

III.

TWO SETS OF MINIATURE BAGPIPES IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ANTIQUITIES OF SCOTLAND. BY GILBERT ASKEW, F.S.A.Scot.

The collection of musical instruments in the National Museum of Antiquities has during the last few years been enriched by the acquisition of two highly interesting sets of bagpipes, one being of a type by no means common and the other distinctly rare. These instruments being worthy of more than the brief accounts of their accession,¹ the writer has prepared the following notes on them, which he hopes may be of interest to such Fellows of the Society, or others, who are amateurs of the bagpipe.

The first set to be dealt with is of the miniature Lowland type, that is, an instrument of the Lowland pattern, bellows blown, but on a small scale and intended either for practice purposes or for playing within doors (fig. 1). It is made of rosewood (or some closely similar material), and has the usual three drones of different lengths all mounted in a common stock: the drone harmony is as usual, *i.e.* the small drone sounding the tonic, the next in length the dominant, and the longest the octave below the tonic. The drones have brass ferrules and ivory tops, and the middle one has an ivory stopper attached by a cord. The lengths of the three drones are as follows, the measurements being taken from the point of junction with the stock and with the slides completely closed:—

Small drone, $5\frac{7}{16}$ inches. Middle drone, $9\frac{3}{8}$ inches.
Large drone, $15\frac{11}{16}$ inches.

¹ *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxxviii. 1933-4, pp. 14 and 415.

The drone stock is of the same wood as the drones, with an ivory mount, and is stamped NAUGHTAN
ABD . The chanter stock is of cocus or

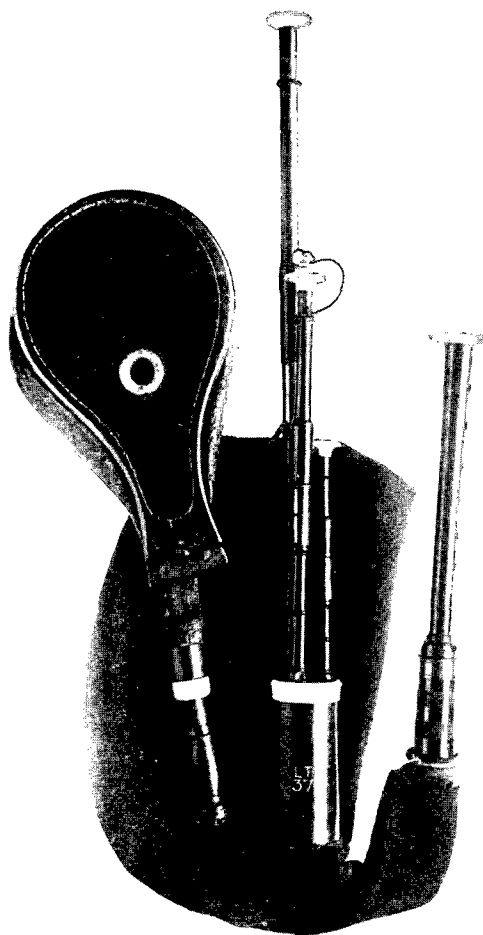


Fig. 1. Lowland Miniature Bagpipes.

rosewood, and has a brass mount; the chanter is of ebony with a horn mount and an ivory sole. Neither chanter nor stock is original, being probably later additions to enable the set to be used for the practice of

Highland pipe music: this would also explain the presence of the stopper attached to the middle drone. The chanter is $7\frac{1}{16}$ inches long, and resembles the ordinary Highland practice chanter in the arrangement of the holes, although these are distributed over a slightly shorter distance than in the standard pattern.

The connecting-piece which passes the air from the bellows to the bag appears to be of cocus wood, and is without the non-return valve which is usually found in Northumbrian examples. The bellows have mahogany sides, one of which is pierced for an ivory valve; the sides are of pear-shape form and measure $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches by $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches; the leather is kept in place by stitching. The bellows bear no maker's name but are probably contemporary with the drones.

The interest in this set lies in the fact that it is from the hand of John Naughtan of Aberdeen, who flourished between 1824 and 1842. On a previous occasion the writer had to deal with a set of bagpipes by this same maker,¹ and the late Mr R. Murdoch Lawrance, a former Fellow of this Society, was kind enough to furnish some dates for Naughtan and his work. Apparently Naughtan is recorded in the first Aberdeen Directory, 1824-5, as a turner; in the volumes for 1825-6 to 1829-30 he is described as being a turner and pipe-maker; and from 1831-2 to 1841-2, his final appearance in the Directory, he is mentioned as a turner and musical instrument maker. His workshop was located at 28 St Andrew's Street, Aberdeen, from 1824-5 to 1829-30, at 90 George Street, Aberdeen, from 1831-2 to 1839-40, and at 122 George Street from 1840-1 to 1841-2.

The drones and drone stock of this set are excellent examples of the turner's art, and it is to be regretted that the original chanter has not been retained. Chanters, especially old chanters, are extremely fragile, and it is rare to find an old set of pipes which has not been renovated in this respect.

