The Jacobites’ “General”: Spanish John’s Evidence for the History of Military Bagpiping

Month after the battle of Culloden, the last organized elements of the Jacobite army narrowly escaped an attempt to surprise them at Achnacarry in southwest Inverness-shire. John Macdonell of Scotus was a Spanish officer and Highland gentleman who happened to be on hand as an envoy from the Jacobite planners in France. In his memoirs, Macdonell (or Eòin Spàinteach, “Spanish John”) recorded the rebels’ alarm and hasty withdrawal: “we were awakened at break of day . . . by all the Highland Bagpipes playing the general, Cogga na sì, having been alarmed by their scouts, who reported that the Duke of Cumberland had sent a much superior force by three different routes to surround them . . . .”1 Although Macdonell’s narrative has been in print for many years, no one seems to have remarked the significance of this passage, which throws fresh light on the history of piping even as it deepens and confirms certain new aspects of our understanding of the Jacobite army in the ’45.

Until recently it was customary for even the most scholarly discussions of the ’45 to use the terms “Highland army,” “Highlanders,” “clansmen,” or even “Highland rabble” interchangeably with “Jacobite army.” Such has been the tenacity of the idea that the rebel army in 1745-46 was, leaving aside a few fringe units, essentially a Highland force—an informal clan army engaged in a kind of glorified cattle raid. This is an illusion with a long and complicated history, going back to the rebellion itself and the propaganda of both sides, to the government’s derisive ethnic stereotyping as well as the Jacobites’ mythologizing self-portrayal as a band of plucky freedom fighters.3 On the Whig side, David Hume gives us a fairly measured expression of a
view which even now commands popular allegiance. The rebel army, Hume writes shortly after the rising, was composed of people who

are altogether...ignorant of Discipline..., and know as little of the Nature of Encampments, Marches, Evolutions, Ranks, Firing and all the other Parts of military Exercise, which preserves Order in an Army, and renders it so formidable. They advance to Battle in a confused Heap, which some People have been pleased to call a Column: they have no Weapon but the Broad-Sword.... And they become weaker by their Victories; [as] they disperse to their Homes, in order to secure the Plunder they have acquired....

A more complex reality emerges from the recent studies which have looked at this subject from an empirical, rather than a romantic or whiggishly didactic, perspective. The Jacobite army of the '45, it turns out, was a most heterogeneous body in its ethnic, social and denominational makeup. Highlanders formed rather less than half the army's peak strength (even supposing the identification of a "Highlander" were in every case unambiguous). Lowlanders and Englishmen, Frenchmen and Irishmen, a smattering of gypsies and Welshmen, and the often nationally unclassifiable second- or third-generation members of the international Jacobite diaspora made up the balance. Like the other mixed-bag armies of the European eighteenth century, this Jacobite force was held together by internationally recognized norms of training, discipline, organization and procedure.

In other armies, those norms entailed a prescribed set of "calls" issued most often, in the eighteenth century, by particular drumbeats corresponding to particular orders thus, as one military dictionary of the time put it, "giv[ing] notice to the troops of what they are to do"—the reveille, the retreat, the tattoo, and so forth. The important thing is that an army have an agreed-upon system so that when an order is conveyed in this manner, the troops will understand its meaning. The beats by which a given signal was conveyed varied from army to army, but by the 1740s...
a single basic repertory of signals was widely shared among conventional European forces.8

“Spanish John” Macdonell’s account is our only direct evidence that this conventional system obtained among the pipers in the Jacobite army of 1745-46.

A word of introduction, then, to our source. A Jacobite by birth and inclination, a dandy by taste, and a soldier by profession, Spanish John was born in 1728 into the duine uasal level of the clan MacDonell of Glengarry. As a boy he was sent to Rome where he picked up some scraps of priestly learning at the Scots College. He soon entered the army of the king of Spain which is where he received his military education.

It will be useful to take a step back to consider the Jacobite diaspora which was Spanish John’s functional milieu during these years abroad. Starting with the overthrow of James VII and II in 1688, traditional patterns of migration from the British Isles to the Continent were elaborated and intensified, and given a distinctive political complexion, by the movements of thousands of Jacobites who voluntarily or otherwise expatriated themselves, forming an emigré community that centred on an exiled court which claimed to speak with the only true voice of political authority for British affairs. The formation of the Jacobite diaspora marks a very deep schism in British political experience, and the community in exile should not be laughed off as hapless or irrelevant9; it was neither, for all that its political aims were ultimately thwarted. Jacobite emigration drew on all levels of society, and it did not peter out – that is to say, we do not cease to find migrants following identifiably “Jacobite” paths of expatriation — until the 1760s, at the earliest. Eventually these Jacobite migrations produced a kind of alternative British kingdom, diffused across the European Continent. Possessing a court, a diplomatic corps, a financial system, a set of ecclesiastical institutions and centres of learning, a postal service, military resources, even a cultural life – possessing, in other words, most every attribute of a conventional state save territory – the Jacobite diaspora evolved into a socially articulated space into which any British subject, regardless of private political conviction, could migrate if he was so minded. Having a relative
or other sponsor in the hierarchy of Jacobite exile, or simply making a profession of loyalty to the exiled monarch, worked like an Open Sesame to those seeking access to social and economic opportunities on the Continent: few European states were unpenetrated by the patronage networks of emigré Jacobitism.\textsuperscript{10}

