The Ancient Gaelic Medical Manuscripts of the MacVeigh/Beatons

The MacBeatha family who settled in Islay in the time of Angus MacDonald of Islay were his physicians and senachies. Their medicine was much advanced over what passed for medical science in much of Europe at the time. By the 15th century MacBeatha physicians had medical texts of the great Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd (known in the West as Avicenna and Averroes, respectively) written in Gaelic before they were translated into other European languages. According to the Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness, "The Gaelic Ollambs...were familiar with the literature of their own profession; and the names of Galen, Hippocrates, Averroes, John of Damascus, Barnard De Gordon, Jaques De Forli, Isodore, and as the author of MS X puts it, a thousand others, were household words among them."¹

A branch of the MacBeaths moved to Pennycross on the island of Mull and became hereditary doctors and senachies for the Clan MacLean. They were also renowned for their library, which contained many ancient volumes of poetry, history and legend, as well as many Greek and Persian medical text. The manuscripts ranged from the works of Hippocrates to ancient Irish legend to medieval French works. Among the volumes was the earliest account of the fall of Troy translated into any European language other than Latin, a tale of Charlemagne, and another of French origin.

The Mull library was last in the possession of the Episcopal minister, Rev. John Beaton, who moved to Ulster rather than conform to Presbyterianism in Scotland. By the end of the 17th century he was in Ulster where he likely died in the early 1700s and with his death his great manuscript library vanished. But before the Rev. Beaton and his library disappeared, a Welshman named Edward Lhuyd, second Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, visited him in Ireland, and completed a list of part of the library contents. Much of the poetry, history and legend was extremely ancient but it is the medical treatises which Lhuyd listed, that are of the greatest significance. "For we now know that it was the Arabs who preserved and built upon Greek medical science; and that the very Crusaders sometimes asked for and were provided with Arab doctors to save them from the ignorance and superstition that passed for medical knowledge in Christendom. The Gaelic library of the Beatons contained not only the Aphorisms of the Greek Hippocrates, but also 424 leaves in folio of the foremost Arab scientist Averroes. Among European works it included the Lilium Medicinae, and a 13th-century treatise which had been published in Padua in 1483. ‘Yea, very many other books’, wrote Lhuyd in Welsh at the end of his text.”²

Gaelic medical manuscripts associated with these and other branches of the family survived the Reformation and the Jacobite Risings. The National Library of Scotland holds about seventeen volumes of manuscripts (MSS) that were once associated with the Beaton family of hereditary physicians. In addition, the Edinburgh University Library hold a medical manuscript from the collection of the late David Laing. Finally, the Society of Scottish Antiquaries holds an ancient translation of Gordon’s Lilium Medicanum. The last two volumes were at one time held by the McVeigh/Beaton family. Even though other Gaelic transcripts have been found, no other MSS can be found outside of Scotland that can be proven to be held by the McVeigh/Beatons.

The Regimen Sanitatis, ‘The Rule of Health’, is an example of a Beaton MS:

¹ Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness, Vol. XVL, 1889-90, Google Book Search digital copy
Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum: The Salernitan Rule of Health, A Gaelic medical Manuscript of the early sixteenth Century or perhaps older from the Vade Mecum of the famous Macbeaths, physicians to the Lords of the Isles and the Kings of Scotland for several centuries. By H. Cameron Gillies (ed), First edition [82 pp. + 15 photographic MS reproductions], Robert Maclehose & Co. Ltd.; University Press Glasgow (1911).

The digital images of a late 15th century or early 16th century vellum Gaelic medical manuscript containing the same text as above, is located at the National Library of Ireland and available on the ISOS Project website: Go to the Collections of Irish Manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland, MS G 12. There is a catalogue description and and five sections of pages. The Regimen Sanitatis by Magninus Mediolanensis (fl. 1326-36) is based in part on the Rosa Anglicana by John of Gaddesden and translated from Latin by Cormac Mac Duinnshleibhe [MacDonlevy] (fl. c. 1459).

