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Raising the tone: the bagpipe and the Baroque

Hugh Cheape

The bagpipe has been readily identified as part of the trappings of a Scottish national identity, sometimes making Scotland’s love-affair with the instrument a cause of amusement to the world beyond. A less happy facet of such attitudes has been that the ‘national instrument’ was denied much critical attention or close scrutiny at an academic level outside a modern sociology discourse (see, for example, McCrone 2001; McCrone 2017). Scholarly attempts to place the instrument in some sort of wider musical or cultural context such as Anthony Baines’ Oxford Pitt-Rivers monograph Bagpipes (1960, revised edition 1973) seemed to be unknown or studiously ignored in Scotland itself. Here the bagpipe never seemed to merit any deeper contextual evaluation beyond a shallow historiography that had emerged from an essentially teleological view of its history, with the instrument as an autonomous element of Scottish culture. Conventional accounts of the bagpipe at home had narrowed to the Great Highland Bagpipe, whose origins were predicated on concepts of antiquity and continuity (see, for example, Collinson 1975; MacNeill and Richardson 1987).

This paper sets out an antithesis based on the realisation that an ancient Great Highland Bagpipe is difficult to trace in the material culture or ‘organology’. By contrast, the surviving material culture of the bagpipe in Scotland, as well as in Ireland and Britain as a whole, offers a startlingly different message, clearly coloured by variety and strong links to European ‘ecotypes’ and the Baroque era. Variety can best be characterised by the relative wealth of bagpipes, other than types of Highland bagpipe, in museum and conservatoire collections, amounting to an organology that has been neglected until recently. This can now be more comprehensively explored with a better understanding of so-called ‘Pastoral’ and ‘Union’ bagpipes as new instruments emerging and developing arguably under Baroque and Neo-Baroque influence, thriving in what amounted to a Western European Neo-Baroque piping tradition in the eighteenth century and giving way to a narrower militarised and national-romantic tradition in the nineteenth century. The Great Highland Bagpipe as we know it has been the exclusive legacy of this later shift. These contentions are built on the evidence of a ‘national collection of a national instrument’ in the public domain and a collecting policy instigated by the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland about 1976 and re-formulated following amalgamation with the Royal Scottish Museum in 1985, to be adopted by the new National Museums Scotland thereafter (Cheape 2008b). Locating the bagpipe in the European Baroque has potential to raise the tone of any debate.
Meanwhile, beyond the confines of specialist research, the field of pipes and piping as part of the creative and performing arts in Scotland is thriving in ways unimaginable, say, fifty years ago; unimaginable, for example, in that performance and composition have been drawing on a wider range of music and on genres of instruments virtually unknown – or lost to sight – for most of the twentieth century. This trend and the ‘Scottish Music’ degree courses in the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland call for underpinning by an intellectual infrastructure and fresh musicology that supply an appropriate rigour. A generation earlier, circa 1960, piping was a rather isolated and esoteric pastime, entirely consumed in its apparently unique musical styles and highly formalised processes of competitions and pipe bands, owing nothing, seemingly, to anyone furth of Scotland and claiming an autonomous evolution from a heroic Scottish past. Such a generalisation takes a long view and does no justice to recent publications such as the exemplary *The Highland Bagpipe and its Music* by Roderick Cannon (Cannon 1988), or *When Piping Was Strong* by Joshua Dickson (Dickson 2006), and the magisterial and inclusive survey of Scotland’s music by John Purser (Purser 1992; Purser 2007).

The ‘national instrument’

The tone of this modern construct for the bagpipe had been set as early as 1819 by Donald MacDonald, Skyeman, soldier and bagpipe-maker in Edinburgh’s Castlehill. In the Preface to his collection of Highland bagpipe music, the first of its type in print, *A Collection of the Ancient Martial Music of Caledonia called Pìobaireachd*, he laid the claim, probably with other editorial input, for the bagpipe being ‘the national instrument’. Such a claim is intelligible perhaps in the context of the Napoleonic Wars, earlier wars of empire and the widely celebrated feats of arms of the Highland regiments, out of all proportion it might be added to the numbers involved. The claim is also intelligible in the wake of destruction and decline visited on the Gaels in the eighteenth century and a need to overcome the trauma of a post-Culloden nadir:

Strangers may sneer at the pains taken to preserve this wild instrument, because their ears have only been accustomed to the gay measures of the violin and ‘lascivious pleasing of the lute’; but it has claims and recommendations that may silence even their prejudices. The Bag-pipe is, perhaps, the only national instrument in Europe. Every other is peculiar to many countries, but the Bag-pipe to Scotland alone. There in the banquet-hall and in the house of mourning it has alike prevailed. It has animated her warrior in battle, and welcomed them back after their toils, to the homes of their love, and the hills of their nativity. Its strains were the first sounded on the ears of infancy, and they are the last to be forgotten in the wanderings of age (MacDonald 1974, 4).

An orthodoxy emerged from these modest origins in the first half of the nineteenth century and was elaborated by repetition and speculation in the second. Other brief and largely unsupported statements about the origins of the Highland bagpipe such as by Angus Mackay in his *Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd or Highland Pipe Music* (Mackay
1838) and *The Piper’s Assistant* (Mackay 1843) seemed to have had a compelling appeal and are repeated verbatim in later publications (see Cannon 1980). The portrait in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery of the celebrated young virtuoso performer, Angus Mackay (1812-1859), by Alexander Johnston dated 1840, then offers an early version of what has undoubtedly emerged as a stereotype image and an image that infers that the so-called Great Highland Bagpipe had established itself as *a*, or *the*, ‘national instrument’. From the contemporary point of view of the art or craft of the bagpipe, this was not a folk instrument but a form of high status instrument and performer, and from the effective re-writing of a cultural history characterised as the ‘invention of tradition’ of the ‘Romantic’ era, the bagpipe was basking in the glow of aristocratic and royal patronage (see Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Queen Victoria appointed Angus Mackay as her Royal Piper in 1843. He was succeeded by Royal Appointment in 1854 by Pipe Major William Ross, a figure familiar to us from the set of portraits by Kenneth Macleay commissioned by the Queen of her Highland servants. William Ross as Piper to Queen Victoria, shown on the Terrace at Windsor Castle about 1869, represents in portraiture and detailing the apotheosis of the Great Highland Bagpipe (Fig. 1). At the same time, a

Fig. 1 William Ross, Piper to Queen Victoria, 1854-1891, in the lithograph portrait by Kenneth Macleay in *Highlanders of Scotland* (Macleay 1870).
situation was emerging that, as William Donaldson has defined in his closely argued study, *The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society, 1750-1950*, the performers on the Great Highland Bagpipe were reduced to a servile status by the new class of patrons by whom they were manipulated. His argument proposes that the patronage of the nineteenth century effectively rewrote the music of the Highland bagpipe and cut the pipers off from their Gaelic roots (Donaldson 2000, *passim* and 3, 197, 209, 241, 325, 423).

Filtered through such imagery, the received history of the Great Highland Bagpipe reflects in too many respects a triumph of sentiment over fact and we as a nation have been disinclined to revisit or rewrite this history. How this ‘tradition’ might be summed up is available in many texts from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. About 1885, for example, Rev Dr Norman MacLeod, the Queen’s Chaplain, wrote an essay on ‘The Bagpipe and its Music’, for William Ross’ *Collection of Pipe Music*, in what were undoubtedly intended to be stirring as well as elegiac terms:

The Music of the Highlands is the Pibroch of the Great War Pipe, with its fluttering pennons, fingered by a genuine Celt, in full Highland Dress, as he slowly paces a Baronal Hall, or amidst the wild scenery of his native mountains. The Bagpipe is the instrument best adapted for summoning the Clans from the far-off Glens to rally round the standard of their Chiefs […]. The Pibroch is also constructed to express a welcome to the chief on his return to his Clan; and to wail out a lament for him as he is borne by his people to the old burial place in the Glen, or in the sainted Isle of Graves. (NMS [National Museums Scotland] K.2007.58.1; see also Ross 1869)

The author, one of the famous MacLeod clerical dynasty, must have believed these words which effectively create a potent cultural touchstone, and this image and message is still believed, or half-believed, by many. More seriously for the history of the instrument, Scotland’s service industries, tourism and even the national economy in such sensitive contexts as the ‘Year of Homecoming’ (2014), ‘Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology’ (2017) and in the marking of anniversaries have a vested interest in such a parody. No trans-Atlantic filmmaker could resist it.