The military arm of this shadow kingdom was formed mainly by the Irish regiments in the armies of France and Spain, whose ranks and officer corps were open to British as well as Irish emigrés. These regiments maintained a symbolic allegiance to the house of Stuart until late in the eighteenth century; they also cultivated a self-consciously Gaelic identity.\textsuperscript{11} Briefly, in the mid-1700s, the French king supported three Scottish in addition to some half-dozen (the number fluctuated) Irish regiments.\textsuperscript{12}

A grenadier's mitre cap from one of those Scottish regiments survives in the collection of the National War Museum in Edinburgh. It is a revealing artifact: this cap shows “that, like the Irish regiments in the French service, the [Scottish regiments] preserved some 'British' elements in their uniform,” but the cap's “arrangement of colours reversed those in British practice...”\textsuperscript{13} In other words the Jacobite exile wore a uniform that was like a negative image of the British uniform's positive. This cap serves as a felicitous visual symbol for the negative-positive relation between the Jacobite diaspora on the Continent and the Whig state in the British Isles - between the two mutually denying British realms defined by the Stuart and the Hanoverian successions, two political communities existing in constant dynamic opposition to one another.

Spanish John's family connections in the Jacobite diaspora are what led to his enrollment in the Scots College in Rome, and the same connections secured him a commission in one of the Irish regiments in the service of Spain. (You needed money to get a commission in the British army, influence alone did the trick in the Jacobite emigré regiments - a difference which was decisive for more than a few British and Irish younger sons seeking to begin military careers.\textsuperscript{14}) He saw some action in Italy and was promoted from cadet to lieutenant before volunteering, in 1746, for the invasion force which the French government was assembling in order to assist the Jacobite rebels in Britain.
The fate of that invasion scheme is well known. After its collapse, Spanish John accepted the mission of carrying money and dispatches to the Jacobite leadership, and late in April he disembarked, along with a comrade, on the west coast of Scotland only to learn that the battle of Culloden had taken place on the day they had sailed. Almost immediately, the two couriers were relieved of most of the money they were carrying by a group of disgruntled MacKenzies. Persevering, they caught up with the remnant of the Jacobite army at Achnacarry where they were received by Prince Charles’s secretary John Murray of Broughton, the highest-placed member of the dissolving Jacobite staff who was present.

Murray in his memoirs recalled the arrival of “a Spanish and French Officer who had landed some days before . . . [with] a large pacquet of Letters . . . containing dispatches for the P–ce . . . and others.”15 The next morning saw the events recorded at the start of this paper.

The rest of Spanish John’s career, though not relevant to this discussion, refuses to be passed over. After Achnacarry he did not return to the Jacobites’ Continental shadowland but remained in the Highlands, whence in 1773 he emigrated to the province of New York. A loyalist in the War of Independence, he resettled with his family in southern Ontario. His posterity formed something of a rustic dynasty which included, in Spanish John’s son Miles, the first governor of what is now Manitoba.16 Spanish John composed his memoirs shortly before his death in 1810. These were printed by a now elusive Canadian periodical in the 1820s. In 1931 the Royal Celtic Society sponsored the publication by William Blackwood and Sons of Spanish John’s Narrative in book form.

To return to the surprise at Achnacarry – the rebel scouts’ alarm, the sound of the pipes “playing the general, Cogga na si,” the exhausted little army’s removal to a place of greater safety. All the Jacobite regiments represented at Achnacarry were Highland regiments. But as Murray Pittock has observed, the rebels’ practice of standardizing company muster strengths by shuffling troops from more robust units into weaker ones ensured that few nominally “Highland” regiments were purely
so in their ethnic composition.\(^\text{17}\) (The equation of regiments with clans, a commonplace of writing on this subject - “Lochiel entered the town with five hundred of his clan” - is therefore specious.) Moreover, even those regiments recruited primarily in the Lowlands had regimental pipers.\(^\text{18}\) This may have been a result of the Jacobites’ policy of putting an exaggeratedly Gaelic face on their enterprise (all troops, regardless of regional or national background, were uniformed in some kind of “Highland habit”\(^\text{19}\)). Or it may be that the Highland warpipes were a familiar piece of military paraphernalia even for Lowland recruits. Many of the pipers found in the Jacobite muster roll have Lowland names and places of origin,\(^\text{20}\) and at least one of the government’s Lowland regiments had pipers during the ‘45.\(^\text{21}\) (The use of Highland warpipes in Lowland regiments has precedents back into the seventeenth century.\(^\text{22}\))

