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The folklore of kinship in the British traditional ballads.

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THE FOLKLORE OF KINSHIP IN THE 
BRITISH TRADITIONAL BALLADS 

by 
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. BALLAD CRITICISM AND THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General considerations in ballad criticism</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The problem of the kin-tragedies</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The anthropological school</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions of the anthropological school</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The concept of tribal communalism</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The concept of the &quot;matriarchate&quot;</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The search for &quot;survivals&quot;</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaknesses of the anthropological school</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criticisms of the evolutionary framework</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criticisms of historical reconstructions</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The problem of parallel folklore motifs</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballad origins and historical backgrounds</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials and methods of the present study</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The objective of the present study</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. FOLKLORE AND BALLAD CONTENT</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ballad in the context of folklore</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motifs relating to kinship in the folktale and the ballad</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gummere's treatment of folklore in the ballads</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical considerations about parallel motifs</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. SOCIAL HISTORY AND THE BALLAD</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindred and family in the later Middle Ages</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo-Saxon society: decline of the kindred</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celtic society: persistence of the kindred</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feudal economy and the kindred</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Champion and woodland</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English feudalism</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish feudalism and clanship</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Highlands</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Border</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. KINDRED AND CLAN IN THE BALLADS</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish ballads and clanship</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Border Ballads</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The blood-feud</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinship in Border raids</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The structure and size of the Border clan</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinship in Aberdeenshire ballads</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Highland ballads and the clans</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Scottish historical evidence</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinship in the English ballads</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. THE FAMILY SITUATION IN THE BALLADS</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mother-in-law: folklore and realism</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority and revolt in the nuclear family</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The question of &quot;matriarchy&quot;</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sister's son</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. FAMILY AND CUSTOM IN THE BALLADS</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rites of passage</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtship and marriage</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth, christening, and fosterage</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death and burial</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious sanctions of kinship</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theories of totemism and ancestor-cult</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pagan &quot;survivals&quot;</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pagan and Christian sanctions of kinship</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. VARIATION IN SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND THE BALLAD</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General tendencies of ballad variation</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variation in the ballads of clanship</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in the nuclear family situation</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The decline of kin-tragedy</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comic treatment of kinship</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The genesis of the kin-tragedies</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folkloristic bases</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical bases</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The function of the kin-tragedies</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of folktale and myth in social life</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The comparative function of the ballad</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX A: FOLKTALE MOTIFS AND TYPES IN THE BALLADS | 192 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B: SELECTIONS FROM THE MOTIF-INDEX</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF WORKS CITED</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Familial affairs in balladry have long been of interest to critics. Many of the outstanding ballad characters -- the jealous brother or sister, the tyrannous father or elder brother, the eloping bride, the formidable mother-in-law, the cherished sister's son -- presented starkly, with little comment, sometimes acting without explicit motive, challenge the imagination. The ballad household, existing in an atmosphere of intense emotion which often leads to violence, invites inquiry: such situations, it would seem, must arise out of conditions which differ in certain marked respects from those of modern society. Until recent years, theories of communal origin offered a plausible explanation of familial conflict and tragedy as an expression of the tensions arising out of early tribal relationships and accounted for unusual traits like the authority of the mother and the subjection of the bride as traces of a prehistoric tribal order. But with the decline of romantic primitivism, the communal theory has lost currency; as a basis for explaining the social relationships portrayed in balladry, it is open to suspicion.

A realistic attempt to account for the complications of the ballads of kinship must bring to bear the contributions of recent scholarship in folklore, social history, and anthropological theory. In the light of these disciplines,
the present investigation approaches its objective: to determine what can be said with reasonable assurance about the family and kindred as these are reflected in the British ballads and to trace as far as is practicable the effects of this aspect of social structure on the ballads in their inception and in their development. This general object of inquiry can be broken down into these categories: (1) the type of kindred organization reflected in the earliest British ballads and their later variants, (2) the roles and the relative authority of members of the ballad household and kindred, (3) the major sanctions of familial order furnished by custom and belief, and (4) the changes in social life which the ballads reflect in the course of transmission in space and time. In order to approach these objectives as nearly as possible, it will be desirable to distinguish as far as one can between folklore of wide and indeterminate origin and ballad motifs which reflect actual situations and attitudes; and in making this distinction, it will be helpful to relate whatever data of social history are available to the lore of the ballads.

The present study should have values beyond the limits of its immediate objectives. In considering the historical elements in the early British ballads, it may yield some light on the problem of ballad origins. It may demonstrate the validity of a qualified historical approach to the study
of topics in folklore and help to clear historical investigators of the charge of vague methods and sweeping conclusions. It may suggest the limits that further inquiries into the subject may encounter in the light of presently available data. But the chief interest of the study lies probably in the gratification, as far as possible, of curiosity about the nature and meaning of the ballads of kinship.
CHAPTER I

BALLAD CRITICISM AND THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND

Attempts to define the "popular ballad" and to classify collected ballads have raised some major problems in definition, many of which may defy solution for some time. Any definition which attempts to take into account either the origins of ballads as a class or the origins of specific ballads is bound to be questioned. On the origins of ballads as a class, Hustvedt notes the diversity of scholarly opinion:

The designations old and ancient are necessarily bound up with the question of origins. . . . The most varied opinions have been held on this subject. The ballad has been supposed to go back to immemorial antiquity, to common Aryan foundations, to Gothic or widely Germanic beginnings, to a relatively narrow European focus in the Middle Ages.1

Investigations of specific ballads also show diversity of opinion and scarcity of evidence. Archer Taylor, in his monograph on Edward, offers some valuable conclusions about variation and geographical dissemination but prudently renounces conjecture about ultimate origins.2 Christophersen's comprehensive study of Sir Aldingar and its analogues


advances arguments for an oral tradition which probably carried the story of the ballad from as far back as the eleventh century; but the evidence does not indicate when or how the tradition took on ballad form. Nygard's skeptical review of the numerous theories concerning the origin of Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight demonstrates the complexity of some of the problems of origins.

Although oral transmission is generally recognized as a distinguishing trait of the popular ballad, the nature of the process and its resulting variations in ballad form and content raise their own peculiar problems. If any laws govern variation, they have not been derived and formulated so definitely that they can be universally accepted: even the general question whether transmission leads to degeneration or improvement has been answered in totally opposite ways, and the inconsistent habits of the bearers of ballad tradition have led at least one experienced collector to


4 Holger Olof Nygard, "Ballad Source Study: Child No. 4 as Exemplar," JAF, LXVIII (April-June, 1955), 141-152.

despair of formulating any general principles.\textsuperscript{6}

Furthermore, the extent to which the ballads, even those which have undergone oral transmission for long periods, are truly popular -- the extent to which they reflect the actual customs and beliefs of any particular "folk" who may have been their creators or their trustees at any particular time -- is in no sense a closed question. "It is to be suspected," says Hustvedt,

that popular and non-popular elements have been strangely intermingled during the whole period of ballad history, that the hand of the one and the voice of the many have borne conflicting testimony for so long a time that they must continue to betray our blindness for some time to come.\textsuperscript{7}

Even Andrew Lang, an early exponent of the "anthropological" approach to ballad study, warned his readers of the difficulty of assuming the reliability of ballads as indices of custom and belief in any special area:

Many ballads are versified Märchen, or Märchen are ballads done into prose, or both descend from popular tales partly in prose, partly in verse, and the Märchen are very old and widely diffused.

The answer to any one of these questions depends to some extent upon what light can be shed upon the others.


\textsuperscript{7} Ballad Books and Ballad Men, p. 14; see also pp. 17-21.

\textsuperscript{8} Andrew Lang, "Notes on Ballad Origins," Folk-Lore, XIV (1903), 152.
If we knew with reasonable accuracy when and where the first European ballads were sung, we would know where to begin looking for their social context. If we knew that ballads varied directly and sensitively as their environment changed, we would know how reliably a given variant would be likely to reflect the folk-culture of its time and place and how drastically its earlier content would probably be altered.

Since the scope of these problems is exceedingly broad, the present study will confine itself to one segment of the problem of social backgrounds. The concern with the role of the kindred and family in the lore of the ballads arises from two circumstances: first, the importance of the kin-group as a unit of social structure,⁹ and second, the presence of a strong interest in family conflict and tragedy and an occasional reflection of Scottish clanship in the ballads themselves.¹⁰

⁹ Cf. George Peter Murdock, Social Structure (New York, 1949), pp. 1-14. Murdock describes the nuclear family as a "universal social grouping ... a distinct and strongly functional group in every known society" (p. 2).

¹⁰ "Apart from the tales of love-making that is preliminary to marriage or frankly illicit, no less than seventy-five of the ballads in Child's collection, as I count them, have to do with family relations of one sort or another. Nearly half of these, it is interesting to note, bring in manslaughter" (Gerould, The Ballad of Tradition, p. 45). For the clan-ballads, see Chapter IV, below.
The family circle, with or without its extensions to various degrees of kinship, is of primary importance in many of the ballads rescued from oral tradition by Child and his predecessors. Ballads like *Edward, The Cruel Brother*, and *The Braes of Yarrow* have their being in an atmosphere that cannot be duplicated in the modern social world. The family group portrayed by the ballads often lives in an intense intimacy, with loves, jealousies, and resentments heightened somehow -- perhaps by remoteness from other social units or by lack of thorough integration with them. The intensity and seriousness of domestic relationships is heightened by violent and catastrophic incidents: lovers suffer and die under the shadow of family rivalry and restraint; older brothers and sisters or parents resent with brutal rancor the slightest breach of their "honor" or of their authority; revenges, both within the family and against outsiders, are bloody and frequent.

The earliest critic of note to comment extensively on the prevalence and the quality of the ballads of kinship was Francis B. Gummere. "Domestic complication, in the widest range of the term," he says, "furnishes a theme for the majority of the English and Scottish ballads." And

although some of his insights were colored by an anthropological outlook that has since been largely discredited, his keen appreciation of the literary worth of the best ballads of this class deserves notice:

The mention of sister and brother carries us to the large group of ballads that deal with complications of household and kin. Tragedy hovers over these, and, as in the case of their highborn rivals from the Oresteia to "Hamlet," seldom fails to fall upon them. Doggerel itself cannot hide in them the dignity of the tragic passion; but when that old simplicity of repetition is allowed to do the work alone, to carry the hopeless struggle of personality against fate, and when the traditional note is untroubled, then the ballad achieves those results which make the critic claim it as art. 12

Gummere's approach to the meaning of the kin-tragedies seems at first glance fairly simple and attractive. Following the lead of folklorists of the nineteenth-century "anthropological" school, Gummere saw in many traits of the ballads "survivals" of a remote, though somewhat indefinite, prehistoric past. At some "primitive" stage of human culture, he assumed, the individual was submerged in the clan, which he and some others thought of as an organism almost in the biological sense, held together by ties of blood made sacred by ritual and belief.

They have no personal sentiment in them, these ballads, no "lyric cry" of the modern type; they all lead back to the emotions of the throng and the clan. Nowhere does one feel this communal quality so strongly as in the group of kin-tragedies, such as "the Cruel Brother". . .

12 The Popular Ballad, pp. 166-167.
"The Twa Brothers," "Child Maurice," even a half-spoiled traditional ballad like "Bewick and Graham," point unerringly back, not to the wrecks of romance, but to the beginnings of poetry in the singing and dancing throng.

The "singing and dancing throng" itself, as a collective mass, was the original ballad-maker, and spontaneous communal composition was the source of the ballad or at least of its prototype: "The individual withers as we retrace our steps in balladry, and the throng, with its refrain, is more and more."

The unity of the clan was presumed to be absolute in such a complete sense that individual authorship of folksong or ballad was impossible; hence the objective manner was characteristic of the oldest ballads. Carrying on from this hypothesis, some critics have found traces of totemic belief in folklore and ballad. Work and play alike, in this view, were the acts of the

14 Old English Ballads (Boston, 1894), p. lxxxi.
15 See The Popular Ballad, pp. 22, 169, et passim.
16 For example, George Lawrence Gomme, Folklore as an Historical Science (London, 1908), p. xiv: "As survivals, folklore belongs to anthropological data, and if, as I contend, we can go so far into survivals as totemism, we must understand generally what position totemism occupies among human institutions, and to understand this we must fall back to human origins." For a determined attempt to detect traces of totemism in ballads, see Lowry C. Wimberly, Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads (Chicago, 1928), pp. 68-67.
unified kin-group. Individual expression found neither impulse nor scope in the organism that was the tribe.

A further corollary of the evolutionary theory of ballad society was the primacy of the matriarchate. A universal dominance of "the mothers" in ancient society was suggested, not only by the occasional occurrence of matrilineal clans in savage society, but also by the treatment of the familial matron in some ballads. "Stark and stour," formidable in her power to bless and curse, she often took on the dimensions as well as the role of the Biblical patriarch. The "sister's son," that stock figure of matrilineal tradition, has a part in many ballads, often as the object of his uncle's concern and affection. The new bride, often a captive, entering her husband's household, must suffer the close scrutiny of her mother-in-law; or, in a later society, may undergo the torments of malign witchcraft if she incurs the old lady's displeasure.

17 See Gomme, p. 61: "The answer comes from almost all parts of the primitive world that, in certain stages of society, the children are related to their mother only."


magical powers and the aura of respect belonging to the old matron reminders of her ancient role as tribal priestess and central symbol of a family cult? Was the real ruler of the prehistoric household, the symbol and focus of worship, endowed with occult powers like the Veleda of the Germanic tribes or the "redoubtable cailleach" of the Celts?

These questions of tribalism and matriarchy have engaged the attention of even such recent students of folklore in the ballad as Hodgart, Wimberly, and Evelyn Wells. Miss Wells notes that certain relationships of personages in the ballads "hark back to a primitive social organization." She enumerates traits which "suggest a society that is based on matriarchy," and she calls attention to some ballad references to the "sister's son." Wimberly quotes Gummere's conclusion in "The Mother-in-Law" but introduces the quotation with some mild reservations of his own:

21 Cf. Gummere, Germanic Origins, a Study in Primitive Culture (New York, 1892), pp. 131-142.
22 Germanic Origins, pp. 139-140.
25 Pages 79-80.
In the ballad household the man's mother holds a position of authority, and it is to her rather than to his father that the son appeals in times of crisis. How much this is the result of the ballad plot and how much the result of the reflection of actual custom, it is hard to say.26

In his *Death and Burial Lore in the English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, however, he takes a cue from Gummere's presumption that the revenge in *The Lads of Wamphray* is carried through by a sister's son.27 Hodgart calls attention to some "survivals" of social institutions, "some perhaps antedating the typical community of the late Middle Ages."28 He mentions some instances of maternal authority and matrilocal residence but ventures the reservation that the "sister's son" references in the ballads may be borrowed from epic tradition.28

Although the evolutionary approach seems at first glance to offer a temptingly easy and lucid solution to some of the problems of the kin-tragedies, this approach proves on somewhat closer examination to be beset with pitfalls. In the first place, developments in the strictly

26 Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads, p. 205.
inductive disciplines of modern anthropology have seriously undermined the premises on which the conjectures of Gummere and his followers are based. Anthropologists have generally discarded the notion of a uniform pattern of social evolution applying to all human societies; they have observed carefully the variety of local cultures; and they have been severely critical of assumptions based on the concept of a unilinear development of human institutions. 29 "As soon as we admit," writes Boas, "that the hypothesis of a uniform evolution has to be proved before it can be accepted, the whole structure loses its foundation." 30 And in a recent essay, J. H. Steward sums up the results of many investigations:

Twentieth-century research has accumulated a mass of evidence which overwhelmingly supports the contention that particular cultures diverge significantly from one another and do not pass through unilinear stages. 31

F. A. Montagu would reject the term "primitive" along with the "artificial evolutionary cultural framework" which many users of the term take for granted. 32 The search for

29 See, for example, Franz Boas, "The Limitations of the Comparative Method," in his Race, Language, and Culture (New York, 1940), pp. 270-280. Since the essay was originally published in 1896, it is an interesting specimen of pioneering criticism. Cf. Murdock, Social Structure, p. 188, for some comments on Boas and others.


"survivals" of customs and beliefs presumed to have existed in an indefinite prehistoric past has been largely abandoned, though some folklorists still defend the concept of survival in a limited sense. 33 Even Erixon, who objects to some of the implications of functionalism, recognizes the validity of some of the attacks which certain functionalists have made on the uncritical use of the old "comparative method."

Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown objected against both comparative and historical aspects in methods of research. This attitude may have been legitimate as a reaction against a previous partiality for a rather uncritical combination of elements coming from different cultural spheres and groups. Younger European scholars, working in regionally limited local cultures, have not been involved in this problem to the same extent. A regionally limited folk culture research might perhaps grow into a much more accurate science than a general ethnology which makes generalizations on a far too early stage. 34

Not all functionalists prove to be as determinedly anti-historical as their critics make them out to be, 35 but their cautions against careless generalization and the ignoring of specific differences have been taken seriously by most of their contemporaries. Even a dedicated evolutionist like

33 See Sigurd Erixon, "An Introduction to Folklife Research," _Folk-Liv_, XIV (1950), 15, n.: "As a matter of fact, it cannot be denied, in spite of the theories of Malinowski and his followers, that survivals do exist, even if they are chiefly to be found in material and social culture."

34 _Folk-Liv_, XIV (1950), 10.

35 See A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, "On the Concept of Function in Social Science," _Amer. Anthr._, n. s., XXXVII (July - Sept., 1935), 401, n.: "I see no reason why the two kinds of study -- the historical and the functional -- should not be carried on side by side in perfect harmony."
Leslie White is inclined to regard cultural evolution as a convenient conceptual scheme rather than as a description of a uniform historical process through which every culture has passed, or must eventually pass, in a series of deterministic stages. 36

Modern anthropologists are suspicious of historical reconstructions based on general evidence derived from indiscriminate sources. 37 The limitations of historical conclusions have been pointed out frequently: thus Kroeber, in 1935, puts a careful estimate on the validity of historical interpretation:

A little reflection will show that all historical procedure is in the nature of a reconstruction; and that no historical determination is sure in the sense that the determinations in physical science are sure; that is, objectively verifiable. Historical determinations are in their essence subjective findings; and at best they only approximate truth or certainty. They differ from one another in seeming more or less probably true, the criterion being the degree of completeness with which a historical interpretation fits into the totality of phenomena, or if one like, into the totality of historical interpretations of phenomena. 38

But even in the light of the above considerations, Kroeber

does not deny careful and reasonably impartial historical investigation a place in the study of human culture:

The point of view which underlies the foregoing discussion is that there is a historical attitude and approach as well as a scientific attitude and approach, and that, in a field like anthropology, each has its genuine problems and equally important and fruitful results. If I have leaned one way, it is because the current of the day runs the other. 39

In folklore studies, in the second place, emphasis has shifted from the search for "survivals" to the study of motifs in folk-literature. A. H. Krappe, though he endorses the idea of stages of cultural evolution, 40 objects strongly to the aims and methods of Lang, Gomme, and J. A. MacCulloch:

The doctrine of polygenesis, so far as fairy tales are concerned, is probably the most untenable. For it is unthinkable that stories with a plot as complicated as that of Nicht Nocht Naething... should have arisen independently. In the second place, granting that a given motive could have arisen only in savagery, this fact would prove nothing for the type which may well have incorporated the motives in question in the shape of survivals. But granting also that the type originated in savagery, it can have originated only in the savagery of the particular country where it was first put together. From there it may have migrated (theoretically at least) to countries far removed from the state of savagery, so that in no case does it prove anything for the past of the people among whom it is now current. Lastly, the so-called primitiveness of certain conditions obtaining in fairy tales has been vastly exaggerated. 41

39 Page 566.

40 Alexander Haggerty Krappe, The Science of Folk-lore (London, 1930), p. xvii: "Thus a certain human tribe, in a certain spot of the globe, will at this time represent the stage of spiritual evolution left behind by another tribe, in a different spot, several hundred years ago."

41 Page 8.
Stith Thompson, who concedes that some story motifs may derive from early customs and beliefs, nevertheless warns the student of the folktale against easy generalizations about "primitive" sources and about a uniformly "primitive" stage in human culture. Extensive historic-geographic study of tale types should, in Thompson's opinion, precede any attempt at either psychological or anthropological generalization about folktales. And von Sydow condemns the search for survivals -- in particular the Mannhardtian notion about fertility rites -- with a certain felicity:

To the modern scholar such names must suggest a curious romantic coxcombrry, which finds pleasure in seeing survivals of ancient primitive heathendom everywhere.

It may not be possible to determine precisely the extent to which the ballads have borrowed from other folklore as well as from written epics and romances; further treatment of this problem must be reserved for the chapter which follows; but it is important at the outset to


43 Page 388.

44 Page 448. See also Stith Thompson, "Advances in Folklore Studies," in Anthropology Today, p. 595.


46 See above, p. 3.
see the ballads in a realistic perspective. If they are to be considered "a principality within the broader empire of folklore," then the considerations which apply in this general area will apply to them also.

A third major objection to Gummere's explanation of the kin-tragedies arises from the development of recent opinion on the perplexed question of ballad origins. The extensive controversy on this subject will not be reviewed in its entirety here: Hustvedt gives a good view of developments in European and American criticism on the topic, and Leach and Christophersen have registered the essence of recent opinion in their introductory summaries.

Despite the endorsement of Kittredge, Gummere's theory of communal origins has not fared well, nor has the contention that the ballad as a type is of ancient origin been universally seconded. Minor clues like the song of the Monks of Ely, accounts of tenth- or eleventh-century Greek

48 Pages 8-17.
50 Ballad of Sir Aldingar, pp. 4-8.
53 See Christophersen, p. 5.
narrative songs that may have been of the ballad type, and the use of a form like that of the ballad in the thirteenth-century Judas continue to give some grounds for speculation about early origins. But there is no conclusive evidence at the present time for the existence of English or Scottish ballads, in the generally accepted sense of the term, before the later Middle Ages. The most venturesome of modern ballad critics will rarely look further back than the twelfth century for the origin of the ballad genre, and then usually in the direction of Scandinavia rather than Britain. Even ballads of the first half of the fifteenth century have been questioned: Chambers, whose wide acquaintance with medieval literature gives weight to his opinions, does not recognize any unimpeachably "popular" ballads from manuscripts of earlier date than 1450. How long the

54 See Leach, p. 28.
56 See, for example, Wells, The Ballad Tree, p. 77.
57 See the definitions in Chambers, pp. 137-139; 153-154.
58 See, for example, William J. Entwistle, European Balladry (Oxford, 1939), pp. 18-19; Christophersen, p. 5.
ballads had been in oral circulation before they were first written down is, of course, another question. Historical references in the ballads point to a late date, as Hodgart notes:

The kind of evidence provided by "historical" events, then, gives no positive indication that any ballads were composed before the fifteenth century, and very little indication that they were being composed before the sixteenth century. Some of the folklore content of the ballads may be of earlier origin than the historical material; but, as in the case of Sir Aldingar, though early analogues exist, evidence of transmission from very early times in ballad form is lacking.

In any case, to assume at the outset of this study that ballads are of ancient origin would be taking too much for granted. In the absence of conclusive evidence, it seems necessary to take the later Middle Ages as a tentative period of origin for the ballads generally. Many of the specific ballads in Child's collection prove to be of later date than the fifteenth century. Some of the Scottish ballads of domestic tragedy and feud "belong, when they can

60 Cf. Hustvedt, p. 19.
61 The Ballads, p. 70.
62 See above, p. 2.
be dated, to the sixteenth and still more to the seventeenth century. Two are of the eighteenth. 63

Gummere's approach to the problem of the background and significance of the kin-tragedies, then, has been largely superseded. No longer can we find the roots of the ballad of familial conflict, of kinship and the blood-feud, firmly embedded in a remote tribal past whose mysteries are illuminated by insights from a comparative view of "primitive" culture. In default of the tribal-communal theory of origins, we must assume that the ballads were first composed under the conditions of medieval social life. How much the ballad-makers may have borrowed from the common stock of epic, romance, and folktale and how much they derived from their own experience of life must be approximately determined by an examination of both folklore and history. The way is open for new insights into the meaning and the social matrix of the kin-tragedies.

Despite the many difficulties of such an investigation, whatever can be said in the light of available evidence about the social bases of the ballads of kinship would have much interest and some tentative value for the student of ballads. The only objection to such a study hinges on the dearth of available information on the origins and dissemination of ballads. 64 A partial answer to such an objection may be that

63 Chambers, p. 168.

64 Cf. Archer Taylor's warning against "visiting Malaysia" before examining enough texts of available ballads ("Edward" and Sven i Rosengård," pp. vii-viii).
enough material of a historical and a folkloristic sort is available for a general investigation and that conclusions about the origins of some of the more interesting ballads of domestic complication are not likely to attain a high degree of certainty for an indefinite time, barring some unforeseen discovery. And in the meantime, some of the methods used in historic-geographic studies involve assumptions about social backgrounds -- assumptions which might be substantiated or clarified by investigations of the type which is here projected. 65

The materials of the present study must go beyond the limits of ballad collections, and its methods must include those of the critic and the historian. It must take the universal and ubiquitous motifs of folk-literature into account, in the attempt to assess the borrowings of folktale elements in the ballads of kinship; it must apply the conclusions of the best-informed students of medieval British society; and it must take account of the loss and corruption of older motifs and attitudes in the ballads through variation. Such a method is the one projected in pursuing the objective of this thesis -- to ascertain as clearly as

65 In Taylor's study of Edward, for instance, the probable dissemination of the ballad depends somewhat on those elements which point to aristocratic or lower-class origins ("Edward" and "Sven i Rosengård," p. 15). The refusal to speculate on "matriarchy" implies a judgment about the social background also -- as to probabilities, at least (cf. above, pp. 9-10).
possible in the light of available evidence and recent scholarship the nature of the kindred and family arrangements which prevailed at the times and places of origin of the earliest British ballads and the extent to which these and subsequent familial conditions have affected the content of those ballads which deal with kinship.
CHAPTER II

FOLKLORE AND BALLAD CONTENT

Some of the difficulties of tracking down actual custom and belief through the songs and stories of the folk have already been mentioned. Story-motifs and even entire tale-types have been found to be of remote origin and wide dispersion; and the points of origin of many known motifs are located vaguely if at all. A tale like The Two Brothers, found in ancient Egyptian lore, contains a good many motifs common to folk-literature of the sort that was once thought to have had its fountain-head somewhere in India. Until the source of a folktale is established, it is hardly possible to ascertain whether the beliefs and customs that may be inferred from it are indigenous to the place where the tale is most frequently found or whether they are characteristic of the plot of the tale and are regarded by the story-teller and his hearers simply as eccentricities. The recorded comments of informants show some inconsistencies in this matter: as might be expected, attitudes toward the material vary with the individual informant. Some of the people of Cape Breton preserve a kind of half-belief in

fairies, according to Leach. Mackenzie vouches for the implicit belief of his Nova Scotian singers in the content of their ballads, but one of his informants regarded her version of The Cruel Mother as "foolish." Such inconsistencies in themselves constitute warnings against interpreting the data of folklore without due caution.

The geographic-historic method, which has superseded the search for "survivals" among most contemporary folklorists, has its values. The comparison of variants, the careful checking of places and times of origin of separate versions, and the construction of the theoretical archetype -- all these are useful procedures. It is only the tendency to regard the archetype as a terminal point of study, as an end in itself, that incurs criticism from both anthropologists and folklorists. For ballad studies, the archetype is of doubtful value: "Archetypes are not to be found," says Hustvedt, "nor can they be critically reconstructed with any

2 The Ballad Book, p. 12.
3 Quest of the Ballad, pp. 106-107, 153, 239.
4 Page 103.
In a valid sense, an archetype is as much a historical reconstruction as any theoretical set of circumstances that may have entered into the composition of the tale. No archetype can purport to be an actual original; the archetype is a useful construct derived from materials which exist. Though the method of derivation is clear and rigorous, human judgment enters into the process of construction as it must enter into any other process of historical inference. If the archetype is a legitimate object of historical search, then, so also may be the conditions that surround the tale or the ballad and affect its specific traits.

It is perhaps not necessary, therefore, to regard the study of motifs and types as terminal in folklore pursuits. Some tale-motifs, such as the belief in witchcraft, can be examined in the light of corroborating evidence, such as the history of witchcraft persecutions in specific localities. Where such evidence is available, the ballads and tales help to complete the picture of a historical era. Even the functionalist's approach to folklore emphasizes the role played by the songs and stories of various groups in their everyday lives. The relationship of folklore to human

6 Ballad Books and Ballad Men, p. 16.

experience in general, though it may not give rise to a simple correlation of motif and life-situation, nevertheless means that the life of the transmitter of a story or a ballad may be reflected in the manner of transmission.

This question of the origin of folklore motifs has been answered in a variety of ways and, like the question of ballad origins, is open to further investigation; but the views of a few recent authorities may be of value in this study. The theories of the Grimms, of Max Müller, and of the evolutionary "anthropological" school need not be taken up here. Although few folklorists attempt to explain folktales as degenerate myths at the present time, some authorities refuse to think of folktale, legend, and myth as self-contained entities: these three categories tend to overlap, and the same motifs are identifiable in all three:

The facts that are brought out most clearly from a careful analysis of the myths and folktales of an area like the northwest coast of America are that the contents of folktales and myths are largely the same, that the data show a continual flow from mythology to folktale and vice versa, and that neither group can claim priority. We furthermore observe that contents and form of mythology and folktales are determined by the conditions that determined early literary art.

8 For summaries and comment see Joseph Campbell, "Folkloristic Commentary" to Grimm's Fairy Tales, ed. James Stern (New York, 1944), p. 858; Richard Chase, Quest for Myth (Baton Rouge, 1949), pp. 76-77; and Stith Thompson, The Folktale, p. 370.

Some folktale motifs may be of mythological origin, then, just as myths may consist in part of intellectualized and formalized folktale material. But how far the materials of myths or folktales, whichever are primary, consist of the life-experience of the folk, of belief and custom, of ritual, or of deliberate imaginative fabrications or dreams and visions, is another question.

Certainly most of these sources are admissible. Boas takes them into account in his discussion of supernatural elements in folktales. The formulae of tales and myths, he concludes, reflect occurrences in human life; but the incidents that give the tales their highly imaginative quality are often contradictory to everyday experience. These incidents need not always be based on belief: they may be instances of wishful thinking, of the materialization of fear, or of the exaggeration of traits found in experience. The social life of the people does, in Boas's view, have

10 Cf. Chase, Quest, p. 77: "The generally accepted view today is that, aside from probable but undemonstrable evolutionary theories, the folk tale is psychologically and functionally primary to the more ambitious and serious mythological tales. The tendency is to suppose that obviously philosophical or explanatory myths are tales which have been remodeled and intellectualized by gifted priests or raconteurs. No modern anthropologist would deny, however, that some highly developed myths have in some places been retold and misread in folktale style."

some bearing on the creation of folktales and myths.\textsuperscript{12} Thompson also believes that many motifs are "the result of beliefs or customs of the people"\textsuperscript{13} and that motifs of this sort account for polygenesis of folktale elements.\textsuperscript{14} But it is not wise to assume that the social life of the people is always simply and clearly reflected in tales and ballads; the material must be sifted carefully if any traces of social backgrounds are to be discerned.

The relationship between ballads and folktales also poses certain problems. That such a relationship exists seems obvious on first consideration, but proof is necessary before proceeding on the assumption. And the manner and the degree of influence must also be considered.

One objection to the borrowing of separate motifs comes from Archer Taylor, who criticizes the concept of motifs as "atomistic" entities circulating freely in oral tradition and attaching themselves at random to folktales or ballads.\textsuperscript{15} Whereas this assumption of organic structure may

\textsuperscript{12} "Development of Folktales and Myths," p. 406.

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{The Folktale}, p. 439.

\textsuperscript{14} "That this primitive element in folktales has been overstressed by some anthropologists should not cause us to lose sight of its real importance. These motifs of the common life and thought of primitive peoples are likely to arise independently in many places. They furnish important parts for folktales, but before they can serve as such they need to be utilized by the composer of a tale" (\textit{The Folktale}, p. 439).

\textsuperscript{15} "Edward" and "Sven i Rosengård," p. 40.
hold for some already formulated tale-types, it does not rule out the possibility of the formation of types from separate motifs. Many of the simpler tales consist of single motifs, and the use of some of the common motifs as part of the "common stock" of narratives is attested by Thompson. A combination of elements which were once independent is also indicated by Boas.

These conclusions may apply to both folktales and ballads. Polygenesis is possible, though not highly probable, for separate motifs, but it is highly unlikely for types of any complexity. And a number of tale-types are found in the ballads. According to Murokoff's analysis, thirty-five of the ballads in Child's collection have parallels in the Aarne-Thompson index of tale-types or folk-tale analogues cited by Child. This total is about eleven per cent of the three hundred and five titles in Child's collection, or enough to indicate a significant number of borrowings.