The urge to formulate a narrative for the history of Highland piping was not an ignoble one, indeed it was undertaken in the conviction that the tradition was then in decline and that a written history would reinforce it. Much the same scholarly syndrome and critique is evident in the *Carmina Gadelica* Gaelic folklore enterprise (Campbell 1978, 2-3, 12-14). But out of a narrower historiography a bagpipe achieved an apotheosis as the ‘Great Highland Bagpipe’. Its possible deeper origins remain unclear and are not visible in the organology, beyond a modest and low-caste European ‘great pipe’ type of instrument. If we valued the bagpipe highly, we have been remarkably careless

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1 References marked “NMS” give an identifying number for the relevant item in the collections of the National Museums Scotland. Full information on each item can be obtained by entering this number into the NMS Collections Information System at https://www.nms.ac.uk/explore-our-collections/search-our-collections
about its history. There were few Highland bagpipes in museum and conservatoire collections and the documentation of old instruments was poor to non-existent, betraying a lack of any specialised knowledge and even the same age-old condescending attitude and thin commentary on provenance. A simple but all too typical example can be cited from the National Museums’ collections: this was the French *musette*, a sophisticated chamber bagpipe probably perfected in the Paris workshops of instrument makers such as Hotteterre, but designated as belonging to Bonnie Prince Charlie and described as ‘old Irish bagpipe’, a label applied uncritically and seemingly without further investigation to any bellows bagpipe (NMS H.LT 6). Of course, this may also be a pale reflection of an eighteenth-century usage. The *musette de cour* was the first bagpipe acquired by the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland in 1872, in the same year coincidentally that the ‘Special Exhibition of Ancient Musical Instruments’ was staged in the then new South Kensington Museum. This laid the foundations for the scholarly study of musical instruments, but Scotland’s criteria for acquisition of such an item as the *musette* ignored musicology in favour of person and event in a national history, a trend shaped by the antiquarian tradition out of which the National Museum had grown (Cheape 2008b, 10-11).

The available literature, sustained by an unassailable conventional wisdom, offered a history of piping narrowly and disingenuously wedded to national divisions with a Scottish bagpipe – the Great Highland Bagpipe – an Irish bagpipe and an English bagpipe, playing to respective national conceits. The deeper history of a generic ‘great pipe’ instrument transcends linguistic or racial markers although it seems to have richly served different cultural strains of music and song evolving in different cultural communities. In this respect the achievement of the Highland bagpipe, with its powerful sound and complex acoustic properties, is huge. In the course of time, this tonal dynamics has created a very strong sense of ownership which began to be expressed so fulsomely in the nineteenth century. Conventional accounts of the instrument at home have always led with the Great Highland Bagpipe whose origins, as we have said, are predicated on concepts of antiquity and continuity and a sense of an autonomous development within Scotland; this has been maintained in the face of a paucity of organological evidence for such an instrument before about 1800 or the late eighteenth century (see Cheape 2013, 34-40). We seem to look in vain for a precursor or native ‘ecotype’ or much the same sort of instrument in the hands of home-grown musicians of, say, the sixteenth century. Indeed, it is difficult to make assumptions about the details of an instrument as referred to in the sixteenth century without evidence of the material culture. A court case brought in Stirling in 1574 against a Highland piper called Edmond Broun whose dog had savaged one of the burgesses offers an example in which we could not in reality and with any confidence attempt to describe his bagpipe (Sanger 2010, 18). The surviving material culture of the bagpipe in the British Isles offers a startlingly different message, clearly coloured by variety and strong links to European ‘ecotypes’.