Parenthetically, I should say that I am assuming here that all the regimental pipers listed in the Jacobite army played, in fact, the “great Highland pipe” and not some now forgotten Lowland cousin - as the old Northumberland Fusiliers used to march to an outdoor variant of the Northumbrian pipes.\(^\text{23}\) It is possible that our current sense of the variety of bagpipe forms in Scottish culture - three or four distinct types of instrument - is much simplified from the eighteenth-century reality.\(^\text{24}\)

At any rate, it is clear that pipers were distributed evenly through the ethnically mixed Jacobite infantry. The old picture of a ragamuffin army ignorant of “all the . . . Parts of military Exercise” is belied by Spanish John’s indication that the pipers’ music had been adapted to conventional forms of military signalling.

There is no reason not to assume that the tune to which Spanish John refers, “Cogga na sì,” is the piobaireachd set down and annotated in volume ten of the Piobaireachd Society series, Cogadh no Sìdh (“War or Peace”).\(^\text{25}\) No other title has been proposed for that piece of music, and no source assigns the same title to a different composition. The editors of the Piobaireachd Society series make it clear that the tune is preserved in an unusually wide range of early printed piobaireachd sources,\(^\text{26}\) and it is, indeed, quoted briefly (though under no title) in the
earliest of all scholarly works on piping, Joseph MacDonald's
Compleat Theory of the Scots Highland Bagpipe (written c. 1760),
Joseph's brother Patrick includes the whole tune, headed Coma
leam, coma leam cogadh no sìth ("Alike to me, alike to me war or
peace"), in his Collection of Highland Vocal Airs (published
c. 1784). John Francis Campbell of Islay remembered the tune
being played by his father's piper, John Campbell (1795-1831),
one of whose Lorn forebears had played at Culloden. Angus
MacKay, or whoever wrote the notes to that founding document
of the piobaireachd canon, MacKay's Collection of Ancient
Piobaireachd (1838), says apropos Cogadh no Sìdh:

It is evidently ancient, from its simple bold and char-
acteristic style, and is played all over the Highlands;
in fact, the title is appropriate to no particular clan,
but applicable to all, indicating that indifference,
which a warlike, spirited, and resolute people, in
the days of proud independence, would have, as to
whether the disputes of their patriarchal chiefs would
terminate amicably or end in bloodshed.

The would-be authenticator of piobaireachd titles and prove-
nces walks usually on treacherous ground, but Cogadh no Sìdh
seems to be one of those exceptional tunes on which the conven-
tional gloss is well supported. All authorities agree, incidentally,
that this is the tune which the piper played outside the British
square during a memorable episode in the Waterloo campaign,
which the Russian czar called for during the subsequent
victory celebration in Paris.

The title surfaces in another eighteenth-century military
source, in addition to Spanish John's account of the skedaddle
from Achnacarry. Spanish John's account is the earliest identi-
fication of a specific pipe tune serving as a military call. The
earliest known list of such tunes survives in a regimental order
sheet, dated 25 July 1778, pertaining to the Western Fencible
Regiment, a militia force embodied for the defence of the Clyde
firth and the coast of Argyllshire during the American War of
Independence. This manuscript gives the names of pipe tunes
corresponding to five calls; although the orthography is eccentric
even for the eighteenth century, each name is recognizable as the title of a known piobaireachd. The “gathering” is called “Coagive & Shea”. Searching for an explanation of this continuity between the military music of the rebels in the ‘45 and the military music of the increasingly tartanized government forces in the subsequent generation, one’s mind moves to the present duke of Argyll’s rueful adaptation of the proverb: “the Jacobites have all the best tunes.”

The word applied to Cogadh no Sidh on the order sheet of 1778, “gathering,” is a distinctively Scottish synonym for the more widely recognized word which Spanish John uses. In French and Spanish military usage as in English, the “general” (la générale, la generala) is a call which serves “to give notice to the troops that they are to march.” (The general can subsume a more contingent signal, the alarm “to give notice of sudden danger, that all may be in readiness for immediate duty” — and Spanish John was in the habit of using the word in this sense. If Cogadh no Sidh was the Jacobites’ general, then it was presumably this tune which roused Prince Charles’s guards somewhat belatedly into action on the morning of the rout of Moy: Charles’s footman recalled running in to the disheveled prince in a stair-well on that frantic morning “and [the prince] desired me to call the piperach [sic], for which I did and his highness went down stairs....” The rebel pipers striking up into a piobaireachd is a poignant image for the start of a day which would see the death of Donald Bàn M acCrimmon.