An excerpt from a translation:

“Should you need physicians, these three doctors will suffice:
A joyful mind, rest and a moderate diet.
In the morning, upon rising, wash your hands and face with cold water;
Move around awhile and stretch your limbs;
Combi your hair and brush your teeth. These things
Relax your brain and other parts of your body.
After your bath keep warm; stand or walk around after a meal;
go slowly if you are of cool temperament.”

A chief source of information on the MacBheath, McVeagh and Beaton physicians comes from McKinnon’s A Descriptive Catalogue of Gaelic Manuscripts in the Advocates’ Library Edinburgh..., Chapter I (Medicine, etc.) and Appendix II (Manuscripts in Other Libraries: MSS in Edinburgh University: (1) Beaton Medical MS, pp 283-6., which quotes from the Laing Collection of Manuscripts of the University of Edinburgh.

The following excerpts from McKinnon include references to the M’Beaths/Macbeths/Beatons:

[ppg 5-6] CHAPTER I MEDICINE, ETC. ETC.

The old Physicians whose works the Gaelic-speaking practitioners of Scotland and Ireland studied, translated, and commented upon, included within the sphere of their study not merely Medicine and the Physical Sciences as known to them, but also Astronomy and Astrology, as well as Philosophy and Metaphysics. In this extended sense the Medical section of the Scottish Collection of Gaelic MSS is very large. The fact is mainly due to the zeal and industry of a family of the name of M’Beath, latinised Betonus, now Beaton, who flourished for several centuries in Islay as hereditary physicians, and who spread from the

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3 Vade Mecum translates to ‘Notes’

original home to Mull, Skye and Uist in the Isles, as well as to Sutherlandshire and other places on the Mainland.

The manuscripts which they rated so highly were preserved more carefully than others. The old documents, it need hardly be said, are of little or no medical value in our day; but in the history of the Highlands and of the Gaelic language and literature, they will always remain of the greatest importance.

The medical MSS. are the following:

MS. I  [see appendix II for a more complete description]

A Gaelic manuscript - MS III, No. 21, is located in the Laing Collection at the University of Edinburgh. It contains the pedigree of the Macbeths/Beatons physicians; also medical matters, fevers chiefly. [Contact Centre for Research Collections, Edinburgh University Library, 30 George Square, Edinburgh, EH8 9LJ, Tel.: +44(0)131 650 8379, Fax: +44(0)131 650 2922, Email: is-crc@ed.ac.uk. Or Dr Joseph Marshall, Rare Books and Manuscripts Librarian, Tel.: +44(0)131 650 6864, Email: Joseph.Marshall@ed.ac.uk.]

MS. II  [Gaelic MS. II, Medical, 16th-17th cent., Adv.MS.72.1.2]

MS 2 contains various manuscripts of different sizes bound together evidently by someone who did not understand the contents. Vellum pages at the beginning contain treatises on blood, fevers, bone, herbological and philosophical subjects. On paper there are treatises on secretion, sediments, fevers, veins, diseases of different parts of the ear, philosophy, pregnancy, astronomy, medical terms, gout, prescriptions, etc. Also, a tract on the virtues of aqua vitae, one on diseases of the eyes, teeth, and heart; and a panegyric on Hippocrates.

“...Several memoranda, in Gaelic and English, are entered here and there on margins and blank spaces of the MS...The following entry on fol. 65b shows that the MS. or a portion of it belonged to Malcolm M'Beath or Bethune, probably one of the Skye physicians: Liber Malcolmii Betune. Ag so leabar Giolla Golaim Meigbethadh tabhraid gach neach a leg fas so bendacht ar aninuinfir an leahhair si. Anrnen. ‘The book of Malcolm Betune. Here is the book of Malcolm Macbeth, and let every one who reads this bestow a blessing on the soul of the owner of this book. Amen.’”