16 The Folktale, p. 439.
19 Cf. Krappe, pp. 185-186.
20 Gene E. Murokoff, "Whole Tale Parallels of the Child Ballads as Cited or Given by Child or in FFC 74," JAF, LXIV (April-June, 1951), 203-206.
A specific study is available in Christophersen's investigation of Sir Aldingar, which Murokoff lists as "more or less doubtful."\textsuperscript{21} An oral tradition in some form probably antedates the early accounts of the Gunhild story, which is one of the hypothetical sources of the ballad.\textsuperscript{22} That this oral tradition was a song of some type is a possibility,\textsuperscript{23} but that it was a ballad in the strict sense of the term goes against the premises which Christophersen accepts at the beginning and almost at the conclusion of his study.\textsuperscript{24} Besides, the earliest versions of the Gundeberg story, which probably moulded the Gunhild tradition,\textsuperscript{25} could hardly have been ballads. And in any case, the Scandinavian versions of the ballad show definite signs of folktale influence, some of which may have come by way of another ballad:

If we compare the ancient English versions of the Gunhild story with the modern Scandinavian ones, we find the folk-tale element much more pronounced in the latter. In the former it is confined to the fight itself and consists in the idea of a dwarf unexpectedly conquering a giant; in the latter further folk-tale features have been added. Thus in all the modern Danish versions Memering wins Gunhild's hand by his fight; he is no longer the disinterested chivalrous defender of the fair sex. . . . Now obviously this change is due to the influence of stories of

\textsuperscript{21} Page 205.

\textsuperscript{22} Christophersen, The Ballad of Sir Aldingar, p. 29.

\textsuperscript{23} Christophersen, p. 29, n. 2.

\textsuperscript{24} Cf. pp. 5-6, 108. But cf. p. 164: "The legend had very likely from the beginning the form of a ballad."

\textsuperscript{25} Christophersen, pp. 108-109.
woosing contests or of wooing a princess by a fight with a giant, and very likely the influence has come, to some extent at least, from the ballad of Orm Ungersvend og Bermer-Rise.  

Furthermore, several elements in the modern British versions of the ballad can be accounted for most plausibly as borrowings from romances -- probably, by Christophersen's hypothesis, from a lost version of The Earl of Toulouse.  

The essential motif, the accusation of infidelity, appears in the seventh century, in connection with Queen Gundeberg of Lombardy; again about 900, in connection with Richardis, wife of Charles the Fat; and again in the early part of the eleventh century, in connection with the Empress Cunegund.  

In none of these cases is a developed ballad form of the tradition likely. The motif of the falsely accused queen takes a variety of forms and is extremely widespread; both wide diffusion of the motif and independent origins are likely. Whether the Apocryphal story of Susanna had any influence in moulding the theme of the tales is uncertain, though it is possible that some of the carriers of the theme were aware of this analogue.

26 Christophersen, p. 54.
27 Pages 110, 157.
28 Page 160.
29 See Margaret Schlauch, Chaucer's Constance and Accused Queens (New York, 1927), for a comprehensive treatment of this subject.
30 Christophersen, p. 161.
By way of contrast, one may take Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight. Of all the treatments of this ballad, Sophus Bugge's theory of its origin is probably the most widely known, and it has been accepted by a number of reputable scholars. Yet the connection between the Apocryphal story of Holofernes and the tale of Herr Halewijn can in no way be established, and the clues in Bugge's analysis prove under close scrutiny to be inconclusive. As with the parallel accusation motifs in the stories of Susanna and Gunhild, the analogy does not prove real connection.

Child has noted many analogies to the ballads in his collection. Although he has not always committed himself as to borrowings in the ballads, he expresses certainty in a number of cases and in some others furnishes enough evidence for at least a few judgments of probabilities.

The wit-contests of the first three ballads in Child's collection have many analogies in folktales. The setting of tasks and the use of riddles appear both in connection with courtship and in connection with escape from demonic figures. The demon-lover of Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight

31 Nygard, "Ballad Source Study," p. 146.
(4) may also be found in European folktales, notably those of the "Bluebeard" class.\textsuperscript{34} Gil Brenton (5) has an analogue in a Norse tale,\textsuperscript{35} with a possible borrowing from the romances of Tristan and Isold.\textsuperscript{36} Willie's Lady (16) has analogues in classical literature\textsuperscript{37} and in European tales from Arran to Roumania;\textsuperscript{38} but the belief that knots and locks affect childbirth is said to have existed in Scotland as late as the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{38} A Polish tale of the cante-fable variety tells of how a pipe made from a willow-bough growing over the grave of a murdered sister sings about the murder.\textsuperscript{39} This tale is geographically remote from The Twa Sisters (10), but there is a Norwegian tale of a murder revealed by a fiddle made from "strings" growing from trees over the grave of the victim.\textsuperscript{40} In a series of European tales, telltale instruments are made from reeds growing over the grave of a murdered brother.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{34} Child, I, 54.

\textsuperscript{35} Child, I, 66. Cf. type 873 in Thompson, Types (FFC 74), for some similar elements. But the tale of Tamar and Judah (Genesis xxxviii) is in some respects closer.

\textsuperscript{36} Child, I, 67.

\textsuperscript{37} Child, I, 34.

\textsuperscript{38} Child, I, 85.

\textsuperscript{39} Child, I, 124.

\textsuperscript{40} Child, I, 125.

\textsuperscript{41} Child, I, 125-126. Cf. type 780 (FFC 74).
The connection is not always established beyond the possibility of some cavil in these instances; but Child is confident of folktale connections in Allison Gross (35), and in The Twa Magicians (44). King John and the Bishop (45) is close enough to the Kaiser und Abt type (922) to indicate direct connection. The ingenious suitor of Captain Wedderburn's Courtship (46) has numerous counterparts in both folktale and romance, which are probably to be given more weighty consideration as possible sources of the ballad than the reported use of riddles in a Russian marriage ceremony. Folktales parallels are close enough to suggest extensive influence also in such ballads as John Thompson and the Turk (266), The Heir of Linne (267), The Twa Knights (268), and King Edward the Fourth and a Tanner of Tamworth (273).

42 Child, I, 340-341.
43 Child, I, 401.
44 Child, I, 407-408.
45 Child, I, 416-417.
46 Child, I, 418.
47 Child, V, 1.
48 Child, V, 12.
49 Child, V, 22.
50 Child, V, 69.
Analogues from romances, fabliaux, Breton lais, eddic poetry, and other sources might further encumber this text; but a list of parallels noted by Child, Murokoff, Kittredge, and Thompson is included in the appendix.

Child does not generally point out folklore analogues to the ballads which purport to be historical. But historical figures, like Queen Eleanor (156) and King Edward IV (273), are placed in folktale backgrounds, and there is no way of ruling out the possibility that folktale elements may become absorbed into ballads which have reference to historical incidents. Of the ballads of kinship and domestic complication, some, like The Twa Sisters (10) and Willie's Lady (6), show signs of extensive folktale influence. Others, like Edward (13), The Bonny Hind (50), and Earl Brand (7),

51 Child, I, 188-189, 209, 257-258; II, 156; V, 43.
52 Child, V, 121.
53 Child, II, 67; V, 38.
54 Child, II, 228.
55 Motifs which are relevant to the present study are also given. See below, Appendix A
56 Child, III, 256-257. See also motifs K 1528 and K 1545.2 in Stith Thompson, Motif-Index of Folk-Literature, FFC, XXXIX-XLVII, Nos. 106-117 (Helsinki, 1932-1936).
57 Child, V, 69.
show traces of elements from folktales and other sources.58 A substantial remainder, including such outstanding ballads as Lord Randall (12), The Cruel Mother (20), Lord Thomas and Fair Annet (73), The Twa Brothers (49), and The Braes of Yarrow (214), do not have influences strong enough and convincing enough to receive serious consideration from Child and other editors. But even in these cases, the possibility of influences from folktales and other sources cannot be ruled out. For one thing, some of these, like Lord Randall, have an international tradition much like that of the folktale, and their essential motifs cannot easily be localized. Again, simple and common motifs like wooing and familial rivalry are not always easily recognized as tale-motifs specifically; but this difficulty of recognition does not rule out the possibility of borrowing in some cases. And though few of this last group of ballads may be found to have direct relationships to whole tale-types, many of their separate motifs have interesting parallels in folktales and in literature of the formal variety.59

58 The parallels between the incest-motif of the Kullervo story in the Kalevala and The Bonny Hind and Lizie Wan are interesting, and the non-cupative will in the Kullervo account has parallels with that in Lizie Wan and Edward. But evidence does not at present warrant more than conjecture about possible connections. See Child, I, 445-446. For Earl Brand, see Child, I, 95-96, and Motif-Index, T 141.1, C 430, K 1371.

59 See below, Appendix A.
Several conclusions may be drawn from these studies. First, the ways in which ballads have borrowed from folktales may be both direct and indirect. Direct borrowings can be (1) a use of the whole type, which may undergo variation as a ballad, (2) the borrowing of a motif which is incorporated into the ballad at some point in transmission, or (3) a reshaping of the ballad under the influence of a folktale or of certain common folktale motifs. Some such borrowings may be contaminations, but they occur, as the studies in *Sir Aldingar* and *Edward* indicate. Indirect borrowings may be from romances, epics, or other sources, such as fabliaux, cante-fables, and any form of folk-poetry that may have antedated the ballad, in which folktale motifs may be incorporated, as the Swan Children story is incorporated in the Swan Knight legend. Second, analogies between motifs, or even partial analogies between types, of ballad and folktale or other possible source do not always constitute prima facie evidence of borrowing. However, when the analogies are close and relatively complex or there is likelihood of contact between two motifs in the course of transmission, borrowing is to be suspected; at least, one cannot assume that polygenesis is the rule when such conditions exist. Third, where borrowing from a folktale, romance, or other source is not

clearly indicated, the possibility that a given motif in both the ballad and its analogue arose from the same ultimate source cannot be disregarded. In the tradition of Sir Aldingar, for instance, the tale and ballad traditions run parallel for some time, and the parallelism may have extended a considerable distance into the past. Parallel traditions of tale and ballad may be found in American folklore for such figures as Pecos Bill, Stackalee, and Jesse James.

Gummere was undeniably aware of the problem of borrowings in his treatment of the ballads generally and of the ballads of kinship and love in particular. His treatment of the problem was partly colored by his theory of ballad origins. According to his view, the dramatic element in the ballads is in large part a reflection of social conditions: a bride-stealing or a feud might be commemorated in a dance-ballad, which had a ritualistic function; the "epic" material, which was added to the dramatic element, was largely borrowed. This analysis can no longer be regarded as a

61 See Christophersen's diagram of the pedigree of Sir Aldingar, p. 108.
63 The Popular Ballad, p. 292: "Speaking in a general way, and repeating the conclusions gained from a study of ballad structure, we may regard all particularly epic material, when not based on a historical or local legendary event, as mainly borrowed or derived . . . while the dramatic material, the 'action' of the choral throng, the situation which appealed to those improvising singers, and even that complication of kinship or of social relations which gives motive to so many of the old ballads, must be left in good part to the original side of the account."
trustworthy key to the matter, since the "singing, dancing throng" is no longer recognized as the anonymous collective author of the ballads generally and would account for few of the ballads we know today even if it were still credited with this authorship. But Gummere's claims for authentic representation of real life are not, in the last analysis, confined to the dramatic elements: ballad commonplaces and reflections of social custom were, in Gummere's view, generally not borrowings. And the kin-tragedies were, he thought, especially clear reflections of the life of the people who had produced them.

The predominant themes of the ballads of domestic situation, as Gummere sees them, may well be considered in the light of the motifs of other folk-literature. Though sure connections cannot in all cases be established, the presence or absence of analogies may throw some light on the probabilities -- especially since an interchange of ballad and folktale material has already been shown to be highly probable.

Bride-stealing is the first of the relevant subjects

64 The Popular Ballad, p. 310
65 The Popular Ballad, pp. 146, 295.
66 Such motifs as seem relevant to this discussion are listed in Appendix B, pp. 200-215. Some related ballad-titles not already given in the Thompson Motif-Index are added.
treated by Gummere in *The Popular Ballad*. That some of the Scottish ballads dealing with the subject have such a basis is undeniable; however, the examples Gummere cites as having such a basis are of eighteenth-century vintage by his own account and can tell us nothing reliable about medieval practices. The motif, K 1371 in the Motif-Index, may have had real-life origins in some cases. But to trace the supernatural bride-stealer -- Lady Isabel's Elf-Knight, for instance -- back to a human progenitor from some ancient time when tribal exogamy made marriage by capture the rule rather than the exception is contrary to the probabilities of folklore. For the supernatural lover, in various forms, was common enough in folklore to influence medieval ballad-makers. And the oldest text now extant of a wit-contest between a maid and an elfin lover -- the *Inter Diabolus et Virgo* of Kittredge's edition, makes the would-be captor

67 See pp. 145-165.


70 See the Motif-Index, especially C 31, C 31.4.2, F 300, F 301, F 471.2, and F 471.2.1.

71 No. 1, text A*, from a manuscript of about 1450 (Kittredge edition, pp. 1-2).
clearly a supernatural being; it is in later texts that he becomes an ordinary man.\textsuperscript{72}

The theme of blood-brotherhood in Bewick and Graham (211)\textsuperscript{73} has many widely distributed parallels in folklore.\textsuperscript{74} These parallels do not completely rule out the possibility of a basis in custom: Trumbull’s \textit{The Blood Covenant}, cited in the Motif-Index, gives plausible evidence of the practice.\textsuperscript{75} But the texts of the ballad so far discovered are of such late provenience that borrowing from earlier traditions or from literary sources is to be strongly suspected.\textsuperscript{76}

The theme of the cruel mother, which has a wide range of instances in folk-literature,\textsuperscript{77} is presented clearly and

\textsuperscript{72} See Child I A (I, 3-4); 4 C-F (I, 56-60). In this note and in succeeding ones, the first Arabic numeral after Child (or after no. if Child has been clearly cited) is the number of the ballad in Child’s collection; the capital letter is that given to the variant text by Child; and the numerals in parentheses are the volume number and page numbers of Child’s edition. Arabic numerals which follow the letter of the text immediately without parentheses indicate the stanza number when this number is useful. When only one variant is given, stanza will precede this number.

\textsuperscript{73} Cf. \textit{The Popular Ballad}, p. 167.

\textsuperscript{74} Motif-Index, P 312. Cf. P 311, Sworn brotherhood. Types 518 and 1364 are cited.


\textsuperscript{76} Cf. Leach, \textit{The Ballad Book}, p. 560: “Only late texts of this ballad survive, but they show evidence of being based on much older material.”

\textsuperscript{77} Motif-Index, S 12. Types 511, 590, 706, 765, and 781 are cited.
unambiguously only in *Prince Robert* (87). The English tradition of *Edward* (13) is probably another legitimate representative of the theme, however, despite Taylor's judgment that the curse, with its imputation of treachery, is a "contamination." **78** The infanticides in *The Cruel Mother* (20) and *Mary Hamilton* (173) are acts of desperation that still occur occasionally, rather than a reflection of any ancient practice. **79** Gummere accounts for the relative lack of instances of this theme by the supposition that the cruel stepmother and cruel mother-in-law figures have replaced the "unnatural" figure of the cruel mother. **80**

The mother-in-law is widely represented in folklore literature from India through Europe; **81** and an even wider range of folklore deals with the cruel stepmother. **82** The latter is not so extensively treated in the ballads as in other folklore, **83** but the former figure presents problems which must be dealt with in a later chapter. **84**

**78** "Edward" and "Sven i Rosengård," p. 38.

**79** See Motif-Index, S 301, Children abandoned (exposed), S 312, Illegitimate child exposed, and other motifs under S 300, Abandoned or murdered children. For conjectures about infanticide, see "The Mother-in-Law," p. 17, n. 3, and Schlauch, Constance, pp. 15-19.

**80** The Popular Ballad, p. 172.

**81** Motif-Index, S 51. Type 706 cited.

**82** S 31; types 403, 425, 432, 450, 451, 480, 502, 510, 511, 516, 590, 592, 706, 708, 709, 720.

**83** Cf. The Popular Ballad, p. 175.

**84** See The Popular Ballad, pp. 171-173. See below, Chapter V.
The brother-sister relationship, like the mother-in-law theme, raises some questions which cannot be dealt with in the light of the Motif-Index. The theme of the "treacherous brother" embraces several tale-types,\textsuperscript{85} as does that of the "treacherous sister";\textsuperscript{86} But the related problem of the importance of the sister's son is not clarified by the Motif-Index reference (under P 297) to Gummere's essay on the subject.

Although Gummere says, with seemly propriety, "Fickle husbands and false wives play no great part" in the ballads,\textsuperscript{87} such hardy and widely disseminated specimens as Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard (81), The Gypsy Laddie (200), James Harris (243), and Our Goodman (274) certify considerable popularity for the theme of marital infidelity (T 230), which is of course likely to have multiple origins in life-situations as well as in folklore. The punishment in Little Musgrave and in Old Robin of Portingale (80) -- "the old act of mutilation for adultery," Gummere calls it\textsuperscript{88} -- has parallels in Scottish tales;\textsuperscript{89} but similar punishments are found in tales from other regions.\textsuperscript{90}

\textsuperscript{85} K 2210: types 301, 502, 506, 550, 551.
\textsuperscript{86} K 2212: types 300, 315, 425, 706, 709, 780.
\textsuperscript{87} The Popular Ballad, p. 176; cf. p. 177.
\textsuperscript{88} The Popular Ballad, p. 180
\textsuperscript{89} See references for motif Q 451.9.
\textsuperscript{90} See motifs Q 451.1, 451.4, 451.5.1, 451.6.1., also Q 241.
The incest theme (T 410) is widely represented in folk-literature. Whether this representation indicates anything about the prevalence of the practice is doubtful, though attempts have been made to account for it in terms of matrilineal descent.\textsuperscript{91} Avoidance of the act seems to be universal among known societies,\textsuperscript{92} however; and the loss or sublimation of the theme in later traditions may be the result of censorship.

There are resemblances, then, in many important respects, between the matter of folktales and that of the ballads. Supernatural relatives or lovers may represent borrowings from the tales at least as often as they represent actual belief. The authority of certain members of the clan or of the family group affects the progress of both tales and ballads. Usually, parents in the nuclear family situation carry the greatest weight of authority. Riddles and tasks used in connection with courtship, the theme of the clever lass, the supernatural bride-stealer, the chastity test, the arrested childbirth, the twining plants, the jealous brother or older sister, the wicked stepmother engaged in malefic magic, the accidental incest of brother and sister, the ravishment of the maid and coincidental reunion

\textsuperscript{91} Cf. Schlauch, Constance, pp. 40-45.

with the ravisher, the life-token, and other common motifs are present in the ballads and mark them as part of the great stream of oral tradition whose sources are various and often remote. If evidence from the ballads is taken as indicative of the ways of the people of any specific place and time, such evidence should be corroborated as much as possible by whatever historical references are available. Folklore motifs may show something about their successive environments by the way details are altered to suit changing attitudes, of course; but even such alterations need to be considered in the light of other kinds of evidence.

Perhaps not all the items in the Motif-Index are to be regarded as purely fanciful or as remote in origin. Some motifs may be found in connection with recorded historical events. Not all such references to history can be trusted, however. The legendary matter of Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight has been localized in several places, and the inhabitants point out the stream where May Colven's false lover drowned his victims. 93 A runaway love affair is attributed, without a shred of evidence, to Lady Cassilis. 94 Even in the Border ballads, an admixture of folklore may color the accounts of rescues and raids. It will be

profitable, therefore, before considering the ballads more specifically, to see what relevant evidence exists concerning the social history of ballad times.
CHAPTER III

SOCIAL HISTORY AND THE BALLAD

Like ballad criticism, the social history of the Middle Ages has undergone its share of vicissitudes in the past century. The main line of development has in a general way reflected the tendencies of political and social theory in other spheres. Nineteenth-century historians debated Romanist and Germanist theories, sometimes along nationalistic lines; later investigators, under the influence of evolutionary social theory, saw medieval society evolving from the communal life of the clan. Nationalistic controversies have lost some of their prominence, but the question of the validity of theories of tribal origins and of "agrarian communalism" still has importance, for the student of folklore among others. Gummere's idea of the primitive throng is similar to nineteenth-century ideas of the tribal community.


3 Cf. The Popular Ballad, pp. 21-23; Old English Ballads, p. lxxxiii.
Anthropologists have attacked the conception of the homogeneous tribe which submerges individual expression in an economic, artistic, and intellectual collectivism,\(^4\) and since the last decade of the nineteenth century, historians have modified the communal-tribal theory considerably, when they have not dismissed it for lack of evidence.\(^5\) That there was sporadic cooperation among the peasants of the early Middle Ages is not unlikely, but this cooperation cannot be called universal; the medieval manor was probably not preceded by the tribal equivalent of the collective farm.\(^6\)

Even the evidence for the prevalence of kindreds in pre-medieval and early medieval times is subject to controversy. Historians have tried to find the origins of the medieval manor in tribal organization,\(^7\) in a familial structure on more restricted lines than those of the clan,\(^8\) in


\(^7\) Cf. Seebohm, The Tribal System in Wales, pp. v-vii, ix-x.

the Roman institutions of patronage and agricultural serfdom, or in a merging of some or all of these forms of association. The wide variation in social structure indicated by the available evidence seems to favor the notion of multiple origins. In any case, the role of the kindred cannot be taken for granted as universal in the origins of medieval institutions; even the evidence of Tacitus has sometimes been used to indicate that organized kindreds were not the prevalent and predominating form of association in Germanic society. Although there is evidence of power and influence on the part of kindreds in certain areas on the continent, the decline of the kindred as a functioning unit is generally evident throughout the Middle Ages.


In Britain, the Anglo-Saxons evidently did not long retain the organized kindred as an important unit of social structure. Whether because the mass migration to a new homeland broke up whatever kindreds existed or because the larger units of the monarchy and the aristocracy had superseded or were superseding the kindred as a functioning socio-political order, there is little evidence that the maegth -- in the sense of fully-developed kindred-organization, at least--played any major part in early English history. Legal documents, for instance, do not specify clearly the extent of the kindred involved in wergilds. And the wergild itself loses its importance as the Anglo-Saxon period goes on. The kindred had its role in the supporting of oaths in court; but before King Alfred's time, a defendant had to produce oath-helpers who were not kinsmen. Frankpledge


soon replaced kinship as a means of protection and an assurance of good behavior. And the old laws do not show great regard for extended familial arrangements relating to property.

Even the law of Aethelstan which Miss Phillpotts calls "the most overworked passage in the Anglo-Saxon laws" in respect to the kindred does not indicate the structure and nature of the group to which it refers. An aristocratic "house" or extended family with a following could be intended as well as a clan or a large organized kindred of any sort. And even granting the possibility that a large kindred of some independence and solidarity is indicated, the law itself illustrates the opposition of the monarchy to such groups.

In Celtic society, on the other hand, there is evidence of a different state of affairs. The kindred was an active administrative unit in Wales until the manorial system super-


22 Kindred and Clan, p. 216. Phillpotts renders the law (Aethelstan vi, 8 # 2) thus: "And if it should happen that any maegth should be so powerful and so large, whether in the land (London territory?) or out of it, whether it be twelve-hynde or two-hynde, that it refuses us our right and steps in to protect the thief, that we ride thither in full force." Cf. Vinogradoff, Manor, p. 136.

sed it: there is a good record in the documents of the Honour of Denbigh of the imposition of the manorial system on Welsh tribalism, in which kinship to the fourth degree of descent was clearly the central basis of social and economic organization,24 and kinship to the ninth degree occasionally had legal significance.25 In Ireland, the peasantry to this day cling to certain customs affecting the kin-group, and a man's "friends" are his kinsmen in a group reckoned back for from five to seven generations.26 The Scottish clan has long flourished as an association demanding loyalty and offering aid, though the claims of clansmen to the ancient origin and unbroken continuity of their particular clans may be questioned.27

Whatever the early state of kindreds in the British Isles may have been, it is generally acknowledged that kinship had undergone considerable change in England and in large


sections of Scotland by the time the surviving British ballads were composed. The effect of feudal organization on clans and kindreds was bound to be disruptive: the rulers and benefactors of feudalism were in an advantageous position to assert their claims over those of other individuals and groups. The essential feudal relationship, founded on homage and customary service, was the normal one in medieval Europe; and at the base of the feudal pyramid, the manor was the prevailing social unit. The numerous exceptions establish the rule, as Lipson remarks:

Yet, just as the factory is the type of modern industrial organization although small-scale production still widely persists, so the manor is the type of medieval rural organization notwithstanding the survival of small non-manorial properties.

The imposition of Norman feudalism on England is generally recognized as the completion of a process that had already been taking place in Anglo-Saxon society.

Partly because the Norman Conquest was not a total revolution, however, the persistence of custom and precedent on the local level accounted for much variety, especially in


31 Cf. Frederic William Maitland, Domesday Book and Beyond (Cambridge, 1897), pp. 223-224; Seebohm, English Village Community, p. 179.
degrees of servitude and liberty. 32 Along the broadest lines, the division is usually made between the champion country of central England, where the manorial system achieved its highest development and its greatest predominance, and the woodland and outlying districts, where a variety of social arrangements prevailed because of the relative isolation of small communities and where Celtic arrangements sometimes persisted. 33

In the champion country, the convenience of the lord of the manor and the efficient administration of the manorial economy called for certain basic land units, which could not be subdivided and redivided indefinitely or held by fluctuating and indefinite groups. That some subdivision took place at first is probable; 34 but by the time of full manorial organization, most tenements had become relatively stable, so that each cottar or villein could be held responsible for certain standard dues and services governed by the size of his holding. 35 Inheritance in such cases was impartible; the


34 Bennett, Manor, p. 50.

35 Bennett, Manor, pp. 255-256; cf. Vinogradoff, Manor, p. 204. Kent was a notable exception, and there were others: cf. Homans, pp. 112-115; Vinogradoff, Manor, pp. 246-247.
holding went to the oldest son or in rarer cases to the youngest, and the other sons of the former tenant were obliged to shift for themselves if they were to become heads of families. The daughters, of course, married out of the family and settled on their husbands' holdings. The nuclear family was thus the standard unit of kinship-organization in developed manorial society; this stem-family (Le Play's famille-souche) became the prevalent one in England and in much of feudal Europe. There were some ties of loyalty between brothers and sisters, but the formation of organized kindreds of any effectual sort under this system was highly unlikely.

In this basic family unit, the major lines of relationship were fairly well defined. The parents were in theory and often in effect the rulers of the household. Children were supposed to obey both parents; daughters especially might come to grief if they refused to do so, even if the demands made upon them were of a kind that would in modern society be considered unreasonable. The treatment of

36 Bennett, Manor, pp. 255-256; Homans, pp. 117-120; see Homans, pp. 123-124 for ultimogeniture or "Borough English."


38 See Homans, pp. 215-218.

Elizabeth Paston at as late a date as 1454 is a notorious example of harshness in parents not considered exceptionally brutal in other connections:

For she was never in so great sorrow as she is now-a-days, for she may not speak with any man, whosoever come, he not see nor speak with my man, nor with servants of her mother's, but that she beareth her an hand otherwise than she meaneth; and she hath since Easter the most part been beaten once in the week or twice, and sometimes twice on a day, and her head broken in two or three places.  

That this treatment was somewhat extreme even for those times, however, may be deduced from the solicitude shown by Elizabeth's aunt and by her extenuation of the mother's behavior -- "for sorrow oftentime causeth women to beset them otherwise than they should do" -- and by her instructions to John Paston to burn the letter -- "for and my cousin your mother knew that I had sent this letter, she would never love me." And corporal punishment was thought salutary in many cases where it might not be approved of today; Agnes Paston instructs Clement's tutor to "belash him till he will amend; and so did his last master, and the best that he ever had at Cambridge." But the records of lawsuits between parents and children who had come of age give evidence of


41 Agnes Paston to London (recipient unknown), January 28, 1457, Fenn, I, 82-83.
lasting bitterness and occasional rebellion.  

Elizabeth Paston's troubles were largely over marriage arrangements, and in this respect also her case was symptomatic. A girl's preference might be consulted, but custom did not make it important. Marriages were frequently arranged, sometimes before the children were old enough to have a preference, and often with regard to considerations of property. The daughters of the very poor probably had more freedom of choice within the limited sphere that was open to them than had the children of other groups.

By analogy with the Biblical patriarch and by virtue of his legal responsibility as head of the household as well as his superior physical strength, the father was normally thought of as the ruler of the family. But genuine affection between husband and wife was not uncommon, and a wife of strong character might acquire equal importance with her husband.

Wife-beating was a recognized right of man, and was practised without shame by high as well as low. The woman's defense was her tongue, sometimes giving her mastery in the household, but often leading to muscular retort.

42 Bennett, *The Pastons*, p. 75.


44 See Bennett, *The Pastons*, p. 51.


46 Trevelyan, p. 260.
Cases of brutal treatment can be cited: Coulton gives three pages of evidence of "wife-beating, sister-beating, daughter-beating," and claims that the full evidence "would fill a volume." Bennett notes the widespread acceptance of such treatment but is aware of some happy relationships:

Yet it would be foolish to assume that all husbands maltreated their wives, or subjected them to harsh discipline. Much may be learned concerning the happy relations often existing between husband and wife by turning over the pages of collections of medieval wills. Frequently the whole of a man's estate is left to his wife to dispose of as she wishes. The evidence as a whole shows a disparity and an inconsistency that may well typify many medieval institutions.

Since women were minors before the law in feudal society, their property rights were limited. The woman's dower was not to exceed one third of her husband's real estate at the time of the marriage, and the wife had no control over the management of the dower during her husband's lifetime. These laws were modified in the course of time, however, from the thirteenth century onward, so that a widow might

48 Page 213.
49 The Pastons, p. 58.
50 Davis, Medieval Barony, p. 74.
inherit the whole estate of the husband.\(^{52}\) In villein-age, the whole tenement went to the widow; in other cases a third and sometimes a half.\(^{53}\) A widow's "free bench" -- originally a bench at the family hearth -- entitled her to at least a portion of the estate as long as she remained chaste and unmarried;\(^{54}\) but the belief that a man was needed to manage the holding often led to remarriage, sometimes by order of the lord of the manor.\(^{55}\)

Extensions of kinship beyond the nuclear family counted, even under feudalism, in at least two connections. One was social status. Especially during the later Middle Ages, kinship was important to both the serf and the lord: since the production of two or more male kinsmen of a serf in court constituted legal evidence of his status, the records of relationship were carefully kept on some manors.\(^{56}\) Not only close relatives were likely to be produced as witnesses; according to Bennett and Vinogradoff, descent and collateral relationship were sometimes traced back for four generations.

\(^{52}\) "Under Henry III, in 1217, a widow was permitted to receive at dower one third of all the real estate of which her husband was possessed at his death. In the reign of Edward IV a husband might, if he chose, endow his wife with the whole of his real estate for life" (Goodsell, p. 226).

\(^{53}\) Bennett, \textit{Manor}, pp. 251-252.

\(^{54}\) Ibid.; cf. Homans, pp. 180-188.

\(^{55}\) Homans, p. 188; cf. Davis, p. 74.

in order to prove status. Such proofs must have been difficult to come by in many villages, however, especially in view of the instability of family names:

A boy was by no means sure of bearing the same last name as his father and brothers, but was likely to be called Hugh's son, after his father, or Reeve, after his office, or Marden, after his home village, or Atwell, after the place of his house in the village, or Turnpenny, after some personal characteristic, without regard for the names his ancestors had borne. It is true that in that century and later ones, the use of family names became more and more settled.

Alliances by blood and by marriage were important to the land-owning classes, not only for the consolidation of property, but in some cases for the sake of power. Feuds among powerful family groups were in evidence on the continent as late as the thirteenth century, and in scattered localities in Britain, the borough records show that degrees of involvement in violence and manslaughter on the part of kinsmen persisted. In Archinfield in 1221, it is thought lawful for a manslayer to make agreement with the

57 Bennett, Manor, p. 314, n. 1; Vinogradoff, Villainage, p. 143.
58 Homans, p. 217.
61 Cf. Bloch, Société féodale, p. 196: "En France, jusque dans les dernières décades du XIIIe siècle, pourquoi le sage Beaumanoir, serviteur de rois entre tous les bons gardiens de la paix, estime-t-il désirable que chacun sache calculer les degrés de parenté? Afin, dit-il, que, dans les guerres privées, l'on puisse équérir 'L'aide de son ami'.
dead man's kin:

Talis est consuetudino in Urchefeldia, quod de tali morte licet aliquis convictu sit, bene potest concordiam facere cum parentibus. 62

In Manchester in 1301, if a townsman who strikes another "can meet the feud of him who struck, he lawfully may; but if not, by the advice of his kin, he shall make peace with the injured man, and this without paying any forfeit to the reeve." 63 And a statute of Hereford in 1486 shows both the inclination of families to fight over property and the attempt to counteract such violence:

Et statim mandetur eis quod prosequantur [placidam predictum de tenemento petito] per omnias vias sibi necessarias excepto duello quod non debet inter illos nec aliquos concives nostros vadiar propter inimiciiam perpetuam parentum et puerorum nostrorum que ad perdicionem civitatis posset verti, et alia pericula innumerabilia incumbencia. 63

Such instances do not constitute evidence of organized kindreds, of course; family groups, including some collateral relatives and, in the upper classes, retainers, were probably involved in the vendettas and contests for power that occasionally took place. Violence on the part of large households is in evidence during periods of civil disruption like that of


63 Bateson, I, 31; editor's translation.
the fifteenth century; ambitious families often seized the opportunity to attack other groups under the color of defending the Lancastrian or the Yorkist cause. Families like the Pastons made use of their real or supposed relationships to people of influence -- somewhat more frequently than their modern counterparts have been known to do, perhaps, but hardly in the systematic and confident way that would prevail under a society of organized kindreds.