Just as an aside, we may observe that Spanish John’s evidence for the history of piping is consistent with the orthodox view that the piobaireachd form stood at the centre of the military piper’s repertoire until late in the eighteenth century, when marching music began to displace it. This is one of the orthodoxies which John Gibson challenges in his brilliant iconoclastic book Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping, 1745-1945. Given the power of his evidence and reasoning, it would be foolish to quarrel with most of Gibson’s arguments. But on this one point I think Gibson is wrong. His main polemical objective, in re-examining the history of military bagpiping, is to show that ceòl beag or (as it is popularly mistranslated) “light music” was part
of the active inherited repertoire of regimental pipers in the eighteenth century, in addition to piobaireachd. If we define ceòl beag as the traditional dance music which is Gibson’s primary focus, he is assuredly right. But Gibson includes in his definition of ceòl beag “quicksteps,” now commonly designated “marches,” i.e. those regularly paced compositions designed to accompany the movements of men marching in step. “[T]here is no doubt,” Gibson says, “... that this sort of non-dance-music ceòl beag was used by Gaelic pipers in military settings . . . at least as early as [the opening decades of the eighteenth century] and probably much earlier.” 42 In fact there are persuasive grounds for accepting the orthodox idea that quicksteps were an innovation of the post-Culloden era.

Many readers will recall a controversy some years ago in the TLS, around the question of when the cadenced step came into use as a feature of military practice. 43 John Keegan won these skirmishes, marshalling the best evidence and the soundest reasoning for his surprising argument that marching in step was unknown (except perhaps as an abstract concept) 44 before the middle of the eighteenth century, that it emerged only sporadically around that time and that it was not widespread in European armies until the century’s end. (To take a piece of iconographical evidence pertinent to the ‘45, Hogarth’s March to Finchley “depicts the grandest of redcoat regiments shambling along”. 45) Of course, musical compositions denominated as “marches” are associated with military contexts much earlier than this. “If early musical marches were not used to regulate the steps of marching soldiers,” one of Keegan’s challengers asked, “what was their military function?” 46 This objection drew a response which is worth quoting at length:

The oldest regimental march still in use in the British Army is that of the 1st of Foot, the Royal Scots, known as “Dumbarton’s Drums,” after the 1st Earl of Dumbarton, who became Colonel of the regiment in 1678. It is a very strange piece of music indeed, a relentless battering of drumbeats without discernible tune. . . .
If “Dumbarton’s Drums” is not a march in the sense understood today, that would explain why . . . there are so many pictures from the sixteenth and seventeenth century of columns of soldiers visibly not keeping step to the beat of the drums accompanying them . . .

The disjunction between drumming and drill . . . [can be] understood through the point . . . that the drum probably appeared in the West through contact with the steppe nomads, for whom the drum was both an instrument of intimidation on the battlefield and a focal point of fighting units. Tambour or tabor is a word of Persian origin; tabor is Turkish for battalion or regiment, and the kettledrum, in which they boiled their soup, was the Ottoman Janissaries’ regimental totem. Drumming on the tabor was a means of striking fear into the enemy, and awe-inspiring it is, too, as anyone who has heard the Mehter, the reconstituted Janissary band that performs at the Istanbul military museum, can testify.

I would suggest, therefore, that drumming in Western armies also originally had a mood-creating function. That is the effect that “Dumbarton’s Drums” has on me . . . 47

“[I]n place of a drum”, a sixteenth-century observer writes apropos of the Highlanders, “they use a bagpipe.” 48 All the available evidence suggests that for Scottish armies in the early modern period, the warpipes served the same mood-creating purpose as Keegan assigns to the drum. The pipes were used to whip up the spirits of one’s own side and to cow the enemy. Certainly Keegan’s remarks about the sensations produced by the Mehter or Dumbarton’s Drums apply to Cogadh no Sidh, a shivering, gooseflesh-making piobaireachd constructed around hammering repetitions of the chanter notes C, B and low A. One of the earliest pieces of evidence along this line occurs in an account written by a French military adviser, who recalls what he observed in Scotland in 1549: “Ies Ecossois sauvages se
provocquoyent aux armes par les sons de leurs cornemuses.” 49 The bagpipe's power to intimidate was presumably in effect at the first action of the '45, the clash at High Bridge - the extraordinary event which inspired Sir Walter Scott's quip, "twelve Highlanders and a bagpipe made a rebellion." 50 Another eighteenth-century example can be found in the history of the unhappy Moore's Creek Bridge campaign in North Carolina in 1776. At one point in that campaign, a small detachment of loyalist Highlanders held a patriot army in check with their pipes and wardrums. 51 There is also some evidence of warpipers performing the other early function to which Keegan adverts, providing a focus amid the confusion of battle and conveying rudimentary signals. 52

