

TROD NAN CAILLEACH

Bho Hebridean Folksongs II

Bha bana-bhàrd aig Mac Nìll Bharraidh uair air an robh Nic Iain Fhinn mar ainm, agus bha i 'na bana-bhàrd ainmeil 'na latha fhéin... Bha bana-bhàrd aig Mac 'ic Ailein cuideachd, dha 'm b' ainm Nic a' Mhanaich; agus is iomadh uair a thilg Mac Nìll air Mac 'ic Ailein nach digeadh i an uisge na stiùrach do Nic Iain Fhinn air bàrdachd ... agus is e thachair gun do chuir na fir geall r' a chéile gum b' e a' bhana-bhàrd aige fhéin a b' fheàrr; agus shuidhich iad gun deante luadhadh ann an Caisteal *Ormacleit ... agus gum faigheadh an dithist aca cothrom air i fhéin a dhearbhadh.

Seo mar a bh' ann. Dh'fhalbh sgoth is sgiobadh a Eòiligearraidh le Nic Iain Fhinn a dh' Uibhist... Ghabh i suas chon a' Chaisteil, far am faca i còmhlan bhoireannach cruinn...

A' Bhan-Uidhisteach

Nic Iain Fhinn, ban-eileineach,
Cailin spàgach, uinneineach!
Blad-chraois leathan, dealanach,
Stròn ghorm, ghoirid, mheallanach,
Bus is spor is spreillean ort,
Taobh dearg a seicheadh a muigh!

A' Bhana-Bharrach

Thig thusa a mach, 's lig mise steach,
gun dianainn an trod sunndach, sanntach,
ris a' chaillich chutaich, chataich,
ulpaich, alpaich, uinneinich!" ...

**Tha Frangag bheag de 'n bheachd gur ann an Caisteal Bhuirgh ann am Beinn na Faoghla a bha seo a' tachairt. Aig an am cha robh Caisteal Ormacleit air a thogail fhathast!*



Caisteal Bhuirgh
Dealbh FMD

TROD NAN CAILLEACH

From *Hebridean Folksongs II*

Once upon a time Mac Neil of Barra had a bardess called Nic Iain Fhinn ... who was a famous poetess in her day ... Macdonald of Clanranald too had a bardess, called Nic a' Mhanaich... Many a time MacNeil was casting it up to his brother-in-law Clanranald that Nic a' Mhanaich could not come anywhere near to Nic Iain Fhinn in composing poetry. Clanranald, who was better off than MacNeil in every worldly respect, was vexed at this, and eventually they each made a wager that his bardess was the better. They decided that there should be a waulking at *Ormaclate Castle in South Uist, and that ... the two of them should have the chance to prove themselves.

So it came about. A boat with a crew went from Eoligarry in Barra to Uist with Nic Iain Fhinn. .. She went up to the castle, where she saw a band of women gathered together ... (When she came near to them, she heard one of them abusing her, in these words:)

The Uist woman:

Nic Iain Fhinn, she-islander,
The club-footed, thick-ankled quean,
With broad, greedy, flashing mouth
And short, lumpy blue nose;
Snout and claw and blubber-lips,
And the red side of her hide outside!

The Barra woman:

You come out and let me in
so that I can make the flyting
(Lit. *so that I can enjoy the argument I've been looking forward to*)
with the stumpy, catty,
lumpy, greedy, thick-ankled hussy! ...

**Frances is convinced that this incident took place at Borve Castle in Benbecula. Ormaclate was not yet built at this period!*

TROD NAN CAILLEACH

1. A DHIA! 'S GAOLACH LEAM AN GILLE

A' Bhan-Uidhisteach

Fa liù o ho
FA LIÙ O HO

A Dhia! 's gaolach
FA LIÙ Ó HO
Leam an gille O hao rì o ho
HI O HO HAO O HO, FA LIU O HO

Dh' am bheil deirge	's gile 's duinnead
Dalta nam bàrd	thùs nam filidh
Ogha 'n fhir o 'n	Chaistéal Thioram thu
Bheireadh air an	togsaid sileadh
Le fion dathte	's e air mire

Hi o ho, hao o ho, Fa liu o ho.
HI O HO, HAO O HO, FA LIU O HO.

A' Bhana-Bharrach

Ach eudail mhór	's a Dhia fheartaich!
Càit an d'fhàg thu	Ruairidh an Tartair?
No Niall Glùndubh	no Niall Frasach?
Gill'Eòghanain	mór an gaisgeach?
Dhòirteadh am fion	fo na h-eachaibh
Chuireadh srian an	airgid ghlas riu
Chuireadh cruidhean	òir fo 'n casan.

Hi o ho, hao o ho, Fa liu o ho.
HI O HO, HAO O HO, FA LIU O HO.

A' Bhan-Uidhisteach

A bhradag dhubh bheag	a bhrìst na glasan
Fàgaidh mi ort	an dubh-chapull!
Cha d'fhuaradh riamh	staoileadh agaibh
Ach Barraidh dhubh bheag	chrìon-dubh chlachach
Oighreachd fhuair sibh	bhuainn an asgaidh
Nuair a chunnaic	Dia 'nur n-airc sibh!

Hi o ho, hao o ho, Fa liu o ho.
HI O HO, HAO O HO, FA LIU O HO.