The second set of bagpipes to be described is of the mouth-blown Highland miniature type (fig. 2). In this example the chanter is of *lignum vitae*, with an ivory sole, and is very much worn at the holes, which are distributed over a length of $4\frac{1}{16}$ inches; the chanter itself is $6\frac{1}{16}$ inches long. On being tested with a Northumbrian small-pipe reed, the scale was found closely to resemble that of the present-day Highland bagpipe, the lower leading note being much flattened. The chanter stock is of ebony with an ivory mount, but is not original. The blow-stick is of the same wood, ivory mounted, with a modern horn mouthpiece, well

¹ *Transactions of the Hawick Archaeological Society*, 1934: "The Lowland Bagpipes: Notes on the Instruments in Wilton Lodge Museum, Hawick."

used; it is $10\frac{3}{16}$ inches long over all. The blow-stick stock is of ebony and ivory, but this again is not original.

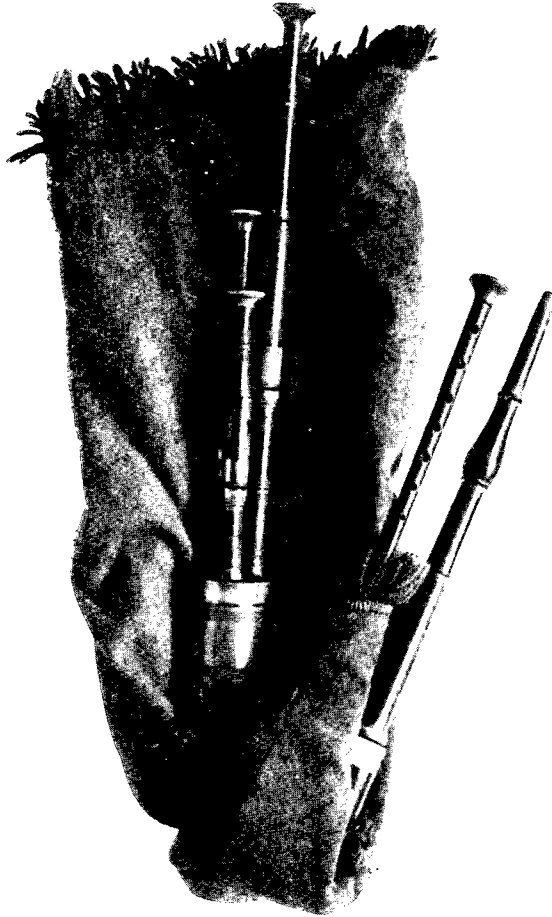


Fig. 2. Highland Miniature Bagpipes.

The three drones, which are all carried in the same stock, are plainly but neatly turned, and have mounts and ferrules of old ivory. The lengths are as follows:—

Small drone, $5\frac{13}{16}$ inches. Middle drone, $7\frac{7}{16}$ inches.
Large drone, $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

This type of bagpipe appears to be rare, and only five examples are known to the writer, though there are probably others in private collections. None of the standard works on the bagpipe makes any mention of the pattern, and it was not until 1931 that the present writer suggested, in a paper on the origins of the Northumbrian bagpipes,¹ that these mouth-blown Scottish small pipes were a distinct species and had no direct connection with the Northumbrian series. It is probable that they have never been dealt with by earlier authors simply because, being so uncommon, anyone who had only seen one such set would perhaps be justified in treating it as a freak and leaving it alone.

Of the four other examples known to the writer, the finest is one which was formerly (and may still be) the property of a well-known Tyneside piper. It bears the following inscription:—

“1st Highland Batt'n., Jan. 4 1757.
Hon. Coll. Montgomery.”

This inscription probably refers to Major the Hon. Archibald Montgomerie, afterwards the Earl of Eglinton, who in 1757 raised the 77th Regiment (Montgomery's Highlanders), his commission as colonel being dated 4th January 1757; the regiment was disbanded in 1763.

A similar set, slightly larger and more modern, is in the collection of Mr William Cocks, F.S.A.Scot., of Ryton-on-Tyne; another is in the Royal Scottish Museum, having been presented by Dr A. B. Flett, of Edinburgh, in 1913. The latter set is of ebony with ivory mounts, and is ascribed, probably correctly, to the early nineteenth century. As to the fifth set, this is in private hands at Tain, and was recently reported to the writer. He has not seen it, but the details and measurements given place it in the same class as the other four sets dealt with above; it is of boxwood mounted with ivory, with an ebony chanter (which suggests a replacement of this part), and bears the name of MacGregor, Glasgow, as maker.

It has been suggested to the writer that these little bagpipes came into use in the Highlands after the rising of 1745, when the playing of the bagpipe was forbidden under heavy penalties; by using these comparatively quiet instruments players would be able to practice without informing the whole neighbourhood as to their illegal activities. Whatever truth there may be in this suggestion, there can be no doubt why the type never became popular. The small reeds necessary for chanter and drones would be very quickly spoilt by the moisture inevitably collecting in the bag, and replacements would have to be frequent.

¹ *Archæologia Æliana*, 4th series, vol. ix. p. 81.

In conclusion, the writer would return thanks to Dr J. Graham Callander and Mr A. J. H. Edwards for their kindness in giving him access to the instruments and allowing him to take measurements and carry out tests with reeds, and also for the photographs of the two sets.