The bagpipes, then, served purposes in early-modern warfare that were not related to the regulation of soldiers' footsteps. We can put alongside this information the provable fact that when we see the word "march" applied to a piece of bagpipe music before the second half of the eighteenth century, we are, as Keegan says of Dumbarton's Drums, not necessarily dealing with "a march in the sense understood today". MacAllisdrum's March, an Irish pipe tune dating to the 1640s, was described by a listener in 1750 not as a repetitive, evenly paced quickstep but as "a wild rhapsody" 53 Joseph MacDonald in his Compleat Theory (a book which does not recognize the existence of quicksteps) applies the word "march" exclusively to piobaireachs 54 which of course are not compatible with the cadenced step. In Joseph's brother's Collection of Highland Vocal Airs, Cogadh no Sídh itself is described as "A Bagpipe March." 55 For these eighteenth-century writers, "march" seems to refer to a piece of bagpipe music used for mood-creating purposes in military conflict, in the same way that the word refers to drumbeats like Dumbarton's or like the Scots March—a drumbeat exported to the Continent with seventeenth-century Scottish mercenaries, and which as Gibson himself notes "was used by [Gustavus Adolphus's drummers] to instill fear in the Imperial Catholic troops..." 56 The word "march" appears to have become attached to such pieces of music through their use as signals (e.g. the general) for a given body of troops to begin marching; there was no implication that
the signal should be maintained throughout, or should set the pace of, the ensuing process. Similarly, the original Gaelic word for quickstep, caismheadh, is said by MacBain to stem from the Irish caismirt or caismert (“signal,” “battle-cry,” etc.).

Confusion over the shifting meanings of the word “march” is partly to blame in Gibson’s mistaken (as I see it) rejection of the idea that “Gaelic military quicksteps [are] a late-eighteenth-century innovation.” He also emphasizes a report from 1716, stating that some of the duke of Argyll’s Highland troops engaged in suppressing the ’15 entered Perth and Dundee playing The Campbells are Coming and Wilt Thou Play Me Fair, Highland Laddie? But the fact that these tunes have become familiar to us as quicksteps does not necessarily mean they were played as quicksteps in 1716. Highland Laddie was known in the eighteenth century as a lively danceable spring to which various (usually Jacobite) sets of words were sung; The Campbells are Coming seems to have started off life as a jig. Neither Keegan (I shouldn’t think) nor I would deny that pipers, before the late eighteenth century, accompanied soldiers as they were marching — just as in Hogarth’s March to Finchley, a drummer and fifer accompany those redcoats who are “shambling along.” The evidence for this begins with Holinshed’s glimpse of Henry VIII’s Irish mercenaries: “In the moneth of Maie [1544] ... passed through the citie of London in warlike maner, to the number of seauen hundred Irishmen, hauing for their weapons, darts, and handguns, with bagpipes before them ....” The question is, what sort of music were the pipers playing and was it intended to synchronize the soldiers’ footsteps or merely to keep their spirits up and make the miles pass more quickly?

It is instructive, in considering Gibson’s claims regarding the quickstep, to look at Capt. Simon Fraser of Knockie’s Airs and Melodies Peculiar to the Highlands of Scotland and the Isles, first published in 1816. If we correct for notational interference, this source offers us probably the clearest surviving echo of the music of the pipers in Fraser’s regiment — what Gibson calls “the first atonement regiment”,66 raised and officered by reconstructed Jacobites for service in the Seven Years War. Gibson traces the web of kinship and personal acquaintance which bound
the compiler of this work to the personnel of that regiment. If quicksteps formed an important subset of this regiment’s pipe music, we should expect to find some in Capt. Fraser’s collection. My examination of the collection uncovers no quicksteps which are not identified as compositions of (at the earliest) the late eighteenth century, or as recent adaptations to the quickstep form of airs originally found in another form.

That is a widely observed phenomenon among the earliest recorded quicksteps — if they are not new compositions of the latter 1700s, such as The Garb of Old Gaul or The MacKenzie Men, they are adapted in Procrustean fashion from dance tunes or indeed piobaireachds. If quicksteps were an organic part of the Gaelic piping tradition as Gibson argues, then we should expect to find instances of reciprocal adaptation — airs migrating from the quickstep form into others. I am aware of no clear eighteenth-century example of this. The course of adaptation seems to have been unidirectional and seems not to have got underway until the 1750s at the earliest.