TROD NAN CAILLEACH

A DHIA! 'S GAOLACH LEAM AN GILLE

The Uist Woman

O God! the lad	is loved by me,
who is red and	white (complexioned) and brown (haired)
fosterling of bards	leader of poets
grandson of the laird	of Castle Tioram
who would make	the hogshead pour
with red wine	and it gushing!

The Barra Woman

But, my dear	and God of power!
where did you leave	Ruairidh the "Tartar"?
or Niall Black-knee	or Niall of the showers?
or Gilleonan	the great hero?
who would pour out wine	before his horses
who would put a bridle	of grey silver on them
and put golden horseshoes	on their hooves

The Uist Woman

Little black thief	who broke the locks	
I will leave on you	the "black horse".	*
You never yet	got any title	
but little black Barra	withered and stony.	
Lands you got	from us for nothing	
when God saw that	you were starving.	

* Denotes defeat in a bardic contest. The precise significance is unknown.

TROD NAN CAILLEACH

2. CHA TEID MOR A BHARRAIDH BHRONACH

A' Bhan-Uidhisteach

Hùgaibh ise 'n tùgaibh éileadh
Hó ró hùgaibh i.
HÙGAIBH ISE 'N TUGAIBH ÉILEADH
HÓ RÓ HÙGAIBH I.

Cha téid Mór a Bharraidh bhrònach
Hó ró hùgaibh i.
HÙGAIBH ISE 'N TUGAIBH ÉILEADH
HÓ RÓ HÙGAIBH I.

Cha déid Catriona 'ga deòin ann
No Anna bheag ma 's i as òige
Far am bi na sgait air fleòdradh
Dallagan is sùilean rògach
Giomaich 'gan tarruing á frògaibh
Strùbain 'gan cladhadh le 'm meòirean
Muirsguin 'gan tarruing a lònnaibh

A' Bhana-Bharrach

Tha lionn-dubh mo chinn air dòrtadh
'G éisdeachd ri bleideig an Ròdha!
A chailin dubh 's a dhubh-bhrògach
Cha b' e mo thìr an tìr bhrònach
Tìr a' chorca tìr an eòrna
Tìr uisge-bheatha agus bheòire
Hó ró hùgaibh i.
HÙGAIBH ISE 'N TUGAIBH ÉILEADH
HÓ RÓ HÙGAIBH I.

O hùg o	Chailleach chrùbach	O HUG O	lùgach iollagach
O HUG O	Bhradach bhriagach	O HUG O	bhialach ionasdach
O HUG O	Bhreugach sgeulach	O HUG O	éisgeach inisgeil!
O HUG O	Tha do theanga	O HUG O	leathan còmhnard
O HUG O	Tha trì roinn oirr'	O HUG O	's faobhar leòit' oirr'
O HUG O	Chaidh i ri cloich	O HUG O	air a' bhòn-dé
O HUG O	Shluigeadh tu na	O HUG O	muc le gaoiseid
O HUG O	Chrochadh t' athair	O HUG O	leis na taodan
O HUG O	Dh'fhalbh do mhàthair	O HUG O	air an t-sluagh aotrom

HÙGAIBH ISE 'N TUGAIBH ÉILEADH
HÓ RÓ HÙGAIBH I.

'S truagh nach fhaighinn siud air m' òrdan
Slaodadh ris an Tùr air ròpa
Taod mu d' chlaban, calp mu d' dhòrn dheth
Dà shac dhiag gu teine mòna
Bradag bhith 'na miosg 'ga ròsladh
'S na coin mhór bhith 'gad shròiceadh
'S na mucan ag ithe t' fheòla!

TROD NAN CAILLEACH

CHA TEID MOR A BHARRAIDH BHRONACH

The Uist Woman

Mor will not go to miserable Barra
Catriona won't willingly go there
nor little Anna though she is the youngest
where the skates are soaked
and the sunken-eyed dogfish
and lobsters pulled from hiding places
where they dig cockles with their fingers
where razorfish are pulled from puddles

The Barra Woman

Melancholy has overwhelmed me
listening to the blether from the Ròdha!
Wicked lassie, black-footed
My land is not a miserable country –
A land of oats a land of barley,
a land of whisky and beer.

*

O hùg O

You hunchbacked old wifie,
thieving, lying,
untruthful, talebearing,
Your tongue
It has three points
It went to the whetstone
You would gulp down
Your father was hung
Your mother went off

bandy-legged, flighty,
big mouthed, ...?...
scurrilous, slanderous!
is broad and flat -
and a cutting edge.
the day before yesterday!
a pig with its bristles!
with ropes;
with the fairy host.

It's a pity this wasn't within my power:
dragging (you) on a rope to the Tower,
a thong around your skull, a turn around your fist,
with twelve bags of peat for a fire,
the thieving woman being roasted on a spit,
while big dogs were tearing you
and pigs were eating your flesh!

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* An Ròdha is in South Uist, on the shore near Gearrabhailteas.

** Kishmul, not London!

J.L. Campbell says: "It is a remarkable testimony to the historicity of this poem that there actually were three daughters of John of Moidart, chief of Clanranald in the seventeenth century, named Mór, Catriana, and Anna, and that one of them, Catriana, did marry a MacNeill of Barra."

John of Moidart died in 1670.

TROD NAN CAILLEACH

Aig deireadh an luaidh:

A' Bhana-Bharrach:

Togaibh a' chailleach a-mach as an taigh is cuiribh té eile 'na h-àite, 's gun mhi lethach!

At the end

The Barra woman:

Take that old hag out of the house and put another one in her place – I'm not half-finished!

