionnan le nighean Mhic Dhughaill fanail aig bun Chruachan-beann mar a bha i, b'e Mac an t-Saoir a h-annsa agus bha i toilichte de a staid leis a phailteas iasg a's sithionn a bha Mac an t saoir a cumail rithe.

Thug Mac Dhughaill dhachaidh leis a nighean agus Mac an-tsaoir agus thug e dhoibh buaile cruidd mar thoiseach earras dhoibh, [fol. 78] a chionn gu'n d'fhalbh sibh air fuadan comhla, agus sibh bhi rè seal fhada

gun fhios bhi agam c'aite an robh sibh; ach bho'n a tha mar a ta, agus do bhrìgh coltais gu'm bheil sibh sona comhla, leigear seachad feirg s dioladas agus nì mi ribh mar bu chuibhe do athair a dheanamh ri cliamhuinn agus ri nighean, bheir mi dhuibh buaile cruaidh, agus an gleann nach eil fhathast iar aiteachadh arson aite comhnuidh dhuibh fein, agus gus an spreidh bhios aguibh bhi ag ionaltradh air, agus is e sin is fhearr dhuibh gus aran 's anlann a sholar na gun bhi agabh ach a bhi cuir earbsa à sealgachd s iasgachd. Thug Mac an t-saoir taing do Mhac Dhughail, arson a chaomhalachd, agus thainig e fein agus Mac Dhughail gu bhi reidh ri a cheile, agus an deigh beagan comhnaltra dh'iarr Mac Dhughail air a nighean s Mac an t-saoir iad a dh' fhalbh leis do Dhunollaidh agus gu'n tugadh e dhoibh còir air a ghleann a ta suas taobh Beinn Chruachain nach robh aig an am sin iar aitheacha, arson aite ionaltra do'n spreidh bhitheadh aca, agus gu'n tugadh e dhoibh buaile de chrodh air son toiseach earras dhoibh.

Chaidh Mac Dhughail dhachaidh do Dhunollaidh; agus thug e a nighean agus Mac an t saoir dhachaidh leis; agus an deigh dhoibh bhi tamull an Dunollaidh, thug Mac Dhughail dhoibh buaile de chrodh, agus còir air a ghleann a ta taobh Churachan-beann, ris an abairte na deigh sin Gleanna-nodha.

Trath bha Mac an-t-saoir agus nighean Mhic Dhughail a fagail Dhun-ollaidh, gus dol ghabhail seilbh ann am fearann a ghlinne bha iad iar faotuin, dh'iarr té de na banaraichean a bh' aig Mac Dhughail cead falbh comhla riutha, gu i bhi na banarach aca anns a ghleann-nodha do'n robh iad a dol. Thug Mac Dhughail cead dh'i, i a dhol comhla ri a nighean s Mac an t-saoir na'n togaireadh i. Thogair i, agus dh'fhalbh i leo ag iomain a chruaidh.

Trath rainig iad am fearann air an d'thug Mac Dhughail còir dhoibh, cha robh tigh ann ach bùthan beag a chuir Mac an-t-saoir suas gus am faigeadh e tiom tigh ceart a thogail. Chaidh leigeadh leis a chrodh sgaoileach feadh a ghlinne gu ionaltra ann. B' e bó mhór bhàn a bha measg a chruaidh an aon a b' fhearr dhiubh agus thubhairt a bhanarach ri Mac an-t-saoir, "bheir mise comhairle ort a Mhic an t-Saoir ma ghabhas tu uam i."

[*fol. 79*] Thubhairt Mac an t-saoir rithe, "gabhaidh, abair do thoil." Thubhairt a bhanarach, "am bheil thu faicinn na bó mhór bhàn úd?" Thubhairt Mac an t saoir, "tha." Thubhairt a bhanarach, "ma-ta, is e i siod ribhinn na buaile; agus is e mo comhairle-se dhuit, thu ghabhail deadh bheachd air a bho bhàn; agus ge b'e a' cheuda aite ann an luidh é, thu a thogail do thigh anns an aite sin. Agus cha bhi an gleann nodha so do 'n d' thainig thu gun Mhac an t saoir ann fhad is a ghleidheas Mac an t saoir bó bhàn na buaile." Mar an ceudna thubhairt a bhanarach ri Mac an t-saoir, "thabhair aire cia an rathad a bhitheas agaidh na bó bhàn trath luidheas i, agus ge b'e rathad a bhitheas aghaidh na bó, cuir thusa taobh beoil do thaigh ris an taobh sin, agus soirbhichidh leat, agus le do shliochd anns a

Ghleann-nodha so rè iomadh linn.” Bha feadhainn ag amharc air comharraidhean, agus a dobhairt geill daibh arson nan tiomana bha gu tigheachd, mu dheibhinn nithe bha gus tachairt, anns na tiomana ann an robh Mac an t-saoir. Agus ghabh Mac an t-saoir comhairle na banarach. Ghabh e beachd air an aite far an do luidh a bho-bhàn agus chuir e suas a thigh anns an aite far an do rinn a bhò bhàn an ceuda luidh anns a ghleann, agus chuir e taobh beoil an taigh dìreach ris a cheart àird ris an robh aghaidh na bó, agus b’e nead na bó bàine theirte ris an aite ann an robh an tigh, agus lean Gleannanodha mar ainm air a ghleann riamh tuile na dheigh sin.