The second important connection in which kinship played a part was that of exogamy. Incest, as at first defined by canon law, was imputed to anyone who married a cousin to the seventh degree. After 1215, the prohibition was limited to the fourth degree; but even with such a concession, incestuous marriages were difficult to avoid, especially in manorial villages where marriages with outsiders incurred a fine. Violations of the incest rule, as applied to the extreme degrees, were therefore almost inevitable, and the discovery or the claim of relationship

64 Cf. Bennett, The Pastons, pp. 5-7, 181.

65 See The Pastons, p. 9, on the relations between John Paston and Sir John Fastolf: "Perhaps he was distantly related to the Pastons, for Margaret once writes, 'I suppose Sir John Fastolf if he were spoken to, would be gladder to let his kinsmen have part than strange men, ... and he often speaks of John Paston as 'cousin'."

within the forbidden degrees was sometimes convenient in securing an annulment. 67

In both of the above instances, the prevailing kinship-structure is evidently of the vague bilateral sort that is found in most modern European society. The lack of functional organization for purposes of exogamy made the enforcement of incest regulations confusing and difficult. The vague term "cousin" covered a multitude of relationships, and the use of "friends" as a term applied to kinsmen 68 also implied indifference to the finer points of kinship terminology. 69 Family pride, inculcated by literary traditions and confirmed by property considerations, made lineage and alliances of blood important to the upper classes, 70 even as consciousness of social status makes lineage important to certain "upper-class" contemporary groups. 71


68 See Bloch, Société féodale, pp. 192-196.

69 Cf. Romans, pp. 216-217. "The terms used to reckon and indicate kinship often reflect the facts of family organization. Accordingly in north-western Europe they supported the emphasis put upon the small family group consisting of a man, his wife, and their children" (p. 216).

70 See Bloch, Société féodale, pp. 194-195.

The above conditions represent the closest approximation that can be made at present to the arrangements that prevailed in the champion country generally; but in the areas known as "woodland," conditions of tenure and of family organization often varied from the standard manorial pattern. A less thoroughly regulated economy made different arrangements possible; and since these areas were often Celtic in part at least, some of the social structure found in them probably depended on kinship. In these areas, and in Kent as well, inheritance was often partible, and indications are that a joint-family system prevailed.

According to the joint-family organization, a man's land descended to all his sons jointly. They and their descendants would hold and work the land in common, and dwell together in one great house or in a small cluster of adjoining houses. The Welch trefs were such groups, or the big farms of the sagas, or the family communes of Auvergne and Nivernais. From time to time as the population of joint-families increased, they would be likely to split or bud and so found new families. In certain circumstances the customs of the joint-family were in danger of degenerating into mere rules of law allowing an action for, or prescribing, the division of a man's land at his death among all his sons.

The largest area outside of manorial England with which this study must deal is Scotland; since many of the British ballads are of Scottish origin or have passed through

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73 See Homans, p. 112.
74 Homans, pp. 119-120.
Scottish tradition, the question of the kindred in Scotland is important. Unfortunately, there is not so much evidence about Scottish social structure, especially in the formative years, as there is about Welsh society in comparable times. Historians following the "comparative method" are tempted to take up Seebohm's suggestion that Welsh institutions would throw light on Scottish social history. 75 On such an assumption, evolution from what has been called tribalism, with its marked structure of kin-ties regulating rights to the produce of the land and its emphasis on the rights of kinsmen to the fourth degree to certain "tribal" areas rather than on individual ownership of definite tracts of land 76 would be a fairly continuous, organic development. 77 Evidence of such a continuity is slight, however; the resemblance between Welsh and Scottish treatment of strangers in blood in landholding cited by Seebohm 78 is not conclusive, since similar conditions apply to villein tenure under manorial conditions, 79 and the fourth-generation limit is probably

75 Tribal System, p. vi.
76 Tribal System, pp. vii-viii, 89-91.
78 Tribal System, p. 128.
79 See above, pp. 58-59.
the most practical one to recognize in the absence of detailed genealogical records.

Inheritance in the strictly male line is also considered a Celtic trait, and there is some evidence of a preference for the male line in Scottish lineages, but there were exceptions to this rule also, and the need for male leadership in warlike times may explain the preference more cogently than the persistence of custom. Likewise, the institution of tanistry, which would seem to indicate a preference for arrangements like the Welsh system, based on descent from a common ancestor rather than on the direct line of father-to-son inheritance, was not universal, even among Highlanders. "Stern necessity rather than old tradition," says Miss Grant, "seems to have influenced the Highlanders when they departed from the accepted laws and customs of Scotland." 


84 Page 521.
Recent historians have also taken into account the influence of Norse inroads on Scottish territory and the introduction of Anglo-Norman feudalism into parts of Scotland. In the extreme north and in the Western Isles, Norse settlements and incursions were numerous before the eleventh century; and in Galloway, some Gaels adopted Norse customs and some went into piracy with Vikings. A Gaelic revival of the twelfth century may have counteracted Norse influences somewhat. But little is definitely known of the social history of these times.

The chief threat to Celtic institutions in Scotland was Anglo-Norman feudalism. From the twelfth century onward, feudal institutions were officially sanctioned and encouraged in the kingdom: the reign of King David, as Trevelyan says, "laid the impress of Norman ruling families on Scottish society and religion." Feudal land tenure became the rule in the Lowlands generally; the feudalization of the Western Lowlands was fairly complete by the end of the thirteenth century.

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85 Grant, pp. 151-152.
86 Grant, pp. 153-155.
87 See Grant, p. 153: "How far the Norsemen modified the civilization of the older inhabitants is not known. It was natural that, coming as conquerors as they did, they should have had some influence over the possession of land."
The effect of feudal ideas on official administrative policy and on legal theory was far-reaching. The laws of the Scottish kings show a consistent attempt to enforce feudal patterns of land-tenure, inheritance, service, and criminal law. Some concession is made to local customs of partible inheritance among free men, but the knight's fee is kept intact. Daughters may inherit, in accordance with feudal practice. The direct line is preferred to the collateral line, in contrast to the Celtic principle of tanistry. Wardship is regulated by feudal custom. Women have the same narrowly defined rights as those of manorial England. A widow is entitled to part of her deceased husband's house, and a woman "frie and subject to na man" may make a will. A woman's dowry is limited.

Cf. Trevelyan, p. 217; Vinogradoff, _Manor_, p. 32.

See Grant, pp. 25-30; cf. p. 64: "In Scotland the Normans' influence deeply penetrated the whole conception of their rights among the land-holding classes, and also the legal doctrines."


Malcolm II, Book II, ch. xxviii (ibid.).

Malcolm II, Book II, ch. xxxiv (ibid., p. 65).

Malcolm II, Book II, chapters xli, xlii (ibid., p. 69).

David I, ch. xxv of Borough Laws (ibid., p. 230).

Malcolm II, Book II, ch. xxxvi (ibid., p. 66).
to one-third of the husband's property at the time of the marriage, as in England; and the widow may have to go through legal processes to get her dowry if it is "nocht vaicand." The kindred, under the early laws, play the chief role in manslaughter accusations; but the king may serve as accuser in place of the man's kindred, and feudal ties as well as kinship are admissible in proof of manslaughter.

Not all custom is a duplicate of written law, however, and it is possible that non-feudal elements played a part in the social organization of some areas, even where feudalism was officially in force. The economic bases of the manor did not develop generally in Scotland as thoroughly as they did in England; the emphasis on stock-raising at the expense of tillage and the use of the in-field and out-field instead of the three-field system mark a significant difference.

The feudalization of Scotland, however, was by no means a simple and uniform process, and the scope of the movement was limited. . . . The feudalization of land-holding in Scotland is well attested by her code of laws, and by surviving charters, but it would be the greatest possible mistake to imagine that the mass of Scots people were thereby transformed; or that the system was imposed upon the general organization of

97 Malcolm II, Book II, ch. xvi (ibid., p. 47).
99 Malcolm II, Book IV, ch. v (ibid., p. 127).
the people, as a complete and totally separate thing, like the crust upon a pie; or that the feudal system itself worked out in practice upon a neatly classified and tidily uniform plan.101

The status of the Scottish tenant was somewhat different, it is said, from his English counterpart. Although serfdom evidently existed in Scotland in the twelfth century, both in the Lothians and in the North,102 the status of the average Scottish tenant has been called less servile and at the same time less secure than that of the typical villein.

The legal position of the tillers of the soil, however, in such a country as eleventh-, twelfth-, and thirteenth-century Scotland must necessarily represent merely an abstraction. In practice, by the end of the period, the rural workers had attained an entirely different position to those of England. There was no large semi-servile class such as the English villeins. They had imperceptibly passed into free-men, whether tenants, sub-tenants, or cottars, and even humbler individuals depending upon the cottars, but, apart from the rather shadowy rights of the "kindly tenants," they were able to acquire no claims to the land. There was in Scotland no equivalent to the English "copyholders."103

The Scottish tenant's lease was often short and his tenure insecure. A year's rent was customarily payable at the beginning of every lease.104 An act of 1555 ordered the landlord to give the tenant fifty days' notice if his lease

101 Grant, p. 38.
102 Grant, pp. 73-74.
104 Grant, pp. 254-255.
was not to be renewed but allowed the landlord to require the aid of the sheriff in ejecting tenants who refused to leave. 105 Some acts of Parliament limited abuses of landlordship in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but apparently with little effect. 106 Rack-rents and insecure leases no doubt added to the roster of landless men whose allegiance went where there was promise of a meal and protection. Laws directed specifically at such vagabonds appear in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. 107

Kinship may have had a role in land-holding in some nominally feudal areas, as in the somewhat disputed question of the "kindly tenants," whose relatively privileged position may have been a result of their relationship to the chief land-holder. 108 But such exceptions may be regarded as variations on a prevailingly feudal pattern and are hardly conclusive as evidence of a persistence of arrangements based on kinship. "How far any vestiges of tribal landholding survived in the Lowlands," says Miss Grant, "it is,

105 Grant, p. 256.

106 See Cunningham, pp. 177-178; cf. Coulton, Abbeys, p. 263.

107 Robert II, ch. xii (Regiam Majestatem, ed. Skene, pp. 395-396). Robert III, ch. xlvii, ch. xlviii (pp. 415-416). Ch. xlvii is explicit: "Item, considering the great and horrible destructions, heirisches, burnings, and slaughters that are sa commonlie done throw all the kinrik," etc. (P. 415).

unfortunately, impossible to say. There is no evidence of its existence.\textsuperscript{109}

Most modern historians acknowledge that feudalism was extended into the Highlands and Isles during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{110} There was resistance to this extension, and some kindreds or nuclei of clans may have survived intact;\textsuperscript{111} but all we can be sure of is that the idea of kinship as a social nexus persisted in some areas.\textsuperscript{112} In any case, clan organization seems to have extended itself increasingly in the Highlands during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{113}

The clan system as it is known to historians, however, owes a good deal to feudalism for its preservation and resembles feudalism at least as much as it does the tribal system of Wales. Rather than representing a clear-cut persistence of specific kindred-organization, the typical Scottish clan has the marks of an essentially feudal order permeated with ideas of kinship -- ideas which serve as

\textsuperscript{109} Social and Economic Development, p. 63.

\textsuperscript{110} Cf. Grant, p. 150; Adam and Innes of Learney, The Clans, pp. 101-102; William C. Mackenzie, The Highlands and Isles of Scotland, pp. 38-39; David Mackay, Clan Warfare in the Scottish Highlands (Paisley, 1922), pp. 11-12.

\textsuperscript{111} See Grant, p. 151; Trevely, p. 217.

\textsuperscript{112} See Grant, pp. 150-151, 476, 496.

\textsuperscript{113} Grant, p. 151.
important ties between members. The clan-chief often held his lands by feudal tenure. The clansmen were his tenants and owed him dues and allegiance in their turn. A vital part of the system in many areas was the tacksman, who held a long and somewhat privileged lease in return for military service and the collection of rents for other tenants. It is not even clearly evident that the tacksman was always related to the chief by blood. In fact, the economic and military ties of the chief and his tenants were so important that one is tempted to question the claims of the more ardent defenders of the familial aspects of clanship. As McKerral writes, "Long-standing custom, subservience, and economic weakness were likely to furnish motives quite as strong as those based on the ties of kindred." Nevertheless, the real or fictitious ties of kinship did much to cement the bonds of Scottish feudalism and to insure its continuance well into the eighteenth century.

114 Mackenzie, Highlands, pp. 88-89.
115 Mackenzie, Highlands, p. 88; Mackay, pp. 11-12.
117 McKerral, pp. 20-21.
118 See, for example, Skene, The Highlanders, pp. 100-101; Adam and Innes, The Clans, pp. 96, 140, et passim.
119 McKerral, p. 21.
120 Cf. Grant, pp. 496-502, for examples of the use of clan-organization to bolster feudal ties.
The Border clans, whether they manifested a persistent clan sentiment or arose as an analogy to the Highland clans, owed their existence to the same warlike conditions that had encouraged clanship in the Highlands. The incessant guerilla warfare with England, the frequent raids over the border, made some form of association for mutual defense inevitable; and the form which suggested itself was that of kinship. The family name was often the rallying point. "Broken men" were adopted into the clan, especially if their fighting ability was good; other dependents paid "black-mail" to one or more clans for protection. But for the raids and feuds of the Border clans, and for perhaps a few side-lights on the relationships of the clansmen, the ballads may well be consulted.


123 Grant, p. 483.

CHAPTER IV

KINDRED AND CLAN IN THE BALLADS

The ballads in Child's collection which deal the most explicitly and thoroughly with the conditions of Scottish clanship are those of the Border. That these should furnish more insight into social conditions than the Highland ballads may seem surprising, but the continuance of the Gaelic cycles of Finn and Oisín seems to overshadow balladry in English in the northern region.¹ And the events of Border warfare and local adventure seem to have been eminently suitable subjects for ballads; not taking place on a grand enough scale to require the scope of the epic, these events had a strong appeal to local singers and hearers.² In fact, the conditions of Border life, as far as they can be ascertained from ballads and chronicles, are strongly reminiscent of the ideal ballad environment described by Entwistle.³ As a place of

¹ See Grant, Social and Economic Development, pp. 475-476.

² Cf. William J. Entwistle, European Balladry (Oxford, 1939), p. 30: "The ballad people was the whole people, organized under its natural leaders. They prefer aristocracy to the proletariat, and often seem to be mainly interested in the local chief, not the nation's king. . . . In this respect also ballads differ from traditional epics, for the traditional epic has a national scope and its heroes are the leaders of the nation."

³ Pages 5-8.
origin, the Border is of prime interest to ballad students. The center of the British ballad world has always been the Scottish Border. Everything conjoins in its favor -- its topography, its history, its social economy, and its poetic tradition. Even the discovery of America's hoard, while adding greatly to our knowledge of the processes of tradition, cannot detract from the importance of the Border as the home of the ballad makers, singers, and collectors. 4

The Border ballads may be divided into two classes, the "historical" and the "romantic." 5 These terms are approximate, and they overlap considerably. At the "romantic" extreme, ballads like Thomas Rhymer and Tam Lin are full of folklore motifs of transformation, the supernatural lover, and redemption from fairyland; at the "historical" extreme, ballads like The Battle of Otterburn and The Hunting of the Cheviot refer to events and can be compared, though not closely, to historical accounts. 6 At best, however, the "historical" ballads cannot be shown to be more reliable


5 Cf. T. D. Miller, Border Ballads and Balladists (Galashiels, 1931), pp. 2, 8, 20. Chambers employs a similar distinction (English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages, pp. 182-168) but uses "imaginative" instead of "romantic."

6 See Francis James Child, ed., The English and Scottish Popular Ballads, III, 289-295, 304-305. "The singer is not a critical historian, but he supposes himself to be dealing with facts; he may be partial to his countrymen, but he has no doubt that he is treating of a real event; and the singer in this particular case thought he was describing the battle of Otterburn, the Hunting of the Cheviot being indifferently so called" (p. 304). In neither case is historicity a strong point of the ballad.
historically than the chronicles of Boece and Lindsay of Pitscottie, of whose accuracy there is considerable doubt.\(^7\)

Between the extremes lie ballads like *The Braes o Yarrow*, which could have been derived from an event or from oral tradition of more or less remote origin: as Child remarks, "the facts are such as are likely to have occurred often in history, and a similar story is found in other ballads."\(^8\)

It is, then, probably unrealistic to expect circumstantial accuracy from either ballads or prose accounts dealing with Border life. But where the sources agree substantially in representing the human relationships and attitudes involved in the events which they relate, where neither the ballads nor the prose accounts are highly colored with folklore, and where the implications of both harmonize reasonably well with the conclusions of recent authorities, one may expect to make at least some fairly valid inferences.

\(^7\) Cf., for example, Andrew Lang, *A History of Scotland from the Roman Occupation*, 5th ed. (Edinburgh, 1929), I, 320: "But these romantic details, so excellently handled by Scott, reach us late and on bad authority, as through Boece and Lindsay of Pitscottie. Whenever we can check Pitscottie by documents he is almost invariably, and most ingeniously, wrong." Lindsay's account of the execution of John Armstrong (Robert Lindsay of Pitscottie, *The Chronicles of Scotland*, ed. J. G. Dalyell [Edinburgh, 1814], pp. 342-343) reads much like the ballad of Johnie Armstrong (169) at some points. Child suggests that his C-text contains borrowings from Lindsay's account (*The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, III, 366-367); but there are also parallels in A and B: cf. A, stanzas 6-9, 11 (III, 368), B 6-11 (III, 369).

\(^8\) *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, IV, 164.
Of primary interest for the present study are the ballads which deal with the forays, feuds, and jail-breaks of the Border clans. These ballads not only lack supernatural motifs and the more obvious marks of folktale borrowings; they possess a homely realism and a concreteness of detail that distinguish them from the romantic group. Even these ballads are not very informative about social and economic relationships; but personal ties of kinship and of other sorts enter into the tales of raiding and retaliation.

One possible indication of the nature of kinship is the way it figures in the blood-feud, which is present in some of the Border ballads. The practice is verified, in a general way, by both parallel prose accounts and historical commentary on Border conditions.

9 The following are worthy of consideration for present purposes: Rookhope Ryde (179), The Lads o Wamphray (184), Dick o the Cow (185), Kinmont Willie (186), Jock o the Side (187), Archie o Cawfield (188), Hobie Noble (189), Jamie Telfer in the Fair Dodhead (190), and The Death of Parcy Reed (193).

10 Dick o the Cow suggests, in its theme of theft from the robber, the Ali Baba type of folktale material. Cf. The Crafty Farmer (283). But the parallel is very general, and Dick o the Cow contains some interesting detail about specific groups, such as the Armstrongs.

11 Cf. Steinberg, Studien zur Border-Ballade: "Über die sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse berichten die Balladen selbst nur sehr wenig" (p. 51).

12 Cf. Steinberg, pp. 57-58; Veitch, Border, pp. 35-40. Rennie finds the Lowland feuds characterized by treachery and cold-bloodedness and a "cloak-and-dagger atmosphere." He finds many small feuds and intra-clan feuds (Clansmen, pp. 271-272).
Some indications of blood-feud practices may be found in *The Lads of Wamphray* (184), *Hobie Noble* (189), *The Death of Parcy Reed* (193), and *Lord Maxwell's Last Goodnight* (195).

*The Lads of Wamphray* probably has reference to a raid made by the Johnstons in 1593 of which the chronicles take brief notice. A reference to Will of Kirkhill exists in *The New Statistical Account of Scotland*, but only the ballad is concerned with the vengeance taken by Will for his uncle's death. Will sees his uncle hanged and vows to avenge him:

"But if ever I live Wamphray to see,
My uncle's death revenged shall be!"

Will recruits riders, presumably from among the Johnstons, though the ballad does not specify this, turns loose the Crichtons' cattle, and drives the booty toward Wamphray. The Crichtons attempt to stop the raiders; there is a fight, and the ballad claims victory for Will and his men. Will's final boast is about the "noble deed" of revenge, but the ballad does not overlook the profit of the raid:

"I think my lads, we've done a noble deed;
We have revenged the Galiard's blood.

"For every finger o the Galiard's hand,
I vow this day I've killed a man."

14 Child, III, 459.
15 Child 184, stanza 22 (III, 459).
16 Stanza 25 (III, 460).
17 Stanzas 26-33 (III, 460).
And hame for Wamphray they are gane,
And away the Crichtons' nout they've taen. 18

The seeker of "survivals" might be tempted to find an instance of the collection of wergild in the "lifting" of the Crichtons' cattle; such informal and violent requisitions do occur in Scandinavian tradition. 19 But neither The Lads of Wamphray nor any other Border ballad gives sufficient grounds for such a speculation, and both accounts and ballads show that the lifting of cattle occurred frequently, with or without pretext.

Though there is little historical evidence about the activities of Hobie Noble, 20 he is the chief actor in two excellent ballads. 21 In the ballad which bears his name, he is the victim of treachery on the part of a member of his adopted clan -- "traitor Sim o the Mains," as he is labeled in the ballad. 22 At first, Hobie hesitates to cross the Border into England, where the land-sergeant has him "at


20 See Child, IV, 1: "Mr. R. B. Armstrong informs me that he has found no notice of Hobie Noble except that Hobbe Noble, with eight others, 'lived within the Nyxons, near to Bewcastle.'"

21 Cf. Child, IV, 1: "Hobie Noble . . . will always command the hearty liking of those who live too late to suffer from his irregularities, on account of his gallant bearing in Jock o the Side. See especially No 187 A."

22 Child 189, stanza 4 (IV, 2).
feid" for the death of a brother. 23 The feud is not followed up in the ballad, however: Hobie is even offered remission of the death sentence for his crimes if he will confess to a raid:

Confess my lord's horse, Hobie, they say,  
And the morn in Carlisle thou's no die;  
"How shall I confess them?" Hobie says,  
"For I never saw them with mine eye." 24

Only local tradition, recorded in Richardson's Borderer's Table Book, 25 corroborates the sordid tale of the death of Parcy Reed. In taking the life of Whinton Crosier, Parcy was merely discharging his office as warden of the district, if the tradition can be trusted. But the Crosiers recognized no fine distinctions; with the aid of the treacherous Halls, who disarmed Parcy, the Crosiers wounded him mortally and rode off gloating:

"Now, Parcy Reed, we've paid our debt,  
Ye canna weel dispute the tale." 26

Sentiment is on the side of the victim in both texts of the ballad; and the habits of the Crosiers are roundly scored in B:

God send the land deliverance  
Frase every reaving, riding Scot:

23 Stanza 9 (IV, 2).
24 Stanza 31 (IV, 3).
26 Child 193, B 31 (IV, 27).
We'll sune hae neither cow nor ewe,
We'll sune hae neither stag nor stot.  

Parcy's dying words in the B-text bear the promise of further retaliation:

"The laird o' Clennel bears my bow,
The laird o' Brandon bears my brand;
Whenever they ride i' the Border-side,
They'll mind the fate o' the laird Troughend."  

The ballad of Lord Maxwell's Last Goodnight reveals little about the circumstances of the feud between the Maxwells and the Johnstons. Maxwell is about to go into exile for killing the laird Johnston in retaliation for the death of Maxwell's father:

"Tho I have killed the laird Johnston,
What care I for his feed?
My noble mind dis still incline;
He was my father's dead.

"Both night and day I laboured oft
Of him revenged to be,
And now I've got what I long sought;
But I manna stay with thee."  

Maxwell expects the feud to continue and to bring suffering to his adherents:

"Adiew, fair Eskdale, up and down,
Where my poor friends do dwell!
The bangisters will ding them down,
And will them sore compel."  

27 B 1 (IV, 26).
28 B 41 (IV, 28).
29 Child 195 B 2-3 (IV, 37); cf. A 3-4 (IV, 36).
30 B 9 (IV, 33); cf. A 7 (IV, 37).
And he expects to avenge his friends in his turn:

"But I'll revenge that feed myself
When I come ou'r the sea;
Adiew, my lady and only joy!
For I maunna stay with thee." 31

In this case, however, the prose accounts are more informative than the ballad. The accounts show that there was enmity between the Maxwells and the Johnstons at least as far back as 1585, when the Laird of Johnston was commissioned to pursue and take John, Lord Maxwell, who was in the bad graces of the Earl of Arran. After raids and counter-raids, Johnston was captured. In 1592, peace was made. The Johnstons, however, made a raid -- probably the one celebrated in The Lads of Wamphray -- and Maxwell, who had evidently been restored to favor and was warden of the district by that time, was commissioned to punish the Johnstons. In order to induce the now reluctant Maxwell to take action, the injured persons entered into a bond of manrent with him. The Johnstons, by an alliance with Scotts, Eliots, and others, however, were able to defeat Maxwell in a battle at Dryfe Sands, and Maxwell was killed in the fight. Though Sir James Johnston made peace with the king, the clans of Maxwell and Johnston kept up a private war, in spite of imprisonment and outlawry. John, ninth Lord of Maxwell, successor to the John Maxwell who had been killed, eventually

31 B 10 (IV, 38); cf. A 8 (IV, 37).
(1609) met with Sir James Johnston to adjust differences. But there was evidently treachery in the parley, whether premeditated or not; and it ended when Lord Maxwell shot Sir James in the back. Maxwell fled the country but returned after four years. He was betrayed by a kinsman and executed. 32

A few things are worthy of note in this account: for one thing, the royal power, though unable to stop the feud, has influence in several ways: at some point or other, each of the parties has the support of the king's authority, and imprisonment and exile at the will of the monarch eventually lead to an attempt to settle the feud. For another, the essentially feudal bond of manrent has more to do with the resumption of the conflict than the enmity of the two clans. Third, the lines of kinship-loyalty are not neatly and cleanly drawn: Lord Maxwell is betrayed by a relative; and in the attempt at reconciliation, Sir Robert Maxwell, who is brother-in-law to Sir James Johnston as well as cousin to John Maxwell, is asked to act as mediator. 33

References to the blood-feud may be claimed for at least two other Border ballads; one is brief, the other, doubtful. After the execution of Johnie Armstrong, according

32 Child, IV, 34-35. For Child's sources see p. 35, notes.
33 Child, IV, 35.
to the ballad, his young son (A-text) or his infant son (B-text) vows to avenge his father:

Newes then was brought to young Ionno Armstrong,
As he stood by his nurses knee,
Who vowed if ere he live'd for to be a man,
0 the treacherous Scots revengd hee'd be.34

Since the proper execution of the feud would have required the death of no less a personage than the king, any attempt to follow up this probably fictitious resolution would have attracted considerable historical notice. The Braes of Yarrow (214) likewise reveals little about the habits of feuding Borderers. Scott's suggestion that a duel between John Scott of Tushielaw and Walter Scott of Thirlestane was the source of the ballad led investigators to a study of the records of a feud between the above branches of the Scott family, but there is small likelihood of a connection between this feud and the ballad.35

What evidence we can gather from the ballads and parallel accounts does not, then, indicate thorough and systematic organization of the kindred for purposes of the blood-feud.

O then bespoke his little son,
As he was set on his nurses knee:
"If ever I live for to be a man,
My fathers blood revenged shall be."

Arrangements like those claimed by Seebohm for the Welsh kindreds, in which kinsmen to the seventh degree of descent were responsible for homicide and in which kinsmen to the ninth degree might be called upon for wergild payments in case the slayer defaulted\textsuperscript{36} are not evident. Rather, the reliance on feudal loyalties and the occasional if reluctant acceptance of royal authority, the existence of intra-kin feuds, and instances of treachery within the group would indicate that the cohesion of the Border kin-groups was somewhat dubious.

More prominent as a motive for conflict than the blood-feud is the booty to be gained in a predatory raid; often the circumstances of the fight and the goods obtained are the chief interests of the ballad-singers. A few ballads reflect the existence of ties of kinship among the moss-troopers.

A good example of the way kinship should have operated, according to the norms of the ballad-makers, in times of stress is furnished by Jamie Telfer in the Fair Dodhead (190). Veitch wrote concerning this ballad --

The whole spirit of the old Border life is there, in its fidelity to clanship, its ready daring, its fierceness of fight and fence, its delight in romantic deeds, and, withal, in its heart of pathos.\textsuperscript{37}


\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Scottish Border}, II, 147.
The ballad itself gives evidence of both economic and familial relationships. Jamie is a tenant with enough substance to merit the attention of raiders from the English side of the Border. 38 He pleads with the men who ransack his house and drive off his ten cattle, but neither pleas nor threats avail him anything, since he is apparently alone and helpless:

Now Jamie's heart it was right sair,
The tear ay rowing in his eye;
He pled wi the Captain to hae his gear,
Or else reveng'd he would be.

Bat the Captain turnd himsel about,
Said, Man, there's naething in thy house
But an auld sword without a scabbard,
That scarcely now would fell a mouse.

As soon as the raiders leave, Jamie runs eight miles to ask help of Buccleugh, the chieftain of the Scotts. 40 But Buccleugh refuses to help, claiming that Jamie has paid him no mail for protection:

"Gae seek your succour frae Martin Elliot,
For succour ye's get nane frae me;
Gae seek your succour where ye paid blackmail,
For, man, ye never paid money to me." 41

38 See Kittredge's headnote to the ballad in English and Scottish Popular Ballads, ed. Helen Child Sargent and George Lyman Kittredge, p. 467: "Scott's title, 'Jamie Telfer of the Fair Dodhead,' makes Jamie proprietor of the estate, whereas 'in' signifies, according to Scottish usage, that he was a tenant simply."


40 A* 7-8 (Kittredge, p. 468). Scott's text reverses the roles of Buccleugh and Elliot perhaps out of deference for Scott's ancestor (Child 190 A 8-11 [IV, 6]).

41 A* 10 (Kittredge, p. 468); cf. Child 190 A 10 (IV, 6).
Jamie, however, has evidently paid Buccleugh and resents the refusal bitterly:

Jamie he's turnd him round about,
And ay the tear blinded his eye:
"I'se never pay mail to Scott again,
Nor the Fair Dodhead I'll ever see."\textsuperscript{42}

An alternate source of help is more fruitful; Jamie turns to Martin Elliot, who is evidently powerful in the district.\textsuperscript{43} On the way, Jamie gets assistance from a brother-in-law, who lends him a horse.\textsuperscript{44} He rides to the house of Martin Elliot's son, who immediately takes pity on him, perhaps because of past favors:

"Alack, wae's me!" co Martin's Hab,
"Alack, awae, my heart is sair!
I never came bye the Fair Dodhead
That I ever faund thy basket bare."\textsuperscript{45}

With a fresh horse, Jamie goes to Martin Elliot, who calls up a number of men to pursue the raiders.\textsuperscript{46} Martin's son Simmy leads the pursuers and challenges the Captain of

\textsuperscript{42} A* 11 (Kittredge, p. 468); cf. Child A 11 (IV, 6).

\textsuperscript{43} "Auld Martin Elliot, an den er sich wendet, nachdem er von Buccleuch abgewiesen worden ist, ist der Herr des Gebietes; die Befehlsgewalt, die er ausübt (str. 23-25), tut dies kund" (Steinberg, Border-Ballade, p. 51).

\textsuperscript{44} A* 15-16 (Kittredge, p. 468); cf. Child A 16-17 (IV, 6).

\textsuperscript{45} A* 19 (Kittredge, p. 468). Scott's text has "William's Wat" (Child A 20 [IV, 6]).

\textsuperscript{46} A* 23-25 (Kittredge, p. 469): "auld Buccleuch" summons men in Child A 22-27 (IV, 6-7).
Bewcastle on overtaking him, but whether all the other pursuers are kinsmen of Martin Elliot, the ballad does not specify. When Simmy is killed in the skirmish, Martin Elliot takes over command. The pursuit turns into a retaliatory raid, and Jamie gets thirty-three milk cows in place of the ten he has lost. In Scott's version, Jamie pays the "rescue-shot" to his vindicators in "gowd and white monie." Thus in the estimation of the ballad-maker, the ties of kinship and friendship were somewhat stronger than those of financial obligation. But economic considerations and the feudal obligation to respond to the call of the laird also play an important role in the ballad.

Although Dick o the Cow (185) has for its central idea the rather fantastic single-handed raid of the "innocent fool" on the formidable Armstrongs, some of the surrounding circumstances are of interest, and one detail of the action, at least, has an authentic ring. When Dick finds his three cows and his wife's three blankets gone, he asks his lord for permission to go to Liddisdale and recoup his losses.