Elementary questions about bagpipe origins were typically received in the National Museum as corollary to a collecting policy for bagpipes and could only be tentatively answered. In suggesting that the bagpipe becomes firmly established in the six-
teenth and early seventeenth century Highlands (or earlier), this is not to say that it was unknown before then, only that this was the era when its status became established, expanded and grew. In terms of a Gàidhealtachd extending from Port of Ness to Cape Clear, there is some shared linguistic evidence although, by contrast with Ireland, there does not seem to be such early linguistic evidence for the instrument in Scotland. Here, stringed instruments such as harp and clàrsach held sway and clearly enjoyed high prestige. The early history of the Great Highland Bagpipe is closely associated with the name ‘MacCrimmon’ or ‘MacCrimthain’. This family name is rooted more clearly in Ireland and we seem to see the members of an emerging professional piping dynasty aligning themselves with the high-status learned orders shared between Ireland and Scotland, bringing us back of course to the cultural well-spring of Ireland (Cheape 2000, 5-12). In the same context, it is the ‘differences’ between Ireland and Scotland, and their Gaeltachts, as teased out by Kenneth Nicholls (Nicholls 1972) and Wilson McLeod (McLeod 2004), that could help to explain phenomena such as the classic form of Ceòl Mòr and a Highland bagpipe as elements of autonomous development.

Reassessment of such a quintessentially Scottish musical instrument as the bagpipe working from the premise of the evidence of the material culture, of the ‘organology’, in other words, of the instruments themselves, has not been done before. At the point when the serious study of musical instruments began, with the large international exhibition of musical instruments in London in 1872, a small and apparently random selection of bagpipes was offered to tell the story of piping in Scotland. ‘The Special Exhibition of Ancient Musical Instruments’ was staged in the new South Kensington Museum – the embryonic Victoria and Albert Museum - and seems to mark the beginnings in the United Kingdom of the systematic study of historic musical instruments, the ‘material culture’ of music and the systematic collection of musical instruments for museum display and for teaching purposes. The beginnings of this class of museum work is documented in the magnificent catalogue published from the 1872 exhibition, edited by the German scholar Carl Engel (1818-1882). The exhibition also formed the basis of the extensive musical instrument collection still in the V&A. Since then, comprehensive collections of musical instruments have been formed elsewhere, such as the Dolmetsch Collection, now in the Horniman Museum, the Bate Collection in Oxford, and the large collection of ethnic musical instruments in the Pitt-Rivers Museum, whose bagpipe collection instigated by Henry Balfour formed the core of the remarkable Oxford monograph Bagpipes by Anthony Baines of 1960 (Baines 1973). Other important collections for the history of the bagpipe are the Edinburgh University Musical Instrument Collection and specialist collections overseas in Brussels, Paris, Vienna, Nuremberg, New York and Washington. Bagpipes, having been the poor relation in musicology, form the core of the collection of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle which displays the Northumbrian small-pipes and their music in Morpeth, and collections in the (former) College of Piping and National Piping Centre in Glasgow. Bagpipes are significantly evident in a few notable collections overseas such as the Crosby Brown Collection in the New York Metropolitan Museum (see Libin 1977), the Musical Instrument Museum in Brussels (with an important bagpipe collection instigated by Hubert Boone), in Spain in the Museo de las Gaitas, in France, in the Czech Republic under the determ-
ined and patriotic drive of Josef Reszny, and in the Budapest Museum of Ethnography in Hungary (whose collection was formed under the influence of Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály). It is a matter of observation throughout all these museums and collections that their respective examples of Great Highland Bagpipe are generally what might be described as ‘modern instruments’, that is, the products of named makers of the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries and of little musicological merit for the accumulation of deeper historical data.

Reviewing the literature of the subject is part of the research process and the contention here is that this has not had substance. In the circumstances of dearth, it is evident that one or two books have been routinely quoted, such as the 400-page Highland Bagpipe by the Caithness-born Glasgow journalist, W. L. Manson (Manson 1901), and W. H. Grattan Flood’s The Story of the Bagpipe (Flood 1911). These two books had laid the basis of a secondary literature for the history of piping in the British Isles and Ireland. They included some exploration of instruments but no evaluation or critique; notoriously, for example, the supposedly fifteenth-century Highland bagpipe, exhibited as such in the London 1872 exhibition, was duly illustrated by Manson, using a plate from the Society of Antiquaries and from the paper by Robert Glen of the Edinburgh firm of bagpipe and musical instrument makers on ‘Notes on the ancient musical instruments of Scotland’ in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1879 (Glen 1879, 121). This image was consistently offered as the oldest surviving Highland bagpipe, and it was not until 1970 that this piece was revealed as a fake and peremptorily removed from display in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland (Bryan 1971, 240-241).