Bha clann aig Mac an t-saoir, agus dh’fhàs a h-shliochd lion-mhór ann an Gleann-nodha agus ann an Gleann uaracha na dheigh sin agus b’e Fear Ghlinne-nodha, air-neo Mac an t-saoir Chruachain a theirte ris an fhear bu shine de’n dream.

From John Macintyre Police-man in Glen-coe in AD 1865
and from John MacIntyre weaver in Socach Glenglasary.

Written by John Dewar

Dewar MSS, vol. V, ff, 148–51
[fol. 148]

Comhspaid eadar Eobhan Loch-iall agus
Marcus Athol mu dheibhinn na’n crìoch
eadar Lochabar agus braigh Reannach

Bha fearann eadar Lochabar agus braigh Reannach agus bha Marcus Athol agus Eobhan Camashron Loch-iall le cheile ga agairt, agus ag radh gu m bu leotha-san e, agus thòisich comhspaid cho dian eadar iad mu-dhebhinn is gu’n eagal gu’n rachadh blàr a chuir mu’m bitheadh a chùis iar a reideachadh.

Chuir Marcus Athol fios a dh’ ionnsaidh Eobhain Loch-iall e a thighinn a choinneach ris eadair braigh Reannach, agus gun e a thoirt leis ach a phiobaire, agus nach bhiodh aig Marcus Athol leis ach a phiobaire fein, agus gu m feuchadh iad ris a chùis a reiteach eadar iad fein. Cha do chuir Eobhan Loch-iall umhaill gu’n robh céilg air bhith sa chùis, agus shuidhich e latha gu coinneach ris a Mharcus. Trath thainig latha na coinneamh, dh’éirich Loch-iall ro mhoch, agus dh’ fhalbh e chun na coinne, a’ marcachd air muin each, agus gun do ghille leis ach a phiobaire. Choinnich e ri a mhuime-chìche, s i air air an rathad g’a fheithe, Thubhairt e rithe le mionnanaibh mòra, “dé a chuir thusa an so cho maduinneach air an rathad, gu thu a bhi na’d dhroch còmhlaiche dhomh?” Thubhairt ise, “agus c’aite am bheil Loch-iall a dol cho maduinneach is so, eagal air roimh dhroch còmhlaich, s gun daoine leis?, innis dhomh-sa c’aite am bheil thu a dol?” Thubhairt Loch-iall, “tha mi dol gu coinne ri Marcus

Athol aig braigh Rainneach, a dh'fheuch an còird sinn mu na crìochan, agus cha'n daoine gu bhì againn ann air taobh no taobh." Thubhairt muime-chiche Loch-iall ris, "shaoil mi gu'n robh thusa na b'eolaiche air ceilg Mharcus Athoil, na gu'm falbhatu [*sic*] g a choinneachadh s gun do dhaoine leat. Pill thusa a Loch-iall, agus thoir do dhaoine leat, tra ruigeas tu am fagus do aite na coinne, fàg an ceil aig cùl [*fol. 149*] cnuic na daoine, agus mur cuir thu feum orra, na toir am fradharc idir iad, ach ma thig éiginn ort, agus gu m bi feum agad air do dhaoine, tionndaidh an taobh stigh de d chleochd a mach, agus leig fhaicinn do ud dhaoine lìnig dhearg do chleochd, agus trath chì na daoine taobh dearg a chleochd a mach, tuigidh iad gu'm bheil thu ann an cunnard, agus theid iad gu d chobhair." Ghabh Loch-iall comhairle a mhuime-chiche. Phill e s chuir e suas a chrois-tàra, s thionail e a dhaoine, agus dh fhalbh air an ceann gus an do rainig e am fagus do n aite aig an robh e gu coinneach ri Marcus Athol. Bha aig an am sin fear de Chloinn an t-Shaoir, a chòmhnuidh am fagus do Loch-treig, b abhuist d'a bhì bíchionnta a togail chreach, agus a goid. Agus thubhairt a bhean ris an latha sin, "is e so an t am dhuit gu do shith fhaighinn o Mac Dhomhail-duibh, cha ruig thu leas eagal a bhì ort dol foidh an bhratach aige an diugh, agus ma theid bithidh tu na d dhuine saor na dheigh so." Chaidh Mac an t-Shaoir fo bhratach Loch-iall an latha sin, agus dh'fhalbh e measg a chuid eile de na daoine. Trath a rainig Loch-iall mur astar beag do n aite anns an robh e gu tachairt ri Marcus Athol, thubhairt e ri a dhaoine, "fanadh sibhse aig cùl a chnuic ud, agus theid mise agus am piobaire air nar aghart gu taobh an Lochain ud, far am bheil Marcus Athoil agus a ghille, agus bitheadh gille beachd agaibhse, a faicinn gach nì a bhitheas mise a deanamh agus fanaibh an ceil gun sibh fein a leigeadh fhaicinn idir, mur faic sibh mise a cuir dh'iom mo chleochd, agus a tionndaidh na linnig dhearg a mach, ach ma chì, thigibh do m ionnsaidh gu luath oir bithidh feum oiribh." Chaidh daoine Lochiall gu cùl a chnuic, s chum iad iad fein am falach; agus chaidh Loch-iall agus a phiobaire, air an aghart gu far an robh Marcus Athol agus a ghille. Bha Marcus Athoil s a ghille iar a bhì an re seal, a feithe ri Loch-iall aig taobh lochan beag a bha an sin. [*fol. 150*] Chuir iad failte air a cheile, agus thòisich iad air bruidhinn mu crìochan an fhearainn, agus an aite còrda, b'ann a bha iad a cuir a mach air a cheile na bu mhiosa no bha iad a roimhe, agus b'ann a bha Marcus Athoil na bu ladarna no b abhuist d'a, agus bha e ag iarraidh no crìch a bhì na b' fhaide a stigh air fearann Loch-iall na far an robh e ag agart i bhì a roimh, agus chuir iad mach air a cheile uime, agus cha robh coltach gu m bitheadh iad reidh 's an dealachadh. Thug Marcus Athol neapaign geal mach as a phocaid, agus bha e aige na làimh g'a chrathadh, mu dheireadh leig e tuiteam de'n neapuine air an làr, agus air ball dh' éirich buidheann de fhir Athol às an fhraoch, agus bha iad dol an rathad a bha Loch-iall agus am Marcus. Thug Loch-iall an aire dhoibh, agus dh' fharraid e de Mharcus Athol, "ci dé na daoine, a ta an siod?" Thubhairt Marcus Athol, "tha an siod, cuid de na muilt Atholach, a tigheachd a dh