The evidence for when the quickstep emerged is patchy and unfortunately is apt to remain so; J.E. Cookson has recently emphasized how little we really know about the Highland regiments in the crucial pre-Napoleonic era. But on balance it looks like Keegan’s timeline holds true for military bagpiping, that Gibson is wrong in rejecting the idea that quicksteps were an innovation of the late 1700s, and that Thomas Raddall was therefore committing an anachronism when in his novel Roger Sudden he has a veteran of the ’45 experience in this way the arrival of Fraser’s regiment in Halifax in 1757:

But now rose a sound of music wild and high, fantastic on this side of the sea. It brought people running from the houses and halted Roger like a shout. Along Barrington Street, forerun by a rabble of delighted urchins, came the skirl of bagpipes and a gallant rattle of drums. Astounded he beheld a regiment marching past in short red coats and waistcoats, in kilt and plaid, in blue bonnets with scarlet pompons, in diced red-and-white stockings. The
spring sunshine glinted on musket and broadsword and the long Lochaber axes of the sergeants. Leather sporrans danced and kilts swung to the ordered thrust of hairy knees, the quick, springy step of men of the hills.

Frasers, by the plaid. What were they doing here in the forbidden Highland dress, in those red jackets, with the hateful G.R. stamped upon their cartridge boxes? Frasers, fighting for King George?

He turned away abruptly as a prophet might turn from a chosen people gone to Baal. Good God, what next! The lilt of the pipe tune mocked him all the way to Pleasant Street, with his feet falling instinctively into the march step . . . .

But Spanish John, while adding to the evidence for piobaireachd’s centrality in early-modern Gaelic military culture, does not of course prove anything either way in the debate about the emergence of quicksteps. What Spanish John’s account of the surprise at Achnacarry does accomplish is to extend to the realm of military music the conclusion of recent scholarship, that the Jacobite army of 1745-46 was not a rude band of ragamuffins but a conventional military machine. In naming the tune which the Jacobites used as their general, Spanish John also verifies our historical information on that tune—a rare gift, in the notoriously uncertain and contaminated field of piobaireachd studies. And in telling us that the rebels used piobaireachds to convey their military calls, Spanish John shows how the distinctive features of Gaelic culture were being adapted to conventional European military practice.

There was an interface happening here, at which the folkways of Jacobism’s Gaelic recruiting grounds were being fused to the procedures and usages of conventional European warfare. In language, this interface is represented by the incorporation into Gaelic, during the eighteenth century, of such loanwords as infantraidh (infantry), tap-dubh (tattoo), and trabhàllidh (reveille). In music, this interface is represented by the adaptation of piobaireachds to a foreign system of military calls.
A final observation on the events reported by Spanish John. Gaelic tradition connects two lines of song with the opening phrases of the Jacobites’ general: as coma leam, ‘s coma leam cogadh no sìdh / Marbhar ‘san chogadh no crochar an sìdh mi (“alike to me, alike to me, war or peace. I shall be killed in the war and hanged in the peace”). Remembering the fate which awaited at least one Jacobite piper in the treason trials of 1746, it is a fair guess that this sentiment never fit the circumstances better than during that early-morning alarm recalled in Spanish John’s narrative.

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Endnotes


For a recent rehash of such clichés, see J. Michael Hill, “Gaelic Warfare 1453-1815,” in European Warfare 1453-1815, ed. J. Black (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1999), 201-223. This author’s ability to handle Gaelic sources is assessed in Colm Ó Baoill’s review of


11 There is an extensive literature on the “wild geese.” Its starting point (excluding eighteenth-century works) is: J.C. O’Callaghan, *History of the Irish Brigades in the Service of France, from the Revolution in Great Britain under James II, to the Revolution in France under Louis XVI*, Cameron & Ferguson ed. (Glasgow: R. & T. Washbourne, [1870]).

S. Wood, “‘The Cap . . . Suppos’d to have been designed for ye young Chevalier’: A Grenadier Officer’s Mitre Cap of Le Regiment Royal-Ecossois, 1745,” *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 75 (1997): 77-83, here 80.


18 E.g. the duke of Perth’s regiment, the Forfarshire regiment, Gordon of Glenbucket’s (raised in Banffshire- Aberdeenshire), John Roy Stewart’s (raised in Edinburgh) (Livingstone of Bachuil et al., eds., *Muster Roll*, 69, 94, 122, 205).