47 A* 27 (Kittredge, p. 469): Willie, son of Buccleuch in Scott's version (Child A 30 [IV, 7]).
48 A* 31-32 (Kittredge, p. 469). In Scott's version, auld Wat of Harden takes the lead and cries out for revenge (Child A 37 [IV, 7]).
49 A* 41 (Kittredge, p. 470); Child A 48 (IV, 8).
50 Child A 49 (IV, 8).
51 Child 185 Stanza 12 (III, 464).
The lord, being responsible for Dick's behavior, refuses to countenance stealing as a conscientious superior must; but one concession is made to Border ethics:

"To give thee leave, my fool," he says, "Thou speaks against mine honour and me; Unless thou give me thy trouth and thy right hand Thou'Il steal frae nane but them that sta from thee."53

When Dick returns with his booty, his lord threatens to hang him for theft.54 But when Dick proves that has lived up to the agreement, the lord pays him thirty pounds for one of the horses he has stolen from the Armstrongs.55 It should not be inferred, probably, that the Border thief always had the connivance of his superior. Some rather respectable people were sometimes implicated in raids, however: the Captain of Bewcastle has been seen cast in the role of a bandit. Child, who at first doubted the authenticity of Jamie Telfer for this reason,56 later found indications that other men of reputable station had been named as thieves in the Border


53 Stanza 13 (III, 464).

54 Stanza 45 (III, 466).

55 Stanzas 46-53 (III, 466).

56 See IV, 5: "That the deputy of the warden, an officer of the peace, should be exhibited as making a raid, not in the way of retaliation, but simply for plunder, is too much out of the rule even for Bewcastle."
area. 57 Another homely detail of this ballad is of interest. At the house of Mangerton, a large group of the Armstrongs and their dependents are sharing a meal -- in this case at Dick's expense, since the laird's Jock invites him to share a steak from his own cow 58 --

Then it was the use of Puddinburn,
And the house of Mangertoun, all haile!
These that came not at the first call
They gott no more meat till the next meall. 59

This practice, with the detail that Dick finds thirty-three Armstrongs at Puddinburn when he arrives, 60 might suggest joint-family arrangements. But it must be remembered that the Armstrongs are celebrating their raid; and it should also be noted that the Elliots -- or the Scotts, whichever variant one accepts -- live on rather scattered holdings in Jamie Telfer, and both Jamie Telfer and Kinmont Willie are apparently tenants, living somewhat apart from the holdings of others. 61

Another raid by the Armstrongs sets the scene for the rescue in Jock o the Side (187). The news of his capture

57 "'In the list of Border thieves made in the year 1552, William Patrick, the priest, and John Nelson, the curate of Bewcastle, are both included': Denham Tracts, I, 150. This shows that the society was homogeneous" (Child, V, 300).

58 Stanza 21 (III, 465).

59 Stanza 24 (III, 465).

60 Stanza 16 (III, 464).

brings grief to his friends, but Hobie Noble offers to lead a rescue party, and under his guidance Jock is set free. There is historical reference to John of the Side, but his release is probably legendary. A closely parallel account of a rescue is attributed to the Halls in Archie o Cawfield and both ballads are very much like a tradition of a rescue of the chief of the Johnstons from imprisonment at the hands of the Maxwells. The pattern of all three accounts of rescues suggests that of Kinmont Willie: the prisoner's friends and kinsmen venture into enemy territory to rescue their cohort from prison and escape with him in spite of great risk. And there are specific parallels: the rescuers use a disguise; the watchman of the castle or the porter of the town is killed on the way in some variants; and almost invariably the rescuers make good their escape by crossing a dangerous stream. All three ballads, then, may

62 See Child, III, 475: "The earliest appearance of John o the Side is, perhaps, in the list of the marauders against whom complaint was made to the Bishop of Carlisle 'presently after' Queen Mary Stuart's departure from France: not far, therefore, from 1550: 'John of the Side (Gleed John)'."

63 See Child, III, 485.

64 Child 186 sts. 18-24 (III, 473); 187 A 8-9 (III, 477), B 8-9 (III, 479-480); 188 C 6 (III, 491), D 4 (III, 492).

65 Child 186 stanza 30 (III, 473); 187 B 14 (III, 480), C 10 (III, 482).

66 Child 186 sts. 43-44 (III, 474); 187 B 31-32 (III, 481), C 25 (III, 482); 188 A 40-41 (III, 489), B 25-26 (III, 490), C 27-28 (III, 492), D 16-17 (III, 493), F 13-14 (III, 494).
have derived much of their material from some account of the rescue of Kinmont Willie such as the tradition which Spotiswood recorded, 67 though the possibility of more than one actual rescue cannot be ruled out.

In Jock o the Side, kinship is the dominant motive for act and feeling: Jock laments for the parting from his relatives while he lies in prison:

*Wee are brothers childer nine or ten,*  
*And sisters childer ten or eleven,*  
*We neuer came to the feild to fight,*  
*But the worst of us was counted a man.* 68

Hobie Noble, though he is of English origin in one variant, 69 proclaims himself "a bastard-brother" of Jock's in another. 70 In the B-text, Jock of the Side is sister's son to Lord Mangerton, who gives the order for his rescue. 71 In Archie o Cawfield, the rescue is planned by two brothers of the prisoner; 72 in A, they enlist the aid of their cousin, Jocky Hall, for his strength and his fighting abilities --


68 Child 187 A 24 (III, 478).

69 B 7 (III, 479).

70 A 26 (III, 478).

71 B 3 (III, 479).

72 Child 188 A 1-5 (III, 487), B 1-5 (III, 489), C 1-6 (III, 491), F 1-3 (III, 494).
"An ever we come till a pinch,  
He'll be as good as any three."73

After the rescue, Jock the laird (not to be identified with Jocky Hall, who is cheerful throughout) has some misgivings about the possible loss of his lands as a result of the escapade:

O up bespake then Jock the laird,  
"This has been a dearsome night to me;  
For yesternight the Cawfield was my ain,  
Landsman again I neer sall be."74

But he is rebuked for setting property above brotherhood:

"Now wae light of thee and thy lands baith, Jock,  
And even so baith the land and thee!  
For gear will come and gear will gang,  
But three brothers again we never were to be."75

And in Kinmont Willie, Buccleugh calls up forty men -- all kinsmen of his save one:

He has call'd him forty marchmen bauld,  
I trow they were of his ain name,  
Except Sir Gilbert Elliot, call'd  
The Laird of Stobs, I mean the same.76

Whether this passage is one of Scott's "emendations" of the ballad or whether it is a genuine part of Border tradition, no one can say with any great assurance.77 The prose accounts

73 A 6 (III, 487).
74 A 44 (III, 489).
75 A 45 (III, 489).
76 Child 186 st. 16 (III, 473).
77 See Child on Scott's editing of this ballad (III, 472): "It is to be suspected that a great deal more emendation was done than the mangling of reciters rendered absolutely necessary."
give larger numbers for Buccleugh's forces: Scroope's report to the Privy Council specifies -- perhaps with understandable exaggeration -- "Walter Scott of Hardinge and Walter Scott of Goldylands, the chief men about Buclughe, accompanied with five hundred horsemen of Buclughe and Kinmont's friends."78 Buccleugh was able to muster enough men to launch a serious attempt to get the king out of the hands of Douglas in 1525, when Douglas was supported by "the earle of Angus, and George, his brother, and sundrie vther of thair kin and thair freindis."79 And the Armstrongs, according to W. Mackay Mackenzie, had over three thousand adherents in 1528.80

A raid by English Borderers on Englishmen is commemo-rated in Rookhope Ryde (179). Since the Rising in the North had left Weardale supposedly defenseless, moss-troopers from Cumberland and Northumberland took advantage of the occasion to make a raid -- as Child reads the evidence, on December 6, 1569.81 The raiders number a hundred men -- "not of the worst/ That could be choosed out of Thirlwa 'nd Williehaver,"82

78 Child, III, 470. Spotiswood's account gives "some two hundred horse" (Child, III, 470).
79 Lindsay, Chronicles, II, 319-320.
81 III, 439.
82 Child 179 Stanza 23 (III, 440).
but they are not said to be clansmen. Some of the casualties among the raiders are close relatives:

George Carrick and his brother Edie,
Them two, I wot, they were both slain:
Harry Corbyl and Lennie Carrick
Bore them company in their pain. 83

The death of George Carrick evidently disheartened the raiders, 84 but nothing is said about avenging him. Rowland Emerson, the only Weardale man reported killed, may have been related to the bailiff; 85 but the ballad, which takes note of the recent death of the bailiff's brother at the hands of a previous party of thieves, 86 makes nothing of this relationship. The ties between the defenders in this ballad are evidently geographical: pride in the locality which they defend gives the Weardale men courage and unity of purpose:

Thir Weardale men, they have good hearts,
They are as stiil as any tree;
For, if they'd every one been slain,
Never a foot back man would flee. 87

Rookhope Ryde has value by way of contrast to the Scottish Border ballads, in which the sentiment of loyalty

83 Stanza 29 (III, 441).
84 Stanza 32 (III, 441).
85 "The Weardale man who was killed was Rowland Emerson, perhaps a kinsman of the bailiff. The family of Emerson of Eastgate, says Surtees, long exercised the offices of bailiff of Wolsingham (the chief town and borough of Weardale) and of forester, etc., etc., under successive prelates" (Child, III, 439).
86 Stanza 20 (III, 440).
87 Stanza 35 (III, 441).
to the kin-group is more prominent. Other ties were present on the Scottish side, also: an Englishman, like Hobie Noble, might become a dependent of one of the powerful groups, and money payments (blackmail and rescue-shot) were partial guarantees of assistance. But the extended families of the Armstrongs, the Elliots, the Scotts, the Johnstons, the Crichtons, and the Halls were strong in the land; and association with one of these groups was the individual's best warrant of survival. The "great and horrible destructions, heirships, burnings, and slaughters" noted by Robert III's parliament in 1400\textsuperscript{88} made such associations necessary; and by most accounts, these conditions prevailed on the Borders through most of the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{89}

To say that the tie of kinship was sacred and inviolable under these conditions, however, is to ignore some of the evidence. The name of a Border chief was a convenient rallying symbol, and the adoption of the name was a safeguard. Clan-names were prevalent enough to make "to-names" necessary in order to distinguish persons and families from one another.

\textsuperscript{88}Regiam Majestatem, ed. Skene, p. 415.

\textsuperscript{89}Cf. Veitch, Scottish Border, II, 17-34. "Still the tie of clanship, and control by means of it -- often cemented by a bond of man-rent -- was the only sort of organization that availed on the Borders for a long period" (II, 33). Cf. Mackenzie, "Debateable Land"; Lindsay, Chronicles, II, 56-57; Steinberg, Border-Ballade, pp. 48-51.
As there was no great "routh" of Christian names among the clansmen of the borders, to-names became necessary for the distinction of the numerous Jocks, Christies, Watties and Archies. The name of parent, or of parent and grandparent, was sometimes prefixed, as John's Christie, Agnes' Christie, Peggie's Wattie, Gibb's Jack's Johnie, Pattie's Geordie's Johnie; sometimes the place of abode was added, as Jock o the Side; sometimes there was distinction by personal peculiarities, dress, or arms, as Fair Johnie, Red Cloak, John with the Jack, etc.

Yet, though the Border clans were sometimes respectably large, incidents of treachery and wavering loyalty seen in some accounts and in the ballads cast some doubt on the cohesion of these groups. The bond was more practical than mystical, and occasional touches of realism give away the exaltation of clan-sentiment. Even in Archie o Cawfield, there is some doubt of human loyalty:

"A hundred men you cannot get,  
Nor yet sixteen in Christendie;  
For some of them will us betray,  
And other some will work for fee.

"But choose ye out eleven men,  
And we ourselves thirteen will be,  
And we'll away to Dumfries town,  
And borrow bony billie Archie."

Feudal forms of association and local military alliances play a part along with ties of kinship in the traditions of Scottish balladry beyond the Border regions. Even in those ballads which have originated in the Aberdeen district rather than the Highlands proper, kinship has an occasional importance.

90 Child, III, 461.

91 See above, pp. 93-94.

92 Child 188 B 4-5 (III, 489); cf. A 4-5 (III, 487).
Two of the least fragmented and most detailed of the ballads which come from outside the Border regions are the Aberdeenshire ballads *Captain Car* (178) and *The Fire of Frendraught* (196). In both ballads, the events which are celebrated are matters of historical record; and in both ballads the accounts seem somewhat distorted when compared with prose accounts. Since old feuds are in the backgrounds of both ballads, the partisanship of the singers may account for some of the distortion.

*The Fire of Frendraught* lays the blame for the death of Rothiemay and Lord John at the door of the Frendraughts, especially on Lady Frendraught, who is represented as a coldly treacherous woman. But historians have exonerated the Frendraughts, largely on the grounds that the way they allegedly took to avenge themselves on their former enemy Rothiemay would have been too ruinous for the Frendraughts themselves. An old feud between the Crichtons of Frendraught and the Gordons of Rothiemay is probably responsible for the imputation of treachery in the ballad and in some accounts.

93 Child 196 A 2, 11-12 (IV, 44), B 1-5, 12 (IV, 45-46), C 3-4, 10-11 (IV: 46-47), D 2 (IV, 47).


95 See Browne, I, 296-300; Child, IV, 39-42, 43, n. 1.
Only Grieg's version of the ballad is explicit about the feud:

Lady Frendrat she sent messengers
To call the Gordons a',
That the ancient feud might be forgot,
An' in peace they'd reap an' saw.\(^{96}\)

The ballad ignores a second feud between Frendraught and the Leslies, who were also suspected of the burning,\(^{97}\) and treats the story as one of personal hatred, chiefly on the part of Lady Frendraught. The theme of treachery is sharpened by the contrasting loyalty of one of Rothiemay's servants.\(^{98}\)

Although both the Crichtons and the Gordons are clan-names, the leading figures in the prose accounts of the Frendraught affair were aristocrats and their relatives and friends. Relatives took part in the quarrel on both sides: Frendraught was assisted by George Gordon, his "brother-german," and by James Leslie, his uncle; and the Marquis of Huntly resented the killing of his kinsman, William Gordon of Rothiemay, in the early stage of the feud.\(^{99}\) Rothiemay's eldest son, John Gordon, attempted to avenge his father's death but seems to have relied on free-booters led by James


\(^{97}\) Greig, p. 120; Browne, I, 299-300; Child, IV, 40.

\(^{98}\) Child 196 A 13-15 (IV, 44). Two servants are specified in C 12-13 (IV, 47).

\(^{99}\) Browne, I, 296-297.
Grant at least as much as on regular clansmen of the Gordons for his purpose.100

Though the rival clans of the Gordons and the Forbeses are involved in Captain Car, or Edom o Gordon (178), the occasion for the burning of Forbes's stronghold was an incident of the religious and political warfare that took place during the reign of Mary Queen of Scots. Whether military necessity, religious zeal, or spiteful opportunism was the predominant motive in Gordon's action will probably never be ascertained.101 In any case, the ballad has removed the burning from its historical context and made it the act of a raiding clan:

It befell at Martynmas,
When wether waxed colde,
Captaine Care said to his men,
We must go take a holde.

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...

"I knowe wher is a gay castle,
Is builded of lyme and stone;
Within their is a gay ladie,
Her lord is ridden and gone."102

A "deadly feud" is the pretext given in some of the Scottish versions.103 Although the rival clans are the major forces

100 Browne, I, 297; cf. Child, IV, 40.
103 F 2 (III, 435), G 2 (III, 436), H 3 (IV, 513).
involved, service for pay is recognized explicitly: a man formerly in the service of the besieged lady is now Adam Gordon's follower:

"And ein was worth ye, Jock my man!
I paid ye weil your fee;
Why pow ye out my ground-wa-stane,
Let's in the reek to me?"

"Ye paid me weil my hire, lady,
Ye paid me weil my fee,
But now I'm Edom of Gordon's man,
Maun either do or die."

In some variants, the lord of the plundered stronghold is seen in pursuit of revenge. In B, he sets out after Captain Car, but the text breaks off before the revenge is carried out. In D, the returning laird kills all but five of Adam Gordon's fifty men and then leaps into the flames. In G, Lord Loudon catches bauld Gordon and promises to tear him with wild horses.

A similar removal from historical context occurs in the ballad of The Bonnie House o Airlie (199). Here an incident of seventeenth-century civil strife is treated by the ballad-makers as a family feud once more:

104 D 12, 14 (III, 433-434), cf. F 5-6 (III, 435), G 13-14 (III, 436), H 8-10 (IV, 514), I 10-13 (V, 249).
105 B 20-21 (III, 432).
106 D 26-29 (III, 434).
107 G 38 (III, 437).
It fell on a day, and a bonny simmer day,
When green grew aits and barley,
That there fell out a great dispute
Between Argyll and Airlie. 108

Actually, the plundering of Airlie seems to have been a bit of opportunism on Argyle's part: he seized upon the pretext offered by his commission from Montrose and by the Earl of Airlie's doubtful standing with the ruling powers to plunder the earl's estate. 109

Clan-feuds of a more authentic sort inspired the ballads of Willie Macintosh (183) and James Grant (197), but both ballads are fragmentary accounts and give little insight into the conditions of clan warfare. The Clan Chattan took its revenge for the killing of the Earl of Murray by a raid on the estates of the Earl of Huntly in 1592. Huntly retaliated, only to find the Clan Chattan again raiding his estate on his return. His successful attack on the raiders makes the substance of the ballad, which tells only of the regrets of the leader of the raiders for his slaughtered clansmen. 110

The ballad confuses two William Mackintoshes, both leaders of raids but on occasions that were ninety years apart. 111

108 Child 199 A 1 (IV, 56).
109 Child, IV, 55.
James Grant deals with a feud between two septs of the same clan but recounts only one of James Grant's escapes from his enemies. A reference to the feud is probably intended in the second stanza:

"Baddindalloch has no feud at me,
And I have none at him;
Cast up my gates baith broad and wide,
Let Baddindalloch in." 112

This statement is curious in view of the fact that there was "an implacable feud" between the Grants of Ballindalloch and those of Carron for at least ninety years before the event referred to in the ballad. 113 James Grant evidently put himself in an awkward position by burning the crops and barns of Ballindalloch in revenge for the killing of his nephew, John Grant of Carron, in 1628. On complaint of the Ballindallochs, Murray, the lieutenant, set the Clan Chattan on James Grant, who managed to escape and to elude pursuit until he made peace with the king in 1639. 114

A quarrel over legal matters probably lies in the background of The Baron of Brackley (203). A dispute over fines due for fishing illegally, according to two accounts, led to a fight in which John Gordon of Brackley, his brother William, and their cousin James Gordon in Cults were killed. 115

112 Child, IV, 50.
113 Child, IV, 49.
114 Child, IV, 49-50.
115 Child, IV, 80-81.
The ballad treats the material with typical irresponsibility, making the incident a raid by Inverey on Brackley's castle, evidently for spoil and possibly with the complicity of Brackley's wife, who is represented as having almost as much capacity for treachery as Lady Frendraught. The baron's son vows vengeance for him in almost the same terms that Johnny Armstrong's son is represented as using, but the only attempt to follow up the killing was probably the legal prosecution mentioned in one of the accounts of the affair. The ballad makes passing reference to caterans: Brackley asks his visitors whether they are "widifus" (gallows-birds) or gentlemen:

"But gin ye be gentlemen, licht and cum in: Gin ye drink o my wine, ye'll nae gar my bluid spin.

"Gin ye be hir'd widifus, ye may gang by, Ye may gang to the lawlands and steal their fat ky.

"There spulzie like rievers o wyld kettrin clan, Who plunder unsparing baith houses and lan." Feuds between aristocratic families enter into other ballads occasionally. Hatred for the Setons is Forbes's


117 No. 203 A 41 (IV, 85).

118 The Gordons began a prosecution, the result of which is uncertain (Child, IV, 81-82).

pretext for stripping the wounded John Seton on the battlefield:

Then bye there comes a false Forbes,
   Was riding from Driminere;
Says, Here there lies a proud Seton;
   This day they ride the rear.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

"O spoil him! spoil him!" cried Cragievar,
   "Him spoiled let me see;
For on my word," said Cragievar,
   "He had no good will at me."

And in The Earl of Westmoreland (177), the Regent of Scotland changes his mind about writing to Lord Hume in order to get his hands on Nevill:

"I'lle write a letter," sayd the regent then,
   "And send to Humes Castle hastilye,
To see whether Lord Hume wilbe soe good
   To bring the banished men vnto mee.

"That lord and I haue beene att deadlye fuyde,
   And hee and I cold neuer agree:
Writing a letter, that will not serue;
   The banished men must not speake with me."

Specific insights into the structure of Scottish society are probably less numerous, then, in the ballads which deal with events outside the Border regions than in the Border ballads. Distortion and fragmentation are frequent in the ballads dealing with the Highlands and Aberdeen. Reference to the accounts of some of the events which seem to

121 Child 177 Stanzas 9-10 (III, 419).
have inspired the ballads shows that the conditions surrounding the event celebrated in any particular ballad were usually more complex than the ballad indicates. Litigation, civil warfare, and the use of the royal commission enter into the strategy of rival families and feuding clans. Rarely can a simple instance of a "primitive" blood-feud be found, though the word "feud" is used frequently, and revenges and retaliations are frequent. References to the degrees of kinship involved in these affairs do not go far into extended family relationships: cousins-german and nephews are mentioned, and in the Border ballads the family name is an indication of group solidarity. Clans are involved in ballads from the Highlands and adjacent regions also: the Gordons, the Forbes, the Grants, and the Clan Chattan are involved in raids and counter-raids. The principal actors in the ballads and the accounts are the heads of aristocratic families: their quarrels and alliances make up the substance of many of the warlike encounters celebrated in Scottish tradition. These families and their adherents were doubtless the forces the governor of Scotland had in mind when he told the king of France he could not prosecute certain families:

Thairfoir he concludit with himself that he wold continew the prosequitione quhill he thought better tyme: and incontinent sent to the king of France showing the manner how Scottismen war all alyed with vtheris, and thair blood so mixt, that everie ane of thame tulk pairet with vtheris so againes him, that thei thought him bot ane stranger, and wold not be content that he
Such, too, are the "kine and freindis" that support Douglas and other leaders of aristocratic factions, if Lindsay may thus far be trusted. 123

Structurally, the kinship-organization indicated in the ballads and the accounts is not fundamentally different from what may be expected in the light of the picture of feudalized clanship already delineated by historians. The clearly organized Celtic arrangements attributed to the Welsh kindreds in medieval times 124 are not evident in the Scottish materials. Not enough continuity can be found to support any theory of continuous evolution from tribal society to clanship. What indications have been noted point rather to the political, social, and military expediency of the kin-group as a basis for loyalty where other ties are present and no single tie is absolutely binding. True, the partisanship of the ballad-makers for one clan or another shows the presence of a strong sentiment about specific clans. But the clansmen were united by their common locality and their common economic interests as well as by the idea of kinship. Personal loyalties of the kind set forth in the

122 Lindsay, Cronicles, II, 298.
124 See above, p. 85.
ballads require no mystical explanation -- no totem-worship or family cult.

The Border ballads and the few others which reflect the conditions of clan-society are largely products of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It might be argued that ballads of such late origins would naturally reflect the decline of kinship-organization and of feudalism as well. But ballads whose origins are less definite and therefore possibly more remote than those of the clan-ballads do not, for the most part, make reference to ties of kinship much beyond the nuclear family. Cousins and nephews are the usual limits: the "sister's son" is a typical reference.\(^{125}\) Whether this restriction to the small family group reflects the dominance of the stem-family in most of medieval society or whether, as Miss Wells suggests, it reflects the tendency toward simplification and toward narrowing of the field of reference that takes effect through variation,\(^ {126}\) the evidence of the ballads does not in any case indicate other types of kindred-organization than those already noted. Nor does the evidence of the ballads support the theory of "survivals" of prehistoric tribal institutions. If the ballad was ever a product of tribal communalism in any sense, it has lost the tell-tale vestiges of that hypothetical past.


\(^{126}\) The Ballad Tree, p. 79.
Instances of revenge, even in the ballads of clan-warfare, do not always indicate extensive obligations; and in the ballads which lie outside this category, the obligation is usually confined to the closest relationships. Even in such ballads as Young Benjie (86), Fause Fodrage (89), and Jellon Grame (90), in which the duty of avenging a kinsman is taken for granted, the closest of familial ties are all that are involved. Vengeance is promised by a lover rather than a kinsman in Lady Maisry (65). In the northern English Young Andrew (48), the injured lady invokes the vengeance of her brothers upon her false lover. Revenge for an insult or an injury is taken by the affronted person himself in both English and Scottish variants of Lord Thomas and Fair Annet (73) and Glasgerion (67). The vengeance taken by the outraged husband in Old Robin of Portingale (80) and Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard (81) is in some variants barbarous enough to call for an explanation. The theory of "survivals" has therefore been invoked in this connection; but in addition to being a folklore motif of rather widespread origins, the same practice of mutilation is prescribed for a woman involved in theft in the Borough of Portsmouth in the thirteenth century.

127 See Wimberly, Death and Burial Lore, pp. 10-19; Gummere, The Popular Ballad, p. 130.
128 See above, p. 42; Motif-Index, Q 451.9.
129 Mary Bateson, Borough Customs, p. 77: Portsmouth, cap. 8.
The act of revenge for a close relative or for one's own vindication reveals little about the solidarity of kindred, as Miss Phillpotts notes:

Organized blood-feuds, in which definite groups of kindred take part, show of course considerable cohesion of kindred. But it is necessary to make a distinction between these and mere acts of blood-vengeance. Though the blood-feud between kindreds, unappeasable by any compensation, actually dates from an earlier stage of tribal society than wergild, mere acts of blood-vengeance by an individual may be even a sign of the breaking-up of the kindred, showing that though the primary duty is still acknowledged, the injured kinsmen have not sufficient solidarity to act together in a body and secure their just rights. The exercise of blood-vengeance by a near relative . . . affords no proof that the kindred has not been narrowed down to something more like the modern family.

Even less likely are such acts to be indicative of family or tribal cult.

Apart from the clan-ballads, the references to degrees of kinship beyond the nuclear family are not very informative; but a few examples will bear consideration. Reference to a "great-grand-aunt" appears in the A- and C-texts of Burd Isabel and Earl Patrick. In The Heir of Linne, a grandfather is probably intended by this passage:

His father and mother were dead him froe,  
An soe was the head of all his kin.

And in Old Robin of Portingale, the lady enlists the help

130 Kindred and Clan in the Middle Ages, p. 6.
131 But cf. Wimberly, Burial Lore: "Whether or not vengeance taken for the death of relatives is evidential of the cult of the family manes, we find that blood revenge carries in balladry some of its ancient obligation" (P. 8).
132 Child 257 A 23-24 (IV, 419), C 8, 19 (IV, 422-423).
133 Child 267 A 2 (V, 144).
of twenty-four kinsmen in trying to get rid of her husband; but these are all said to be "next cozens." One can hardly build a case for the solidarity of the kindred on these examples.

The Robin Hood ballads present a few instances of recognition of family ties, usually between a member of the outlaw band and a candidate for membership. Young Gamwell proves to be Robin Hood's sister's son, and Gamble Gold, the bold pedlar, is a parallel cousin. The Tanner proves to be a near kinsman of Little John -- probably a sister's son, but possibly a cousin. Kinship, real or fictitious, is a bond of loyalty in the outlaw band; Adam Bell and his fellow outlaws are bound by an oath of brotherhood:

They swore them brethren upon a day,
    To Englysshe-wood for to gone.

The frequent combats between candidates for Robin Hood's band and Little John or Robin himself, together with the fiction of kinship, might suggest initiation into a society

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134 Child 80 stanza 6 (II, 240).
135 Robin Hood Newly Revived (128), st. 19 (III, 146).
136 The Bold Pedlar and Robin Hood (132), st. 14 (III, 155):
    "You are my mother's own sister's son; What nearer cousins then can we be?"
137 Robin Hood and the Tanner (128), st. 28 (III, 139):
    "For we are alide by the mothers side, And he is my kinsman near."
138 Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, and William of Cloudesly (116), st. 4 (III, 22).
like the *Fiana*. But the assumed relationship and the initiatory ordeal are also standard practices in many modern organizations, including college fraternities.

Such instances as these, then, do not significantly alter the picture of kinship-ties presented in the preceding chapter. Stem-family relationships are important in both English and Scottish balladry, and there are indications of extensions of kinship in the clans of the Scottish Highlands and the "names" of Border society. Feudal ties are present also, largely in the form of payment of blackmail and incidentally in the relationship of landlord and tenant. Nothing is said of serfdom, and in the Robin Hood ballads much is said about yeomanry. Informal recognition of ties of kinship plays some part in the ballads generally, especially among the landowning classes. Those relationships which are noted are often bilateral, though the allusions to close kinship on the mother's side, like those just cited in the Robin Hood ballads, will bear further consideration.

CHAPTER V

THE FAMILY SITUATION IN THE BALLADS

Though the Highland and Border ballads reflect the extension of kindred in clanship in varying degrees, there is a larger group of ballads, many of them Scottish, which deal with the nuclear family group, usually to the exclusion of the remoter degrees of kindred. The immediate family, as pictured in these ballads, is often engaged in serious conflict, more often than not with tragic consequences. Domestic interest is strong in more than seventy of the ballads in Child's collection.¹ A few ballads treat domestic situ-

¹ The following may serve as a reasonably complete list: Gil Brenton (5), Willie’s Lady (6), Earl Brand (7), Erlinton (8), The Fair Flower of Northumberland (9), The Twa Sisters (10), The Cruel Brother (11), Lord Randall (12), Edward (13), Babylon (14), Leesome Brand (15), Sheath and Knife (16), The Cruel Mother (20), Hind Etin (41), Young Andrew (48), The Twa Brothers (49), Lizie Wan (51), The King’s Daughter Lady Jean (52), Sir Aldingar (59), Fair Annie (62), Child Waters (63), Fair Janet (64), Lady Maisry (65), Lord Ingram and Chiel Wyet (68), Clerk Saunders (69), Willie and Lady Maisry (70), The Bent Sae Brown (71), Lord Thomas and Fair Annet (73), The Lass of Roch Royal (76), Old Robin of Portingale (80), Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard (81), The Bonnie Birdie (82), Child Maurice (83), Prince Robert (87), Young Johnstone (88), Jellon Grame (90), The Maid Freed from the Gallows (95), Brown Robin (97), Willie o Winsbury (100), Willie and Earl Richard’s Daughter (102), Christopher White (108), Johnie Cock (114), The Laird of Wariston (194), The Gypsy Laddie (200), Jamie Douglas (204), The Bras o Yarrow (214), Rare Willie Drowned in Yarrow (215), The Mother’s Malison (216), Lizie Lindsay (225), Glasgow Peggy (233), Earl Crawford (229), Richie Story (232), Andrew Lammie (233), Charlie MacPherson (234), The Duke of Gordon’s Daughter (237), Lord Saltoun and Auchanachie (239), James Harris (243), Reedesdale and Wise William (246), Lady Elspat (247), Auld Matrons (249), The
ations humorously, but the greater number are serious.

Many of the motifs in these ballads are duplicated or have at least approximate parallels in folk-literature. The reservations outlined in Chapter II about interpreting such motifs as reliable indications of social structure and custom at definite places and times must therefore be kept in mind in dealing with many of the ballads in this group. Each ballad is a separate problem with its own folklore content and its peculiar origin, which in many cases can never be more than hypothetical. Some characteristic treatments of the widely dispersed motifs of folklore may be enlightening, however. And not all the lore of a given ballad is always exhausted by motif-analysis. The incidental details and the attitude of the singer toward his material may tell more about the social context of the ballad than the stock incidents and the stock characters which make up the main substance of the ballad. But even here, caution must be used; for singers are likely to borrow whole stanzas without always adapting the words to the new context or to familiar conditions.

A typical example of the ambiguities of social background

Kitchie Boy (252), Lord William or Lord Lundy (254), Burd Isabel and Earl Patrick (257), The Twa Knights (263), Lady Diamond (269), The Earl of Mar's Daughter (270), Earl Rothes (297), Young Peggy (298), and The Holy Nunnery (303).

2 See, for example, Our Goodman (274), The Wife wrapt in Wether's Skin (277), and Get Up and Bar the Door (275).
and folklore is *Willie's Lady* (6). The central motif, that of the arrested childbirth, is at least as old as classical mythology; and the resolution by deception is equally ancient. But the mother-in-law is not the practitioner of witchcraft in most of the parallels cited by Child: a cast mistress of the victim's husband operates the spell in Apuleiuous' account, in a story related by Haywood, and in a parallel tale from Arran. One plausible explanation of the change is that the ballad singers, thinking of Willie as a sympathetic figure, shifted the blame for the bride's suffering from the mistress to the mother-in-law, who had an established reputation as a villainess in folklore. On the other hand, a conscious or unconscious tendency to shorten the story, especially in the course of its transmission in ballad form, may have led to a preference for the stock figure which would require the least explanation. A secondary motif, the use of knots as part of the spell, suggests the folding of the hands between the knees in Sicilian tales of delayed childbirth; however, there is also evidence of belief in the efficacy of knots in hindering delivery in

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3 See Child, I, 84.
4 Child, I, 84-85.
5 Motif-Index, S 51; cf. p. 40, above.
6 Child, I, 85.
Lapland and Norway. A Scottish practice of the late eighteenth century seems to Child to reflect a similar belief:

The minister of Logierait, in Perthshire, testifies, about the year 1793, that immediately before the celebration of a marriage it is the custom to loosen carefully every knot about bride and bridegroom, -- garters, shoe-laces, etc. The knots are tied again before they leave the church.

The Scottish custom, however, could have been symbolic of other aspects of marriage than childbirth exclusively. The motif of the knots, then, could have arisen from either folktales or actual custom; the evidence does not support either conclusively against the other.