“...After this comes (fols. 102b-103a) the legend of the discovery of Hippocrates's Arcanum which commences thus:

...'Hippocrates, the key of all knowledge, at the end of his life enjoined that the knowledge and cognisance of death and life of all bodies be written and placed in a casket to be buried with him; and he ordered it to be put under his head for fear that the other

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5 The Skye Beatons or Bethunes, or some of them, claim to be descended from the Bethunes of Balfour in Fife.
philosophers should discover his arcanum and his mystery and his heart's secret.' The legend goes on to relate how, long afterwards, the Emperor Caesar ordered the tomb to be opened, in the hope of finding treasure. When the casket was found the Emperor ordered his physician to examine its contents, and he found that this was the arcanum or 'secret' of Hippocrates. A summary of the contents of the casket follows.

[A less full account is found in the Brit. Mus. MS. 'Additional 15,582/ a MS. written in 1563 by David Kearny for John M'Beath or Beaton (of Islay or Mull), and printed in O'Gr.'s Cat., p. 265. Cf, also p. 282 of the same Cat. for another version in Brit. Mus. MS. 'Egerton 159.]

**MS. III** [Gaelic MS. III, Medical, 15th (?) cent. Adv.MS.72.1.3]

MS. III consists of eighty-five leaves of parchment, small quarto size, stoutly bound in calf and, like MS. II, stamped 'Bibliotheca Advocatorum : MSS. Literis Hibernicis.' The recto of fol. 1 and the verso of fol. 85 are firmly pasted and pressed into the cover. When and how the MS. came to the Library is unknown. Fourteen leaves of vellum of uniform size, and containing a Calendar written in a fine hand, were stitched in at the end of the MS. after binding.

It is a treatise on botany and herbology, a materia medica in alphabetical order. The MS. was probably written in the fifteenth century; one should say with some confidence that a portion of it was written early in that century.
At one time MS. III was the property of John M'Beath or Beaton, one of the famous family of physicians. On fol. 53b John Beaton, in 1677 corrected to 1671, writes his name in Greek characters, with '20 die Septe.' written opposite in English script; and on fol. 85a is the entry, somewhat indistinct: Anrogach (leg. anrathach?) misi an din aig fuacht agus aig oc{ras) agus ni dom deoin agus fast ni leginn a less. E{oin) M'Bh{eatadh). 1671. 'Unfortunate am I this day, cold and hungry, and not of my own will, and besides I did not need to. John M'Beath. 1671.' Another entry on the same page,'Duncane Stewart/ in English script, suggests that the MS. was at one time his property. A third, not very legible, Ailian Stiuar(t) ailian M' Dhonnchadh oig rom sgriohh so a lebar Shemuis M'Nollaimh may mean 'Alan Stewart, Alan son of Duncan junior wrote this for me in the book of James son of the Doctor.'

MS. IV ['“Neil MacBeath’s Psalter” Adv. MS.72.1.4]
The history of the MS is unknown. It is a tiny MS, vellum, 99 leaves, 2 1/2" X 1 3/4"; a collection of definitions and technical terms, chiefly in medicine, by the great authorities. On fol 56b, 'Gadisten' explains Apostema i. Nescoid.

It was at one time the property of the M'Beath physicians. The first twenty-two folios were written by a Neil, in all probability one of the family: Mise Niall do graifne an bee sin, ' I, Neil, wrote that small portion ' (fol. 22a). The name of Niall beg 'Neil junior' appears twice as the owner of the MS. on fol. 24a,b, — Se so lebar Nel oig ' This is the book of Neil junior.' The name of the scribe who wrote the MS. from fol. 25 onwards appears here and there on blank spaces, and at the end (fol. 99a) he adds the following colophon: Misi Mael(s)echlainn m' illainn m' in legha ruaidh do scrib sin do Niall m' Neill Meigbethadh ./mo sesi:' I, Malachy, son of (G)il(f)linn, son of the red leech, wrote this for Neil son of Neil MacBeath, i.e. my friend (comrade).’ In the family pedigree in the Laing MS. there is a Niall beg or Neil junior, but he is the son of Hector, son of Neil. This last Neil is a grandson of Fergus Finn or the Fair who, it has been suggested, wrote the Islay charter of 1408. If he was the scribe of the first twenty-two folios of this MS. the date would be about 1450, which may well be the case. The remainder of the MS. was undoubtedly written later, and if the Neil junior of the MS. was Neil senior's grandson he would flourish about 1500 or a little later. That date, say, 1500-1550, is about the date of the latter portion of the little MSS. At the foot of 99a are two memoranda, of which misi an gilla duhh 'I (am) the swarthy lad' is the only part legible to me.