20 E.g. John Sinclair the “Town Piper” of Arbroath, James Reid from Angus, Nicholas Carr from Huntly, Robert Jamieson from Annandale (Livingstone of Bachuil et al., eds., *Muster Roll*, 94, 122, 69).


pipers would be paid out of a captain's purse or through some other ad hoc setup, there was no official provision for them as there was for drummers, buglers, etc. (ibid., 73ff). In this respect the Jacobite army of 1745-46 was far ahead of its time.


24 Cf. Gibson, Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping, 156.


26 Ibid., 307.

27 Joseph MacDonald, A Compleat Theory of the Scots Highland Bagpipe, 3d ed., with an introduction by Seumas MacNeill (East Ardsley, Yorkshire: S.R. Publishers, 1971), 21 (musical phrases headed “Triple Time Allegro”). Anyone who uses the Compleat Theory as a source should be advised of the grave corruptions which entered into the work at the time of its first publication (1803), and have never been corrected. See Peter Cooke's review of the new reprint, Scottish Studies 16 (1972): 84-5.


30 Quoted in Comunn na Piobaireachd/The Piobaireachd Society, eds., Piobaireachd: A Tenth Book, 307. The extent of Angus MacKay's actual contribution to the Collection that bears his name is uncertain; the catalogues of both the British Library and the National Library of Scotland attribute the textual portions to another author (A.K. Campsie, The MacCrimmon Legend: The Madness of Angus MacKay [Edinburgh: Canongate, 1980], chap. 9; Cannon, A Bibliography, 28). It may not be relevant, then, to observe that Angus MacKay's father's first teacher had been an officer in the Jacobite army during the '45 (Comunn na Piobaireachd/The Piobaireachd Society, eds., Piobaireachd: A Tenth Book, iii). Whoever wrote this note on Cogadh no Sidh, it can be read with confidence as expressing the consensus among piping cognoscenti c. 1838.

31 Although it is hard to guess what evidence the late Seumas MacNeill might have offered for his unequivocal statement that the tune has been played “for at least five hundred years” ([Seumas
MacNeill, writer and narrator,] Piobaireachd: The Classical Music of the Highland Bagpipe, LP recording [REB 48M] of two BBC radio broadcasts first aired 6 November 1968 and 11 December 1968, produced by Fred Macaulay, with musical illustrations by Seumas MacNeill and John MacFadyen [London: BBC, 1969]. As far as I am aware, the earliest reference to this tune is either Spanish John’s or, if you prefer, the order sheet of 1778 (see below) which was written down earlier but deals with a later period.

32 The episode is often pinpointed to the relatively obscure lead-up action at Quatre Bras, but the primary evidence apparently establishes the setting as the battle of Waterloo itself. It is extremely unusual that such a mistake—shifting a story from a more famous to a less famous setting—should have found any purchase. Students of folklore and popular culture generally observe that celebrated events have a gravitational pull, drawing in to their narrative orbit all anecdotes anywhere in their proximity; so Quatre Bras should be giving up its stories to its celebrated sequel, not the other way around.


34 Collinson, The Bagpipe 175-76, 240 n. 79.


38 Macdonell, Spanish John, 20.

39 Forbes, comp., The Lyon in Mourning, 2:246.


42 Gibson, *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping*, 159.


46 Hicks, letter to the editor.

47 Keegan, letter to the editor, 6 September. Keegan goes on to offer the most far-reaching suggestion of this whole debate. Even when we accept that military music evolved, during the late eighteenth century, from a mood-creating function into a pace-setting one, there remains a problem. Music can detract from precision drill. The explanation was suggested to me recently by a former adjutant of the Scots Guards, who revealed that the end of the column, if it marches to the received beat of the band, will be out of step with the head of the column. Guardsmen therefore learn to carry the pace in their heads, and actually march off the beat they hear, when they know that the speed of sound through the air is misleading them.

This is a very sophisticated mental adjustment, which leads me to an unexpected conclusion. I now think that marching in step . . . required the development of an entirely novel mentalité. I think soldiers had, from about 1760 onwards, to programme themselves to the idea of the cadenced step. The development of novel mentalités is familiar to historians— . . . [cf. the controversial question] “When did people begin to read silently?”—and so is its significance. Carrying in the head a collective rhythm of exactly timed movement, if it emerged as a mental programme at the end of the eighteenth century, has obvious associations with the beginning of factory work, of synergy with machines and with the collective, disciplined routines of the Industrial Revolution . . . .