The choice of the mother-in-law as the enemy of the bride, while it reflects folklore usages, may not be entirely unrelated to life situations. The ballad indicates that the enmity is based on opposition to Willie's choice of a bride. And this opposition of parents -- or in some cases, of older siblings -- to the choice of a mate is the most prevalent theme in balladry. This conflict underlies some common motifs in folklore, such as elopement (R 225), tragic love (T 80), and unequals in love (T 91). The path of true

7 Stanzas 8 and 9 (I, 86).
8 See Child 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 15, 24, 48, 53 C, 60, 62, 64, 65, 66, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 76, 87, 96, 97, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 107, 109, 214, 216, 221, 227, 228, 231, 232, 233, 234, 236, 237, 238, 239, 247, 249, 251, 252, 254, 257, 264, 269, 272, 294, 296, 300, 303.
9 See also T 50.1, T 55.1, T 81, and T 121.
love in folktales is frequently an obstacle course, and the
tasks set for the wooer by the lady's parents or captors or
guardians are usually formidable enough to eliminate an
ordinary man. That ballads owe something to folktales in
their use of this theme is highly probable. The unequal
matches in Johnie Scot (99), Willie o Winsbury (100), and
Tom Potts (109) are fantastic enough to serve as instances
of the popularity of this theme with the humbler folk. The
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marriage of the lady and the footman in Richie Story (232),
on the other hand, may have taken place.

The popularity of the theme of conflict on the basis
of rank or property is so widespread, however, that some
aspect of human circumstances, it would seem, ought to account
for such prevalence. It is unlikely, for one thing, that
the property considerations involved in medieval marriages
could always be harmonized with personal choice. Occasional
rebellion against parental authority in arranging matches was

10 For Midir, who is courting Etain, her father Ailill
sets a series of tasks comparable to the labors of Hercules;
see Myles Dillon, Early Irish Literature (Chicago, 1948),
p. 55. Cf. Cuchulain's courtship of Emer: Cuchulain of
pp. 24-32; also the story of Kilhwc and Olwen in The
112-120.

11 Cf. Child's comment, II, 441.

12 Child cites records of the Fleming family, but the
citation from Douglas' Peerage throws some doubt on the in-
equality (IV, 292).

13 Cf. Child 15, 20, 24, 48, 53 C, 60, 62, 64, 66, 69,
73, 87, 97, 100, 101, 102, 107, 138, 214 K-N, 232, 233, 237,
238, 239, 247, 252, 257, 269, 277, 296, 300.
likely, as in the case of the Pastons.\textsuperscript{14} Even in later times, where property considerations prevail and parental authority is traditionally strong, the normal situation is likely to consist largely of parental arrangements. In rural Ireland, for instance, the parents play a strong role in the provision of farm land and dowry,\textsuperscript{15} and romantic love complicates the normal situation:

Ordinarily, marriage in the matchmaking system is a matter of free agreement within the traditional setting. Love enters the situation, however, only to complicate it. A runaway match upsets the whole pattern, the interplay of dowries, land, and portions of it for children, the transition between adulthood and old age for the parental couple. There are other considerations, too, which account for the disturbance a runaway match causes, such as those of class involved in "marrying beneath" one.\textsuperscript{16}

The ballads which deal with the exceptions to the norm, whether these exceptions were frequent or not, were probably popular because they effectively idealized the theme of personal loyalty between lovers. Often, this devotion is treated romantically; very often one or both of the lovers will be said to die for the sake of love, as in the familiar endings of \textit{Lord Lovel} (75) and \textit{Bonny Barbara Allen} (84).\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{14} See above, pp. 54-56.

\textsuperscript{15} Arensburg and Kimball, \textit{Family and Community in Ireland}, pp. 109-114.

\textsuperscript{16} Arensburg and Kimball, p. 119.

\textsuperscript{17} See Child 7 B, 64, 66, 70, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 84, 85, 87, 97, 204, 222 C, 229, 233, 235 E-I, 239, 256, 262, 292, 295.
Even a relatively recent ballad like Lord Saltoun and Auchanachie (239), which has its touches of realism in its treatment of the persons and property involved,\(^{18}\) ends with both the lovers dying of grief.\(^{19}\)

Folklore and actual practice may also be mutually accountable for the ballad-situation in which the elder brother or sister claims or holds authority over the younger. Feudal primogeniture would account for the authority of the older brother. The brother's resentment in The Cruel Brother (11) has its parallel in that of Evnissyen at not having been consulted about Branwen's marriage to Matholwch, King of Ireland.\(^{20}\) Child quotes Dr. Prior's statement to the effect that overlooking the brother in asking assent to a marriage was regarded as unpardonable in ballad-times, but he does not give the evidence for this statement.\(^{21}\) The brother exercises authority over his sister in other ballads. In Lady Maisry (65) and in Andrew Lammie (233), the lady's brother punishes her cruelly for her choice of a lover. The brothers as a group put up violent opposition to their sister's love

\(^{18}\) See, for example, A 7 (IV, 348):
"0 Saltoun's a valley lies low by the sea,
Though he's bowed on the back and thrawin on the knee,
Though he's bowed on the back and thrawin on the knee,
The bonny rigs of Salton they're nae thrawin tee."

\(^{19}\) A 12, 15 (IV, 348), B 8, 10 (IV, 349).

\(^{20}\) Mabinogion, trans. Guest, p. 35.

\(^{21}\) Child, I, 142.
in The Braes of Yarrow (214), Clerk Saunders (69), and Earl Brand (7) — also in the Danish analogues of this last. 22

In Earl Rothes (297), Lady Ann's brother, though too young to fight, promises to defend her honor against her paramour as soon as he is able. 23 In Proud Lady Margaret (47), the brother's ghost takes on the role of keeper of his sister's conscience. 24 Similar manifestations of the brother-sister relationship have been noted in rural Ireland:

There is a good deal of the boy's regard for his mother in his attitude toward his sister. Likewise for the sister, especially in the years when both are fully adult, the brother comes to have much of the position of the father, especially if he is older. 25 The assumption of authority on the brother's part, then, is understandable in the light of parental authority; in the temporary absence or in the weak exercise of parental power, the brother may assume the parental role.

The exact apportionment of authority between the parents has caused some interesting critical reactions in the past: as has been noted, Gummere's "The Mother-in-Law" has given rise to further speculations on "matriarchal survivals" in the ballads, and critics of the ballad still

22 See The Griefs of Hillelille, in Olrik, A Book of Danish Ballads, I, 124-127; Ribold and Guldborg, II, 247, 249.

23 Stanza 8 (V, 170).


25 Arensburg and Kimball, p. 68.
refer to his observations with somewhat qualified approval. Hodgart's reservation about borrowings from epic traditions may be carried further: attribution of those motifs which suggest "mother-right" to folk literature in general may explain their existence in those ballads which have parallels in prose traditions. Margaret Schlauch has traced the "accused queen" motif in medieval literature to a hypothetical primitive matriarchate. This theory of origins, if accepted, would indicate that the ballads had borrowed such motifs from some oral tradition antedating the ballads as we know them (a possibility which is not borne out in Willie's Lady), and the matriarchal motifs would not prove anything definite about society in what are usually thought of as the times of ballad origins. But the alternate possibility that some basis for these motifs may be found in the actual environment of the ballads must also be explored.

The premise of the "matriarchate" needs investigation, for the sake of folklore studies generally as well as for the clarification of ballad criticism touching on this subject. Or rather, anthropological theory needs to be brought to bear on the literary problems relating to this question; for in no instance does the gap between anthropological conclusions

26 See pp. 8-10, above.
27 Above, p. 10.
28 Chaucer's Constance, pp. 33-45.
and literary studies seem wider than in this one. The basic assumption, on which literary studies have been founded, of a fairly simply sequence leading from "mother-right" to patriarchy to modern familial conditions has already been seen in its context of nineteenth-century evolutionary anthropology, but at this point some further consideration of the problem may be useful.

Even before the end of the last century, anthropologists had questioned the notion of the matriarchate. Early in the present century, the notion was subjected to so much criticism in the light of empirical data that it could be safely dismissed from serious consideration. Thus, Lowie wrote in 1920 --

As noted, matrilineal descent was at one time interpreted to mean that women govern not merely the family but also the primitive equivalent of the state. Probably there is not a single theoretical problem on which modern anthropologists are so thoroughly in accord as with respect to the utter worthlessness of that inference.

Much of the earlier speculation about the matriarchate actually had reference to the tracing of descent through women. Matrilineal descent does not always imply that power is vested in women; men can still perform the major political functions otherwise attributed to women.

29 See Edward Westermarck, The History of Human Marriage (London, 1891), p. 104: "It is safe to say with Professor Max Müller, that we can neither assert nor deny that in unknown times the Aryans ever passed through a metocratic stage."

functions in a society that traces its family lines through the female side of the family. Matrilocal residence may give the wife's relatives some control and some rights over the husband and his children, but in this case also the rights need not be vested exclusively in women. Special powers vested in women through certain functions such as witchcraft or priestcraft may give prestige to certain women, but these powers are usually limited to certain situations. Priestesses had their functions in ancient societies, but they did not -- setting aside the ingenious speculations of Robert Graves -- govern empires.

The balance of authority in the Middle Ages was generally favorable to the male. Scottish authorities think of the clan as "patriarchal"; by the law of tanistry, a male, even if illegitimate, was supposed to succeed the chief, to the exclusion of females. In this case kinship took precedence over property as a principle of continuity. Even this practice had exceptions, however. In feudalized areas, among yeomen and peasants, the rule of inheritance does not exclude women:


33 Logan, p. 132.

34 Logan, p. 133.
The provisions which were made in custom for the widow-er of a woman who held land in her own right, an heir-ess, are less important for their own sake than for what they imply in general about the organization of English families in the Middle Ages. In the first place, the fact that there was an heiress is important. There was no such emphasis put on descent in the strict male line as there came to be in later times and among the gentry. If the last holder of a tenement left no sons, his land went to his daughters rather than to any brother or other male kinsman. In the second place, all custom conformed to the sentiment that a certain blood ought to remain in possession of a certain tenement, whether that blood was represented by a man or a woman.

Even in the matter of family names, there were, in manorial districts, some exceptions to the rule of transmission in the male line:

Among husbandmen in the Middle Ages, family names were unstable, and usually little can be learned from them. But in one respect, the very way they changed is significant. Elsie Toms, writing of the entries in the fourteenth-century court book of Chertsey Abbey in Surrey, points out as a remarkable fact that: "when heiresses marry, they so often keep their maiden names, while their husbands change theirs to their wives' names . . ."

To use the words of modern Irish countrymen, the family felt that they ought to keep "the name on the land." These instances do not, of course, constitute evidence of matrilineal descent, as a "survival" or in any other form; rather, they represent adjustments for the sake of convenience of a system that recognized bilateral descent and at the same time favored the paternal side in a general way in matters of family names, authority, and inheritance.

Aside from considerations of descent and inheritance, it is possible to account for a degree of importance and even of domestic prestige among women without looking back to a hypothetical primitive past. Even in the "man's world" of the Norse sagas, there are exceptions to the norm of male supremacy. When Unn manages to get her remaining kinsfolk and her wealth away from Caithness after the killing of her son, the narrator remarks,

And there is scarcely an example known to man of another woman having got away single-handed with so much wealth and so large a company. By this is to be seen how greatly she surpassed all other women. 36

This exceptional woman holds considerable power: she holds land, portions it out, and designates her heirs. 36 Despite the claim of uniqueness in her case, there are other outstanding women in the sagas: Gudrun is the power behind the feud between Bolli and Kjartan, 37 and Thorgerd stirs up Haldor to avenge Kjartan and directs the raid on Bolli's premises in person. 38 Thorbjorg, mistress of Vatnsfjord, orders the bondis who have taken Grettir captive to release him despite the sentence of outlawry and manages to justify her action very cleverly to her husband, Vermund. 39

37 Laxdaela Saga, p. 170
38 Laxdaela Saga, pp. 184-188.
In the ballads, it is generally the mothers who enjoy a certain prestige. Gil Brenton's mother not only superintends the test of the bride's chastity, but questions the bride and unravels the story of the premarital union and the missing tokens. She is strong physically as well as in domestic authority:

The auld queen she was stark and strang;  
She gard the door flee aff the ban.

The auld queen she was stark an steep;  
She gard the door flee in the fleer.  

Earl Brand takes his lady to his mother's gate and leaves the bride in his mother's charge. Lord Randall and Edward confide in their mothers; so does Leesome Brand in one text. Child Waters' mother takes on a role somewhat parallel to that of Gil Brenton's mother but behaves less authoritatively. Lord Thomas asks his mother first about his choice of a bride in most texts, though he consults his father first in a few variants. A son avenges his mother's death by killing

40 Child 5 A 38-39 (I, 69).
42 Child 15 A 33-35 (I, 183).
44 B 4 (II, 184), I 6-7 (IV, 469).
his father, according to the A-text of Jellon Grame; in B, the child is not the killer's own, however; and in A, the child is brought up to believe he is Jellon's nephew. Johnie Cock, though he does not take his mother's advice -- and suffers therefor according to the ballad formula -- sends to her to be fetched away after the foresters have wounded him.

By way of contrast, it should be noted that some ballads of this largely international group favor the father as an authority. As in Lord Thomas and Fair Annet, so in The Fair Flower of Northumberland (9), the authority appealed to may be either the mother or the father. In C, the mother answers the father's rebuke:

Out spake her father, he spake bold,
"How could ye be a whore in fifteen years old,
   And you the fair flower of Northumberland?"

Out spake her mother, she spake wi a smile,
"She's nae the first his coat did beguile,
   Ye're welcome again to Northumberland."

But in E, the father countermands the stepmother's order to leave:

Down came her step-dame, so rugged and doure,
   O why was your love so easily won,
"In Scotland go back to your false paramour,
   For you shall not stay here in Northumberland."

45 Child 90 A 21 (II, 304).
46 A 16 (II, 304).
47 Child 114 A 20 (III, 4).
Down came her father, he saw her and smiled,
A young maid's love is easily won,
"You are not the first the false Scots have beguiled,
And ye're aye welcome back to Northumberland."

Fair Janet's father informs her that his will is "both bed and board" to her. The lady's father in Willie and Lady Maisry (70) takes the place of the seven bold brothers in Clerk Saunders (69) as the protector of his daughter's honor. The lady of The Bent Sae Brown (71), a ballad also related to Clerk Saunders, gives her oath to father, mother, and brothers alike, though it is her mother who brings suit for the killing of her sons to the king's court.

It will be noted, too, that whereas the man confides in his mother in the ballads, the woman usually confides in her father. It is Annet's father who tells her to go to Lord Thomas's wedding in 73 A and B. This counter-motif to Lord Thomas's asking his mother may be dictated by a sense of esthetic balance, but it also may reflect a psychological affinity. In Sir John Butler (165), the daughter's devotion to her father is notable. The father's authority over his

49 E 17-18 (I, 117).
50 Child 64 A 3 (II, 103).
51 Child 71 Stanzas 7-8 (II, 171).
52 Stanzas 35-37 (II, 172).
53 Cf. Gummere, The Popular Ballad, p. 175: "To match the close relation of mother and son, we get a glimpse of the daughter who can dare everything for love of her sire."
sons may lead to a preference for the mother as a sympathetic friend and confidante, and this relationship may be reversed for the daughters. Malinowski has remarked that when authority is vested in the maternal uncle, the relationship between the father and his son is often closer and more confidential than in patrilineal society. 54

While giving the father his due measure of respect, it must be admitted that in the ballads generally, mothers predominate as holders of respect and authority. One reason for this predominance, as even Gummere concedes, 55 is probably the fact that widows were fairly common, especially in the turbulent times in which many of the ballads had their origin. And the right of the widow to hold property, though subject to limitations, nevertheless indicates a certain respect. 56

Some of the prestige accorded to women can also be accounted for on the grounds of their supposed possession of occult powers. Older women, for the most part, are the ones who enjoy this respect, though fear of such powers sometimes led to dire consequences. Celtic and Norse traditions


56 Cf. above, pp. 57-58.
may account for some of the witchcraft in the ballads; 57 but, as Coulton points out, there was a considerable body of belief in witchcraft in the Middle Ages, and women, though they had no monopoly on the black art, often bore the brunt of blame for it:

The mission preacher Herolt, and the medieval witch-finder Sprenger, both agreed that more women will be found in hell than men; because, although the women lead in other respects more regular lives, it is they who are specially given to witchcraft. Berthold of Regensburg [1250] says in one of his sermons: "Many of the village folk would come to heaven, were it not for their witchcrafts. . . . The woman has spells for getting a husband, spells for her marriage; spells on this side and on that; spells before her child is born, before the christening, after the christening; and all she gains with her spells is that her child fares the worse all its life long. . . . Ye men, it is much marvel that ye lose not your wits for the monstrous witchcrafts that women practise on you!" 58

Not all ballad witches resemble the mother in Willie's Lady and the stepmother in Kemp Owyne (34), and The Laily Worm (36) in the use of their powers for evil purposes. The beneficial uses of occult powers enhance the prestige of the women who employ them. Gil Brenton's mother uses a magical test to determine the chastity of the bride-to-be; a witchwoman saves the heroine's honor by teaching her a sleep-charm.

57 Aoife, Lir's first wife, bewitches his children by his second wife (Dillon, Early Irish Literature, p. 64); Conaire meets a woman with the Druid sight who throws the evil eye on him (Cuchulain, trans. Gregory, p. 93). Thorbjorn Angle's foster-mother practises her arts against Grettir (Grettir, trans. Hight, pp. 199-203).

in The Broomfield Hill (43); and Leesome Brand's mother furnishes the magic blood that brings her son's lady back to life. 59

Another means of confirming authority, also linked with preternatural powers, is the parental blessing, or its alternative, the curse. 60 Not overlooking the instance of Bewick and Graham (211), in which Graham fights with his sworn brother in order to earn his father's blessing, one must nevertheless hand the palm for occult powers in this matter again to women.

One ballad, The Mother's Malison (216), is based on the theme of the efficacy of the maternal curse. Willie will go to see his true-love rather than stay "this ae night" with his mother. 61 For insisting on going, he earns the fatal curse:

"O gin ye gang to May Margaret,
Without the leave of me,
Clyde's water's wide and deep enough,
My malison drown thee." 62

Needless to say, Willie does not get home alive.

Opposition to a marriage brings down the mother's curse in some variants of Rare Willie's Drowned in Yarrow (215):

61 Child 216 A 4 (IV, 187).
62 B 4 (IV, 188).
"Your Peggy she's but bare fifteen,  
And ye are scarcely twenty;  
The water o Gamry is wide and braid;  
My heavy curse gan g wi thee!"  

Johnie Cock's mother reinforces her counsels by the promise of her "benison" in most variants and the threat of her "malison" in one. And again, the son's disobedience brings disaster.

The mother's advice is often supplemented by the alternatives of curse or blessing in variants of Lord Thomas and Fair Annet (73). In F, the choice is most succinctly stated:

"Oh if ye merry your Fair Annie,  
Your mither's malison you'll win;  
But if ye merry the nut-brown may,  
Ye will get her blessin."

Thomas gets his answer from both mother and father in B; in D, he gets the conditional blessing from his mother only.

63 E 9 (IV, 181); cf. G 1 (IV, 182).
64 Child 114 A 2 (III, 3), E 3 (III, 6), F 2 (III, 7), G 4 (III, 8), H 3-4 (III, 9).
65 "Says, Johnie, for my malison,  
I pray ye at home for to stay." (D 3 [III, 5].)
66 Child 73 F 4 (II, 190).
67 "The brown bride, she has houses and land,  
And Annie she has nane;  
Sae on my blessing, my auld son,  
   "And for my blessing, my auld son,  
68 American variants tend to follow this pattern, probably because of the influence of printed texts (Barry, British Ballads from Maine, p. 134).
A share in parental prestige and in the legal privilege of inheritance, together with the occasional attribution of occult powers, gives only a partial accounting, perhaps, for the prestige accorded to the older woman. But these are grounds more relative than a matrilineal system of descent for which there is no evidence. Another problem arises, however, in connection with this matter of descent in balladlore. That is the problem of the sister's son. References to this relative are frequent enough and important enough to suggest a system of matrilineal descent to ballad critics. And the brother-sister relationship described above has been cited as further evidence of this system of descent.

Some influence from other literature is possible: Both Celtic and Norse sources contain references to the sister's son, and the Morte d'Arthur has a few such references; one of the best is Arthur's speech on seeing Gawaine receive his mortal wound:

"Alas, Sir Gawayne, my sister son, here now thou lyghest, the man in the worlde that I loved moste."

70 Pages 118-119.
But the sister's son plays a part in some writings that pretend, at least, to be historical. The Welsh Saint Cadoc cursed a pre-medieval chieftain for the killing of two sons of his own sister.\textsuperscript{74} Lindsay of Pitscottie seems partial to this relative: Lord Hamilton is persuaded by "his eame bischope Kennedie"\textsuperscript{75} to desert Douglas and go over to the king; Sir Patrick Gray enlists the support of the king in trying to get Douglas to release Sir Patrick's sister's son, the Tutor of Bombie; Robert Bruce gives the earldom of Murray to his sister's son, Sir Thomas Randall of Strathdoun;\textsuperscript{77} and Henry VIII of England orders his barons "that non of them sould invaid nor trouble Scotland the tyme of the kingis minoritie, ... and sett forth lettres thairvpon, for love of his sister and his sister sone."\textsuperscript{78} The brother's son is in evidence at least once, however.\textsuperscript{79}

There are parallels, then, in both literary traditions and the chronicles, for the references to the sister's son in

\textsuperscript{74} "Donations to St. Cadoc," in Seebohm, \textit{Tribal System}, p. 208.
\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Chronicles}, I, 175.
\textsuperscript{76} \textit{Chronicles}, I, 97, n.
\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Chronicles}, I, 64.
\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Chronicles}, II, 283.
\textsuperscript{79} Lives of Stirling, in his rivalry with William Mel­drum, laird of Bines, over the lady Glengeis, "solisted his brother sone, the laird of Keir, with ane certane companie of armed men, to set vpon the laird of Bines, to tak his ladie from him be way of deid" (II, 305).
the ballads. The phrase is a commonplace in balladry and probably was transferred from one ballad to another without necessary awareness of its meaning. But it was widely used, and social circumstances may account in some degree for its acceptance.

In some instances, as in the J-text of Fair Annie (62), the sister's son is called upon for some service:

"Seven ships they brought me here,
But I'll gae hame in ane;
I'll get my sister's eldest son
To hae me maiden hame."81

Child Maurice, in one variant, trusts the "bonny boy" who runs his secret errand because the boy is his sister's son. The secret is still betrayed, but through indiscretion rather than treachery.

The sister's son often appears in the role of a very close and intimate relative. In Lord Ingram and Chiel Wyet (66), the two rivals in love are brothers in two variants (A and B), but Wyet is sister's son to Ingram in C. In the Robin Hood ballads, the relationship stands for close kinship:

"You are my mother's own sister's son;
What nearer cousins then can we be?"83

81 Child 62 J 54 (III, 82).
82 Child 83 D 5 (II, 269).
83 The Bold Pedlar and Robin Hood (132), st. 14 (III, 155).
Andrew Barton feels keenly the loss of his sister's son in the sea-fight, after sending him, the last of many, to the topsail:

When Sir Andrew sawe his sister's sonne slayne,
That man in his heart was nothinge well.84

Johnie Armstrong attributes the same feeling to the king of England:

"Wist England's king that I was tane,
O gin a blyth man wald he be!
For anes I slew his sisters son,
And on his breist-bane broke a tree."85

In Lord Thomas and Lady Margaret (260), the lady, though she poisons her former lover, promises to give him proper burial as if he were a near kinsman:

"But I will bury thee, Lord Thomas," she said,
"Just as if thou wert one of my own;
And when that my good lord comes home
I will say that thou's my sister son."86

Child Owlet refuses to cuckold his sister's son, Lord Ronald.87

The Outlaw Murray calls on his sister's son for help in A;88

Murray's foot-page is his sister's son in B.89

Of special interest is the association of prophetic power with this relationship in a variant of Lord Thomas and

84 Sir Andrew Barton (167), A* 61 (IV, 505).
85 Johnie Armstrong (169), C 24 (III, 371).
86 A 19 (IV, 427).
87 Child Owlet (291), st. 3 (V, 157).
88 The Outlaw Murray (305), A 38 (V, 192).
89 B 34 (V, 195).
Fair Annet (73) and in Johnie Cock (114). In the I-text of the former, Thomas' sister's son is not only precocious but gifted with foresight:

Up than spak his sister's son,
Sat on the nurse's knee,
Sun-bruisit in his mother's wame,
Sun-brunt on his nurse's knee:

"O yer hogs will die out i the field,
Yer kye ill die i the byre;
An than, whan a' yer gear is gane,
A fusome fag by yer fire!"90

Corruption of the prophetic passage in Johnie Cock makes the reference obscure, but the sister's son makes the prophecy of Johnie's death in some variants.91

Even this evidence, however, need not point to a matrilineal system in the background of ballad-lore. Aside from the isolated instance of the "Pictish succession," there is no hint of such a system in the ancient past.92 The sister's son was a figure of some significance in medieval Europe, however, but he had no need of a matrilineal society to establish

90 Child 73 I 9-10 (IV, 469). The sister makes a similar prediction in F 9 (II, 190), G 9 (II, 192), H 10 (II, 194).

91 Child 114 A 15 (III, 3), F 15 (III, 8); "uncle's son" in E 15 (V, 7).

92 "In the latter years of the Pictish monarchy, Gaelic influence had been exemplified by the growing laxness with which the rules involved by the Pictish rule of succession had been observed. After Scottish kingship over the Picts had been established, the patriarchal principle itself was finally abolished, and replaced by tanistry" (W. C. MacKenzie, The Highlands and Isles, p. 73). Cf. Skene, The Highlanders, p. 81; J. H. Stevenson, "The Law of the Throne -- Tanistry and the Introduction of the Law of Primogeniture," Scot. Hist. Rev., XXV, (Oct., 1927), 2.
his importance. Homans points out the frequency of this relationship in the medieval institution of wardship\textsuperscript{93} and notes that a close relationship between the mother's brother and the sister's son exists in many patrilineal societies:

It seems to be a natural concomitant of the emotional tensions obtaining in the small family: the mother's brother acts as a kind of male mother. Tacitus speaks of such a relationship among the Germans, and the sagas show that in Iceland there was a tendency to send children to the mother's brother to be fostered. In the case of the English custom of wardship, there can be no question of a survival from early Germanic society. The lawyers of the time observed that material interests furnished reason enough for the custom. They said that the wardship ought to belong to the nearest of kin to whom the inheritance could not descend, the nearest of kin who would have nothing to gain by the death of the heir.\textsuperscript{94}

Modern Ireland furnishes instances of the closeness of this relationship where patrilineal ties are ostensibly the dominant ones:

The country people marvel that a young child may often like its mother's brother better than its "own uncles." They mean thereby that the bond survives in equal strength with that where the common patrilineal interests of a common family are in question, as in the case of two brothers and their children.\textsuperscript{95}

The ballads, then, tend to attribute a certain prestige to the older woman, especially in the mother-son relationship. And the relationship of the maternal uncle and his

\textsuperscript{93} \textit{English Villagers}, p. 191.

\textsuperscript{94} Page 192.

\textsuperscript{95} Arensburg and Kimball, \textit{Family and Community in Ireland}, p. 68.
nephew is also close. But these matters can be accounted for as well by some elements in folk-literature and, more significantly, by elements in medieval society as by looking back to a remote past for hypothetical conditions about which there is no satisfactory evidence.
Though the ballads are concerned frequently with courtship, marriage, birth, and death, they do not deal in equally great detail with all the customs surrounding these matters. Though weddings are numerous in the ballads, the actual ceremony, whether in the church or at the church door, is never described in detail: the interrupted ceremony, completed by Little John wearing the bishop's coat, in Robin Hood and Allen a Dale (133), can hardly be considered representative of serious practices. Trothplight or handfasting, which played a considerable role in medieval marriages, is important to the plots of a few ballads: Young Beichan's betrothed comes seeking him from a far country, and Sweet William's ghost returns from the grave to ask for the promised "faith and troth." But the exact manner in which the betrothal is made is not given in the ballads. The property settlements made by the families of the bride and groom are rarely given much attention, though


2 Child 53 C (I, 466-467).

3 Child 77 A 4-10 (II, 229); cf. B 2-9 (II, 230), C 6-7 (II, 231), D 4-13 (II, 231-232), etc.
often the relative poverty of one of the parties to the marriage is the outstanding obstacle. The ballads are concerned with the main line of the action and give little of the circumstantial detail. They allude to some matters, however, in which the kindred may be directly involved.

In contrast to the accepted practice, courtship in the ballads generally takes the form of direct dealings between the lover and the lady, and troth-plight is usually a private affair, often a secret one, between the lovers. But the bride's kindred must be reckoned with at some point, even if it is defied by elopement; and obtaining consent can cause trouble, as in The Cruel Brother (11). Wooing through the mediation of the bride's parents and even through that of sisters and brothers is not unknown in the ballads, but this practice rarely succeeds as well in balladry as the direct wooing of the bride. The ballad singers give short shrift to the man who bribes the lady's kindred to obtain her hand. Lord Ingram lavishes his gifts on the lady's family as well as on the lady herself:

And he has bought to this lady
The robs of the red;
"And ever alas," says this lady,
"The robs will be my dead!"

And he has bought to this lady
The chrystal and the lammer,
Sae has hee bought to her mither
The curches of the cammer.
Every ane o her se'en brethren
   They had a hawk in hand,
And every lady in the place
   They got a goud garland. 

And the English lord courts Katharine Jaffray by securing her parents' consent:

   He's teld her father and mither baith,
      As I hear sindry say,
   But he has nae teld the lags her sell,
      Till on her wedding day.

But in both ballads the suitors who plead their causes to the ladies directly win the ladies' affections. The failure of the indirect wooing suggests tales of the "Courtship of Myles Standish" type.

The family of the bride is directly concerned in the matter of the dowry, which receives considerable attention in the ballads. In Leesom Brand, the eloping couple steal the dowry; only the exact amount which the bride-to-be knows is due her is taken. In The Earl of Errol, the earl's wife and her family try to cheat the earl of the dowry by swearing in court that "he's no a sufficient man." The promise of a generous dowry is a motive for supplanting

4 Lord Ingram and Chiel Wyet (66) C 4-7 (II, 131).
5 Katharine Jaffray (221) A 5 (IV, 219); cf. C 5 (IV, 220).
6 Motif-Index T 51.1: Emissary wins lady's love for himself.
7 Child 15 A 18 (I, 183).
8 Child 231 A 14 (IV, 284).
the faithful mistress in *Fair Annie*:

"Wi her I will get gowd and gear,
Wi you I neer got nane."\(^9\)

In one variant of this ballad, the altercation between the new bride and the groom over that all-important matter overshadows the discovery of the long-lost sister:

"For that's the voice of your sister Ann,
Was stown frae yont the sea;
I came seeking Annie's tocher,
I was not seeking thee."

"Seven gude ships I has brought here,
In seven I'se gae hame;
And a' the gowd that I brought here,
It's a' gang back again."

"Seven ships they brought you here,
But ye'll gang hame in ane;
Ye'll leave the rest to tocher Ann,
For wi her I got nane."\(^10\)

In another variant, the bridegroom combines practical sense and sentiment in evenly balanced proportions:

"Rise up, rise up, my bierly bride;
I think my bed's but caul;
I wouldna hear my lady lament
For your tocher ten times taul.

"O seven ships did bring you here,
An an sal tak you hame;
The leve I'll keep to your sister Jane,
For tocher she gat nane."\(^11\)

The hero of *Glenlogie*, or *Jean of Bethelnie* (238) at first scorns Bonnie Jean's love because her "tocher's oure


\(^{10}\) J 51-53 (II, 82).

\(^{11}\) E 19-20 (II, 75).
And even in a fairly late ballad like Walter Lesly (296), the dowry is a motive for bride-stealing:

It was not for her beauty, nor yet her gentle bluid,
But for her mither's dollars, of them he had great need. 13

Custom is probably more accountable than folklore in this instance: medieval law was concerned with the dowry, 14 and the institution is still of much importance in some peasant societies:

The dower was a vital consideration in the making of any marriage in Europe under the old order. If what happened in Europe in the thirteenth century was like what happens in parts of Europe where the old peasant culture is still established, careful and determined haggling went on between the head of the boy's family and the head of the girl's before her dower was agreed upon, and the agreement might be an elaborate one. . . . The withholding of a dower upon which two parties had agreed was, like any other breach of covenant among villagers, a cause for a suit before a manorial court. 15

Where the kindred does not consent to the match, the ballad hero and heroine often resort to elopement. This practice and bride-stealing are folktale motifs of long standing. 16 An occasional marriage without the consent of

12 Child 238 H 3 (IV, 344).
13 Child 296 Stanza 12 (V, 169).
14 See above, pp. 57 and 67.
the families concerned was not unlikely, even in ballad
times, but to describe such runaway matches as "marriage
under the figure of bride-stealing" would imply more than
we know about "survivals" of primitive practices. Some of
the accounts of bride-stealing in the ballads clearly belong
to folk-literature; the stories of capture in *Fair Annie*
(62) and in *Prince Heathen* (104) may have some basis in oral
traditions of Viking raids. There are sufficiently authen-
tic prose accounts of the attempts at abduction in *Rob Roy*
(225) and *The Lady of Arngosk* (224). The would-be captors
failed in these accounts and in the ballads of *Eppie Morrie*
(223) and *Bonny Baby Livingston* (222). All these bride-
stealers were Highlanders, and, like Walter Lesly, were often
after money, which they hoped the lady's reluctant Lowland
relatives would furnish after the marriage.