MS. XIV — Kilbride Collection, No. 10 [Adv.MS.72.1.14]
This MS. consists of two layers of parchment, large quarto, each containing eight leaves. The two are fastened together, and bound in pieces of skin stitched roughly by a thong. This cover was written upon, but only parts of the text are now legible. These are in Latin,
— one being a fragment of the Gospel of St. John (xviii. 39-xix. 21) which follows the Vulgate closely, but with a few words transposed and one or two omitted; another is devotional.

A few words and phrases are written in a modern unformed hand on the inside of the cover, — one of them reads Mise leahar Neill meic Giollandris, 'I am the book of Neil son of Gillanders,' one of the M'Beath physicians, no doubt. There are Neil and Neil glas or 'gray,' sons of Gillanders, in the M'Beath pedigree above referred to (v. supra, p. 5).

**MS. XX — Kilbride Coll., No. 16, [Medical, 16th Cent., ADV. MS.72.1.20]**

MS. 20 contains writings on different kinds of fevers from red blood and from impure blood, etica, diabetes, on the breast, its diseases and other cures.

MS. XX is a fragment consisting of six leaves parchment, large folio (12 in. by 9). It is written in a plain, regular hand, in double column, with fifty lines and upwards to the page. Beginnings of sections are written in capital letters, but there is no ornamentation or colouring. The ink is dull, and the MS. has been roughly used, so that in some parts, especially the last page, it is difficult to read it. Rents in the skin are stitched with red silk thread. This MS. was written or transcribed at a later date than most of the medical parchments, the script ao for ae, e.g. aon, raod, taohh, being common throughout.

The commencement of the text is wanting, but the Treatise closes on the eighth line of the last column (fol. 6b2). Then comes a docquet giving the date, which is illegible. Another note follows: Aois an tigherna an tan do marhadh GochtJiach o madadh . . . ' The age of the Lord when C. was killed by the hound . . .,' but again the date cannot be fixed. Lower down is Misí Eoin Machetha April 16 ...'I (am) John MacBeath, April 16 ...' with other illegible matter. At the foot of the previous page (fol. 6 a) is written across the margin in English, and in inferior hand, 'This was writin by me, Luke T(?F)ully, the first of November, 1679,' which, considering the orthography, may be about the date of the transcript.

**MS. XXVI — Kilbride Collection, No. 22 [Adv. MS.72.1.26]**

The medical portion of MS. XXVI consists of six leaves of parchment, quarto. The writing is in double column. The text begins and ends abruptly.

Six different subjects are treated of: —
1. The *hlasa* or tastes (cf. supra, pp. 13, 37), in connection with which Gilbertus is cited.
2. A chapter headed 'don filun' Of Felon. The text consists of a number of prescriptions in the form of plasters and potions for Felon,
Fistula, Cancer, Carbuncles, and Furunculus. This chapter ends on fol. 4b2, and the remainder of the column is blank.

3. On fol. 5a1-2 is a fresh chapter which professes to treat of Elephantiasis, Morphea, Scabies, Apostemata, and Pruritus. Only the first two are mentioned. Under Elephantiasis, Arnaldus is cited, and under Morphea, Hippocrates.

4. On fols. 5b1-6a1 are named the foods etc., suitable for each of the twelve months of the year, beginning with March and ending with February. The account professes to follow a leahar 'book' which is not named.

5. The days and hours on which Sun and Moon enter the same coiruirtha or Sign in each month of the year are given on fol. 6a1-2.

6. On fol. 6b1-2 the subject is Sleep. The last couple of lines are illegible. In this paragraph oir 'because' is written oigh, a phoneticism which recalls, in Scotland, Tiree and Uist.