Organology presupposes interdisciplinary methodologies. Processes of research in areas of the arts and humanities have been qualitatively different from research in the sciences, though material evidence is highly susceptible to scientific methods, for example, in the measurement of organic materials and sound and acoustic properties of, say, wind instruments. Quantitative data has been less common in advancing knowledge and understanding of bagpipes, and the researcher in the arts and humanities is more likely to be working as an individual rather than as part of a research team. The concept of the research community has not been common in musicology before the digital age, and without institutional support it has been difficult to make research outputs widely available. If the research community in musicology is small and scattered, the review process and quality control of outputs can fall short. For bagpipes, there was little or no peer review so that, for example, when John Donald published a study of piobaireachd in 1987 which was manifestly flawed, the publishing business would not contemplate more on pipes and piping for many years (MacNeill and Richardson 1987; Cheape 1990, 201-207). With no obvious outlet for initial results into bagpipe research, for example, the securing of one of the earliest complete surviving Great Highland Bagpipes for the collections of the National Museums in 2003 remained relatively obscure beyond a few aficionados (NMS K.2003.939). In the digital age, the communication of basic information is improving; the National Museums Scotland copied their collections information on pipes and piping into CD-ROM form which, at the very least, advertises the collection of data on which future organological research may be based.
Piping’s Baroque revolution

If a key to the unlocking of bagpipe history in Scotland is the Baroque, where do we start? ‘Baroque’, of course, has to be used cautiously but we may take the term to describe the music of the same period as well as the lavish architectural style of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The musical shift towards the Baroque followed the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660, marked by the removal of the ban on the theatre and a fresh emphasis on the social skills of making music, singing and dancing after the blight on these pastimes during the Commonwealth. Scotland’s cultural circumstances were different, with no court culture since 1603 and a prevailing Covenanting theology and Presbyterian discipline bred in the Civil Wars and encoded in the Revolution Settlement of 1690. A comparatively slow start is evident for the Baroque in Scotland compared to the quickening in England following the Restoration, although a cultural deficit is perhaps too readily suggested for Scotland (cf. Stell 1999; Johnson 2000, vii)). Given that an interest in the music of Scotland was at the heart of the Baroque in the United Kingdom, this can be measured perhaps by quotas of Scottish tunes to be heard in London and pervading the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (Cheape 2008a, 291, 294-296). These were largely songs and ballads, readily identified as ‘Scotch’ and widely imitated, but not at first evoking a strong sense of a national tradition. Perception of contemporary Scottish music performance was based on keyboards and strings, rather than a bagpipe, in the same way that a well-schooled nation in Scotland might have regarded the national language as Latin rather than Scots or Gaelic. An early touchstone of a national tradition might be the Saint Cecilia’s Day concerts in Edinburgh and, from the perspective of the time, this offers vital evidence of the environment of music-making. This can be gauged from ‘The Order of the Instrumental Music for the Feast of St Cecilia, 22 November 1695’, later published by William Tytler, together with a ‘Dissertation on the Scottish Music’, in the 1792 volume of the Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (Cheape 2008b, 92-94).

If the role of the music of Scotland is significant in the Baroque, in the same context ‘Neo-Baroque’ might be used to describe home-grown reactions against over-elaborate styles of French and Italianate music, taking the form of versions of folk songs and ballads which were currently then well-known and popular and which asserted the character and the virtue of the native tradition. In Britain, the ‘Scotch song’ as a generic song-form as well as bagpipe music of the post-Restoration period provided a quantity of Neo-Baroque music which achieved huge popularity and inspired imitation, not only in Britain but also in France and Germany (Fiske 1983, ix, 11).

Post-Restoration musical life therefore holds a key to aspects of bagpipe music and the piping tradition of today, together with names such as Henry Purcell and John Playford, whose English Dancing Master first appeared in 1651, in the time of the Commonwealth, and continued to be published in new editions into the 1720s. It included ‘Scotch’ tunes, the first song to appear being ‘The Broom of Cowdenknowes’, and the Scottish music and song element increased in subsequent editions through the years. This music book became a best seller and a source book for other musical publishers such as William Thomson for his Orpheus Caledonius and John Geoghegan (see below).
A Neo-baroque drift of fashion can be measured in Henry Playford's *Collection of Original Scotch Tunes, full of the Highland Humours*, printed in London in 1700 and 1701.