Childbirth plays its role in the ballads, most often
in the form of premarital pregnancy. Relatively little is
said, however, about baptism, christening, and such post-
natal rites. Hind Etin's son asks for "christendoun" and

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17 Alexander Tarvit's marriage against the will of
his ward is the subject of a court case in 1515-1517. See
*The Sheriff Court Book of Fife 1515-1522*, ed. William C.
Dickinson (Edinburgh, 1928), pp. 71-72, 295.


19 Cf. above, p. 39.

20 Cf. Child, IV, pp. 241-242, 244.
receives it along with his six brothers who have been brought up with him in the good green wood. 21 And Janet asks Tam Lin, her otherworld lover, if he has ever been "in holy chapel;/ Or christendom did see." 22

Fosterage and wardship do not enter into the ballad plot, unless perhaps the "sister's son" references reflect the practice of fostering a young man on his "eame." 23 Adoption takes the folkloristic form of the kidnaping of mortal women to nurse elf-children in The Queen of Elfan's Nourice (40). 24

The frequency of ballad households containing one daughter and several brothers has been cited as a hint of some ancient practice of infanticide. 25 But it should be noted that the number of personages in a ballad is often limited to those called for by the narrative and that in those ballads where infanticide occurs -- The Cruel Mother (20), The Maid and the Palmer (21), and Mary Hamilton (173) -- the act is regarded as criminal and is punished. In The White Fisher (264), the drowning of the child is avoided,

22 Tam Lin (39) A 21 (I, 341), B 20 (I, 344), D 11 (I, 346); cf. G 24 (I, 350), etc.
24 Cf. Motif-Index, F 372.
to the satisfaction of both parents.

The ballads show some preoccupation with burial and mourning customs, and the kindred is frequently seen to be concerned with these matters. Although ballad funerals are almost all aristocratic in their splendor, as Wimberly points out,26 the relatives of the deceased are so intimately concerned that they often make both the shroud and the bier with their own hands.27 The lyke-wake, a prevalent observance in Scotland even after medieval times,28 is chiefly the responsibility of the kindred, though others may be present, as is the lady in Willie's Lyke-Wake (25). In Young Benjie (186), the brothers watch the corpse of their sister in the belief that it will tell them who murdered her; but in Fair Mary of Wallington (91), the lady expresses the hope that her relatives will arrive in time for her wake, if not before her dying hour:

"Ye bid them and ye pray them bath,
    If they will dou it for my sake,
    If they be not att my death,
    To be att my leak-wake."29

The kindred is also usually charged with the duty of giving

27 Death and Burial Lore, p. 100.
29 G 13 (V, 223).
away food and money at the wake or the funeral, probably, as
Wimberly suggests, to obtain prayers for the dead. Then
atives perform this service in Lord Thomas and Fair Annet (73),
Fair Margaret and Sweet William (74), and The Gay Goshawk
(96); the lady performs it for her supposedly dead lover in
Willie's Lyke-Wake (25); and in Fair Janet (64), the dying
lover asks his mother to "deal the bread" and the wine for
him.

Close relatives also undertake the duty, in a few
ballads, of burying important objects with the corpse. Little
Sir Hugh asks his mother for his Bible and his prayer-book.
In The Twa Brothers (49), the dying brother asks for his
Bible and his "chaunter" but wants his bow and arrows by his
side also. In another text of this ballad, he asks his
brother for all of his physical armament and does not mention
protection of the spiritual sort:

"Ye'll lay my arrows at my head,
    My bent bow at my feet,
    My sword and buckler at my side,
    As I was wont to sleep."  

30 Death and Burial Lore, p. 97.
31 Child 64 C 19 (II, 107).
32 Sir Hugh, or, the Jew's Daughter (155) N 16 (III,
    252).
33 Child 49 B 6 (I, 438).
34 D 9 (I, 440). See also Robin Hood's Death (120)
    A and B, for weapon-burial.
Wimberly's comment on these instances is typical of the search for "survivals" in ballad criticism:

The ancient and primitive practice of burying with the dead certain of their possessions is reflected in three fine ballads. 35

Wimberly does not specify here exactly what is meant by "primitive." If this term refers to a hypothetical stage in unilinear social evolution, the objections already reviewed are applicable here. If the practice of burial in specific pre-Christian societies like those described in Beowulf and in Norse literature is meant, then some resemblance may be noted, especially in the burial of weapons. The requests for the Bible and the prayer-book or the psalm-book may be motivated by the orthodox Christian trust in these articles as safeguards for the soul, however; and a sentimental attachment for the weapons that have been one's best defense in life may account for the seemingly pagan practice of weapon-burial.

Other aspects of burial and mourning customs give rise to speculation of this sort:

Before taking up mourning customs more or less as we know them today, we ought to raise the question as to whether the ballads hold anything of primitive mourning ritual. One is inclined to raise this question when confronted with the various and picturesque ways that ballad characters have of expressing grief. What means, for example, the riving or tearing of the hair,

35 Death and Burial Lore, p. 126.
what the pulling of ribbons from the hair and letting them "down fa," what the wringing of the hands, the "cracking" of the fingers? May these incidents be dismissed as extravagances that are likely to characterize popular poetry when striving for its own peculiar effects, or do they reflect a way of life that, without the aid of artistic distortion, would appear absurd to the modern reader, as unnatural, say, as the heroic lamentations of certain of Homer's heroes?36

In medieval literature, violent emotion often extends to other manifestations than mourning; and it is present in prose traditions as well as in ballads.37 Some influence from folklore is doubtless present in extravagant expressions of feeling. It is also likely, if the literature is at all symptomatic, that medieval people were more spontaneous in expressing both grief and joy than are their modern descendants. The ritual quality of such expression can be accounted for in terms of the emotional tone of medieval life:

Every event, every action, was still embodied in expressive and solemn forms, which raised them to the dignity of a ritual. For it was not merely the great facts of birth, marriage and death which, by the sacredness of the sacrament, were raised to the rank of mysteries; incidents of less importance, like a journey, a task, a visit, were equally attended by a thousand formalities: benedictions, ceremonies, formulas.38

And the violence of emotional expression may be accounted

36 Death and Burial Lore, p. 103.
37 See Motif-Index T 81, Death from love, F 1041.1, Death from a broken heart, F 1041.10, Death from excessive joy.
for as a result of the conditions of life:

Calamities and indigence were more afflicting than at present; it was more difficult to guard against them, and to find solace. Illness and health presented a more striking contrast; the cold and darkness of winter were more real evils. Honours and riches were relished with greater avidity and contrasted more vividly with surrounding misery. . . . All things presenting themselves to the mind in violent contrasts and impressive forms, lent a tone of excitement and of passion to everyday life and tended to produce that perpetual oscillation between despair and distracted joy, between cruelty and pious tenderness which characterize life in the Middle Ages. 39

The austerities and self-imposed penances for the dead noted by Wimberly 40 may have their roots also in medieval conditions. Penance would have more significance in medieval Christianity than in paganism. And many of the austerities and penances are the effects of the strong grief of the relative or the lover.

The question of ritual in connection with rites of passage leads to the broader problem suggested by Wimberly -- the possibility of some surviving family cult -- of some form of ancestor worship 41 or even of totemism. 42 But the evidence for totemism and ancestor-cult in Indo-European society is inconclusive. Andrew Lang rejects the notion of totemic

39 Huizinga, pp. 9-10.
40 Death and Burial Lore, p. 103.
41 Death and Burial Lore, p. 8.
42 Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads, pp. 66-67.
origins in Scotland. The lack of evidence for totemism in Indo-European backgrounds generally is noted in a more recent study:

If totemism existed among the Indo-Europeans, one would confidently expect to find evidence of it in connection with the bean, not only because of the unique profusion of the evidence, but also because the basic soul concept was peculiarly well adapted to evolution in a totemic pattern. The lack of evidence of such a development is sufficient justification to view with considerable skepticism any attempt to prove that totemism existed among the Indo-Europeans.

Animal parentage, transformation into animals, and other close relationships between animals and human beings have been cited as evidence of totemism; but these folklore motifs are widely diffused in oral tradition and need not stem from any specific corpus of belief. "Unfortunately," says A. H. Krappe, "the only common feature is the occurrence of an animal, and by this logic it would be possible to link La Fontaine's fables with totemism." Ancestor-worship is likewise hard to substantiate. The only specific evidence of anything resembling family

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43 History of Scotland, I, 78.
45 Wimberly, Folklore, p. 67.
46 See Motif-Index, I, 270-370.
47 The Science of Folk-lore, p. 9.
Cult is the Welsh custom of dadenhudd -- the uncovering of the family hearth-fire by a son succeeding his father in possession of the homestead. Seebohm found this procedure highly significant, for its symbolism at least:

The legal term for the recovery by an ejected son of his patrimony was dadenhudd or the uncovering again of the parental hearth. . . . The fire-back-stone, set up against the central pillar of the hut supporting the roof . . . was a memorial or witness of land and homestead . . . because it bore the mark of the kindred upon it.48

But his inference about ancestor-worship rests on the comparative method, as he himself states:

But when the comparative method forces upon us the fact that in other tribal systems the hearth is surrounded with sacredness as the centre of the worship of ancestors, and that connected with that worship there were found in various tribal systems strangely similar grades of kinship, to shut our eyes to this wider view would be willful blindness to facts which may throw back, even upon the Welsh tribal system, an important side-light.49

There is no certainty of anything except the use of a legal term in all this "evidence." Nor do we have any proof that the practice existed in Scottish society.

The "beneficent household demon,"50 the Billy Blin, suggests the Roman lares domestici. But there are similar household spirits in folk-literature apart from the ballads, 51

48 The Tribal System in Wales, p. 82.
49 Tribal System, p. 86.
50 Wimberly, Folklore, p. 200; see also pp. 209-210.
51 Cf. Motif-Index, F 480, House-spirits, F 481, Cobold,
and Child's analysis indicates a possible connection with Odin. In this case again, the evidence is ambiguous and insufficient for anything but the wildest conjecture.

Whether the customs that relate to the kindred are derived from ancient practices and beliefs or whether they are largely the results of late medieval attitudes, colored perhaps by folklore, is the major question that emerges from the above considerations. Wimberly consistently attempts to explain all such matters as survivals of a prehistoric past; modern anthropologists would be inclined to look for psychological values and satisfactions in the actual lives of the people in the ballad-community to explain most of the practices mentioned. The emphasis on survivals leads Wimberly to state the case for pagan elements in the ballads in a rather extreme form:

Our best ballads are pagan at heart, fully as much so as the traditional songs of Scandinavia, and their religion is as heathen as that of the Helgi lays. The amalgamation of heathen beliefs with the ideas of a later or alien faith -- the Christianizing process, in a word, so apparent in the religious thought of the Celts, for example, or of the Teutons -- is illustrated here and there in our balladry, but throughout these simple little songs the world of paganism enjoys a hardy survival. This is not, of course, to say that the ballads antedate the introduction of Christianity into the British Isles. It is to say, however, that English folksong has caught

52 See Child, I, 67.
up and carried along a great corpus of beliefs which do antedate and are independent of Christian thought.

Whether the beliefs indicated here are borrowings from other folklore or living and functioning beliefs and customs, the writer does not clearly specify.

It is extremely improbable that a totally pagan world inspired the major portion of balladry in the later Middle Ages. It is also unlikely that a body of poetry completely or largely pagan in its reference to belief and custom had widespread currency after Piers Plowman and the romances. The ballad world, as the ballads themselves picture it, can be called neither totally pagan nor totally Christian. Popular Christianity in ballad times was doubtless blended with some pagan elements, and local folklore often had reference to a pagan past. John Aubrey accounts for this mixture of elements:

In the Infancy of Christian Religion it was expedient to plough (as they say) with the heifer of the Gentiles: (i) to insinuate with them, and to let them continue to use their old Ethnick Festivals which they now named with Christian names, e. g. Floralia, they turnd to y3 Feast of St. Philip and Jacob, etc. The Saturnalia into Christmas. Had they done otherwise, they could not have gain'd so many Proselytes or established their Doctrine so well, and in so short a time.54

Christian doctrine, as the average man understood it, did not probably coincide in all respects with official

53 Folklore, p. 401.
54 Remaines, p. 6.
theology. As a rule, the medieval folk had little conceptual knowledge of Scripture:

Of the Bible, the ordinary man knew only a few stories like that of Adam and Eve, and a little of the Gospels. It has been claimed that the church walls were his Bible; but wall-paintings, statues, and stained glass told far more of the saints' legends than of Bible history.55

Thorough indoctrination of the folk through preaching was unlikely:

Such preaching as was done in all these thousands of English parishes, after the middle of the thirteenth century, was mainly performed by a few scores of itinerant friars. Originally, it was only bishops who normally preached; others did so, very occasionally; sometimes never.56

Berthold of Regensburg was interrupted in a sermon against chatting in church by one of his hearers:

"Yea, Brother Berthold, but we understand not the Mass, and therefore can we not pray as we had need, nor may we feel such devotion as if we understood the Mass."57

Under these conditions, one would not expect the popular faith to be completely orthodox. Coulton allows considerable scope for the continued operation of pagan belief and custom:

The village dance was, as we have seen, a direct inheritance from pre-Christian times. It is absolutely necessary to realize that nobody whatever doubted the actual existence of these old pagan gods. They existed as truly as the great God; but, whereas the pagans had taken them for gods, the Christians knew them to be

55 Coulton, Medieval Panorama, p. 185.
56 Medieval Panorama, p. 190.
57 Medieval Panorama, p. 189.
devils. Such gods can be driven out only by the power of a greater God; and, though worsted for a moment, they still linger in the background, ready to snap up everything that the greater God does not definitely protect. Hence, since the Church took a very one-sided view of human life in many ways, whatsoever the ecclesiastic in his narrowness or intolerance cast out, that became the natural domain of the Devil. 58

Though lacking perhaps in logical and theological consistency, medieval man had one advantage: he could draw on a variety of resources to satisfy his psychic needs.

Even in the absence of a specific family cult, religious sanctions, in the form of ritual and belief, had a great deal of bearing on such matters as birth, status, rites of passage, authority within the group, and marriage. 59 "It is within the kin group," says Goode, "that religious socialization occurs, and these learned sanctions in turn support much of the familial structure." 60 In marriage and in christening, as has been indicated, 61 Christian usages had occasional relevance in balladry. Family cult is not the only means of accounting for the death and burial lore of the ballads: medieval religious sanctions serve as well to explain the relationship between the living and the dead kinsmen or loved ones:

Aside from the living memory of the dead, they often remain as part of the supernatural forces, even

58 Medieval Panorama, p. 111.
60 Page 183.
61 Above, pp. 140, 145-146.
in societies which are not cases of "ancestor worship." ... It is significant that in spite of the wide disparity between the societies treated in this investigation, all of them consider the dead to figure largely among the sacred forces. 62

The continuity of the family group is maintained in rituals implying the responsibility and the concern of the living for the dead:

The society enjoins particular types of mourning and funeral ritual. This means that at the moment of greatest preoccupation with one's own sorrow, the group forces those most concerned, the family, to take part in something which points beyond sorrow itself to other interests, social and sacred. The solidarity of the family has been temporarily broken by the removal of an integral part, and the collective mourning and ritual serve to realign the unity in an emotionally satisfactory and socially approved manner. ... Mourning and ritual adjust the individual to the reality of death. That is, there is a forced catharsis and a deviation of interest from sentiment to activity. 63

Both the pagan lyke-wake and the possibly Christian penances and donations of food, drink, and money are means to this end.

In the ballads which deal with birth and death, both pagan and Christian sanctions for ritual and attitude can be found almost inseparably intermingled. In Tam Lin (39), the elf-world is at odds with Christianized humanity; but even the fairy-folk exist in a Christian cosmos: at every seven years' end, they must pay a "tiend to hell" in the form of a member of their company. 64 In the Scandinavian analogues of

62 Goode, p. 185
63 Goode, p. 186.
64 Child 39 A 24 (I, 342); B 23 (I, 344), D 15 (I, 346), G 28 (I, 350), I 32 (I, 354).
Hind Etin (41), the elf-world takes its vengeance on the lady who desires to return to her Christian heritage; but in the British ballad, the lady and her children eventually return to civilization, and the children are christened. And the ballad revenant, despite its corporeal qualities and its pagan habitat of the barrow, has some knowledge of hell and paradise. The barrow-ghost of Proud Lady Margaret (47) warns his sister to "leave pride and vanity" like any preacher of Christian asceticism and speaks of her conduct in church and of the danger of hell-fire almost like a good Scotch Calvinist. Similarly, the ghosts of the children in The Wife of Usher's Well (79) and Sweet William's ghost have glimpses of the Christian otherworld beyond the confines of the grave. Wimberly's estimate of the role of paganism in the ballads has, then, some validity. But it is not demonstrable that the ballads illustrate an originally pure pagan

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66 Child 41 A 50-54 (I, 369), C 12-14 (I, 371).
68 Child 47 D 12 (I, 430), E 11 (I, 431); cf. B 26 (I, 428), C 18 (I, 430).
70 B 30-31 (I, 429).
framework of ideas. The suggestion here offered is that the partial merger of pagan and Christian elements took place in the society from which the ballads emerged.

Neither in paganism nor in Christianity can a purely familial cult be found. Both teutonic and Christian systems tend to support larger units than the clan: the king and his thegns were reflected in the Teutonic pantheon, and the courageous undertakings of the gods were models for the heroes of the whole people; and the Christian ideal of universal human brotherhood occasionally found its way, at least in the form of the concept of the Holy Roman Empire and in the internationalism of the Crusades, into the tangled intrigues of ecclesiastical and secular politics. On lower levels of organization, Christian beliefs and institutions tended to support the monarch against powerful families of nobles. At the same time, however, both world-views furnished elements of belief and custom which were necessary to the continuance and the welfare of the family group.
CHAPTER VII

VARIATION IN SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND THE BALLAD

The general tendencies of variation affecting the British ballads in America are reviewed in a recent study by Tristram Coffin.¹ Those phenomena which affect the story of the ballad -- "elimination of action; development into lyric; loss of detail through forgetting; convention and cliché; localization; the effect of literalness; rationalization; sentimentalization; moralization; manner of use; secondary growth; new ballads which rise from old; and mergers"² -- all have interest for the present study. Our primary concern is not to illustrate all these processes fully (such documentation would require several volumes) but to observe some typical effects of social change on ballads dealing with familial matters which have undergone sufficient change to produce effects on these ballads. Of primary interest are problems such as these: (1) whether the ballads reflect changes in the familial situation and in relevant customs and beliefs; (2) whether such changes affect the quality of the ballads; and (3) whether folkloristic elements such as

² Page 11.
supernatural motifs are more or less susceptible to variation than those involving kinship. Three of the forces listed by Coffin may be expected to operate in important ways in connection with these problems: these forces are rationalization, moralization, and sentimentalization. Rationalization affects chiefly the supernatural sanctions relating to kinship:

In Britain and America as belief in ghosts, fairies, and other spiritual characters dwindles, everyday substitutes are provided, so that an elfin knight becomes a gypsy lover and later an illicit lover or even a lodger, while a mermaid is replaced by a mortal, if mysterious, sweetheart. So strong is such rationalization that most of our modern versions of the old ghost, witch, etc. ballads have lost nearly all traces of the supernatural.

But as changes take place in the relations of family and kindred, one may expect elements which depend on these relationships to change somewhat or to disappear also. Moralization may arise from a failure to understand or to condone the social arrangements of the past or, in certain cases, from an increase of squeamishness about describing certain human situations. The sentimental attitude leaves its mark on some narratives: the lover may have a change of heart and apologize in The Brown Girl (295), or the girl may turn against the lover who kills her father in Earl Brand (7).

The most striking social change affecting the ballads is probably the repression of clanship as an effective political

3 Page 17.
4 Page 18.
force in eighteenth-century Scotland. There has been relatively little transmission of the ballad of clan-warfare in the Highlands and on the Border, and even the ballads which commemorate the clashes of aristocratic families are fragmented and lack clarity of reference for the most part. The old text of Geordie (209) suggests the power of a great clan as it tells of the rallying of Huntly's supporters at the time of his trial:

The Gordons cam, and the Gordons ran,  
And they were stark and steady,  
And ay the word amang them a'  
Was, Gordons, keep you ready! 5

And though the king's pardon is purchased, the suggestion of warlike loyalty lingers in the lady's greeting to her liberated husband:

She blinkit blythe in her Geordie's face,  
Says, Dear I've bought thee, Geordie;  
But there sud been bluidy pouks on the green  
Or I had tint my laddie. 6

Geordie is still current in America, but most American versions are much altered by the influence of the broadside text of George of Oxford, 7 which celebrates the execution of a highwayman of the Macheath variety. The trial is retained, but the reference to the clan is lost, and Geordie is

5 A 11 (IV, 127).
6 A 14 (IV, 127).
7 See Child's Appendix to No. 209 (IV, 140-141).
usually hanged for stealing. Bonnie George Campbell (210), The Bonnie House of Airlie (199), and Willie Macintosh (183) survive largely in New Brunswick. The least fragmented of the three, The Bonnie House of Airlie, makes the plundering incident part of "the wars of the Roses white and red," and at the same time locates it "in the days of Prince Charlie." 

Whether there is any definite connection between Border raid ballads like Jamie Telfer in the Fair Dodhead or The Lads of Wamphray and American ballads of generally similar subject matter is an open question; American variants of specific ballads of this type are rare. One version of Archie o Cawfield (183) is credited to a singer from Plymouth Harbor, Massachusetts. Local allusions have disappeared, of course, but some typical details are retained: Archer has forty pounds of Spanish iron on his legs, and the high-sheriff's plea to have his irons back is refused with the


See Barry, Eckstrom, and Smith, 183 (pp. 264-266); 199 A and B (pp. 266-269); 210 A, B, C (pp. 279-284).

Barry, Eckstrom, and Smith, p. 268.

"While few of the Border Raid ballads have come to America, their type has doubtless inspired many of our indigenous songs" (Wells, The Ballad Tree, p. 55).

Child's headnote, III, 494.

F 9 (III, 494).
usual taunt. Instead of limiting their numbers to a dozen or so, Archer's brothers decide that "forty men is full little enough" for the jail-break. The enlistment of the cousin and the rebuke earned by Jock the laird are both lacking.

Since the prevailing kinship-structure in the society of ballad times, apart from clanship, was basically similar to the modern organization, which traces degrees of relationship outward in a rather informal way from the small family group, radical changes in the ballads which deal with the nuclear situation are hardly to be expected. But within the basic structure, some changes have been significant: the decline of the stem-family, the decrease in relative degrees of authority among members, the change from the relative isolation of an essentially agricultural or pastoral economy to a society involving more complex social relationships, and the decline of the familial sanctions of custom and belief -- these alterations may be expected to affect the ballads in the course of transmission.

14 F 15-16 (III, 494).
15 See above, pp. 97-98.
16 F 3 (III, 494).
17 See above, p. 93.
W. Roy Mackenzie's caution against formulating rules as absolutes needs to be recalled here: strict correlations and inexorable laws are probably not to be expected. But a general relationship between social background and the ballads seems to be defensible in the light of a general view of variation. Singers forget and make errors in meaning; and what they retain and add tends to follow patterns that are meaningful to successive groups of singers and hearers. Elements that lack meaning for the newer groups who transmit the ballads may be expected to suffer the most frequently from corruption or loss. The overall tendency toward deterioration in the ballads generally, attested by some authorities, is most easily explained on grounds of change in the circumstances which made the earlier versions meaningful. Since most of the deterioration takes place in oral tradition itself, such changes in circumstances are more plausible causes than the effects of literacy or the influence of printed texts. Changes from rural to urban conditions of living are still held chiefly responsible for the decline in

20 See p. 3, above.


balladry, but these changes are also important influences on familial relations. Occasionally, variation produces a ballad that is esthetically better than its predecessors, like the Child B variant of Edward or the D variant of Lord Randall; but these variants are likely to appear before the tradition of the ballad in question has gone into its declining phase.

The general tendency is illustrated by Archer Taylor's conclusion from his study of Edward:

The theme is debased and vulgarized. Clearly the development can have been in but one direction: the older form has degenerated in the mouths of the modern ballad singers. This downward progress has taken place independently in Scandinavia and Great Britain. It is not the shift from the aristocrat who hunts with the hawk to the farmer who uses his hound to track the fox that accounts for the loss in effectiveness, however; it is the decline in importance and intensity of the kin-tragedy itself. American variants make the victim a brother-in-law rather than a brother, thus losing some of the tragic effect of the


breach of the closer relationship; others make use of a pathetic touch in the form of the "poor little brother" or the "dear little brother" instead of retaining the stark qualities of the older tragedy. The final curse -- an effective accident of variation, if indeed it is an accident, as the lack of recurrence in other variants would indicate -- gives way to a series of paraphrases for "never," which do not become quite so repetitious in the Anglo-American tradition as in the Scandinavian tradition of the ballad. The bitter finality which these paraphrases suggest is, however, preferable to the total effect of later variants in which the manslayer, as Taylor says, "takes refuge in cowardly flight," instead of suffering the exile as a due punishment. In some variants, the slayer even takes his wife with him. The abrupt disclosure of the killing, with the


28 Karpeles and Sharp, G (I, 50); Traditional Ballads of Virginia, ed. Arthur Kyle Davis, Jr. (Cambridge, Mass., 1929), A, B, C, D (pp. 120-124).


31 Page 55.

resulting loss of the dramatic climax of the series of questions and reluctant answers leading to the tragic confession, is another sign of decay; the force of the kin-tragedy is almost entirely lost without the emphasis produced by this climax.

The same abrupt revelation of the central tragedy occurs in *Lord Randall*: the tendency to emphasize the concluding series of testaments at the expense of the central tragedy is visible in some of the early texts and persists throughout the late ones. Esthetically, the best text of the ballad is probably the one from Scott's *Minstrelsy* printed as D in Child. It leaves out the long series of passages that comprise the non-cupative will in other variants and focusses attention on the poignancy of the simple situation with its implied contrast of loyalties and affections. Externals are kept at a strict minimum; reluctantly, under the mother's insistent questioning which is prompted by the intuitive knowledge of the son's plight, the treachery of the "true-love" is brought into the foreground; and the refrain changes, swiftly and deftly, to the utterance of the realized betrayal:

"O yes! I am poisoned; mother, make my bed soon, For I'm sick at the heart, and I fain would lie down." 34

33 Cf. Taylor, p. 12.
34 Child 12 D 5 (I, 160).
The conflict of love and kinship is implicit throughout the dialogue, in the mother's suspicion of the true-love and the son's reluctance to reveal the treachery.

Do the economy of statement and the change of refrain reveal the editorial hand of Scott? Possibly; but the materials can be found in other variants; rewriting would not have been necessary. The same brevity is characteristic of E, without the change of refrain. And brevity is a virtue more common to the ballads than to Scott's writings. Besides, the changing of the refrain to fit the narrative context is not a practice unknown to ballad-makers. 35

Lord Randall is notoriously persistent and tenacious in oral tradition: some good texts have been found in both Britain and America. But not only do the later variants retain the series of testaments made by the dying man; they emphasize it so much that often a stanza or two about the poisoning serves to introduce a monotonous series of What-will-ye-leave's. 36 In some cases the true-love is short-circuited out of the early stanzas and bequeathed a rope to

35 See, for instance, The Fair Flower of Northumberland (9) and The Twa Sisters (10).

hang her or hell-fire to burn her, for no apparent reason, at the end of the dialogue. In the branch of the tradition represented by the "Tyranty" and "Croodlin' Doo" texts, the blame for the poisoning is shifted first to the convenient folklore villainess, the stepmother, then to the grandmother. The shift to the stepmother raises the problem of the apparent absurdity of the mother's continuing to question the victim. The situation can be explained by assuming that the questioner is a ghost, thus introducing a supernatural element into the ballad:

'The Croodlin Doo' furnishes a unique example in English of the spirit of a dead mother returning to comfort a child abused by a cruel stepmother. In the Danish ballad Svend Dyring, the dead mother returns to care for her neglected children, and to warn their father not to let it happen again. The popular belief, too, in such a form of spirit return, was attested by Jamieson for Dumfriesshire.

The supernatural element is rationalized by the shift to the grandmother, whose motive for the killing is not usually specified. In Scottish texts, a persistence of belief in witchcraft may have accounted for the killing:

That the grandmother, conceived of as a witch, perhaps needing the corpse for necromancy, should have been introduced into a Scottish form of the

37 Cf. Barry, Eckstrom, and Smith, F, G, H, J, K, M, N (pp. 53-64); Belden and Hudson, C, D (pp. 40-41).
38 See Barry, Eckstrom, and Smith, p. 66.
39 Barry, Eckstrom, and Smith, pp. 66-72.
40 Barry, Eckstrom, and Smith, p. 71.
ballad, is not unnatural, for it was in Scotland where the belief in witches lingered, and where, in 1660-63, a severe persecution took place.  

But in the New England tradition at least, the grandmother's motive lacks definition, and attention again shifts to the verbal testaments of the victim.

Supernatural elements and familial interest also suggest a change in belief and interest in Young Hunting. In the early texts of this ballad, it is the victim's mother who first suspects foul play:

Then up bespak Young Redin's mither,  
And a dowie woman was scho;  
"There's na a place in Clyde's Water  
But my son wad gae throw."

In the C-text, the mother first finds the drowned body and brings it to land: the pathos is commented on somewhat redundantly:

The firsten grip his mother got  
Was o his yellow hair;  
O was na that a dowie grip,  
To get her ae son there!  

The nexten grip his mother got  
Was o his milk-white hand;  
An wasna that a dowie grip,  
To bring sae far to land!

A similar concern with and discovery of the son's fate is attributed to the father in A and D. In most of the Child variants, the parents play some part; but in the American

41 Child 68 B 19 (II, 146).
42 C 21-22 (II, 148).
43 A 15-16 (II, 144); D 19-22 (II, 149).
texts, they hardly appear at all. There is a reference to them in one of Barry's texts:

"Lie there, lie there, love Henry," said she,
"Till the flesh drop from your bones,
I think that your parents in Scotland
Will not soon welcome you home." 44

But in another New England variant, the rival of the mistress replaces the parents in the boast:

"Sleep there, sleep there, you faulse young love,
Sleep there, sleep there alone,
And let the one that you love best
Think you long a-coming home, heme,
Think you long a-coming home." 45

In a variant from the South, the verbal context indicates the probability of a simple substitution of the rival for the parents:

"Lie there, lie there, Lord Henry,
Till the flesh rots off your bones!
That prettier girl in the merry green lands,
Shall mourn for your return." 46

Supernatural motifs in Young Hunting suffer more rapid attrition than those relating to kinship. In the A-, C-, and K-texts, the talking bird advises those who are seeking the corpse to search by night with candles, which will flare up near the body; 47 in D, the bird simply threatens to tell the

44 British Ballads from Maine, B (p. 126).
45 British Ballads from Maine, A (p. 123).
46 Cox, Folk-Songs of the South, A (p. 43).
victim's father directly of the lady's guilt.  

The bird, which may have had supernatural characteristics in early texts, is a parrot in C, a "pyet" in D, a "popingay" in J. In most of the American texts, the bird simply reminds the lady of her guilt and refuses, wisely enough, to fly down within her reach.

Similar trends of variation can be found in The Twa Sisters. The tragic love-rivalry between the sisters is especially understandable in those variants in which the lover courts the elder sister, seemingly under some obligation -- perhaps honoring the determination of the parents to get the elder daughter married off first -- but cannot keep his love of the younger a secret:

He courted the eldest wi glove an ring,
But lov'd the youngest above a' thing.

That the elder sister had expectations of marriage is evident from her reply to the younger sister's plea for help:

"Foul fa the han that I should tach, It twind me an my wardles make."