48 Quoted in Collinson, *The Bagpipe*, 141.
51 H.F. Rankin, “The Moore’s Creek Bridge Campaign, 1776,” The North Carolina Historical Review 30 (1953): 23-60, here 46. Gibson, commenting on this affair, observes that pipe music “appears not to have accompanied the cross-country hiking that is described [in a manuscript narrative of the campaign] as ‘marching’” (Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping, 98). Here Gibson brushes up against the truth without recognizing it: one of the preconditions which Keegan sets for the development of cadenced marching is precisely the spread of engineered roads and parade grounds. Collinson, so often criticized by Gibson, is on the mark when he writes: “...[Q]uicksteps... were unknown in the older repertoire, for the simple reason that there were no roads in the Highlands fit to march on” (The Bagpipe, 181).
52 The earliest record, that I can find, of the bagpipes conveying a military signal (in this case retreat) is an Elizabethan account of warfare in Ireland (Dalyell, Musical Memoirs, 21). At that stage it would be difficult to draw a distinction between the military cultures of Gaelic Ireland and Gaelic Scotland; the existence, at any rate, of an inchoate class of “warning” piobaireachs may be taken as an indication of bagpipe signalling in Scotland as early as the Elizabethan period (R. Black, “Colla Ciotach,” Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness 48 [1976]: 201-43, here 231-36, 243 n. 64).
53 Dalyell, Musical Memoirs, 61 n. 1.
54 MacDonald, A Compleat Theory, passim.
55 Cannon, A Bibliography, 20.
arguments, however, certain questions develop around the etymology and semantic evolution of *caismeachd* (as also, indeed, around the semantic evolution of the English word “march” in the musical sense). I will look into these questions on another occasion.

60 Gibson, *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping*, 160. Gibson is disputing here the claim of a writer in the 1780s who stated: “One of the greatest improvements in the military art, that has been made in modern times, is the introduction of quick-step marches” (159). Gibson would have been wiser to give this source a more sympathetic hearing.


65 I have used a revised edition: S. Fraser, comp., *The Airs and Melodies Peculiar to the Highlands of Scotland and the Isles, Communicated in an Original Pleasing & Familiar Style: Having the Lively Airs Introduced as Medleys to Form a Sequence to Each Slower Movement; With an Admired Plain Harmony for the Piano Forte, Harp, Organ or Violoncello, Intended Rather to Preserve Simplicity Than Load With Embellishment*, new ed. [revised by A. Fraser and W. MacKay] (Inverness: Logan and Co., 1874).


67 Ibid., 85-88.

68 E.g. *The Highland Troop* (Fraser, comp., *The Airs and Melodies*, 30), Fraser’s own composition and not, in any case, a pipe tune.

69 E.g. *Crossing to Ireland* (ibid., 36), which Fraser glosses (101 n.) as probably “built upon Lord Kelly’s strathspey”.

70 Composed by a Black Watch officer who was a classically trained flautist (Keltie, ed., *History of the Scottish . . . Regiments*, 4:347 n. 7). Appearing in the 1750s, this tune seems to be the earliest purpose-composed quickstep (Farmer, “The Scots Guards Band: Fresh Light on Its History,” in *Handel’s Kettledrums*, 3-7, here 3).
71 Purpose-composed on the raising of the Seaforth Highlanders in 1778 (Gibson, Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping, 149).

72 E.g. The Cock o’ the North, given as a strathspey in Fraser, comp., The Airs and Melodies, 40; or Kenmure’s Up and Awa’, Willy, a natural jig. Incidentally the title of the latter tune marks an exception to the rule noted by Sir Walter Scott that where the Irish use “up” as a euphemism for entering into rebellion, the Scots prefer “out”: “he was out in the ’45” (Sir Walter Scott, Waverley, Penguin English Library ed., ed. Andrew Hook [Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1972; repr., 1980], 288 n.). For the connection between this tune and the Jacobite William Gordon, sixth Viscount Kenmure, who was executed for his part in the ’15, see Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, eds., Dictionary of National Biography, o.s., 63 vols. (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1885-1900), 22:235.

73 E.g. Crò Chinn t-Sàile (Gibson, Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping, 149).

74 E.g. Piobaireachd Dhomhnull Dhuibh—a melody which has found its happiest post-piobaireachd setting not as a quickstep but as a reel, in Jamie MacInnis’s arrangement (Bob Worrall, comp., The International Collection: Highland Bagpipe Music, vol. 1 [Burlington, Ontario: Bob Worrall, 1990], 27).


76 Thomas H. Raddall, Roger Sudden (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1944; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1944), 259-60.


78 Peter Cooke, ed., Pibroch: George Moss, booklet accompanying the cassette of the same title, School of Scottish Studies (University of Edinburgh) Scottish Tradition Cassette Series, no. 6 (London: Tangent Records, 1982), 7; Fionn [Henry Whyte], The Historic, Biographic and Legendary Notes to David Glen’s Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd (Edinburgh: David Glen, n.d.), 15.