Changes in music, music performance and musical instruments are all axiomatic in any consideration of the Baroque and should be introduced in the re-assessment of bagpipes, and without drawing any demarcation between art or 'classical' music and 'folk' music, concepts then not yet meaningful or applied (see Gelbart 2007). It is significant that instruments used today in 'folk music' performance derive from archetypes perceived as 'classical', examples being the *vielle* or hurdy-gurdy deriving from the thirteenth-century *organistrum*, the Italian *zampogna* deriving from Renaissance wind instruments in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the Irish *Uilleann* pipe growing from Baroque instrumentation of the eighteenth century. The folk/classical dichotomy of the modern mindset makes it more difficult to discern how, historically, instruments might be adapted for new sound or changing aesthetic, the very process that swept Baroque Europe in the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. With forms of music changing in the Baroque era, for example, with the invention of opera and cantata, instruments were freely adopted and discarded. Musical instruments were never left as they were and it should be emphasized that fixity of form of musical instruments was never the paradigm of European instrumentation. This acts as useful corrective to notions of antiquity and continuity as touchstones for the bagpipe in Scotland. New bagpipes of the *musette* small pipe-type and 'Pastoral' bagpipes were then created for performing the 'pastorale' as exemplified in operas by Lully and Rameau and for inclusion in orchestras and consorts for courtly and aristocratic performance. The popularity of the *musette* is also reflected in the two contemporary published works of repertoire or part-repertoire for the chamber bagpipe, those of Borjon (1672) and Hotteterre (1737) (Cheape 2008a, 286).

The influence of the Baroque (or the Neo-Baroque) in Britain and Ireland can be defined for us in bagpipe terms by the intriguing evidence of the 'Pastoral' and 'Union' bagpipes, and also by the collateral evidence of an extraordinary wealth of published Scottish fiddle music. The finesse of the Pastoral and Union pipes in terms of a re-invention of European woodwind is a manifestation of this that had not attracted notice. The 'light music' of the bagpipe in Scotland may also owe more to the Baroque and Neo-Baroque than has hitherto been defined, as is certainly the case with Scottish fiddle music. The fiddle tradition was carried forward in an explosion of print culture and it is estimated that around 14,000 fiddle tunes were printed and published in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries (see Gore ed. 1994). The late David Johnson concluded in his seminal study published as long ago as 1972, *Music and Society in Lowland Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, that:

Most people do not realise how far Scottish folk fiddle-music was influenced by classical music; it is usually thought of as an indigenous growth, untouched by civilisation, transmitted by illiterate farm-workers and vagrant players. But in fact folk-fiddle playing, as it exists in Scotland today, was almost entirely an eighteenth-century creation; and it was developed by educated musicians,
most of whom were at home in the classical music culture (Johnson 1972, 111).

Although the evidence for change and a chronology of bagpipe-making is sparse, there are one or two high points such as surviving instruments in museum collections, especially a number of diagnostic instruments in the National Museums which carry labels such as ‘Pastoral’ and ‘Union’. Symbolic of this perhaps is a ‘Pastoral’ chanter, also known as a ‘long’ or ‘flat’ chanter at 20 1⁄4 inches long (eg. NMS H.LT 67). Typically with no maker’s name or mark, this was made possibly in London and seems more closely related in style of turning and configuration to Baroque woodwind such as shawm or oboe (Fig. 2). Tentatively, its acoustic shape or form may derive from the Baroque oboe with its narrower bore and smaller tone-holes. The oboe itself in this period was developed from the early woodwind shawm. A further symbolic and complementary item is a set of drones in ivory, anonymous but possibly from a Pastoral Pipe by Hugh Robertson of Edinburgh, with lotus-top profiled drones, with bass in return section, baritone and tenor (NMS K.2003.706).

Fig. 2 Long Chanter for the Pastoral bagpipe, 18th century, more closely related in configuration to Baroque woodwind (drawing by Helen Jackson, NMS; NMS H.LT 67). Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of National Museums Scotland.