48 D 18 (II, 149).
49 Cf. Wimberly, Folklore, pp. 46-47.
51 Karpeles and Sharp, Southern Appalachians, A-N (I, 101-114); Cox, Folk-Songs of the South, A, B (pp. 42-44).
The motive becomes less clear-cut when the courtship is represented as ambidextrous:

There were twa sisters in a bower,
Hey wi the gay and the grinding
And as king's son has courted them baith. 54

Or the lines describing the courtship lose clarity, as when the stanza

He courted the eldest wi brotch and knife,
But lovd the youngest as his life 55

is corrupted to

He courted the eldest with a penknife,
And he vowed that he would take her life. 56

The supernatural element -- the Singing Bone motif of folklore -- degenerates along with the familial rivalry. In some variants, notably in B and C, the theme of the accusation of the guilty sister by means of the harp strung with the drowned girl's hair is presented simply and clearly. 57

But this theme deteriorates early: the broadside text, A, labors the theme of the construction of the instrument (here a "violl") from the drowned girl's body until the whole matter becomes absurd:

54 E 2 (I, 129).
55 B 3 (I, 127).
56 H 2 (I, 131).
57 Cf. Child's note: "Perhaps the original conception was the simple and beautiful one which we find in English B and both the Icelandic ballads, that the king's harper, or the girl's lover, takes three locks of her yellow hair to string his harp with" (I, 121).
What did he doe with her two shinnes?
Unto the violl they danc'd Moll Sym's. 58

The original rivalry of the sisters is lost entirely in this text: the elder pushes the younger into the sea for no apparent reason. The fascination with the fiddle-making detracts from the motivation of the tragedy in oral tradition as well as in the broadside: sometimes, as in L, all interest is centered on ingenious, if somewhat macabre, craftsmanship:

And what did he do with her eyes so bright?
He made them spectacles to put to his sight. 59

There are hints of the tell-tale harp in a few American texts, 60 and part of Child's A-text has been heard of, at least, in Maine. 61 But generally, the speaking instrument has disappeared from the tradition. The later texts emphasize the punishment of the elder sister and of the miller who robs the corpse. 62 Moralization is in evidence, and the essence of the older ballad is obscured: the tragic ring of the elder sister's self-justifying but human words --

58 Child A 13 (I, 126).
59 L 8 (I, 133).

60 See Mellinger Henry, Folk-Songs from the Southern Highlands, C (pp. 43-44); Karpeles and Sharp, Appalachians, A (I, 26-27).
61 Barry, Eckstrom, and Smith, p. 45.
62 Barry, Eckstrom, and Smith, A (p. 41), C (p. 43); Cox, Folk-Songs of the South, C (p. 22); Karpeles and Sharp, B-H (I, 27-32).
"Your cherry cheeks an yallow hair
Gars me gae maiden evermair" 63

-- has faded like the tones of the speaking harp. There is
a mock-sentimentality in a western song listed by Gardner
and Chickering as a text of this ballad; 64 and there is
humor in the southern text found by Mellinger Henry. 65  The
rivalry of the sisters is transferred to the father in a
Newfoundland variant; in this text the supernatural revelation
of the drowning is retained but is made directly by the ghost
of the older sister, who has been killed by the younger. 66

The supernatural sanctions surrounding and affecting
familial relations are outstandingly important in The Wife
of Usher's Well. A pagan atmosphere of fatalism pervades
the early texts of this ballad and gives it a tragic stark­
ness and a certain power. 67  In Child's A-text, the mother
attempts to force the return of her sons from the powers of

63  Child B 15 (I, 127).
64  Ballads and Songs of Southern Michigan, pp. 33-34.
65  Folk-Songs from the Southern Highlands, pp. 43-44.
67  Cf. Evelyn Wells's comment: "The fatalism that
overcasts ballad skies deals constantly with the irrevocable.
Lovers promise never to be faithless, are parted never to
unite, leave for strange lands never to return; wives wait
for husbands who will never come back, mothers for children
they will never see again, except perhaps as ghosts at
Martinmas or 'The hollow days of Yule.' The finality of
death is vivid and concrete" (Ballad Tree, p. 87).
the natural world by spells and curses:

"I wish the wind may never cease,
Nor fashes in the flood,
Till my three sons come hame to me,
In earthly flesh and blood." 68

The sons return; the mother acts as though they have come home for good and has her servants make the house comfortable for them:

"Blow up the fire, my maidens,
Bring water from the well;
For a' my house shall feast this night,
Since my three sons are well." 69

But at cock-crow, the sons must go back to the grave. A trace of the Christian element may be responsible for their fear of punishment for absence, but the place to which they return is the barrow of pagan burial custom:

"The cock doth crow, the day doth daw,
The channerin worm doth chide;
Gin we be mist out o' our place,
A sair pain we maun bide." 70

As they take their farewell to the simple comforts of home, the fire and the warmth of personal relationships contrast sharply with the clammy chill of the grave to which they go:

"Fare ye weel, my mother dear!
Fareweel to barn and byre!
And fare ye weel, the bonny lass
That kindles my mother's fire!" 71

68 No. 79 A 4 (II, 238).
69 A 7 (II, 238-239).
70 A 11 (II, 239).
71 A 12 (II, 239).
The Child B-text, though somewhat fragmented, follows the same general pattern as A.72 In a Shropshire variant given by Child, however, the moral atmosphere is generally Christian, though elements from the other texts have not altogether disappeared. The widow demands her three sons of "sweet Jesus" somewhat in the spirit of the conjurer who manipulates preternatural forces:73

"It's you go rise up my three sons,
Their names Joe, Peter, and John,
And put breath in their breast,
And clothing on their backs,
And immediately send them to far Scotland,
That their mother may take some rest."74

Jesus complies with this peremptory demand: the sons return and go to sleep in the soft bed their mother has made for them. But there is guilt in the mother's attempt to bring back the dead, as the sons know:

And then bespeaks the eldest son:
"I think, I think it is high time
For the wicked to part from their dead."75

The sons go back to "some far chaperine" made of lime and sand,76 where Jesus stands at the wide door and admonishes the mother who has followed them:

72 Child, II, 239.
73 Cf. Bronislaw Malinowski, Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays, pp. 65-70; Richard Chase, Quest for Myth, pp. 69-81.
74 Child C 4 (III, 513).
75 C 9 (III, 514).
76 C 10 (III, 514).
"Go back, go back!" sweet Jesus replied,
"Go back, go back!" says he;
"For thou hast nine days to repent
For the wickedness thou hast done." 77

And the Christian formula of repentance and forgiveness is carried out: after nine days, the mother joins her sons:

Nine days then was past and gone,
And nine days then was spent,
Sweet Jesus called her once again, 78
And took her to heavens with him.

In a North Carolina variant presented by Child, the mother's prayer has no hint of compulsion:

There is a king in the heavens above
That wears a golden crown:
She prayed that he would send her babies home
To-night or in the morning soon. 79

The return of the sons is rationalized: the mother dreams it; and there is no reproof for raising the dead. The children will not eat or drink but must return to their Saviour "To-night or in the morning soon." 80 This variant is fairly typical of the American tradition of the ballad. The prayer to "a king in heaven" 81 and the refusal of food

77 C 12 (III, 514).
78 C 13 (III, 514).
79 Stanza 3 (V, 294).
80 Stanza 6 (V, 294); cf. Karpeles and Sharp, A, B (I, 150-152), I (I, 155).
81 Child 79 Stanza 3 (V, 294).
82 Cf. Cox, Folk-Songs of the South, A 3 (p. 89), C 3 (p. 91), D 3 (p. 91); Karpeles and Sharp, C 3 (I, 152).
and drink are common in American variants. Instead of being summoned by the crowing of the cock, the sons are usually recalled by their Savior:

"For yonder stands our Savior dear,
And to him we must return." \(^{84}\)

The Christian coloring, which becomes predominant in the course of transmission, shifts the focus of interest from the familial tragedy to other concerns: the ballad becomes increasingly didactic and, in its overall implication, increasingly optimistic in tone. The poignant quality of the old ballad is lost.

Motifs having to do with familial situations are often necessary to the plot, and some rather striking ones are retained for this reason. The brother's resentment at not being asked about the wedding is essential to the ballad of The Cruel Brother (11). The authority of parents and older brothers over unmarried daughters and sisters must be taken for granted in ballads of the Earl Brand type. Incidental references, such as the reference to the sister's son, are dropped or modified in time: the sister's son may become a brother's son, an uncle's son, or a "cousin." \(^{85}\)

\(^{83}\) Cf. Cox, A 6 (p. 89), B 5 (p. 90), C 7 (p. 91), D 11 (p. 92); Karpeles and Sharp, A 5 (I, 150), B 5 (I, 151), C 6 (I, 153), I 5 (I, 155).

\(^{84}\) Cox, B 7 (p. 90); cf. C 7 (p. 91), D 12 (p. 92); Karpeles and Sharp, A 7 (I, 150), B 5 (I, 151), C 7 (I, 153), I 7 (I, 155), N 7 (I, 159).

\(^{85}\) See Gummere, "The Sister's Son," p. 141; Child 114 E 15 (V, 7); Karpeles and Sharp, Lady Maisry A 17 (I, 99).
the treatment of situations involving familial tragedy becomes less impressive and less serious as we follow the ballads down to the present. The comic treatment of an originally tragic theme, as in *The Twa Sisters* and more extensively in *The Three Ravens* and in *Lord Lovel*, can be due in part to the increasing sophistication of the ballad audience; but a lack of empathetic response to the struggles and sufferings of the main characters of the kin-tragedies must be a strong contributing factor in the shift away from tragedy.

This shift in emphasis need not be taken to mean that the nuclear family is disappearing from contemporary society or that its conflicts have been resolved. But it is evident that some of the grounds of conflict have changed since the times of the ballad-makers. Parental authority, the role of rank, inheritance, and dowry in the arrangement of marriage, the relative isolation of the ballad-community, the institution of troth-plight, the supernatural sanctions of family unity, the occasional extension of kinship beyond the nuclear family -- all these contributed to the intensification of serious conflict within the family group. Aristocratic mores arising from feudalism must also be taken into account: the importance of family ties and family "honor" had a basis in the real need for land and for respect in the community.

86 See Coffin, p. 18.

87 See Wells, *Ballad Tree*, p. 100.
Though the above mentioned elements do not provide a simple explanation, they can account for much of the seriousness of the kin-tragedies, and they provide a surer basis for approaching familial conflicts and problems in the ballads than an evolutionary scheme based on familial cult and hypothetical primitive tribalism.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

The origins of the ballads as a genre will probably continue to be an open question for some time to come, and hypotheses of origin will have to be modified as further evidence is accumulated. According to the premises of this study, the question of ballad origins is related to the problem of the origins of the folktale and of oral narrative in general. The fairly simple though ingenious hypotheses of the "anthropological" school are no longer accepted by serious students of folklore and should be carefully re-examined by students of the ballad. Folklore motifs in tales and ballads cannot be confidently traced to customs, rituals, or beliefs which fit into a unilinear evolutionary framework.

Despite the insistence of some ballad critics on the immediate availability of real life as a source of motifs, the possibility of borrowing from prose traditions cannot be overlooked in ballad study. Parallels in prose tales and ballads have been pointed out; occasionally, whole tale types appear in ballads. It is difficult to assign specific origins in habit and belief to motifs whose origins are varied and often remote.

No useful purpose is served, of course, by replacing
Gummere's "singing, dancing throng" with metrical hacks turning popular tales into verse. There are some reflections of actual social life in the ballads. But such authentic elements should be carefully sifted, whenever possible, so that they may be distinguished from motifs of remote origins and from the arbitrary inventions of imagination. Some motifs in the ballads can be assigned with about equal justification to folklore or to social conditions; others can be shown to be largely folkloristic; and still others, like the dowry and the lyke-wake, can be confidently assigned to the social life and structure of ballad times. Some motifs which seem to reflect "primitive" practice and social structure, such as bride-stealing, "matriarchal" traits, and "sister's son" references, can be accounted for on grounds of social relationships of medieval times, or even -- as in the Scottish bride-stealings -- of later periods.

Besides showing a qualified relationship to some of the motifs of balladry, social structure and custom are of interest for their bearing on the way ballads are understood and modified in the course of transmission. Variation gives evidence of this bearing: as some motifs are less clearly understood, they are less clearly and less frequently presented; and the decline of the kin-tragedies is an argument for some degree of relationship between society and the ballad. Just as supernatural beliefs are rationalized or
lost, so some of the motifs relating to kinship disappear or are modified. Supernatural motifs and motifs having to do with extended kinship suffer considerable attrition; those motifs which reflect aspects of the nuclear family situation show less rapid and dramatic change, but the kin-tragedies show interesting modifications, usually tending toward simplification, often with loss of tragic effect. Variation is not a simple matter, however: it does not present a curve which can be extrapolated into the past without a great margin of error.

The accidents of variation and the borrowing of folk-tale motifs limit the accuracy of the ballads as guides to social history. They may give clues to matters of attitude and custom, but their evidence should be corroborated wherever possible by other sources. Knowledge of the social history of ballad times, on the other hand, is extremely rewarding for the light which it throws on the ballads themselves. In seeking historical backgrounds for interpretation, such investigators as Gummere and Wimberly have been on the right track; the deficiency has been largely in the recency and the reliability of the data that many such critics have brought to bear on the anthropological and historical problems involved. There is danger, however, in dogmatic acceptance or unqualified approval of what Gummere set forth as hypotheses -- though his defense is often persuasive enough
to give conjecture the force of conviction.

Examination of the texts of the ballads of kinship in the light of current historical opinion does not support the theory of prehistoric tribal-communal origins. The social conditions indicated in the ballads, apart from borrowings from widely disseminated folklore, are demonstrably those of late medieval society for the most part and sometimes those of even later periods. The conditions presented by the social historians at least furnish a more concrete set of circumstances than a putative "primitive" state of affairs based on a concept of unilinear social evolution. Even in the ballads of clan-warfare, the concrete evidence points only at kinship-solidarity of a politically and economically convenient sort -- the type of federation which might arise in any somewhat isolated locality where a strong family group and its adherents are obliged to band together for mutual defense and economic advantage.

But if tribal origins do not account for the ballads of kinship, it may be asked, whence do they arise? What accounts for their seriousness and their erstwhile importance? Medieval conditions must, according to our premises, account for this flowering. The later Middle Ages, with its symptoms of change, its struggles between the rival houses of the nobility and the royal power, the wars of nobles and their followings against one another, in England as well as in
Scotland, is the time that seems most propitious for the ballads of kinship. The final development of the stem-family, emerging from serfdom or from insignificant tenancy and conscious of its need of unity in the struggle for survival and advancement -- a struggle epitomized in the records of the Paston family -- would account for much of the familial interest in the early ballads. Aristocratic ideas of family honor and aristocratic aspirations to advantageous blood-ties were still strong, especially among yeoman and burgher families who had not had a surfeit of upper-class life.\(^1\) In Scotland, as well as in England, local groups maintained themselves against outsiders in troubled times, and Scottish feudalism outlasted the Middle Ages. Such times were not suited for epic themes: the scope of the ballad was exactly the right one.

A merging of folklore motifs with elements taken from real life is plausible under such circumstances; interest in stem-family concerns helps to account for the attraction to the ballad of motifs relating to kinship. In some cases, traditional motifs were attached to specific people, as in

\(^1\) Cf. J. Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages; "Nothing could be falser than to picture the third estate in the Middle Ages as animated by class hatred, or scorning chivalry. On the contrary, the splendour of the life of the nobility dazzles and seduces them. The rich burghers take pains to adopt the forms and the tone of the nobility" (p. 128). See also pp. 56-67.
Mary Hamilton or The Gypsy Laddie; in other cases, the process may be reversed, as when the mortal James Harris becomes the demon lover of folklore.

As for the function of the ballad of kinship in the society in which it probably arose, this function may be in some respects comparable to that of the folktale. Many theories of the social and psychological function of the folktale have been propounded, and final judgment awaits further investigation of the transmission and reception of tales among contemporary groups. But the folktale can be safely treated as a part of folk art, which, for whatever reasons may be the correct ones, entertains and satisfies the hearer and often the teller as well. Ballads and folktales, like narratives generally, typically set up tensions through representations of conflict. In folktales, the tensions are usually resolved in endings that satisfy the moral sensibilities of the hearer: the folktales generally support the notion of a common-sense universe in which the clever and the enterprising are successful, deserving younger sons are richly rewarded, persecuted fair ladies are rescued, and the

unduly proud are humbled. The ballads make use of such patterns also; but many ballads, especially those of kinship, are tragic, and many ballads contain no hint of poetic justice.

A. H. Krappe explains the tragic note in balladry as a result of epic origins:

The tragic ending and the fundamental tragic note connect the ballad with the epic. . . . The reason lies, I believe, entirely in the fact that the epic is an aristocratic form of poetry and that the ballad is a popular offshoot of the epic. Direct descent of the ballad from the epic remains to be proved; however, the aristocratic element in balladry cannot be denied in the face of the Lord Randalls, Lord Thomases, and Lady Margarets who are the chief personages of many ballads. The influence of aristocratic ideas and habits has already been noticed.

Another reason for the prevalence of tragedy among the ballads of kinship may lie in the nature of ballad form. In the folktale, a resolution of the tensions set up in the narrative is possible, for the most part, only through the plot. In the ballad, the metrical and musical form lend

3 Boas has noted the element of wish-fulfillment in folktales: "Revival of the dead, disappearance of wounds, magical treasures, and plentiful food obtained without labor, are not every-day occurrences, but they are every-day wishes; and is it not one of the main characteristics of the imagination that it gives reality to wishes?" (Race, Language, and Culture, p. 405).

4 The Science of Folk-lore, p. 184.
esthetic distance to the whole experience, and the resolution is a total, formal one rather than a resolution of tensions in the narrative elements alone. The ballad singer is thus able to present the darker aspects of life and to provide an outlet in expression for some of the deeper human emotions without seeking an artificially happy resolution for his story. He can deal with the emotional ties and complications within the universal human framework of kinship and love, and he can give the experiences that occur within this framework esthetic expression. Even though the form is sometimes crude and the borrowed motifs are sometimes unreal, and though the content of the ballad changes with time, there is still enough basic human material in the kin-tragedies to account for their interest and their value as human documents.
APPENDIX A

FOLKTALE MOTIFS AND TYPES IN THE BALLADS

For each ballad listed, parallel tale-types and motifs are given. Widely known categories of tales, romance cycles, etc., when applicable, are given first in order, usually by name. Parallel types are listed next when they are relevant. Motifs are given after types and can be distinguished by the identifying capital letters. Related, though not fully parallel, types and motifs are given under cf. The list is intended to supplement the text extensively but is not necessarily exhaustive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child number</th>
<th>Parallel and related types and motifs and literary parallels</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Riddle stories. Type 812 (related); Motif H 530; cf. R 11.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tasks; Clever Lass. Type 875; Motifs F 301.1.1, F 301.2.1, F 301.4, H 951, K 1300, T 50, T 61.3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Riddles. Cf. Type 812; cf. H 530, R 11.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bluebeard; Otherworld lover. C 312.1, F 301.1.1, F 301.2.1, K 1300, K 1371, T 50, R 225.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>&quot;Aase the Goosegirl.&quot; Type 873 (related). H 80, F 481, H 360, H 400, H 411.6, H 411.10, K 1300, K 1843.1, P 262, Q 541.9, T 50. Cf. C 517, F 301.1.1.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tales of delayed childbirth. F 481, P 262, P 351, T 574.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>K 1371, R 225, S 11, T 50.1, T 411.1.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Child number | Parallels
--- | ---
9 | R 225, T 50.
10 | Singing Bone. Type 780; K 2212, T 50.
11 | K 2211, T 50, T 131.1.
12 | S 31 (Croodin' Doo variants).
14 | T 415, T 415.1.
15 | C 151, K 1371, R 225, T 91, T 579.1, T 581.1, T 640.
16 | T 415, T 579.1, T 581.1.
17 | King Horn romances. D 1310.4.1, D 2003, H 80, H 82.2, K 1815, K 1817.1, T 61.2, T 136.1.
18 | Romances: Sir Eglamour of Artois; Eger and Grime.
19 | Orfeus tales, lai of Sir Orfeo. F 81.1, F 322, F 322.2.
20 | S 12, S 312, T 640.
21 | T 640.
22 | Apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus.
23 | Judas legends.
24 | C 150, R 225, S 264.1, T 640; cf. Type 973.
25 | K 1352, T 50.
26 | B 445, B 576.1.
27 | K 1300.
28 | Fabliau: Cort Mantel. H 411.7.
29 | Chanson de geste of Charlemagne's Journey to Jerusalem and Constantinople. F 480, F 481.
31 | "The Frog King, or Iron Henry." Cf. Type 440; D 732.
Child number | Parallels |
---|---|
33 | D 732. |
34 | D 732, D 735.1, S 31. |
35 | D 735.1, F 302.3.2. |
36 | D 170, D 192, D 735.1, S 31. |
39 | C 515, C 517, D 562, D 701, D 757, D 766.1, F 301.1.1.2, F 301.1.1.4, T 572.2.2, T 640. |
40 | F 320, F 372, R 10 |
41 | C 517, C 713.1 (Scandinavian variants), F 301.1.1.2, K 1300, K 1371, R 10, T 111, T 640. |
42 | **Knight of Staufenberg** poem. C 31, C 112, F 301, F 302.3.3.1, T 111. |
43 | Magic sleep: *Gesta Romanorum* and tales. B 211, B 211.3, B 211.7, B 211.9, B 300, B 450. |
44 | D 615.3, D 642.3, K 1300. |
45 | Type 922. |
46 | H 310, H 335, H 342, T 50. |
47 | H 310, H 335, H 342, H 541.1, H 901.1, T 68. |
48 | K 1371, R 225, S 11, T 91. |
49 | K 2211. |
51 | **Kalevala**, runes 35-36. C 114, T 415, K 1500. |
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<tr>
<th>Child number</th>
<th>Parallels</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Cunegund and Crescentia legends, tales, romances. H 210, H 218, K 2100, K 2110.1, K 2112.2; cf. Type 712.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>H 400 (Scandinavian analogues), K 1300, T 91, T 640.</td>
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<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>K 1300; cf. Q 436.0.1, Q 458.2.1, K2211.</td>
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<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>T 50, T 91, P 297.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>K 1317.1, K 2250.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>H 221.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>K 1300, K 1340, T 50.1, T 91.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>K 1371.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>P 297, T 24.1, T 81, T 575.2, F 1041.1.</td>
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<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>T 24.1, T 81, F 1041.1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>T 24.1, T 81, F 1041.1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>T 24.1, T 81, F 1041.1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Cf. 77.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Cf. E 324.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>K 1300, K 2213.3, Q 241, Q 451.9, T 481.</td>
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<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>K 1300, P 641, Q 241, Q 451.9, T 230, T 481.</td>
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<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>B 450, B 131.3, Q 241, Q 451.9, T 230, T 481.</td>
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<td>Child number</td>
<td>Parallels</td>
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<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>P 297, T 257; cf. Q 241, T 481.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>T 24.1, T 81.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>P 212.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>T 61.3, T 581.1, T 640.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>K 2250, P 455.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>P 213.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>B 450, B 582, K 522.0.1, K 1352, T 50.1, R 225.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>K 521, K 1371, K 1836, T 91.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>T 50.1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>T 55.1, T 91, T 121.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>T 91, T 121; cf. T 55.1.</td>
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<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>K 1371, R 225, T 50, T 55.1, T 91, T 121, T 581.1, T 640.</td>
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<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>C 150, K 1371, T 50, T 91, T 581.1, T 640.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>C 150, C 151, K 1300, T 91, T 640.</td>
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<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>K 1371.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>T 481.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>T 91, T 121.</td>
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<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>K 1300, T 91, T 640.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>T 471.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>K 1210.</td>
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<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td>B 821.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td>E 501.1.4, P 297.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child number</td>
<td>Parallels</td>
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<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td>William Tell traditions. P 311; cf. Type 516.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>P 297.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td>P 297.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132</td>
<td>P 297.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>138</td>
<td>R 225, T 91.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155</td>
<td>Hugh of Lincoln tradition. V 361.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156</td>
<td>V 20; cf. K 1528, K 1545.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>167</td>
<td>P 297.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>169</td>
<td>P 297.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>173</td>
<td>K 1300, S 12, S 300, T 640.</td>
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<td>178</td>
<td>K 2250.</td>
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<td>200</td>
<td>K 1300, R 10, T 481.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211</td>
<td>P 311.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212</td>
<td>K 521.4.2, K 1836.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>214</td>
<td>M 411, T 81, T 91; cf. T 61.1, F 1041.1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>215</td>
<td>T 153.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>216</td>
<td>M 411, T 91.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>217</td>
<td>T 640.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>221</td>
<td>Type 885, K 1371.1, R 225, T 136.1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>222</td>
<td>K 1371, R 10, T 50.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>223</td>
<td>K 1371.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>224</td>
<td>K 1371, R 10.</td>
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<tr>
<td>225</td>
<td>K 1371, R 10.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child number</td>
<td>Parallels</td>
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<tr>
<td>229</td>
<td>T 24.1, T 31, F 1041.1.</td>
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<td>231</td>
<td>T 640.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>232</td>
<td>T 91; cf. T 55.1, T 121.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>233</td>
<td>T 24.1, T 80, T 91; cf. Q 458.2.1, F 1041.1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>235</td>
<td>T 24.1, T 91.</td>
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<td>238</td>
<td>T 24.1, T 91.</td>
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<td>239</td>
<td>T 24.1, T 81, T 91, F 1041.1.</td>
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<td>240</td>
<td>T 640.</td>
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<td>241</td>
<td>T 640.</td>
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<tr>
<td>246</td>
<td>Type 882, N 15.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>247</td>
<td>Type 910 D, P 297.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>252</td>
<td>T 121; cf. T 55.1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>253</td>
<td>T 640.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>254</td>
<td>K 1371, K 1371.1, R 225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>257</td>
<td>T 640.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>260</td>
<td>P 297.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>268</td>
<td>Type 882, K 2112.1.1, P 311, K 1512.1; cf. N 15.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>269</td>
<td>Decameron, iv, l, and tales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>270</td>
<td>Lai of Yonec and tales. D 641.1; cf. Type 432.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>271</td>
<td>Types 870 A, 533.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>272</td>
<td>Lenore. Type 365, E 215.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>274</td>
<td>K 1500, T 257.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>275</td>
<td>Type 1351.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>277</td>
<td>Tale, &quot;The Wife Wrapped in Morrel's Skin.&quot; W 391; cf. Type 901.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child number</td>
<td>Parallels</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>278</td>
<td>Type 1164, T 251.1.1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>281</td>
<td>Fabliau.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>291</td>
<td>K 2111, P 297, Q 291.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>295</td>
<td>F 1041.1, T 24.1, T 81.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>296</td>
<td>T 91.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305</td>
<td>P 297.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

SELECTIONS FROM THE MOTIF-INDEX

An attempt has been made to distinguish those motifs which are credited to the ballads exclusively from those which are found in folktales also. Where additional ballad references seem appropriate, they are given in brackets.

The following list contains all motifs thought to have relevance to the present study, whether directly or indirectly pertinent, but does not pretend to be exhaustive. The list is intended to supplement the folkloristic material in the text as adequately as possible.

A 650 Universe as a whole
   A 651 Hierarchy of worlds
      Egyptian, Siberian, Hindu, Indian, and Norse tale references given.
   A 670 Nature of the Lower World
      A 671.2.2 Rivers of blood in lower world (hell)
      Wimberly, Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads, p. 128 [Thomas Rymer (37)]
      Cf. A 878 Earth-tree; D 950 Magic tree;
      F 162.3.1 Tree of Life in otherworld;
      A 922 Ocean made from blood

B 80 Fish-men
   B 81 Mermaid
      [The Mermaid (289), Clerk Colvill (42)]
   B 82 Merman
      B 82.1 Merman marries maiden
         Child I, 366 [Scandinavian analogues of Hind Etn]

B 120 Wise animals
   B 122.1 Bird as adviser
      Wimberly, Folklore, pp. 44 ff. [The Gay Goshawk (96)]

B 130 Truth-telling animals
   B 151.1 Bird reveals murder
      Child II, 144, 146-155 [No. 68]
B 131.3 Bird betrays woman's infidelity
    Child II, 260 [No. 82]
B 131.4 Bird reveals dead rider
    Child V, 65 [Cf. No. 272]
    Cf. E 215 The Dead Rider - (Lenore)
B 133 Truth-speaking horse
    B 133.1 Horse warns hero of danger
        Child no. 43; Lithuanian, Russian, Persian, Irish tales
B 141.1 Bird gives warning
    Child I, 31 ff., 37; II, 206 n., 496 f., III, 10;
    IV, 441; V, 285. [Nos. 43, 272, 82]
    Tales: Jamaica; Benga
B 200 Animals with human traits
    B 210 Speaking animals
    B 211 Animal uses human speech
        B 211.3 Speaking horse
            Child no. 43; Tales: Greek, Russian, Lithuanian,
            German, Turkish, Bulgarian, etc.
        B 211.7 Speaking dog
            Child no. 43; Breton tales
        B 211.9 Speaking bird
            [Child nos. 43, 68, 82, 96, 272] Tales: Hindu,
            Arab, Breton
B 251.1.2.1 Cock crows, "Christus natus est."
    Child I, 240 ff., 505 f., II, 501, IV, 451 f. [No. 22]
B 291.1 Bird as messenger
    Child II, 113 n., 356-365 passim, III, 4, 8, IV, 412,
    482, 484 f., V, 234 [No. 96]. Welsh tales; Lais of
    Marie de France
B 300 Helpful animal
    B 325 Animal bribed for help
        Child I, 57 ff., II, 144-154, 359, IV, 389 f., 416
        (Nos. 4, 68). Sicilian tales
    B 445 Helpful deer (stag, doe)
        [The Three Ravens (26)]; Irish saints' legend, Angola
        tales
    B 450 Helpful birds
        Cf. references under B 291.1. Child nos. 43, 82,
        96, 272: tales: Celtic, Indonesian, Eko, Kaffir, etc.
    B 576.1 Animal as guard of person or house
        [The Three Ravens (26)]: tales: North American Indian,
        Jamaican, etc.
C Tabu
C O Tabu: Contact with supernatural
    Cf. F 301.1.1 Girl summons fairy lover by breaking tabu
C 15 Wish for supernatural husband realized
    Child I, 6 ff., No. 2
C 30 Tabu: offending supernatural relative
   Child I, 21, 485, II, 496, 509, IV, 440; also tales. [Cf. Clerk Colvill (42)]
C 31 Tabu: offending supernatural wife
   Type 425 [Cf. Scandinavian analogues of Hind Etin (41)]
C 32 Tabu: offending supernatural husband
   Type 425 [Cf. Scandinavian analogues of Hind Etin (41)]
C 100-109 Sex Tabu
   C 114 Incest
      Rank, Inzestmotiv
      [Child 8, 14, 16, 50, 51, 52, 57]
   C 120 Tabu: kissing
      C 122 Tabu: kissing fairies
      Child I, 322 and n., 325; Wimberly, Folklore, 282 ff. [Thomas Rymer (37)]
   C 150 Tabu connected with childbirth
      Man not to be present at: Child, I, 179, 181-183, 245 f., 502; II, 98, 106 f., 414, 418, 422, 499;
      IV, 450; V, 236. Dickson, Valentine and Orson, 169, n. 20. (Child nos. 15, 24, 63, 64, 102, 103)
C 200-299 Eating and drinking tabu
   C 211.1 Tabu: eating in fairyland
      Child I, 322-325, 327; II, 505; IV, 455, 458; Wimberly, Folklore, 159, 275 ff. Celtic tales.
   C 712.1 Tabu: staying too long in fairyland
      Child no. 37
C 300-399 Looking tabu
   C 312.1 Tabu: man looking at nude woman
      [Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight (4)]
C 400-499 Speaking Tabu
   C 430 Name tabu
      Tales: Celtic, French Canadian, Jamaican, etc. Cf. "Tom-Tit-Tot" [Cf. Earl Brand (7)]
C 500-549 Tabu: touching
   C 515 Tabu: touching (plucking) flowers
      Type 451. Child, I 360, n. [Nos. 39, 41; cf. Gil Brenton (5), The King's Dochter Lady Jean (52)]
   C 517 Tabu: pulling nuts
C 700-899 Miscellaneous Tabus
   C 713.1 Merman's wife not to stay till church benediction
      Child I, 366 [Scandinavian analogues of Hind Etin]
D 0 Transformation (general)
D 100-199 Transformation: man to animal
   D 191 Transformation: man to serpent
Child 497, s. v. "stepmother"; Hindu, Breton, Swiss, Basuto, Seneca, Plains, etc.

