The Border Widow's Lament (2)

BRDRWDO.1

(alternate:)

BRDRWDO.2

The Border Widow's Lament (2)

(Oh ono chrio - Border Widow's Lament)

On the murder of Glencoe Febr 1692

Was not I a weary May, ohon ochie ho ohno ochie ho
A widow on my bridle day, ohon etc.
That on that dark and fatal night ('ohon--' interlaced throughout)
They brake my bower and slew my Knight

Just in my soft and Longing arms
Where I believ'd him safe from harms
They perced his senser[?] gentle breast
And Left me with sad grief opprest

And was but I a Weary wight
A Maid, wife, widow all in a night
And after that my knight was slain
I could no longer there remain

With a fair suit of his yellow hair
Which bound my heart for ever mare
I cut my hair and chang'd my name
From fair Alice to sweet William

No soft tongued youth nor flattering swain
Shall e're unloose that knot again
But through this wood or world I'le roam
To seek the joyes I lost at home O hon etc..

This earliest (unpublished) text here is from NLS MS 23.3.24. The manuscript, c 1715, is entitled "A Choice Collection of Several Scots Miscellanie POEMS and songs," and appears to be a manuscript for a work never published. The whole manuscript was carefully printed by hand, but there as are still letters here and there that are difficult to decipher.

F. J. Child, <<The English and Scottish Popular Ballads>>,

No.106, prints three later versions of our song here, including <<Scots Musical Museum>>, NO.89, in his prefactory comments to "The Famous Flower of Serving Men." The latter is Laurence Price's ballad entered in the Stationers' Register on July 14, 1656. (Euing, #111, is original issue with Price's initials.) Price's ballad was undoubtably based on an even earlier tale, but not, as has been speculated, on that above. The heading of the text here confirms the note by Robert Burns (in the interleaved Scots Musical Museum) of the statement by Dr. Blacklock that the song was on the Glencoe massacre (James Dick, <<Notes on Scottish Song by Robert Burns>>, 1908, reprint, 1962)

The tune in the SMM was given earlier as "Oh Onochie O", in J. Oswald's <<A Curious Collection of Scots Tunes>>, No.19, Edinburgh, 1740. Same, "Oh Onochie O," is in J. Oswald's <<Caledonian Pocket Companion>>, book 9, p. 4 (c 1758). Apparently the first time a verse of the song was set to music was in Vol. I, page 22, of D. Corri's <<A New and Complete Collection of the most Favourite Scots Songs>>, Ed
Collection>>, No.677 is for "McDonald's Return to Glencoe".
Cf. also SMM No.498, "The Highland widow's lament" WBO

Child #106

WBO
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