The Pastoral pipe is one of the more intriguing topics to emerge from the material record of piping in Scotland, intriguing because of the number of instruments or part-instruments that survive, and because of their high quality and finish. But the instrument has been entirely absent from the written histories of the bagpipe in Scotland. This class of material might now be summarised as a creation of the eighteenth century and of professional wind-instrument makers or turners (that is, skilled lathe-workers); the chanter made in sections, or ‘joints’ like other woodwind instruments such as flute or oboe, with long narrow conical, but not necessarily straight-sided bore. Drone configuration includes folded or returned bass drone with four joints, the length of the bass proportionate to the sounding lengths of the other drone or drones, and to the length of the chanter with its low pitch. The construction of the instrument in its different components suggests that its sound, soft and low-pitch, was designed for indoor playing and playing with other instruments, and to blend as much as to stand out. This ‘chamber
Bagpipe’ seems to have been designed to make bagpipe music appeal to sophisticated and discriminating audiences and to fit with a social and musical context of violin, piano or harpsichord, flute and oboe, for art music and light opera performance (Cheape 2008a, 285-304). Fashion high-points may have been Gay’s Beggar’s Opera after 1728 and fin-de-siècle Ossian librettos for which the Pastoral and Union pipes were the favoured instruments in the 1790s.

The anonymity of these instruments in Scotland is leavened to an extent by the existence of John Geoghegan’s Tutor (c. 1743), titled The Compleat Tutor for the Pastoral or New Bagpipe (NMS A.1947.129). This is the first book of bagpipe music printed in Britain and Ireland and is a remarkable document, opening a window onto a particular stage of the evolution of the bagpipe in Europe – the Baroque and Neo-Baroque. ‘Pastoral’ relates it to contemporary musical fashion and to Baroque woodwind. The tone is set in an engraved plate facing the title page, with a carefully drawn scene showing the player in a great-coat and tricorn hat standing on a terrace in a classical and sylvan setting (Fig. 3). He is playing the ‘Pastoral or New Bagpipe’ of the book’s title, an instrument with a long chanter and two drones lying across the player’s arm, and the bagpipe is being inflated with bellows. The pipes are ‘improved’ to bring them into line with the

Fig. 3 ‘Gentleman Piper’ with bellows bagpipe in a classical setting, in the Plate facing the title page in John Geoghegan, The Compleat Tutor for the Pastoral or New Bagpipe (London c.1743; NMS A.1947.129). Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of National Museums Scotland.

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2 The copy held by NMS and referenced here also contains an eleven-page MS section bound in at the end with music for fifteen pipe tunes.
flute and oboe, and finger charts project a scale from Middle C to Top D, that is, two octaves and a note. A conspicuous characteristic of the 28-page booklet is the use of a printing type with cursive letter-forms imitative of handwriting, a style achieving informality without compromising legibility, and possibly copying the style of Hotte-terre’s 1738 treatise on the *musette*. It includes a ‘tutor’ and nineteen pages of forty tunes which might be summarised as a song and dance-tune selection then popular in London, drawing on Playford’s and Oswald’s publications and ‘borrowing’ fashionably on the vernacular of Scotland and Ireland. Its author, John Geoghegan, could be linked speculatively with Ulster or Leinster, but, more significantly, belongs contemporaneously in the context of an Irish migration to London including such ‘stars’ as Edmund Burke and Oliver Goldsmith. This was as important for Scotland but scarcely admitted in any cultural or musicological account of the eighteenth century. Scottish ‘stars’ include James Thomson, author of *The Seasons*, and Tobias Smollett. Another ‘star’ was James Oswald, who moved from Edinburgh to London in 1741 and began the publication of his *Caledonian Pocket Companion* about 1745 (Johnson ed. 2000, x).