D 192 Transformation: man to worm (often equated to snake)
Child I, 315 f. [Nos. 35, 36]

D 500-599 Means of transformation

D 531 Transformation by putting on skin
Child, II, 494; III, 518; IV, 495; V, 495; Tales: Celtic, North American Indian, etc.
(Child no. 113)

D 560 Transformation by various means
D 562 Transformation by bathing [Cf. Tam Lin (39)]
Tales: Chauvin, V, 4 no. 2
D 565.5 Transformation by kiss
Spanish: Boggs, FFC XC, 56; Child, V, 499, s. v. "transformation" [Kemp Owyne (34)]

D 600-699 Miscellaneous transformation incidents

D 610 Repeated transformation. Transformation into one form after another.
Type 325; Tales: Hindu, Persian, Irish, Greek, etc.
Child, I, 337 (tale references for no. 39)

D 615 Transformation combat: contestants strive to outdo each other in successive transformations
Tales: Egyptian, Greek, Irish, Welsh, Finnish Chinese, Hawaiian, etc.
D 615.3 Combat between lover and maid
[The Twa Magicians (44)]; tales: Bolte-Rlivka, II, 68

D 640 Reasons for voluntary transformation

D 641 Transformation to reach difficult place
Types 326, 665, 434; Celtic, Norse, Finnish, Greek, Chinese, Macri, N. A. Indian tales
D 641.1 Lover as bird visits mistress
Type 432; Child, V, 39 ff.; Irish tales
[The Earl of Mar's Daughter, no. 270]

D 670 Magic flight

D 671 Transformation flight (cf. D 615.3)
Types 313, 325, 327

D 683 Transformation by magician (cf. D 615.3)
D 683.2 Transformation by witch (sorceress)
[Child nos. 34, 35, 36]

D 700-799 Disenchantment

D 701 Gradual disenchantment
*Type 307; Wimberly, Folklore, p. 381 [Tam Lin (39)]

D 732 Loathly Lady
Child, I, 209-313 passim [nos. 31, 32, 34]; tales: Celtic, Icelandic, etc., Wife of Bath's Tale

D 735 Disenchantment by kiss
Type 410; France, Philippine, African tales;
Wimberly, Folklore, pp. 335 ff. [Child no. 34]

D 750 Disenchantment by faithfulness of others
D 757 Holding enchanted person during successive transformations
   Types 403, 450; Child, V, 499, s. v. "transformations, successive" [Tam Lin (39)]

D 766 Disenchantment by liquid
   D 766.1 Disenchantment by bathing (immersing) in water
   Type 433; Taylor, Washington University Studies, IV, no. 2 (1917), 176, n. 8; Wimberly, Folklore, p. 388; Child, I, 308, 338 n.; II, 505; III, 505; V, 39 f. [Child no. 39]

D 790 Attendant circumstances of disenchantment
   D 791.2 Disenchantment by only one person [Cf. Child 39]

D 900-1299 Kinds of magic objects
   D 990 Magic bodily members -- human
      D 991 Magic hair
         German, Celtic, Greek, French Canadian, Spanish tales [The Twa Sisters (10)]
      D 1003 Magic blood -- human
         Irish, German, French, Italian tales; Child, I, 172, II, 39 [Leesome Brand (15 A)]
      D 1076 Magic ring
         English, Breton, Arabian, Sumatran tales, etc.
         Child, I, 169 f. [Hind Horn (17)]
         Cf. D 1510.4.1. Ring tells how another fares
         Cf. E 761.4.4 Life token: rusts

D 2003 Forgotten fiancee
   King Horn romances [Cf. Young Beichan (53), Hind Horn (17), Burd Ellen and Young Tamlane (28)]

E 215 Lenore (dead rider)
      [The Suffolk Miracle (272)] and tales

E 221 Return of dead spouse
      [Cf. Sweet William's Ghost (77), The Unquiet Grave (78), The Suffolk Miracle (272)]

E 631.0.1 Twining grave-plants
      [Child nos. 74, 75, 84]

F Marvels
F 0 Journey to other world
   Wimberly, Folklore, pp. 108 ff. [Thomas Rymer, no. 37]; tales: Irish, Welsh, Hindu, Greek, Icelandic, Arabian, etc.
   F 80 Journey to lower world
      Types 301, 650; Wimberly, Folklore, p. 128 [Child no. 37].
      F 81.1 Orpheus
         Child I, 215 ff. [No. 19] and tales
      F 160 Nature of otherworld
         Wimberly, Folklore, pp. 139 ff.

F 200-699 Marvelous Creatures
   F 200 Fairies (elves)
      F 216 Fairies live in forest
Wimberly, Folklore, p. 127; tales
F 250 Other characteristics of fairies
F 257 Tribute taken from fairies by fiend at stated intervals
Child V, 498, s. v. "Teind" [Thomas Rymer (37), Tam Lin (39)]
F 300 Marriage or liaison with fairy
F 301 Fairy lover Tales: Scottish, Chinese; [cf. Clerk Colvill (42), The Elfin Knight (2), Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight (4)]
F 301.1.1 Girl summons fairy lover by breaking tabu
F 301.1.1.1 Girl summons fairy lover by wishing for him
Child, I, 6 ff., No. 2
F 301.1.1.2 Girl summons fairy lover by plucking flowers
Child, I, 360, n. [Hind Etin, no. 41; cf. Tam Lin (39)]
F 301.1.1.4 Girl summons fairy lover by pulling nuts. Child, I, 360, n. (Cf. F 301.1.1.2)
F 301.2 Fairy lover entices girl
F 301.2.1 Elf-knight produces love-longing by blowing on horn
Child, I, 15 ff., 23, 55, 367 [nos. 2, 4]
F 301.4 Tasks set maid by elfin knight before she can marry him
Child, I, 15 ff. [no. 2]
F 302 Fairy mistress
F 302.1 Man goes to fairyland and marries fairy
Wells, pp. 130 ff. (Launfal, Emare) [Cf. Thomas Rymer (37)]
F 302.3.2 Fairy offers gifts to man to be her paramour
Child, I, 314, 375 f., 384; III, 504; V, 214 [Allison Gross, no. 35]
F 302.3.3.1 Fairy avenges herself on inconstant lover (husband)
Child, I, 372-389 [Clerk Colvill (42)]
F 302.5 Fairy mistress and mortal wife
Cf. no. 42
F 322 Fairies steal man's wife and carry her to fairyland
Wells, 128 (Sir Orfeo) [King Orfeo (19)]
F 322.2 Man rescues wife from fairyland
Sir Orfeo [King Orfeo (19)]
F 370 Visit to fairyland
F 372 Fairies take human nurse to attend fairy child
Child, I, 358, no. 40; Breton tales
F 471.2 Incubus
   Celtic, Estonian tales
F 471.2.1 Succubus
   Armenian tales
F 480 House-spirits
F 481 Cobold
   [Cf. nos. 6, 30, 53, 110]
F 1041.1 Death from a broken heart
   [Child 73, 74, 75, 76, 214, 229, 233, 239, 295]
   and tales
   Cf. F 1041.10 Death from excessive joy
H 0-199 Identity tests: recognition
   H 80 Identification by tokens
      Types 300, 301, 304, 306, 873 [Gil Brenton (5),
      Hind Horn (17)]
      H 94.4 Identification by ring dropped in glass (cup)
      of wine
      Types 400, 506, 510 Child, V, 493 s.v. "ring"
      (no. 17)
H 210 Test of guilt or innocence
   H 218 Trial by combat
      Wells 97 "Chevalere Assignes"; tales; Child, V, s. v.
      "ordeal" [Sir Aldingar (59)]
   H 220 Ordeals
      H 221 Ordeal by fire
      Romances, tales; Child, V, 490 "ordeal" [Young Hunting (68)]
H 300-499 Marriage tests
   H 310 Suitor tests. A suitor is put to severe tests by
      his prospective bride or father-in-law
      Wells 16 (Guy of Warwick), Welsh, Benga, N. A. Indian,
      African, etc.
   H 317 Long term of service imposed on suitor
      H 317.1 Seven years of service imposed on suitor
      Frazer, Old Testament, II, 342-368; Wells
      149: Child, I, 204-206 (Hind Horn, no. 17)
   H 331 Suitor contests: bride offered as prize
   H 335 Tasks assigned suitors. Bride as prize for
      accomplishment
      Types 315, 502, 513, 514, 518, 570, 577
      Greek, Italian, Celtic, Icelandic, etc.
      [The Elfin Knight (2)]
   H 342 Suitor test: outwitting princess
   H 551 Princess offered to man who can out-riddle her
      [Cf. Riddles Wisely Expounded (1), Captain
      Wedderburn's Courtship (46), Proud Lady Margaret
      (47)]
H 400 Chastity test
   Types 870, 870 A; Child, I, 258-271, 507; II, 502; III,
   503 [The Boy and the Mantle, no. 29]
H 410 Chastity test by magic objects or ordeals
  H 411.6 Magic chair as chastity test
    Child, I, 72 ff., 75 [Gil Brenton (5)] and tales
  H 411.7 Mantle as chastity test
    Child, I, 260 ff. [No. 29] and tales
  H 411.10 Magic bed and pillows as chastity test
    Child, I, 64-70 passim [No. 5]
H 431 Clothing (cloth) as chastity index
  Type 888; cf. H 411.7

H 460 Wife test
H 461 Wife's patience
  Griselda [cf. Fair Annie (62)]

H 530 Riddles
H 541 Riddles propounded with penalty for failure
  H 541.1 Riddles propounded on pain of death
    [Child no. 47] and tales

H 950-999 Performance of tasks
H 950 Task evaded by subterfuge
  H 951 Countertasks
    Types 551, 875; Child, V, 497, s. v. "tasks"
    [The Elfin Knight, no. 2]

K Deceptions
K 521 Escape by disguise
  K 521.4.2 Man in danger of life dressed by hostess
    as woman and set to baking
    Child, IV, 151 ff. [The Duke of Athole's Nurse,
    no. 212]
  Cf. K 1836 Disguise of man in woman's dress
  K 522.0.1 Death feigned to escape unwelcome marriage
    Child, II, 355, 367; III, 517 [The Gay Goshawk,
    no. 96]
K 1210 Humiliated or baffled lovers
  Child, II, 480-493 [The Baffled Knight, no. 112] and
  tales: Portuguese
K 1223 Mistress deceives lover with a substitute
  Type 1441; Boccaccio, Decameron, VIII, no. 4
    [Cf. The Two Knights (268)]
K 1317 Lover's place in bed usurped by another
  K 1317.1 Serving-man in his master's place
    [Glasserion (67)] and tales
  Cf. K 1300, Seduction
K 1340 Entrance into girl's (man's) room (bed) by a trick
    [Cf. Clerk Saunders (69)]
K 1371 Bride-stealing
    [Child nos. 4, 8, 15, 41, 48, 71, 97, 101, 104, 222,
    223, 224, 225, 254]
  K 1371.1 Lover steals bride from wedding with unwel-
    come suitor
    Type 885; Lochinvar, Peer Gynt; Child, IV, 218,
    220; V, 260 f. [Katherine Jaffrey (221), Lord
    William, or Lord Lundy (254)]
K 1500 Deception connected with adultery
Cf. B 131.3, P 641, Q 241, T 230, T 481
Cf. K 1352 Death feigned to woo maiden
[Willie's Lyke-Wake (25)]
K 1528 Wife confesses to disguised husband
Fabliaux: [Queen Eleanor's Confession (156)]
K 1817.1 Disguise as a beggar
Child, I, 189, 191 f., 202-207 [Hind Horn (17)] and tales; romance: Horn Childe and Maiden Rimmild-
K 1843.1 Bride has maid sleep in husband's bed to conceal pregnancy
Types 870, 870 A; [Gil Brenton (5)]
K 2100 False accusation
K 2110 Slanders
K 2110.1 Calumniated wife
Types 451, 706, 707, 712, 883 A, 892
[Sir Aldingar (59)]
K 2111 Potiphar's Wife
[Child Owlet (291)] and tales
K 2112 Woman slandered as adulteress (prostitute)
(Usually by unsuccessful suitor)
Types 712, 883 A; cf. K 2110.1
K 2112.1 False token of woman's unfaithfulness
K 2112.1.1 Fingers as false token of woman's unfaithfulness
Child V, 22-27 [The Twa Knights, no. 268]
K 2112.2 Leper (beggar) laid in queen's bed
Child, II, 39 ff. [no. 59] and tales
K 2210 Treacherous relatives
K 2211 Treacherous brother. Usually elder brother
Types 301, 502, 506, 550, 551
[The Cruel Brother (11); cf. 13, 16, 49]
K 2211 Treacherous brother-in-law
Types 315, 712 [Cf. variants of Edward (13)]
K 2212 Treacherous sister. Usually elder sister
Types 403, 425, 432, 450, 510, 516, 592
[The Twa Sisters (10)]
K 2213 Treacherous wife
Types 560, 561, 566, 612, 670, 1350, 1510
K 2213.3 Faithless wife plots with paramour against husband's life
[Old Robin of Portingale (80)] and tales
K 2250 Treacherous servants and workmen
Types 450, 652; [Sir Aldingar (59), Glasgerion (67), Lamkin (93), The Lord of Lorn and the False Steward (271)]
P 200-299 The Family
P 210 Husband and wife
Cf. C 31, D 2003, H 460
P 211 Wife chooses father's side in feud
P 212 Wife more merciful than blood relatives. They refuse to rescue condemned man; wife does so.
Child II, 349 f.; III, 316; IV, 481; V, 231 ff., 296; [ Cf. Young Johnstone (88)]

P 213 Husband more merciful than blood relatives
Child II, 346-353; III, 511; IV, 481 f.; V, 231 ff. [ Cf. No. 95]

P 230 Parents and children
Cf. S 300

P 231 Mother and son
Cf. S 12

P 233 Father and son
Cf. S 11, T 411.1

P 250 Brothers and sisters
Cf. K 2211, K 2212

P 251 Brothers
Cf. G 551.3 Rescue of children from ogre by brother
[ Cf. Hild Etin (41)]

P 252 Sisters
Cf. K 2213

P 253 Sister and brother
Cf. Q 458.2.1, T 415

P 260 Relatives by law
P 261 Father-in-law
Cf. S 52 Cruel father-in-law

P 262 Mother-in-law
Cf. S 51 Cruel mother-in-law

P 263 Brother-in-law
Cf. K 2211.1

P 280 Step-relatives
P 282 Stepmother
Cf. S 31

P 290 Other relatives
P 297 Nephew

P 300-399 Other social relationships

P 310 Friendship
P 311 Sworn brethren. Friends take oath of lasting brotherhood
Type 516; tales and sagas [Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, and William of Cloudesly (116), Bewick and Graham (211)]

P 312 Blood-brotherhood
Type 1364, Trumbull, The Blood Covenant, etc.

P 360 Master and servant
P 365 Faithless servants
Cf. K 2250

P 600 Customs
P 641 Injured husband will not kill a naked man
   Child, V, 489, s. v. "naked"; [Little Musgrave and
   Lady Barnard, no. 81]

P 652 Bells on horse's mane
   Child, I, 323; II, 183-191; IV, 410, 413 [Nos. 37,
   73]

Q Punishments

Q 241 Adultery punished
   Boccaccio, Decameron, V, no. 8; romances, tales
   [Old Robin of Portingale (30), Little Musgrave (81),
   The Bonnie Birdie (82); cf. Sir Aldingar (59), Child
   Maurice (83), Child Owlet (291), The Gypsy Laddie (200)]

Q 450 Cruel punishments
   Q 451 Mutilation as punishment
      Q 451.9 Punishment: woman's breasts cut off
      Child nos. 5, 30, 81; Scotch tales; Peele's
      King Edward I
      Q 458.0.1 Flogging as punishment for adultery
      Malone, PMLA, XLIII, 410
      Q 458.2.1 Brother flogs unchaste sister to death
      Child, II, 102 (German analogue of no. 64); 
      [Andrew Lammie (233)]

R O Captivity

R 10 Abduction
   Child nos. 40, 41, 200, 222, 223, 224, 225
   R 10.1 Princess (maiden) abducted
      Breton, German, Indonesian tales

R 11 Abduction by monster (ogre)
   R 11.1 Princess (maiden) abducted by monster (ogre)
      Types 301, 302, 311, 312 [Cf. Hind Etin (41)]
   R 11.2 Abduction by devil
      [Cf. Child 1, 3]

R 61 Person sold into slavery
   Types 506, 888 [Cf. Fair Annie (62)]

R 150 Rescues
   R 151 Husband rescues wife
      Cf. F 322.2

R 225 Elopement
   Type 516 [Child 8, 15, 24, 48, 96, 101, 107,
   138, 221, 226, 254] and tales

S O Cruel Relative
   Cf. K 2210, K 2211, K 2212, P 200-299

S 10 Cruel parents
   Types 327 A, B, 517, 832
   Cf. S 300-399, M 411.1 Curse by parent

S 11 Cruel father
   Types 451, 516, 671, 706, 725, 870
   [Erlington (8), Young Andrew (48)]

S 12 Cruel mother
   Types 511, 590, 706, 765, 781
   [The Cruel Mother (20), Mary Hamilton (173)]
S 30 Cruel step-relatives
  S 31 Cruel step-mother
    Types 403, 425, 432, 450, 451, 480, 502, 510,
      511, 516, 590, 592, 706, 708, 709, 720
      [Child 12 (Croodin' Doo variants), 34, 36]
S 50 Cruel relatives-in-law
  S 51 Cruel mother-in-law
    Type 706; English, Roumanian, Italian, Cape
      Verde, Hindu, Crimean tales; [Willie's Lady
        (6), Prince Robert (97)]
S 260 Sacrifices
  S 264.1 Man thrown overboard to placate storm
    Type 973; [Brown Robin's Confession (57); cf. Bonnie
      Annie (24)]
S 300 Abandoned or murdered children
  S 301 Children abandoned (exposed)
    Types 327, 450, 590, 675, 920, 930
  S 310 Reasons for abandonment of children
    S 312 Illegitimate child exposed
      Sagas, tales; [Child 20, 173 (cf. S 12)]
T Sex
T 0 Love
  T 24 The symptoms of love
    T 24.1 Love-sickness
      Tales; [Child 73, 84, 107, 229, 233, 235,
        238, 239, 295]
  T 50 Wooing
    Cf. H 360, K 1300
    T 50.1 Girl carefully guarded from suitors
      Tales; [Erlinton (8), cf. Brown Robin (97)]
  T 51 Wooing by emissary
    [Will Stewart and John (107)]
    T 51.1 Emissary wins lady's love for himself
      English, Icelandic, Zulu tales
    T 55.1 Princess declares her love for lowly
      hero
      Type 314; [Johnie Scot (99), Willie o Winsbury
        (100), Willie o Douglas Dale (101); cf. Richie Story (232), Andrew Lammie
        (233), The Kitchie Boy (252)]
T 61 Betrothal
  T 61.1 Betrothal between lovers by drinking each
    other's blood
    [Cf. The Brass of Yarrow, no. 214 A 14, E 12]
  T 61.2 Parting lovers pledge not to marry for seven
    years
      Child V, 498, s. v. "marriage" [Hind Horn, (17),
        Young Beichan (53)] (no tale refs.)
  T 61.3 At betrothal a maid makes a shirt for her
    lover
Child, V., 496, s. v. "shirt" [The Elfin Knight (2), Jellon Grame (90) B]

T 68 Princess offered as prize
Cf. H 331, H 335, H 551

T 70 The scorned lover
Cf. K 1210
T 71 Women scorned in love
T 72.1 Maid eloping forced to strip
Child, V., 497, s. v. "maid" [Young Andrew (48)]

T 80 Tragic love
T 81 Death from love
Child nos. 73, 84, 107, 229, 233, 235, 239, 295, and tales
Cf. F 1041.1 Death from broken heart, F 1041.10
Death from excessive joy
T 86 Lovers buried in same grave
Cf. E 631.0.1 Twining grave-plants
[Child nos. 74, 75, 84, etc. (commonplace)]

T 90 Love -- miscellaneous
T 91 Unequals in love
Cf. T 110, T 121
[Child nos. 15, 20 F, 48, 53 C, 64, 66, 69, 97, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 107, 109, 110, 138, 214
T 91.4 Princess falls in love with lowly boy
Type 314; cf. T 55.1 references
T 91.5 Sultan's daughter in love with captured knight
Wells, 85, The Sowdone of Babylone and tales
[Young Beichan (53)]
T 91.7 Rich girl in love with poor boy
Spanish tales: Boggs, FFC, XC, 54; cf. T 55.1

T 100 Marriage
Cf. H 300, K 1300, R 225
T 110 Unusual marriage
T 111 Marriage of mortal and supernatural being
Type 425; cf. C 31, C 32 [Hind Etin (41); cf. 2, 4, 37, 42, 113, 243]

T 121 Unequal marriage
[Child 99, 100, 101, 109, 110, 252]; cf. T 91
T 121.1 Knight weds peasant girl
Wells, 60 [Child no. 110]

T 130 Marriage customs
T 131 Marriage restrictions
T 131.1 Brother's consent for sister's marriage needed
Child, I., 142 ff. [The Cruel Brother, no. 11]
T 131.2 Younger child may not marry before elder
Icelandic: Ritterhaus no. 2, Indonesian, Zulu motifs: [cf. The Twa Sisters (10)]

T 136 Accompaniments of wedding
   T 136.1 Wedding feast
      Zulu references; [Hind Horn (17), Katharine Jaffray (221)]

T 141 Assignment of bride to another
   T 141.1 Dying man assigns bride to his mother
      Child, I, 376, 378 n. [Earl Brand, no. 7]

T 150 Happenings at weddings
   Cf. K 1371, R 225
   T 152 Bride wounded accidentally on way home
   T 153 Bridegroom slain on way to bride
      Child, I, 142, 386; IV, 179 ff. [German analogue of no. 11; nos. 215, 216]

T 160 Consummation of marriage
   K 1843 Wife deceives husband with substitute bedmate, K 1911 False bride
      [Gil Brenton (5)]

T 200-299 Married life
   T 210 Faithfulness in marriage
      H 492 Test of faithfulness of husband and wife
         [The Twa Knights (268)]
   T 230 Faithlessness in marriage
      Nos. 80, 81, 82, 108
   T 250 Characteristics of wives and husbands
      Cf. H 461
      W 111.3 Lazy wife
         [The Wife Wraht in Wether's Skin (277)]
   T 251 Shrewish wife
      T 251.1.1 Belfagor. The devil frightened by the shrewish wife
         Type 1164; Child, V, 107 f.; 305 [The Farmer's Curst Wife, no. 278]
      T 251.2 Taming of the shrew
         [Child 277]

T 300 Chastity and celibacy
   H 400 Chastity test

T 400-499 Illicit sexual relations
   T 410 Incest
      T 411 Father-daughter incest
         T 411.1 Lecherous father -- wants to marry daughter
            Types 510 B, 706; [Erlinton (8)]
      T 415 Brother-sister incest
         Type 933; Celtic, Norse, Persian, Egyptian, and other tales [Child 14, 16, 50, 51, 52]
      T 415.1 Lecherous brother

T 470 Illicit sexual relations -- miscellaneous
T 471 Rape
[The Knight and the Shepherd's Daughter (110),
Crow and Pie (111)]

T 471.1 Man unwittingly ravishes own sister
Kalevala, rune 35 [cf. Babylon (14)]
N 365.3 Unwitting brother-sister incest
[The Bonny Hind (50), The King's Daughter
Lady Jean (52)]

T 481 Adultery

T 500 Conception and birth

T 570 Pregnancy
T 571 Prevention of childbirth
T 571.1 Magic prevention of childbirth
Type 755
T 571.2 Abortion
T 571.2.2 Abortion by eating
Child, I, 341, 343 f., 352, 354; III, 387, 393; IV, 456 [Tam Lin (39)]
T 574 Long pregnancy. Delayed by enemy who bewitches mother
Kalevala, rune I, tales; Child, I, 82 ff., 489;
III, 497; V, 225 [Willie's Lady (6)]

T 575 Child speaks before birth
T 575.1 Child speaks in mother's womb
Child, III, 367 nn.; IV, 507; V, 298 [The Cherry
Tree Carol (54), and tales]

T 579 Pregnancy -- miscellaneous
T 579.1 Sheath and knife as analogy for mother
and unborn child
Eskimo tales; Child, V, 486, s. v. "knife"
[no. 16]

T 580 Childbirth
T 581 Place and conditions of childbirth
T 581.1 Birth in forest
[Leesome Brand (15), Sheath and Knife (16),
Jellon Grame (90), Willie o Douglas Dale (101),
Willie and Earl Richard's Daughter (102)]
Tales: Dickson, 168, n. 19
T 581.3 Birth in tree
Child, II, 109 [no. 64]; Indonesian, Polynesian
tales
T 581.4 Child born in stable
Child, II, 85-99 [no. 63]

T 582 Precautions at childbirth
T 582.2 All locks in house to be shot at childbirth
Child, II, 498 [Cf. no. 6]
T 582.3 Knots to be untied
Child, I, 85 [No. 6], Frazer, Pausanias, V, 45 f.

T 583.1 Couvade
   T 583.1.1 Pains of woman in childbirth repeated in pains of the man
   Child, II, 109, V, 292 [no. 64]

T 584 Parturition
   T 584.0.2 Husband acts as midwife when no woman available
   Cf. C 150

T 585 Precocious infant
   T 585.2 Child speaks at birth
   [Cf. Johnie Armstrong (169), Lord Thomas and Fair Annet (73)] and tales

T 640 Illegitimate children
   [Child 7, 15, 20, 21, 24, 39, 41, 63, 64, 90, 101, 102, 103, 107, 110, 173, 231, 240, 253, 257.
    Cf. 51, 65, 66, 269] and tales

V 0 Religious services
V 20 Confession of sins
   V 24 Miraculous manifestations at confession
      V 24.1 Confession of sins of a pilgrim calms a great storm at sea
      [Brown Robyn's Confession (57)]

V 81 Baptism
V 87 Christening
V 361 Hugh of Lincoln
   Child, III, 240 ff. [no. 155] and tales
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ABSTRACT

Ever since Francis Barton Gummere called attention to its peculiarities, the ballad of domestic situation has held the attention of critics. Gummere's observations were keen and sensitive, but his explanations of the peculiarities of the ballads of kinship were based on the premises of the "anthropological" school of folklorists, who attempted to account for social developments in terms of a unilinear and practically universal evolutionary process beginning in totemic tribalism and characterized by an early "matriarchal stage" of social organization. Gummere's theory of the communal origins of the ballads illustrates his dependence upon this evolutionary framework.

Critics of the evolutionary school have pointed out that the evidence of anthropology does not support the idea of uniform social evolution, that the historical reconstructions of the evolutionists are highly speculative, and that the notion of a "primitive matriarchate" has no validity. Folklorists also point out that many of the motifs of balladry are of such wide diffusion that they cannot be taken as reliable indices of specific customs and beliefs in every area in which they are found. Nevertheless, some historical explanation of the British ballads dealing with kinship is possible in view of what is presently known about the social history of medieval times.
Since the type of study which depends more on the
evidence of texts than on speculation places the origins of
those British ballads which are known today in the later
Middle Ages at the earliest, it seems profitable to consider
the ballads in the light of late medieval social history
in order to determine how much of the kindred organization
and familial custom reflected in the ballads agrees with
what is known about these matters in this period. In
England, the organized kindred had been rather thoroughly
broken up by the end of Anglo-Saxon times, and feudal
conditions had prevented the re-formation of extensive
kindred-organization. The idea of the kin-group persisted
in Celtic areas, but even in the Scottish Highlands clan­
ship was modified by feudal arrangements. Modern Scottish
historians find little evidence for persistence of pre­
historic tribalism. Though the claims of ancient origin
made for specific clans would argue a continuous tradition
of kinship, such claims cannot generally be shown to be
more than juridical fictions. Largely, the ties of the
typical Scottish clans were those of propinquity reinforced
by feudal bonds and by both actual and assumed kinship.
The Border clans represented a revival of the idea of clan­
ship: the family name served as a convenient rallying
symbol, and tenants assumed the name of the laird or
established relationship by marrying into the clan. In
some cases, intermarriage validated the claim of kinship,
but feudal practices generally continued to serve as bases for organization and as means of securing aid.

In the Border ballads, the social circumstances of the feuding and raiding clans are presented with considerable realism. The blood-feud is evident, but vengeance for a kinsman is not in itself an absolute indication of kinship-solidarity. The revenges taken do not extend to the rather remote degrees of kindred specified, for instance, by the Welsh codes, nor is there a fixed system of galanas or wergild graduated according to descent like that of the Welsh records. Feudal obligations, often in the form of specified money payments, operate side by side with the claims of kindred and assume about equal importance. The evidence of the Border ballads and of related prose accounts of Border feuds and raids does not indicate a steady persistence of Celtic tribal society of the kind described by Seebohm and Vinogradoff.

Although the ballads which deal with the Highland clans are usually too fragmented to yield much evidence, some information may be gleaned from supplementary prose accounts. The feuds to which these ballads refer appear to be largely fights between noble families, with the participation of clansmen, retainers, and hired "broken men" -- the last two categories not necessarily kinsmen of the leaders. Aristocratic families did take account of their
kinsmen, and alliance by blood played a role in Scottish politics, as the ballads indicate and the historians testify. But these associations were matters of convenience rather than "survivals" of tribal institutions.

In the English ballads, there are few indications of concern with kinship beyond the nuclear family. The "great-grand-aunt" of Burd Isabel and Earl Patrick and the "four and twenty next cozens" of Old Robin of Portingale do not constitute evidence of widespread usages depending on extended kinship. Nevertheless, the recognition of blood-relationships in the Robin Hood ballads and the use of blood-brotherhood as a symbol of personal loyalty signify some regard for the idea of close kinship as a form of personal attachment.

In the absence of evidence for tribal "survivals," the situation within the nuclear family as the ballads portray it is best seen in the context of late feudal arrangements, with due allowance for the wide diffusion of certain folklore motifs. The frequency of revolt against parental authority in the ballads is thus partly a reflection of folklore: the parent who imposes tasks upon the suitor for his daughter's hand, the eloping bride, and the lowly suitor who wins the high-born maid against her kinsmen's will are stock figures in folk-literature. On the other hand, accounts of parental conduct show that medieval parents wielded much greater authority than modern
parents, and occasional abuses of that authority may be cited. The social milieu furnished a hospitable climate for the motifs of repression and revolt. Likewise, the forceful mother-in-law and the cruel brother are stock figures of folklore. The authority enjoyed by the former and by the ballad matron in general has given rise to much speculation about "survivals of matriarchy" in balladry; but the lack of convincing evidence for a metocratic phase of social development in most of British history makes it desirable to look for explanations of maternal authority in the circumstances of medieval life. Apart from folklore, the respect accorded to widows by law and custom, together with the chivalric attitude toward women, would account for some of this authority; more significantly, the popular belief in the occult powers of older people and especially of women contributed to maternal prestige. Apparent traces of matrilineal descent implied in commonplace references to the sister's son are explicable in terms of the medieval practice of fosterage, in which the "eame," or mother's brother, played a vital part, largely because he was not in a position to profit from the death of his ward but also by reason of the psychological affinity between nephew and maternal uncle which has been noticed in patrilineal societies.

Besides fitting into the context of medieval society, the ballads reflect some medieval customs and beliefs relating
to kinship. The lyke-wake, the hand-fasting, the giving of lavish gifts in courtship, and the wedding feast receive considerable attention. Some of the religious sanctions have a partially pagan character, but the attempt to characterize the religious elements in the ballads as primarily pagan with a mere veneer of Christianity shows the continued influence of the tribal-communal school. The evident blending of paganism and Christianity probably took place, not in a prehistoric tribal context, but in medieval practices and beliefs which affected the content of the ballads. The rites of passage and the sanctions of family unity which appear in the ballads do not show extensive traces of family cult.

If one discounts the effect of fragmentation and random loss of motifs, one finds in the variations which result from transmission some correlation between social change and ballad content. In the Border ballad, traces of the loyalty based on kinship disappear. The nuclear family situation loses some of its strong charge of emotion, and the pagan coloring gradually disappears from the religious sanctions affecting kinship. The loss of the pagan sense of fatality, the weakening of aristocratic pride in blood-relationship, and the emergence of the family group from relative isolation into an increasingly complex economic and
social environment help to account for the decline in the kin-tragedies.

The function of the ballad of kinship can be understood in terms of the successive environments through which it has passed. Late medieval society would have given many of the stock motifs of folklore a reasonably hospitable reception, and a merger of realism and folklore could easily have taken place. Although the feudal order was crumbling, personal loyalties were still vital; in the stem-family with its informal local alliances, aristocratic ideas of family honor and concern with socially advantageous blood-ties were serious matters. Such serious concern would explain the tragic note in the ballads of kinship; and the metrical and musical form of those ballads would give esthetic distance and formal resolution to their representations of conflict. Later changes in the ballads reflect changes in social values, but the essential human appeal of the domestic situation is not wholly lost.
AUTOBIOGRAPHY

William Sellers was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on February 26, 1919. His parents were William Arthur Sellers, originally from Blackpool, England, and Helen Gertrude Sellers (nee Hall), from Amesbury, Massachusetts.

In 1922, William and his parents moved to Haverhill, Massachusetts, where in due season William attended grammar school and high school. After a year of sporadic employment which followed graduation from Haverhill High School, he entered the Boston University College of Liberal Arts. His father died in 1939, but William was enabled to continue his studies through the aid of an Augustus Howe Buck Fellowship, which had been secured through the advice and assistance of Mr. Donald Oliver, then assistant principal of Haverhill High School and now [1956] Dean of Admissions at Boston University.

After receiving the degree of Bachelor of Science in 1942, Mr. Sellers enlisted in the United States Army. He spent three years in the Air Force as a weather observer, chiefly in the Mediterranean region.

Upon his discharge from the army in 1945, he entered the Boston University Graduate School. He obtained the degree of Master of Arts in 1947.

From 1947-1954, he was an instructor in English at Hofstra College in Hempstead, New York. While living in
the New York area, he served on the executive committee of the Country Dance Society of America; and through the facilities of the society he was able to profit from association with such outstanding authorities on folk music and folklore as Maud Karpeles, Jean Ritchie, Evelyn Wells, Douglas Kennedy, Frank Warner, and Richard Chase.

Mr. Sellers is at present teaching at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, where he was appointed as instructor in English in 1954.

Besides some articles for The Country Dancer, the national magazine of the Country Dance Society, and a few lines of verse, Mr. Sellers has published an article, "Folklore in America," in Reading and Orientation for Foreign Students, edited by Eugene Arden for the English Language Institute of Queens College, New York, in 1954.