itheadh pairt de cheud bhàrr Lochabar.” Chuir Eobhan Loch iall dheth a chleochda, agus thionndaidh e an linnig dhearg a mach, agus chuir e air mar sin e. Ghrad thainig daoine Loch-iall am fradharc, agus bha iad na b fhaigse do far an robh Marcus Athol s Loch-iall na’n seasamh, no a bha fir Athol, agus bha tuille ann dhiubh. Trath chunnaic Marcus Athol iad, dh fharraid e de Loch-iall, “co iad na daoine ud a ta iar tigheachd am fradharc?” Thubhairt Loch-iall, “is e a ta an siod coin-dubha Lochabar, a tighinn a ruagadh na m mult Atholach o bhi ag itheadh ceud bhàrr Lochabar.” Thubhairt Marcus Athoil, “caisg do choin Eobhain.” Thuirt Eobhan, “tha mo choin-se cho deidheil air feòil is nach eil fhios agam an gabh iad casgadh.” Shèid piobaire Loch-iall suas a phiob, agus chluich e port ùr do na Camashronaich, agus b e na facail a chuir e ris a phort, Thigibh mur so, thigibh mur so, a chlanna nan con, s gheibh sibh feòil, s gheibh sibh feoil. Agus be am port sin a bha na phort cruinneachadh do na [fol. 151] Camashronaich riamh tuile na dheigh sin. Thubhairt Marcus Athoil ri Loch-iall, “caisg do choin Eobhain, agus theid crìochan an fhearainn a tharruinn an rathad is aill leat fein iad a bhi, cha n eil maith a bhi striobh riut, cha dohair ni-maithe fein, no an donas an car asad-sa.” Chaisg Loch-iall a dhaoine, agus chaidh crìochan an fhearainn a tharruing an rathad a bha Loch-iall ag iarraidh iad a bhi. Agus trath bha Mharcus Athol agus Loch-iall, a spaisdeireachd comhla aig taobh an Lochain, bha a chlaidheamh aig Loch-iall na làimh, chuir barr a chlaidheamh air uachdar a a bhròige, as bha e ag oibreach a chlaidheamh a null s a nall, bha bàrr a geur, s chaidh e throimh an bhroig s thug e fuil e cas Eobhain, agus thubhairt e, “ach tha mi iar toirt fuil co-dhiubh.” Thuirt Marcus Athoil, s e gabhail beagan eagail, “b fhearr an an claidheamh gun bhi ann, gus gu’n cuirinnse mo ainm ris a bhann.” Thilg Eobhan Loch-iall an claidheamh a mach air an lochan, agus b’e “Lochan-a-chlaidheamh” a theirte ris an Lochan sin riamh tuile na dheigh sin. Rinn Loch-iall agus Marcus Athol suas bann sgrìobhta chuir iad le cheile an ainm ris, a dohairt còir air an fhearann mu’n robh a chomhsaid do Eobhan Loch-iall, agus dheilich an dà fhine gun mharbhadh air bhith a bhi ann. Gidheadh bha gamhla aig Marcus Athol ri Loch-iall riamh tuile na dheigh.

Unknown source. Written by John Dewar.

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