Symbolic perhaps of an ensuing stage of evolution of a Baroque bagpipe is a ‘Union’ pipe in the National Museums by Hugh Robertson of Edinburgh, reflecting significant changes in the instrument in the second half of the eighteenth century (NMS K. 2003.705). This is a bellows-blown chamber instrument and this type of bagpipe survives today as the versatile Irish *Uilleann* pipe (Fig. 4). Diagnostic features include the shorter chanter set at a higher pitch, with addition of key or keys enabling the player to move beyond the eight or nine notes of the conventional chanter. It plays in a Neo-

Figure 4: Union Pipe by Hugh Robertson of Edinburgh, c. 1790, boxwood, ivory, with bass drone, tenor drone and two regulators (NMS K.2003.705). Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of National Museums Scotland
Baroque fiddle style and avoids the destabilising of tone which came with the technique of over-blowing by which the player moved up the scale into a second octave by increasing the pressure on the reeds. Modern perception of the Union Pipe has defined it in terms of Ireland’s culture and the Uilleann bagpipe of today. It has conventionally been described as an instrument native to Ireland, with an autonomous development in Ireland and descendent of an earlier Irish bagpipe (Flood 1911). By contrast, the instrument’s surviving ‘material culture’ suggests that the Union Pipe has been a shared Baroque tradition and that an integrity has been ignored or laid aside in sustaining modern perceptions. The material culture of the instrument – the ‘organology’ – is more dispersed with instruments and parts of instruments from the period approximately from 1760 to 1860 made not only in Ireland but also in Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Glasgow, London and Newcastle.

Symbolic of the later Pastoral and Union bagpipe era is a set in the National Museums with long chanter and foot joint, bass, tenor and baritone drones, and a single five-key regulator (NMS A.1947.106). With little known of its provenance, this might possibly be a theatre instrument and used for entr’acte performance. Surviving instruments suggest that the ‘Pastoral’ pipe continued to be made through the Union pipe era although the latter has been seen as refinement and successor of the former. In the interest of a more comprehensive organology, it seems that north-east Scotland played a notable part in this tradition; this is a special enclave of the history of the Pastoral and Union pipe, with a complex background which must be treated sensitively, with its ‘distinctive blend of humanism, a conservative background of Episcopacy, the two music schools of St Nicholas’ and St Machar’s, an inheritance of a big house “court culture”, and a rural hinterland which has boasted the richest ballad tradition in Scotland and beyond’ (Cheape 2008b, 95). Aberdeen was the source of the first published secular music in Scotland with the Forbes Cantus of 1662, whose Preface claimed the city as ‘the Sanctuary of the Sciences, the Manse of the Muses, and the Nursery of all the Arts’. Tendentious perhaps, but they were talking about contemporary Europe, and Aberdeen’s music culture included names such as Naughtan, Sharp, Davidson and Massie who were making Pastoral and Union bagpipes. For the performer community, we have evidence for a player of distinction such as Robert Millar (Cheape 2008b, 121-122). A Union pipe music manuscript of Millar’s from 1830 includes 383 tunes exquisitely written out, with reels, jigs, hornpipes, quicksteps, song-airs, minuets, waltzes and quadrilles, reflecting the taste in popular music in Scotland in the early nineteenth century, not exclusively Scottish, but drawing on a wide selection of British, Irish and European popular light classical music of the post-Napoleonic era and Continental dance-forms of the time (NMS H.LT 116.2).

‘Raising the tone’ argues for the significance of organology in understanding how Scottish music in its broadest sense has evolved and for the importance of an organology for any account of the bagpipe in Scottish or British and Irish musicology. To improve and enhance understanding of a complex international subject which has been, and still perhaps is, characterised or even governed by a number of spurious assumptions, we require the construction of a new ‘history’ which in this instance is built on a museum collection. The museum task of assembling an organology allows a challenge to
orthodoxy, depending for its effectiveness on the significance of that collection and on
the collecting and research role of the museum. In the case of National Museums Scotland,
their role is to build collections for the nation, to communicate the significance of
these collections, to make the collections accessible to the widest possible audience, and
to generate a broad appeal as well as satisfying the interests of the specialist and practi-
tioner. There was no ‘national collection of the national instrument’, but a collection has
now been amassed in the public domain and critical comment offered on it within Na-
tional Museums Scotland. Such a collection of the bagpipes of Scotland and other coun-
tries is unashamedly built on a Scottish perspective, in other words, on the perspective
of a country that has indeed made the bagpipe very much her own; this perspective, too,
promotes the uniqueness and importance of the bagpipe in all its formats, past and
present, and all its musical manifestations between the Highlands and Baroque Europe.

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