Several notes are found here and there on the margin. The following evidently refers to some calamity threatening Mull, written perhaps by one of the Mull M'Beaths. UcJt a Mhuire is mairg do feraihh Muile ata aiii bethaidh an oneid niairjis dih a nodit, 'Alas, Mary, woe to the living men of Mull who will survive this night.'

**MS. XXVII— Kilbride Collection, No. 23 [Adv.MS.72.1.27]**

The MS. proper consists of five leaves of parchment, rather small folio. It is enclosed in a cover formed of four leaves of parchment, firmly stitched together with a thong. These are written upon in Latin. The outer pages are now illegible. On the inner pages the hand is apparently the same as that of the cover of MS. XIV. On one of these is a copy of the Gospel of St. Mark xiv. 47-xv. 1. On the other, which is broken, there are verses of the Gospel of St. John (cap. xi); of the Epistle to the Philippians (cap ii.); and of Psalm xxii. (Vulgate xxi). On the inner side of the end cover is the note: Me fein ieabhar Ghillanndrias duibh j ni maith an litir so again, 'I am the book of swarthy Gillanders, and this my script is bad.' Gillanders was doubtless a MacBeath, and probably the father of Neil son of Gillanders who appears on MS. XIV (v. supra, p.49).

The contents of the MS. are varied, but mainly Medical.

**MS. XXXIII— Highland Society, Kilbride, No. 2 [Adv.MS.72.1.33]**

Two MSS. covered by very old skin are enclosed in the wrapper labelled XXXIII, and both have been described by Dr. Donald Smith (Rep. on Oss., App., pp. 293-4).

1. The first is a parchment of eight leaves, small folio size. It contains a Calendar, carefully written in a good, clear hand, with
notes on the diet for the various months. On fol. 1b are two well-executed figured circles, with accompanying text explaining how to find the Dominical Letter and Golden Number of any year. Most of the entries and all the numbers in the Calendar are in the same hand, written in black or red. Other entries, chiefly footnotes naming the appropriate foods, drinks, and days for blood-letting for each month, are in a different and inferior hand. Under March e.g. is the following: ...

(In) the third month, viz., the month of March use figs and raisins and other sweet foods, and on the tenth and eighth days open the vein of your right arm especially to prevent Rigor.

Fols. 1a and 8b are blank, with the exception of a few memoranda. Among these are, on ibl. 1a, Eoin Maighheatha est hujus lihri possessor. Gulraithne. 22 don mith April 1700, 'John MacBeath is the owner of this book. Coleraine, April 22nd, 1700'; and on fol. 8b Orra an chinn 'Head charm,' which Columcille 'Columba' prescribed for his gille 'attendant,' when going through a pass in a wood. The charm is in part obscure to me. At the foot of fol. 1b is written in plain hand 'Major John M'Lachlan, Kilbride, No. 2.'

...6. Pp. 61 to the end (p. 84) are taken up with an elaborate Treatise on Urine, found also, but with variations, in MS. LX, pp. 155-180. The contents and colour of the urine are specially dwelt upon, with their value in diagnosis. Hippocrates, who is on p. 80 designated ro eolach naduire, 'the great student of Nature' is cited once or twice.

The following docquet is on p. 84 : Mise Domhnall Mac an Ollaimh. Et is olc an liter sin J do bo "Hfior n . . . Et is mor mo tuirrse toreis Donnchaidh Ulltaigh J ffronsies Ulltaigh. Et is dursan lem nach hfuihghum cunntapart do chuir an en focul diomaigfl siad. F. i. n. i. d. air Eghidius. Et me an dun na gall.' I (am) Donald son of the physician. The handwriting is bad and great was . . . . And very sorry I am after Duncan of Ulster and Francis of Ulster. And sad I am that since their departure I get no one to discuss a single word. An end here to (the Treatise of) Egidius. I am in Donegal.' [For the reference to Egidius V. supra pp. 8, 9, and O'Gr. Cat., p. 173.] Lower down on the same page is Leahhair Giolla Choluim Meigheathadh,'The book(s) of Gille-Colum (Malcolm) MacBeth.'

[pg. 283-286] APPENDIX II, GAELIC MSS. IN OTHER LIBRARIES

I. In the University of Edinburgh.
The late David Laing LL.D. bequeathed his large Collection of MSS. to the University. Among them the following are Gaelic:

The late David Laing LLD bequeathed his large Collection of manuscripts to the University of Edinburgh Library. According to the Laing Handlist, which is labeled “List of Manuscript Books in the Collection of David Laing, LLD”. On page 7 it reads:

“21. Kalendar and Book of Devotion, described in pencil note by Mr. Laing as “A Gaelic MS. On vellum, square 8vo.” The bulk of the writing is in the Irish character: at the end are some writings in a later hand in English, and treating of astrology. Mr. Laing notes that it seems to have belonged to the family of Beaton or Bethune. There is enclosed a letter from “John Rhys, St. Germains, Oxford,” in reference to the MS., and addressed to Mr. Warren.” A margin note in hand reads “Macbeath Medical MS c1600”. The two photos below are from from the Laing Collection of the Edinburgh University Image Collection and show the exterior of the book and the circle-compass pages from Fol 56.

McKinnon in his catalogue wrote the following:

This is a vellum MS. of 111 leaves of small quarto, 6 inches by 4½. It is bound in boards which are covered with skin, painted black and figured, and fastened with two silver clasps, both of which are now broken. The volume was purchased by Dr. Laing at a sale in Edinburgh in 1835.

It would appear that originally only the first eighty-five leaves were written upon. An entry on fol. 54b states that this portion of the MS. was written by Cairpre O'Cendamhain for John M'Beath. Another entry on the margin of fol. 85a, dated 1657, was written by Donald M'Beath. But the text is of older date, and in a hand much superior to that of this note.

The contents of this portion of the MS. are, shortly, as follows: —

Fols. 1-9 are taken up with a Calendar, astrological Table, concentric Circles, figures for the Golden Number, and some Notes. The Calendar gives the names of saints under their respective days with some fulness, along with notes astrological, medical, folk-lore, etc. Thus one is told under the several months what foods and drinks to use and what to avoid, the days on which bleeding is to be resorted to, on which it is lucky to buy land, to enter a new house, etc., etc. At the foot of the pages notes are given as to the influence of storms and especially thunderstorms in the individual months on events throughout the year. The handwriting and figures on these leaves are inferior.

Fols. 10-85 are medical, beginning with Fevers. The subject which receives the most detailed treatment is Urine, the various colours of
which are given in great detail, and the significance of each as indicative of the nature and issue of the disease pointed out. The usual practice of the Gaelic medical tracts is followed.

Paragraphs open with a pregnant Latin sentence, which is translated or paraphrased, and amplified in Gaelic. Bernard Gordon's *Lilium Medicinae* seems to have been so far drawn upon.

This section of the MS. is written with great care. The initial letter is large, and ornamented, or coloured. Others heading subsequent paragraphs are on a smaller scale. The handwriting varies. It is always clear, and in some paragraphs very fine. On fol. 56 is a circle well drawn, with the lines and points of the compass carefully executed, and named in Latin. [See photo below] Other figures are also well done. Several pages and spaces were left blank in the original writing, and were in part filled in at a later date. This portion of the MS. was carefully read and re-read, a marginal note here and there, in different hands, correcting and supplementing the text. The comparatively small amount of the MS. originally written upon, the frequent blank spaces, the size of the page, and the character of the binding all suggest that John M'Beath meant the MS. to be a sort of *vade mecum* to be carried about, and added to by himself and his successors as further experience and knowledge might render desirable.

From fol. 85 onwards the contents as well as the script are miscellaneous, and in point of date much later. Thus on fol. 85 in inferior Scottish hand, but under Gaelic influence, is a paragraph in Gaelic headed 'Signs of Life and Death.' Thereafter on to fol. 95 the handwriting and language are Scottish, the subject astrological. On fol. 99b, in pencil and in an unformed hand of the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, is the entry, 'Thomas Nealson, his Book, God
give him grace therein to look.' On fols. 102b, 103a are written in Gaelic hand the pedigrees of six members of the M'Beath family, with notes in current hand, in Latin. Fols. 104-107 contain what the writer calls a 'short and useful tract' on Astronomy or rather Astrology.

The chief interest of this volume is in the pedigrees of the M'Beaths given on fols. 102b and 103a, the famous family of physicians to whose zeal and learning we owe so many of the Medical MSS in the Scottish Collection. The writer of these genealogies gives the names of six men (presumably physicians) of the clan, and traces the pedigree of each up to a common ancestor Fergus Fionn or Fair. Fergus the Fair is then traced back step by step to Beath or Beatha who lived in the neighbourhood of Dublin on O'Kane's lands. Beath(a)'s pedigree is in turn given up to Neill of the Nine Hostages, monarch of Ireland. [This is highly doubtful.] There were no doubt other M'Beaths beside these six [were] alive at this time.

In the British Museum MS 'Additional 15,582', written by David and Carbery Kearney for John M'Beath in 1563, there is an entry dated 158(9)8 by James son of Rory son of Neill son of Gilchrist son of Fergus son of Gilchrist son of Fergus the Fair, and naming Fergus son of John son of Fergus as the owner of the MS at that date [cf. O'Gr.Con., p. 279; Caledonian Medical Journal, vol. v. p. 76]. The writer of the pedigrees in our MS. was Christopher (or Gilchrist) M'Beath. Unfortunately he does not say where the men he names were located, nor does he date the note which he writes in current hand: de his rebus satis dictum et scriptum per me Christopherum M’Veagh ['Enough has been said and written on this subject by me Christopher M'Veagh']. One should say that the pedigrees and the note were written about 1600.

In Highland tradition Beath(a), from whom the famous physicians derive their surname, was one of the twenty-four heads of families who accompanied the Lady O’Kane from her father's lands to Scotland when she married Angus Og of Islay, the friend and supporter of Robert Bruce. Fergus M'Beath is the first of the clan one meets with in a Gaelic record. He witnesses, if he did not also write, the Islay Charter of 1408. It has been suggested that he may be the Ferghus Finn of these genealogies. If this be so, there are two men of the name of John, both great-grandsons of Ferghus Finn, for either of whom this MS. may have been originally written. Its date would thus be early in the sixteenth century. But there are other two Johns, father and son, in these pedigrees, fourth and fifth in direct descent from Ferghus Finn. It is in all probability for one or other of these that the British Museum MS.'Additional 15,582' was written, and not improbably ours also. In several respects the two MSS, bear strong resemblance. Donald M'Bieath appears with a rather inferior hand in both. Is he the Donaldus Betonus, who in 1674, placed the stone in Iona in memory of Joannes Betonus Maclenorum familie medicus who died in 1657? The MS. was at one time or other in the possession of several members of the M'Beath family. Next to the original text, the oldest entry in the MS. is dated 1587, and runs, Is se so leobhar Giolla Colaim Mic
Gioila Enndris Mic Domhnaill Mic Bhethafh, 'This is the book of Malcolm son of Gillanders son of Donald M'Beath.' The writer of the pedigrees was presumably the possessor of the MS. when he wrote them. On the same page (fol. 103a), also undated, comes in current hand 'Hic Liber est Fergusii M'Veagh habitantis Peanagross'. This entry is very probably not much later than the other Latin entry, early seventeenth century. Peanagross is Pennycross in Mull, where the site of the Ollamh Muileach or Mull Doctor's house is still pointed out, and where a cross with date '1582,' and inscription 'G. M. B., ' D. M. B.' is said to commemorate two of these famous men. Donald M'Beath, with date 1657, has been already mentioned. Later entries, to judge from the handwriting, are 'Fergus,' 'Fergus Beattoun,' 'Fergus Beattoune.'

II. Society of Scottish Antiquaries
Translation of Lilium Medicanum (sic) of Bernard (of) Gordon. 714 pages. It belonged to the Beatons of Skye;